



DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL

The Dragon Boat Festival is celebrated in Mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and elsewhere around the world. The people of China generally receive a three-day break from work in order to celebrate with friends and family.

The Dragon Boat Festival goes by many names in China and across the world. In Mainland China, it is referred to as the Duanwu Festival. The festival is celebrated on the fifth day of the fifth month on the lunar calendar. Because of this, the holiday is often called the 'double fifth' festival. Dragon Boat Festival 2019 falls on June 7 (Friday).

The festival is closely related to the great poet Qu Yuan in the Warring States Period (475 – 221BC). To commemorate his death on the fifth day on the fifth lunar month, people celebrate by eating Zongzi and holding boat races on the waterways throughout China each year.

ALMA

NEWS

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澳大利亚学汉语协会

Hanging Chinese mugwort and calamus during the Dragon Boat Festival is an old practice that is not common in cities, but it is still used in many of China's rural areas. These fragrant plants are placed into pouches and hung on the wall or door of a home. These pouches of mugwort and calamus are intended to keep evil spirits out of the home. In addition to this, the hanging of these plants is also intended to bring happiness and good luck through the rest of the year. More conventional uses include keeping away mosquitoes and other insects.

The wearing of perfume pouches is another tradition of warding away evil. Traditionally, both parents and children wore a perfume pouch to keep evil spirits at bay. Perfume pouches are often made of silk and filled with herbal medicines or perfumes.

ALMA ACTIVITIES

ENRICHING CHINESE STUDIES IN CANBERRA SCHOOLS

This project is jointly administered by ALMA and the ANU Australian Centre on China in the World (CIW). It links ANU students who are learning Chinese or involved in China studies or research with Canberra schools interested in having a visiting speaker or mentor to enrich their Chinese language, culture or history program. The long-term aim is to inspire school students to continue their Chinese studies.

Funds to pay ANU participants a small honorarium for each school visit were originally provided by an ACT government grant (2015-2017). The project then continued with the support of a grant obtained by the ANU Postgraduate and Research Students' Association (PARSA).

Funding originally allowed for the development of some ongoing relationships with a school, for example regular visits by mentors to assist with the school's Chinese language program. Now only occasional talks can be supported, and ALMA is working with a High School to expend the remaining funds.

Talks by ANU participants have been highly successful in the past. Schools and colleges have benefitted from the interest the mentors can stimulate through sharing their own experiences of learning Mandarin, living or travelling in China, and/or their own special area of expertise or research. For their part, ANU participants have had the opportunity to develop their teaching and/or academic skills and to increase their links to the local community.

For more details of this project, email Mandy at anuchinamentor@gmail.com

BILINGUAL RADIO PROGRAM

ALMA continues to take part in the bilingual Mandarin/English language program on community radio 2XX every Friday from 7pm -7.30pm. The program aims to promote the use and learning of Mandarin in the ACT while also providing the

Chinese speaking community with information that might be of interest.

To hear the program, tune into FM 98.3 on Fridays at 7pm or listen to previous broadcasts via the station website at <http://www.2xxfm.org.au/>. Go to 'Program Guide', click on 'Mandarin', choose the date you want to listen to and then click 'listen back'.

Families and teachers are invited to send recordings of children singing or speaking Mandarin for broadcast during the program. Children are usually thrilled to hear themselves on radio and this can motivate them to improve their speaking skills. It may also be possible to arrange a visit to the studio for a live broadcast.

For more information about the program, contact Lucia on mandarinforfum@gmail.com

MANDARIN COMMUNITY TUTORING PROJECT

This ALMA project introduces fluent speakers of Mandarin living in Canberra to learners of the language. It is a voluntary project; no payment is involved. The Mandarin speakers volunteer an hour or so a week to help learners improve their Chinese language skills. In return the tutors can practice their English skills, make local friends, and learn more about language teaching and learning. 30 people have registered for the project so far in 2019.

For more information, visit the tutoring page on the ALMA website.

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Once again the ALMA Committee have been busy with activities to advance the learning of Mandarin within the community.

The ALMA Committee is pleased to announce the appointment of Annette Chemin as the new director for the Chinese Australian Early Childhood Centre (CAECC). She joins us from the Woden Early Childhood Centre. Annette brings a wealth of experience to the centre, having spent 26 years in the early childhood industry. Annette has held two previous full-time director positions at bilingual centres, one at the French Australian Preschool and the Greek-Australian Preschool. Annette

understands the importance and benefits of a bilingual education and will continue the work started by the previous director with the Mandarin programming. The Committee welcomes Annette to the CAECC.

Further news on CAECC matters is the departure of the Assistance Director – Claudia Gelonese in April. Claudia took up a position of Area Manager for a new childcare centre. We wish her all the best for the future. In the meantime Laura has been assisting Annette in the capacity of Acting Assistant Director. The recruitment process is underway and we should have an update in the next newsletter.

The CAECC has seen a rise in enrolments in the last quarter, mainly due to the marketing efforts by several Committee members. The CAECC has increased its presence on Facebook and will soon be creating a dedicated WeChat account and group, so keep a look out for that in the near future.

With 30 June just around the corner the Committee will be commencing the budget cycle for the association and with the enrolments increasing, this will place the CAECC in good financial footing leading into the new financial year.

As mentioned in the last newsletter the Committee were working closely with several community language schools to establish an intermediate class for children from non-Chinese speaking families learning Mandarin. One language school ran a trial during term 1 of the school year. Unfortunately, due to a lack of available teaching space and low enrolment numbers in term 2, the class was cancelled. The Committee will continue to work on a viable solution for the future to ensure that appropriate intermediate-level Mandarin classes are available in the Canberra region.

ALMA Continues to run its bilingual radio program on community radio 2XX FM on Friday evenings. The ALMA Vice-President is looking to interview ALMA member Stephen Ginpil, who has just published a book Untying the Dragon's Tongue: A Guide to Learning Mandarin Chinese (details on ALMA website and later in this newsletter).

Finally, as noted above, ALMA continues to operate its community tutoring projects. Information about this project and the CAECC was displayed at the Language Learning Promotion at the Come and Participate Expo, Kingston old Bus Depot held on Saturday 4 May, via the ACT Bilingual Education Alliance (ACTBEA) stall.

CHINESE AUSTRALIAN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE (CAECC)

澳华幼儿教育中心新闻



From the Director Ms Annette Chemin

I am the new Director of CAECC. As noted above, I have been in the Education and Care industry going on 26 years. I have had experience working in two bilingual children's services in the past. I am bilingual myself, unfortunately not in Mandarin. I am looking forward to working with the educational team, to continue to provide an excellent bilingual early childhood educational program.

We are getting ready to celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival. The children will be making rice dumplings, making their own dragon boats with cardboard boxes and listening to the traditional dragon boat story and singing.

OTHER NEWS

UNTYING THE DRAGON'S TONGUE: A GUIDE TO LEARNING MANDARIN CHINESE

Hot off the press! A recently published book by ALMA member, successful language learner and Canberra resident Stephen Ginpil

Drawing on the results of academic research, the advice of expert language learners, and the author's own experience, this book aims to show readers how to learn Mandarin efficiently, structure their study program to their own needs and maintain motivation over the longer term. Detailed practical advice is also given on methods that can be used to acquire a good accent, remember new vocabulary,

and improve listening comprehension, reading, writing and speaking abilities.

Available for purchase through Amazon (hard copy or Kindle version) or Book Depository.

AUSTRALIA CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY TOUR TO BEIJING REGION 28 AUGUST – 12 SEPTEMBER 2019

The ACT Branch of ACFS is organising a tour, using China travel Service (Aust) Pty Ltd in Sydney, to visit the International Horticultural Expo being held in Yanqing County, Beijing. The tour will also visit Chengde, the former imperial summer residence, one of the Project Hope Schools ACFS supports, and other historic, culturally significant places in the area around Beijing that are not on the usual tourist trail. The group will be limited to a maximum of 16 persons.

The cost of the tour will be between \$3666 and \$3961 pp, twin share, depending on the number of participants. The single room supplement is \$1090pp (at the moment there is a possibility for a single man to share a room) and a deposit of \$500 is required to secure a place on the tour.

For further information and a detailed itinerary please contact the tour leader, Carol Keil via email at cjkeil@proforte.com.au or phone her on 6247 8231 or 0417 041148

PANDA COMPETITION 2019

Conducted every year by the Australia China Friendship Society ACT, the Panda competition is open to students from Pre-schools, Primary schools and High schools in the ACT and Queanbeyan. The topic for this year's competition is Ancient Chinese Inventions

Students are asked to creatively focus on any aspect of this topic. This can be through a drawing or painting, creative works such as a collage or 3-dimensional construction, an essay, poem, or other creative individual effort, appropriate to the student's age and school grade. Pre-school and year 1 and 2 students can also enter colouring in. If the entry is in Mandarin, an English translation must be provided. Conditions of entry are:

- Drawings and combination drawing/words are preferred on A3 paper.
- Sculptures or collages must have a footprint no larger than an A3 sheet
- Essays are to be no more than one A4 page.
- One entry per student. (Entry must be the work of only that student.)

For more details see ACFS website at <http://acfs.org.au/> or contact acfsact@gmail.com

First ACT Chinese Recitation Competition

This inaugural competition took place at Canberra Grammar School (CGS) on Sunday 5 May. Organised by the Chinese Language Teachers' Association of the ACT, the main aims were to encourage the learning of Chinese and to raise the standard of spoken Chinese.

Entry was open to any learner of Chinese in the ACT, with four age groups (5-8, 9-12, 13-16 and 17-25 years old), two sections - Chinese-speaking and non-Chinese speaking families, and two categories - individual and group. In total, 153 learners took part: 11 group and 92 individual entries, and all were provided with a range of texts from which to recite. ALMA Vice President, Mandy Scott, was an invited guest and presented prizes to one of the non-background speakers' sections. Major prizes included an iPad, international flights provided by Xiamen Airlines and study scholarships at Xi'an Jiaotong University and Central China Science & Technology University.

Students from Mawson Primary (seen in the front row of the photo below), many of whom are graduates from the CAECC, made a clean sweep of the winners in the 5 - 8 year old group in the non-background speaker section, and came second in the group section. For a full list of winners, see the 'News' section of the ALMA website.

There are plans to make the Chinese Recitation Competition an annual event in the ACT. The competition next year will be on Sunday 3 May 2020. For more information contact Yuyang Chen at cltaact@gmail.com



Winners of non-background student section at the 2019 ACT Chinese Recitation Competition

CONTRIBUTIONS TO FUTURE ALMA NEWS WELCOME

Please email items to canberraalma@gmail.com by 31 August 2019

NOTE: Decisions on publication remain at the discretion of the editor

For more information about ALMA and to see past ALMA newsletters visit our website at
<https://www.learningmandarincanberra.org/>

