

New Zealand China Friendship Society Inc. – Nelson Branch

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President's Annual Report for 2012 10 February, 2013

It is my pleasure to present the 22nd Annual Report for the Nelson Branch of the New Zealand China Friendship Society.

1. Membership

Our membership continues to rise with a total of 76 members. This includes our 3 Life Members, 5 schools, and the Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology.

2. Branch Meetings

Seven meetings were held during 2012, the Year of the Dragon, and we covered a wide variety of interesting topics. Most meetings were held at Hearing House, except for the banquet at Chinese New Year. Attendance is usually about 30 to 40 members. The catered meal for meetings alternates between the Golden Bell Thai restaurant and the Nelson Oriental Restaurant.

- **January 23: Chinese New Year Celebration** at the Eastern Cuisine Restaurant in Richmond, attended by more than 60 members and guests, including National President Eric Livingstone.
- **March 9: Confucius Institute from Christchurch** were here for Race Unity Day. Dr Hong Hu talked to us about the worldwide work of the institute and of their hopes to develop a Nelson outpost in a school or at NMIT.
- **May 13: Prominent Persons Tour Report: Anne Todd-Lambie** presented us with her ABC of the first time China visitor, and it went all the way to Z with her amusing and insightful comments accompanying a wide range of interesting slides.
- **June 8: Ma Baoru, Honorary Member NZCFS:** It was a great honour for us to have Ma Baoru in Nelson for a few days and to hear her stories of her connections with Kathleen Hall, Tom Newnham and Songjiazhuang Village.
- **July 20: June and Bryce Wild** on tour with their cameras. We were treated to a wonderful range of photographs and fascinating tales of their NZCFS tour with the Livingstones in April.
- **August 31: Ethnic Liaison Officer: David Cogger** spoke about his work in Nelson with the wide range of ethnic groups, including refugees, who have settled in our district.
- **October 19: China's Natural World Heritage Sites: Dr Les Molloy** gave his insights into this world-wide programme with a special focus on the heritage sites in China.
- **November 30: NZCFS 60th Anniversary Tour Report** from Chris Mouter, and Bruce and Christine Ward. The 4,000 kilometres from Kashgar to Beijing by bus and rail with Tour Leader Dave Bromwich was an amazing journey which included presenting our \$1,000 donation to Songjiazhang Village for school improvements.

3. Other significant events

- **Race Unity Day:** Our branch, for the first time, had a presence at this special Nelson occasion. We had helped arrange for a group of dragon dancers to come from Christchurch, and invited a group from the Confucius Institute to present calligraphy for the public. It was an extremely wet day, but a useful beginning was made which will continue this year.
- **Prominent Persons and Leaders Tour:** Marilyn Gibbs and Lillian Li represented us on this tour in September and attended two big gatherings associated with Friendship and Sister Cities. They will be telling us about this at a later meeting.
- **Calligrapher from Huangshi:** For a few days in September, we were honoured by the visit of Defang Zhang and his wife. We sponsored them to come here to compose some Chinese calligraphy to complete the Huangshi Chinese Garden.

- **Mid Autumn Festival** in 2012 coincided with the first day of daylight saving, September 30th. We had a Chinese tea tasting, ate mooncakes and enjoyed Defang Zhang's calligraphy demonstrations.
- **Former Nelson Vice President Ferry van Mansum and wife Aukje Both** met up with the 60th Anniversary tourists at Hexi College and in Shandan for the 70th Anniversary of the Shandan Bailie School. We have been enjoying Ferry and Aukje's regular letters from Gansu that have been published in our newsletters.
- **Appo Hocton Scholarship Proposal:** We have been working with NMIT to establish a scholarship for a student from Huangshi to study in the Media Arts Department here. It is taking a while to finalise because of government requirements in both countries.
- **Sister City Activities:** It has been a big year and our Sister City Coordinator, Barbara Markland, has been involved with many activities. Marilyn Gibbs, also a Branch member, chairs the City Council Sister City Committee and does much to maintain our good relationship with Huangshi. There are more exchanges coming up in 2013. Nelson Branch is grateful for the annual grants from the Nelson City Council that support our Sister City interactions.
- **Home hosting and caring for delegations:** On a number of occasions, members have extended hospitality, including home-hosting to Chinese visitors, which has furthered Nelson's very good relationship with a range of visitors.

4. Appreciations

To our Secretary, Barbara Markland, goes my grateful thanks for her impressive attention to the details of committee work, and her huge commitment to the Sister City portfolio.

Treasurer Royden Smith continues to keep us in good financial order, as well as carrying out the duties of South Island Vice President. We have Royden to thank for our excellent newsletter, issued, in fine fashion, prior to each general meeting.

Special thanks go to Past President June Clark for her splendid service over so many years, and also to Kathy Beatson for her great work as Vice President. They will be greatly missed in these roles. All the Executive express their passion for New Zealand-China friendship in so many ways and my thanks go to them all for their varied contributions.

My thanks also to the wider membership, whose contributions add up to making our Branch among the strongest in the country. Nelson is well known and respected in many parts of China because of our commitment and friendly enthusiasm.

Christine Ward
President