

# National Conference 2009 - Hibiscus Coast Report by Rhyl Jansen

## A Great Event!

"Congratulations Hibiscus Branch. President Rhyl Jansen and Conference Director, Eric Dittmer for a fantastic conference at Orewa, Hibiscus Coast. Great venue, conference arrangements, fellowship, speakers and workshops. Our thanks to all the conference committee and our National Executive for all their hard work and efforts for a memorable weekend."

Eric Livingstone - *National President's Newsletter*

The Hibiscus Coast branch was pleased to host this event for the Society and we welcome the outcomes which, we trust, will enhance the work of the Society.

It was a brave decision in May 2008 by a new branch to offer to host the Conference but our committee worked with total commitment for the following year with regular meetings and reports to the Executive.

### PREPARATION

We are positive about all aspects of the preparations for the Conference (the Registration Booklet, the venues, the catering, the accommodation, the travel to and from Orewa, the banquet), except the finances and the registrations. The budget was prepared on a basis of 80-90 attending, but in the event, there were only 48 and Youxie was not represented.

Therefore, there were some extremely anxious moments in the three weeks prior to the Conference. Registrations were very slow and I would recommend and hope that, in future, the Executive members and Branch Presidents, will register for the next conference at the February National Executive Meeting and the registration fees be paid to the Branch in a timely fashion.

### SPEAKERS<sup>4</sup>

Deputy-Mayor, **John Kirikiri**'s welcome was outstanding and fun and enjoyed by all.

It was an "all inclusive address". John made international connections with numerous people in the audience (but particularly with China) and even had one of the Guilin students go to the front, he asked us all whether we agreed that they two looked alike and then went on to call him "Cuzzie"!!!!

Guest Speakers were

- **Graham Lamont** gave the **Opening address**. He spoke from his experience in education, economics, as an historian and as a cleric. He suggested, 'at a time when economic activity around the world seems to be crumbling fast, countries could be tempted to protect themselves from the aftershocks of the crisis. While it may be easy to understand why these sorts of policies are being proposed, we need to recognise that a confrontational approach and the rattling of economic sabres will almost certainly be counter-productive'
- **Hon. Pansy Wong** – Minister for Ethnic Affairs; Minister of Women's Affairs, Associate Minister for ACC, Associate Minister of Energy Resources,
- **Prof. Paul Spoonley**, Regional Director (Auckland), Research Director, College of Humanities & Social Sciences, Massey University – "*Being Here and There: Chinese Migration & The Impact on Auckland*" He gave us a fact-filled fascinating address on "Migration and Diversity" relating it closely to the Auckland situation; he spoke of one piece of research where, in 1998, secondary school students were interviewed and asked what they thought of New Zealand, the response in general was "this is a boring place". Ten years later those same young people were interviewed again, many in secure jobs, married and establishing homes and families.

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<sup>4</sup> I would recommend that at the February Executive Meeting, that speakers and guests be decided and formally invited by the Executive with a set date for acceptances.



- **HE Ambassador Zhang Limin**, Ambassador PRC. He spoke in really positive terms of the relationship between our countries, of the sixty years of growth, change and the challenges for the republic since its birth in 1949. He quoted John Keys and President Hu Jintao who referred to the Maori expression, "*He aha te mea mui o te ao? He tangata. He tangata. He tangata*". ***What is the greatest thing in the world? Its people. People. People.*** He stressed the importance of the **people** in modern China.

He told us he came from Bauding where the Bauding balls came from which we sell as a fundraiser. He talked about his "town" and then spoke about the willingness for the Chinese Embassy to the N.Z.C.F. soc, by sending us video's books etc.

- **Nora Yao**, Director of Confucius Institute, University of Auckland. Nora spoke of the increasing importance of the relationship between our countries, she spoke of the vast gap between us, **physically** (size and distance), **understanding** (New Zealanders of Chinese, and Chinese of New Zealanders), **culturally** (a perception exists that Chinese here are mostly market gardeners, who are very hard working, and eat oily food ! ), and **historically** ( China's history going back three to five thousand years, New Zealand's history going back about two hundred years or maybe about a thousand years). She stressed that bridging the gap is a two-way process: now no New Zealanders can say, "I have no connection with China". She suggested that we need more drivers and more passengers to bridge the gap – in both directions.

#### ➤ **WORKSHOPS**

- Society Tours in China
- Promotion of Friendship with China
- Review of the Society's Mission
- Sharing Information on China's Current Issues

**REPORTS** \*\* Further details of these projects will be included in forthcoming Newsletters

#### ➤ **Earthquake Projects**

1. Livelihood reconstruction in Penzhou County, Sichuan (NZCFS: \$6907, ~~HAF~~: \$62164)
2. Post-earthquake community rehabilitation of selected communities in Pengzhou county, Sichuan (NZCFS: \$9103, ~~KOHA~~: \$36414)

#### ➤ **Shaanxi Development Projects:**

1. Honghuapu Township Clinic reconstruction, Shaanxi (NZCFS: \$6643, HAF: \$64786)
2. Walnuts in Lueyang County, Shaanxi (NZCFS: \$14088 KOHA: \$56253 Guozheng Township Govt.: \$19331)

#### ➤ **Shandon DP**

1. Partner Capacity Building and Extension of Rural Cooperatives in Shandan County (NZCFS: \$6005, KOHA \$24020)
2. Establish Cooperative Trainers Programme at Shandan Bailie School and extend cooperatives in 4 new Counties of Zhangye (NZCF \$40507, KOHA \$10,127)

#### ➤ **Guanxi DP**

1. Dongshan Village Project - Training, Quanzhou County (\$3323, KOHA \$12928 - not approved yet)
2. Health and Legal Knowledge in Donshan Village (NZCFS 4685, KOHA: \$18738 - not approved yet)
3. Sunflower Seed Training, Shanglin County (NZCFS: 3200, KOHA: \$12800, Shanglin County: \$7555)

- **He Ming Qing Scholarship** for 2 student nurses (Wei Yunjie and Shen Qianqian) (NZCFS2009: \$4860)

## WORKSHOPS

- Branches Growth & Development
- Society Aid & Development Projects in China
- Chinese Language advancement in New Zealand
- Future Structure of the Society

## BANQUET

I understand that it was enjoyed by all present!

It was with great pleasure that Sally Russell received, on behalf of **Hastings Branch**, the **Award for Achievement**, presented by HE Zhang Limin

The **award** was in appreciation of the great effort in being instrumental in the Society raising<sup>5</sup> \$264,000 towards the Sichuan Earthquake relief appeal.



*HE Zhang Limin and Sally Russell, with the Award, accompanied by Dave Bromwich and Lou & Janice Klinkhamer, also of the Hastings Branch*

## SPONSORSHIP

Sponsorship from a number of retailers and organisations in our area was received and this is much appreciated. We thank them most sincerely for their support.

In alphabetical order: **Dad's Pies, Destination Orewa, New World Orewa for Reception, Puhoi Cheese, Ransom Wines, Rodney District Council, Rodney District Economic Trust Waiwera Water, Waves Hotel**

Without the support of these sponsors, running the conference would have been financially very difficult, if not impossible.

## DONATION

Peter Cornwall offered an outstanding gesture to China, offered \$22,000 to set up a trust in the name of his wife for junior staff or students to come to New Zealand and study for one semester. Trustees would be from the NZCFS Executive.

## OVERALL

There were benefits for the Branch. The Committee was committed to ensuring it was a success. They met weekly and have developed into a strong friendly group which we are sure will continue. In conclusion, I thank Conference Director Eric Dittmer for his hard work in the weeks prior to and during the Conference, and also Clarice Dittmer, Alen and Leonore Crosby, Dicky and Trish Hutchings and Lucy Wright for their support and the willing contribution of their special talents.

Rhyl Jansen (President HBC Branch)

For more photos of the event please follow this link:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/77324348@N00/> and then type 'Orewa' in the 'Search' box

<sup>5</sup> For every \$1 raised by the Society, the NZ government made up to \$5, which was doubled by the Chinese Embassy.