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No. 3 – April 2020

Message from our President

A newsletter, thanks to Bruce Ward, but no meeting. It will come as no surprise to you that the April branch meeting has been cancelled. Our May booking for Hearing House has been left 'pencilled in', but I think it is unlikely we will have one then either. Too many of us are over 70 to be taking any risks with our health.

Congratulations and best wishes to Life Member Beverley Brown who is celebrating her 90th birthday in April. Not quite the celebrations you had hoped for! Beverley continues to be an active and valued member of the branch and we wish her well.

Hibernation Royden calls it! For NZCFS as well as me personally. Roy and I are in total lock-down having recently returned from Australia, and I have just walked the perimeter of our section 6 times. It is not a big section so it almost makes me giddy, and it is not much exercise but better than nothing. We are fortunate in having family to help us when needed.

If you need help, or just to talk to someone, then make contact. This is a difficult time for all of us. Please remember we are not just friends of China but your friends as well.

Stay home! Stay safe! Keep well!

President Barbara

Yangjiang exchange cancelled

As mentioned in the March newsletter, the student exchange to Yangjiang has, of course, been cancelled, with some loss of money because of fees. The Branch has successfully applied to the DENG Fund for funds which were not used by projects in previous years, and these will minimise our loss. Royden will reimburse the travellers when we have also received the money to be refunded from the travel agent.

NZCFS Conference cancelled

NZCFS National Conference and A.G.M. which was to have been held in Napier has been cancelled. Refunds are available for those who had paid before the cancellation. It is intended that the National A.G.M. will be conducted online. The National Secretary will be in touch with all branches and executive members on how we can achieve this.

Assistance for Huangshi

At our A.G.M. we pledged money to help Huangshi get needed supplies for their fight against the novel coronavirus because they were, at that stage, in lock-down. South Island Vice President, Craig Ashby, who was here for the A.G.M., had very soon determined that he could get good facemasks, currently in New Zealand, to be sent on our behalf. Craig made considerable effort to achieve this, including a request to the Chinese ambassador who promised to help although she cautioned that they might get only as far as Wuhan.

Sadly, the masks we were so pleased to be sending did not get to Wuhan. The boxes were labelled and ready when the manager of the company, Craig's boss, decided they were needed in New Zealand and vetoed the delivery. Thanks to Craig for attempting to do this for us.

Letters from Yangjiang

Here is a letter to Jane Lister from Julia at Guangdong Liangyang Senior High School in Yangjiang. The letter from Nayland College student Jasmine Wayman and the original response from Julia were published in the March newsletter.

Kia ora Jane,

It's been a while since last time. I hope all of you are fine. The situation has gone worse around the world, which worries us a lot. While in China, the virus has been effectively contained and especially in Yangjiang, all of the 14 imported cases have been discharged from hospital so our city is classified as low risk area and therefore, teachers and students are likely to return school at the end of this month or at the early of April.

For the past two weeks, students from all the three grades have been sending us teachers replying letters in return for the kindness and support from Nayland college. Some of them did a very good job and we are so delighted to see how youths are connected with each other and how badly our students wanted to express their feelings in a foreign language, which is not easy for them. I have included a few of them in this email and hope these letters can also touch the hearts of youths in Nayland college.

With best wishes and strong hope!
Julia

It is hoped that the students' letters sent on by Julia will be attached when you receive this newsletter.

A report on life in lockdown China

Peter Hessler is an American who has written four books about life in China, beginning with *River Town*, a memoir of time spent as a Peace Corps volunteer teaching English. He is currently living in lockdown in Chengdu with his family, and wrote this for the New Yorker.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/03/30/life-on-lockdown-in-china>

Thank you from Youxie

The following is a message from Beijing, sent to Dave Bromwich as President of NZCFS, expressing sympathy for the appearance of COVID-19 in New Zealand.



中国人民对外友好协会 THE CHINESE PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION FOR FRIENDSHIP WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES

23rd March, 2020

Dave Bromwich
National President,
New Zealand China Friendship Society

Respected President Dave Bromwich,

We are so sorry to learn the spread of COVID-19 in New Zealand recently. On behalf of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC), I would like to express our sincere sympathy to you and, through you, to all friends of New Zealand China Friendship Society.

Under the leadership of President Xi Jinping, the Communist Party of China (CPC) and Chinese government have taken comprehensive and rigorous prevention & control measures since the outbreak of COVID-19 with a highly responsible attitude towards people's health. People from all over the world also extended their helping hands to the Chinese people with sympathy messages as well as donations of money and medical supplies. By far, the work of prevention & control in China has achieved initial results, leading to a promising final victory in the battle against COVID-19.

COVID-19 is an enemy of all human beings. Recently, some US politicians irresponsibly called this virus as "Chinese Virus" or "Wuhan Virus". Such remarks to stigmatize China and politicize epidemic control not only serve no help for the fight against the virus in a science-based manner, but also hurt the people to people friendly feelings, and therefore affect the international cooperation against the pandemic. We must oppose such racist words and save the international joint endeavor to combat the virus.

As a poet once said several hundred years ago, we are waves of the same sea, leaves of the same tree, and flowers of the same garden. I want to add that we are residents of the same planet. Only when international community stand together, can our peoples live better lives and our world become a better place. For that, CPAFFC and myself would like to work hand in hand with all New Zealand friends in current difficult times so as to embrace the victory against the virus at the earliest date.

Yours sincerely,

Li Xiaohu
President

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From Nelson Executive - March

The first meeting to be held in a conference room at Pitt and Moore offices. Thanks were expressed to Mike McMellon and Jingjing Jackson for arranging the venue.

- *Cancellation of the Yangjiang Student Exchange:* Many messages had been exchanged between Yangjiang and Nelson relating to the cancellation and the situation in Yangjiang regarding the epidemic. There were some doubts expressed about whether full refunds of air fares would be available, and also about insurance matters. (Refunds have not yet arrived.)
- *Race Unity Day:* Arrangements for a NZCFS stall at Race Unity Day, next to the Chinese Community stall, were made. The event was later cancelled.
- *Future Speakers:* Kirsten Wong about her story of the SS Ventnor. She is available in June. Gregg Wagstaff was asked to demonstrate Qi Gong at the March meeting, since cancelled.
- *Huangshi:* Bill Findlater spoke of communications with Xu Zugui in Huangshi about how his city was coping in lock-down. Many COVID-19 cases and many deaths were reported.
- *Chinese Culture Camp:* Proposed by Jingjing Jackson, possibly in the July holidays. The Listers and Jingjing are to work on this.
- *National Executive meeting report:*
 - A new He Ming Qing Scholar is to start in September. Two others are still studying.
 - A proposal to set up an account with the Bank of China was mooted.
 - NZCFS tours were not being well subscribed and branches were asked to promote these more strongly. (All tours are cancelled now).
 - The second part of the National Exec meeting focussed on the present day relevance of NZCFS. This had merged into discussion about whether to post the 'Xinjiang Videos' on the NZCFS website to show support for the way China was dealing with terrorism and unrest in Xinjiang Province and to counteract the bias of western media.
 - National Treasurer, Ian Lister, resigned during the meeting.
- *Nelson Executive discussion followed:* Decided that the branch should write to National Executive outlining our disappointment at the relitigating of the matter of the Xinjiang videos when we had made it clear at our Nelson meeting with President Dave and VP Craig that we were not in favour of this. We should also say that our members were upset at the National President's focus on terrorism at our New Year Banquet. (This letter was forwarded to all members of National Executive, and several responses were received; some in support and some questioning Nelson's negativity on this matter.)

A relevant cartoon

This is from the South China Morning Post, the English language newspaper of Hong Kong.

