

緬因州華美聯誼會

Chinese & American Friendship Association of Maine

P. O. Box 10372 Portland ME 04104 — www.cafammaine.org



通訊 二零一零年。十一月至十二零月

NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2010

MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Friday, November 19, and bi-weekly, 12:00 - 1:00 PM.
Chinese language roundtable. CIEE building, 300 Fore St. Portland, 2nd floor. Intermediate to advanced speakers. All welcome. No charge.

Thursday, December 9, **CAFAM Board Meeting.** 103 Hanover St., Portland. Pizza served. All welcome.

Saturday, January 15, 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, crafts preparation day for New Year Celebration. 61 Cross Hill, Cape Elizabeth.

Saturday, February 5, 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM. **Annual CAFAM Chinese New Year Celebration.** McAuley High School, Stevens Ave., Portland

YEAR OF THE RABBIT CELEBRATION

The Year of the Tiger is winding down, and the Year of the Rabbit will begin on February 3, 2011. Specifically, in terms of the Five Elements, it's the "metal" rabbit year.

On Saturday, February 5, CAFAM will sponsor its annual Chinese New Year Celebration from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. This will mark the 21st such event.



There will be dance and song performances, craft activities for children, food vendors, vendors of Chinese crafts, books, and objects, and several talks for adults. This year we are delighted to have as one of our presenters Tess Gerritsen, author of eight romantic thriller novels, four best-selling medical thriller novels, and seven crime thrillers which form the basis for the Rizzoli and Isles TV series. Her books have been published in 31 countries and sold 15 million copies. She will talk about growing up as a Chinese-American.

Planning for the event is well underway under the leadership of Eileen Nunley. If you would like to hop on board, you can contact Eileen (right) at enunley@maine.rr.com.



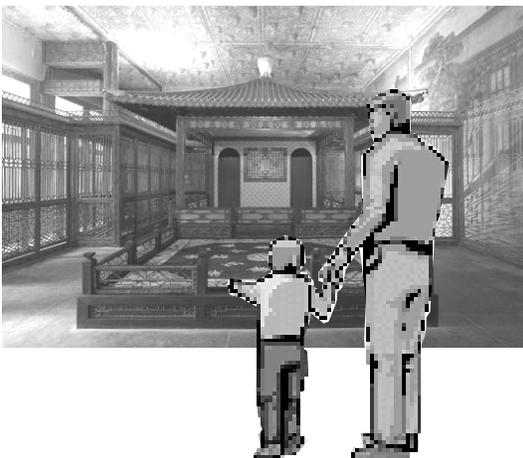
CHINESE SCHOOL VISITS PALACE TREASURES by Kelli Pryor

CAFAM's Chinese School filled two buses on November 6 and headed to Salem, Massachusetts, to visit the Peabody Essex Museum's exhibition, *The Emperor's Private Paradise: Treasures from the Forbidden City*. The students and their families became some of the first people in the world to view ninety treasures from a hidden retreat that has been sealed away for more than two centuries.

The Qianlong Garden—or the Tranquility and Longevity Palace Garden—was created by the Qianlong Emperor, who was a devout Buddhist and reigned from 1736 until 1796. Its artifacts include murals, thrones, beds, and many highly symbolic objects made of jade, cloisonne and silk. The exhibition, which runs through January 9, 2011, will travel to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Milwaukee Art Museum before returning home to a painstakingly restored garden compound within the Forbidden City in Beijing. The multi-million dollar, decade-long restoration is being undertaken by the World Monuments Fund with the Palace Museum, Beijing.

PEM provided tour guides tailored for the school's young visitors. The students sketched their impressions as they progressed through the rooms of the exhibit. The children expressed amazement at the lavish treasures but also at how anyone could sleep on such obviously hard beds. The students were also quick to help the tour guides with Chinese pronunciation, and at the end of the day, the guides all had learned to say “Thanks” in Mandarin.

To everyone who went, it seemed a great good fortune to have traveled such a short way to see treasures that have survived so long and come from so far and been seen by so few.



MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL MARKED

On September 26 CAFAM celebrated the Mid-Autumn Festival, or Moon Festival with its annual potluck supper

and entertainment. A large crowd gathered at Woodfords Church to eat dumpplings and other great food, sample moon cakes, and enjoy moon songs and moon poems. Students from Hyde School joined the celebration. Once

again it was a most enjoyable evening and a chance to see old faces and make new acquaintances. Among the many who offered song and readings (with apologies to those not mentioned), were Ellie Chase, Xu Zhidan, Bob Greene, Cynthia Setchell, Juris Weimar, Sophie Frantz, Anna Brown, Eric Larssen and daughter.



NEW FICTION BY CONNIE ZHU

Connie Zhu, a CAFAM member now living in Waterville, is Policy Analyst with the Maine Center for Economic Policy. A native of Shanghai, she is also a writer of fiction. Last year she published “Ying” (Shadows), a short story, and she recently published another one called “Qiu yu xiao-xiao” (Autumn Rain).



Both of these pieces are intriguing and poignant vignettes of individuals in today's China. Like flotsam on the tides of history, they have been carried along, but not without their own desires, regrets and chances at revenge.

Readers of Chinese are directed to the following site for a copy of “Autumn Rain”: <http://www.sino-monthly.com/art/Story.html>. For a copy of “Shadows,” contact Connie at czhu002@yahoo.com.

Connie, do you plan to translate them into English?

NEW BLOG BY DE-NIN LEE

De-nin Lee has just started a blog devoted to children's literature relating to ABCs (American Born Chinese). The website is:

<http://abcchildrensbookalley.blogspot.com/>

Here is De-nin's description of her project:

When I was a child growing up in the 1970s in middle America, children's books with East Asian content were rare. The few that I knew were a mixed bag. Some seemed to have good intentions, but uncomfortable stereotypes; others snappy writing, but uneven illustrations. Since then, I'm thrilled to see that children's books in the US have flourished, and there is a much greater variety of good quality books that I can now read to my hapa (half-Asian Pacific American) son.

This blog was inspired by a good friend with fine taste in children's books. In the coming year (by November 1, 2011), my goal is to review 365 children's books that might appeal to American Born Chinese, friends, families, and others with an interest in East Asian culture.



Visitors to this site will find excellent reviews of many books. For example, how about a novel treatment of the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac?

WILLIAM CONNELLY PHOTOGRAPHS OF CHINA

William Connelly, one of CAFAM's more frequent travelers to China, had a solo photo exhibit this past August at the Curtis Memorial Library in Brunswick, featuring about 60 pictures from his trip to Beijing and environs earlier this year. The exhibit was divided into three parts-- one of what most people think of Beijing proper, one of a visit to the "wild" (unreconstructed) Great Wall about two hours out of town, and a section devoted to a well preserved late-Qing village, also considerably far from the Beijing most visitors (and even most Beijingers) know.

William's photos are expected to be for sale on the internet once his commercial website is up and running, and he plans as well to have them on display at the Youth Enterprise Zone at next year's Common Ground Fair.



Caption from the exhibit: This photo is similar to many postcard photos as it is the classic angle from which to view the main attraction of the Temple of Heaven. The day my father and I went happened to be a rare day with vivid skies, as you can see.

CHINESE LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

by Nancy Hoople, photo by Don Hoople

Wei Wu is bringing Chinese language and culture to Mt. Ararat High School in Topsham, Maine. Born and educated in Jilin, China, she earned two bachelor's degrees, in English and law. She taught English at a high school in Beijing for three years.



During her first year in Beijing, she learned from a friend about the Chinese Guest Teacher Program in the United States; however, she first needed to teach in China for three years to meet a requirement of the program. Then she accessed an application form from a website and mailed it to HANBAN ("Han Yu Ban Gong Shi"--Office of Chinese Language Council International that is associated with the Chinese Ministry of Education. According to Wikipedia, "Hanban is committed to developing Chinese language and culture teaching resources and making its services available worldwide, meeting the demands of overseas Chinese learners to the utmost degree, and . . . contributing to global cultural diversity and harmony").

Every March Donald Reutershan, education specialist in world languages at the Maine Department of Education, travels to Beijing with some of his counterparts in other states' Departments of Education to interview teachers who have survived the prescreening by HANBAN. Reutershan selects the candidates for Maine. In March 2008, Wei Wu was his choice for Topsham. She has returned this fall for her third year. At the end of the school year, according to requirements of the program, she must return to China for at least two years.

Before coming to the United States, Wei received about two weeks of training in Beijing. Then in the summer, on July 28, she and other candidates went to Stanford University for further orientation. Sadly, she had to miss the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing in order to meet this requirement.

This year Wei will teach Chinese 1, 2, and 3, as well as a beginning class at the middle school. Last year she also taught an adult education class in Chinese language and culture at Merry Meeting Education. Wei likes Maine (except for winters) and finds people friendly, helpful,

and honest. She loves blueberries and autumn colors.

The Guest Teacher Program was started in 2006. Its primary funding comes from HANBAN/Confucius Institute Headquarters in China in partnership with The College Board in the United States. The United States school employing a guest teacher must compensate the teacher according to one of three options, and HANBAN subsidizes the compensation program with \$13,000 annually for each guest teacher. Last year Maine schools hosted five visiting teachers. Three of those teachers have returned this fall to their same schools.

According to Reutershan, China is a global and economic power that we need to recognize and better understand, and we therefore need to expand our students' educational horizons in terms of both language and culture. The Guest Teacher Program provides opportunities to schools that want to establish a Chinese program, but don't have the means to do so. HANBAN can offer financial support. Wei said that they also provided all the textbooks for her classes.



For more on Chinese Guest Teacher Program, see

<http://professionals.collegeboard.com/k-12/awards/>

BYE BYE, NANCY WHITE

About four years ago, Nancy White and Patti Oldmixon stepped forward to head up the New Year Celebration planning. No good deed goes unpunished, and soon both were on the CAFAM board, Patti became president and Nancy vice-president.

Patti is still on the board, although no longer president, but sadly we must say good by to Nancy. With her husband John, she has moved to Blue Hill.



Bye bye, Nancy, and many many thanks.

ELECTION PROTEST

In the waning days of Maine's recent gubernatorial election, the Maine Democratic Party distributed material criticizing the independent candidate Eliot Cutler. The mailings generated loud objections from many people in the state, because of its (perhaps unintended) racism.

At issue was the implication that Mr. Cutler, to judge from his professional activities relating to China, would turn Maine and Maine jobs over to China, were he to become governor. Stereotyping images of fortune cookies and Chinese writing were used.

Many CAFAM members were also offended by this material. As an organization, CAFAM is prohibited by its bylaws from engaging in political activity and did nothing during the course of the election. Various members did write letters and make calls, as individuals. At its recent meeting, the CAFAM board voted to develop a letter to be sent to various Maine media, explaining our organization's objections.

BOOK REVIEW

"What is the "real" China?" This question poses many difficulties for anyone interested in it. First, the country's diversity makes generalization risky. Add to that the fact that the authorities are keen on managing the flow of information by suppressing, blocking, dressing up, and even inventing facts or opinions to fit the desired image. Fearing retaliation, individuals are often reluctant to speak or give information. On the other hand, various foreign interests and media incline toward emphasizing the negative, the scary, as was evident in Maine's own recent elections.

For all these reasons one who seeks a better understanding of what life is like in China must choose his or her guides thoughtfully. Here are two recent publications that deserve a look.

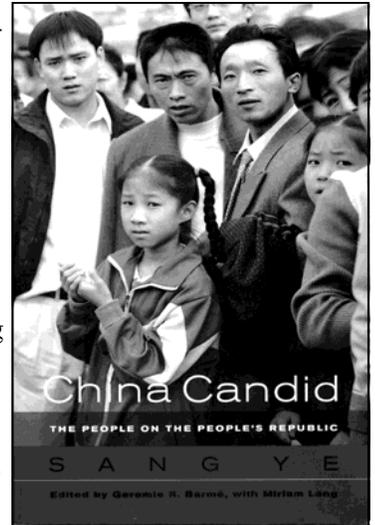
The first is Sang Ye, *China Candid: The People on the People's Republic* (University of California, 2006). The author is a Chinese journalist living in Australia. In the 1980s he co-authored an oral history, *Chinese Lives* ("Beijingren"). More recently, he spent four years travel-

ing inside China interviewing 100 individuals in as many places. He claims as his inspiration Studs Terkel, the famed American oral history chronicler of the common person.

Twenty six people tell their stories in the resulting book, *China Candid*. And a fascinating assortment they are. Truly a cross section of society, socially, geographically, politically, and age-wise. Some entries are predictable: for example the brash young entrepreneur, or self-styled "profiteer," who cynically makes a bundle wherever he finds opportunity and skips always two steps ahead of the authorities. Also to be expected are vestiges of revolutionary times, a bitter party man who feels that the ideals of Mao have been betrayed, or a similarly deflated retired union official. Given the international concern with violations of intellectual property rights in China, one is also not surprised to meet a breezy, brilliant software pirate.

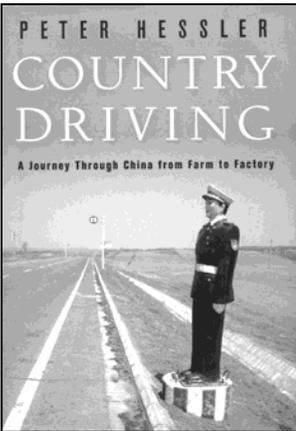
Other appearances are not so inevitable and indeed perhaps shocking. There are the prostitute and the "little sweetie" (mistress), who trade in sex and speak matter-of-factly about their vocations. There is the young woman born without arms, briefly celebrated in the Chinese press as a happily overcoming difficulties. She tells about the real challenges she faces in a society averse to accepting the handicapped. For example, she will always need help with daily activities (stooling for example), despite the incredible dexterity of her feet. Still further from the mainstream is the UFO believer, and further yet the executioner, who calmly talks about the technicalities of dispatching condemned criminals, singly or in batches.

Although Sang Ye admires Studs Terkel, his method is rather different. After transcribing his interviews, many of them protracted and interrupted, he edited them into monologues of self-revelation, not verbatim transcriptions of the interview as recorded. Consequently all of the entries have a (superficial) similarity on the page, even though the language and presentation of the subjects must have been very different. Also, this requires the reader to vest confidence in the author: that he is faithful-



ly representing his subjects. Given the detailed content of their stories, however, the reader becomes comfortable with the authenticity of the accounts. This is reinforced by the fact that, unlike Terkel who openly sympathized with his mostly working class subjects, Sang Ye strikes a more neutral position.

The principal editor and translator of the English edition



is Geremie R. Barme, a well-known scholar of contemporary China in his own right. Chinese authorities have blocked publication of the book.

The second book of interest is Peter Hessler, *Country Driving: A Journey through China from Farm to Factory* (Harper, 2010). Hessler is an American writer and journalist who has made a career of de-

scribing China for the Western reader since his first book *River Town* appeared in 2001. His second book *Oracle Bones* appeared in 2006.

Country Driving draws upon the author's travels around northern and northwestern China in a rented car. This is

something that has only become possible in the last few years, with the vast build-out of China's roads. Hessler is fluent in Mandarin and thus able to interact with all of the people he meets. They all, in one way or another, embody the changes that have washed over China in the era of "reform and opening."

One of the most poignant parts of the book relates to Sancha the little village in the shadow of the Great Wall not far from Beijing. There the author and another American writer rent a house to which they occasionally retreat to work and relax. Notable about this place is the fact that it has been almost deserted by the out-migration to the cities. We often read about the flood of migrants in urban areas who make a living as factory workers, construction workers, domestics, peddlers, etc. We hear much less about the repercussions of such migrations on the people left behind, often the older and less mobile. In Sancha, a few families remain on the land to eke out an existence. The touristed Great Wall and the glittering streets of the capital are as distant as the moon for the people of this village, and the young lonely boy who befriends Hessler and his colleague.

A couple of books can only scratch the surface of portraying the diverse populations of China. But these two provide many insights and counter stereotypes and misconceptions, at least a little bit.

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

In October the Nobel Committee awarded the 2010 Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo (刘晓波). Liu, currently in prison, will not be at the presentation event. Now will his poet-painter-photographer wife, Liu Xia (刘霞). She is under house arrest in Beijing.

Liu Xiaobo is a 55-year-old professor, literary critic and theorist. He has also been an activist, pressing for political change. The government of China is extremely sensitive to all real or imagined threats to its power. Liu's first run-in with the law came during the 1989 Tiananmen events. He is credited with helping to persuade many students to leave the square as the crisis escalated. He was arrested, tried, and imprisoned for a year and a half.

Liu continued to advocate gradual transformation of government away from total monopoly of Communist Party power. He was jailed for six months in 1995 and then spent three years in a labor education camp, starting in 1996. His latest conviction resulted from involvement in "Charter 08" (零八宪章), a document calling for political reform. It was signed by over 350 prominent people. In 2009, Liu was sentenced to 11 years for "inciting subversion of state power."

Liu is almost unknown in China, owing to strenuous censorship (media are not allowed to use his name, websites are closed, etc.). The government has objected to the Nobel award, contending that Liu is a criminal. Many governments have urged China to release him, but buoyed by support from Cuba and Venezuela, the People's Republic has refused.



SUZANNE FOX LEADS DELEGATION

For a couple of years, CAFAM board member and president of Fox Intercultural Consulting Suzanne Fox has been consulting with various educational leaders in Maine regarding the recruitment and hosting of Chinese students as well as internationalizing the curriculum.



Most recently, in early November, Suzanne led a delegation of headmasters and superintendents from three communities in Maine and one in New Hampshire to Beijing, Shanghai, Fuzhou, and Haining. According to Suzanne, the main purposes were to gain insights and understanding into the Chinese educational system, visit Chinese classrooms and meet with principals and teachers, meet with prospective students and their families; and plan joint projects with teachers and collaborate on creating a new global curriculum.

One participating school district that caught the eye of the media was Millinocket. Its plan to begin recruiting paying Chinese to Stearns High School, caught the eye of the New York Times, which ran a front-page article on October 26 entitled, "Needing Students, Maine School Hunts in China". The article is on the web at:

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/27/education/27students.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all

Suzanne can be contacted at:
suzannefox@foxintercultural.net

MISCELLANEOUS

Beginning students of Chinese or those who wish to explore what the language is like may be interested in the following site: www.chinesewithmike.com.

Six historic photos of Chinese in Maine are on exhibit at Chia Sen Restaurant 345 Payne Rd., Scarborough. Food is great too. Take a look!

***Is your membership current?
Remember CAFAM relies on your support.
Please check mailing label for expiration.
Thanks.***

CHINESE LANGUAGE ROUNDTABLE

The Chinese language roundtable began meeting again in September. Numerous and diverse Chinese speakers have come to participate in the informal chats. Next meeting is on Friday, November 19 and then bi-weekly from 12:00 to 1:00 at the CIEE building, 300 Fore Street in Portland. Go to the second floor.

For intermediate to advanced Chinese learners and native speakers. All are welcome. No charge.

For more information or to be included in the notification list please contact Suzanne Fox (see previous article).

The Newsletter is edited by Craig Dietrich and is published five times a year. Contributions and comments are welcome. Please contact the editor at 688-4826 or dietrich@maine.rr.com. The next issue will appear in mid-January. Deadline for submissions: early January.

Snap up our holiday rangoons!

JYANG-LEE'S
AUTHENTIC CHINESE TREATS

张 188

Crab Rangoon
PURE AND SIMPLE, ALL NATURAL, HOMESTYLE-DELICIOUS

14 COUNT - Uncle Fan's Best - KEEP FROZEN

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

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