



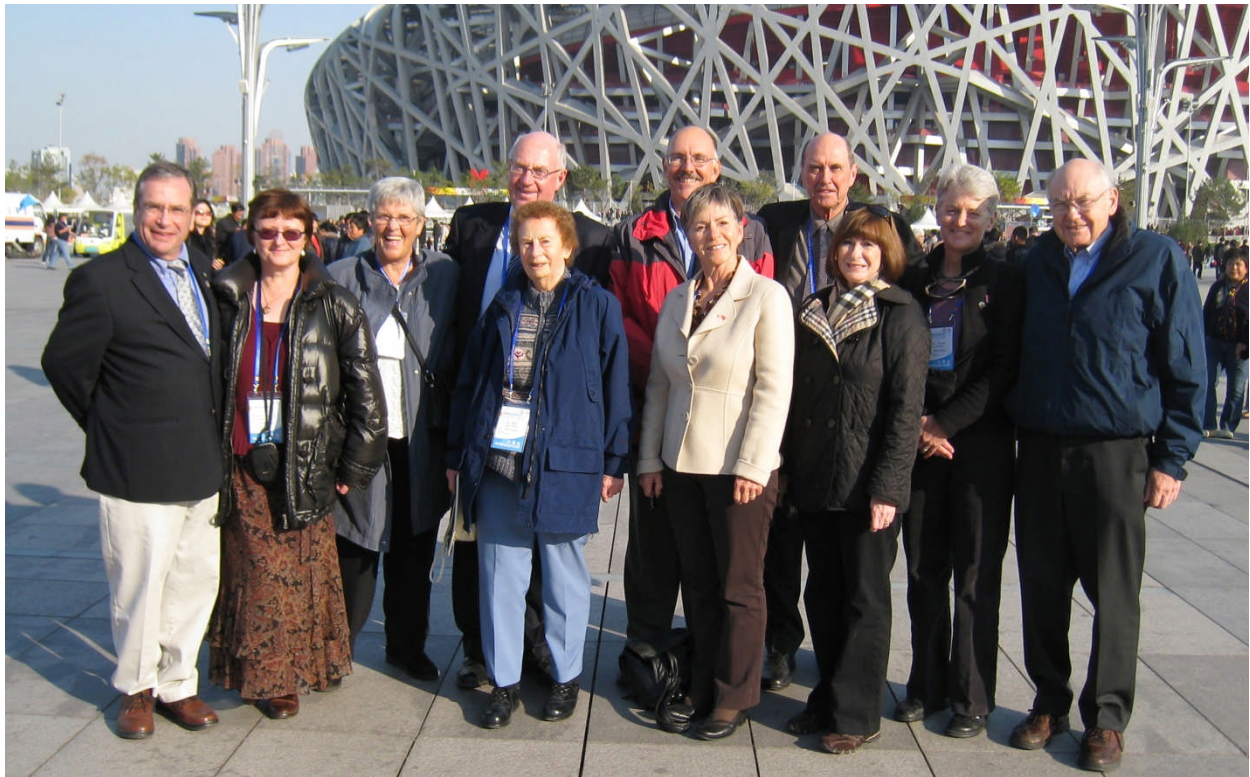
FCCFA Newsletter

加中友协联合会

Federation of Canada-China Friendship Associations

Report of FCCFA Delegation China Visit, November 2008

The Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries invited delegations from eight countries to attend the Friendship Forum in Zhangjiajie, Hunan. Smaller Forums had been held in Chongqing (2004) and in Wuhan (2006). There were eleven members of the Delegation from Victoria, Calgary, Manitoba, Ottawa and Toronto.



Members of the delegation outside the Bird's Nest Stadium on a sunny afternoon in Beijing.

Rear: Bob Raeburn, Peter Larson, Fred Drewe; Front: Michael Copeland, Morag MacLellan
Gloria MacLeod, Joan Wicken, Gilliane LaPointe, Donna Lamb, Lorraine Farkas, Jim Steele

Fred Drewe (page 2), Gloria MacLeod (page 7) and Joan Wicken (page 9) have contributed articles on the Friendship Forum and the trip itself. Peter Larson's article (page 4) deals with his impressions of China after 20 years and his thoughts on Canada-China relations.

China Tour 2008

Fred Drewe

Acting FCCFA President, Manitoba CCFA President

(Thanks to all those who contributed material for me to consider in writing this report. An especial thanks to Gloria MacLeod who may even recognize some of her words and phrases.)

Every couple of years the Peoples Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries of China, (CPAFFC), invites representatives from China Friendship Associations throughout the world to visit China for a short tour. This year the Canadian delegation was grouped with members from the United States, New Zealand, and Australia, a few countries from the Caribbean, Granada and Jamaica, and some from the South Pacific, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu. We all met in Beijing in early November, 2008, traveled to Hunan province and concluded the tour in Shanghai. There were three days of conferences included, two days for a Sister Cities Conference in Beijing and a one day Friendship Forum in Zhangjiajie City, Hunan.

The Canadian delegation was made of representatives from the five cities in Canada with Friendship with China organizations: Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary, and Victoria. The delegation consisted of: Gilliane Lapointe, Peter Larson, Lorraine Farkas, and Jim Steele from Ottawa, Michael Copeland from Toronto, Fred Drewe and Bob Raeburn from Winnipeg, Donna Lamb and Morag MacLellan from Calgary, and Gloria MacLeod, and Joan Wicken from Victoria.

The tour began in Beijing with tourism as we visited the Olympic sites of the Bird's Nest stadium and Water Cube *swimming pool*, as well the refurbished Forbidden City and the Great Wall.

In Beijing, we also attended a two day China International Friendship Cities Conference. Li Jianping, Vice President CPAFFC, who hosted this forum was a student at the University of Victoria 24 years ago. We learned a great deal about the value of sister city relationships throughout the world. However, the chosen form of sharing knowledge was the speech, and after two days it was difficult to appreciate even the best speeches. We were also disappointed that no Canadian sister cities were present. Our president at the time, Lolan Merklinger, noted this issue in an email to Qing Boming, Director, Canadian and Oceanian Affairs, for The Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, (CPAFFC). Lolan wrote that in "China - Canada, a book edited by The Information Office of the State Council of the P.R.C.", the "book lists 31 Chinese-Canadian sister cities and five Chinese and Canadian provinces that are twinned (Heilongjiang, Jilin, Hebei, Jiangsu, Guangdong)".

Continued on page 11

Shaoshan Village, Xiangtang County, Hunan, Birthplace of Mao Zedong.



Mao Zedong in 1927

A highlight of our time in Hunan was a short visit to the home where Mao was born.

Mao's parents were rich peasants from Shaoshan where Mao was born on December 26, 1893. The farmhouse is now a museum, situated in a small valley or glen. His parents' shrine is on a hillside overlooking the

house and the pond in which the boy Mao swam.

Mao returned to Shaoshan in 1927 when he conducted the famous Autumn Harvest Uprising in Changsha, the capital of Hunan, as commander-in-chief. That revolt was unsuccessful but Mao went on the better things.



View of pond to the left of the house



View of house from across the pond



Closer views of the house

China Trip an Eye-opener

Peter Larson, Editor, CCFS-Ottawa Newsletter
(Originally published in their December 2008 Newsletter)

Having visited China about 20 years ago, and having more or less followed developments in China through the Western press, I thought I knew something about the country.

But I am still rubbing my eyes, and shaking my head as a result of my recent tour to China with the Canada China Friendship Society.

China is booming. Construction cranes are everywhere. Shops are full – of goods and people. And everyone I talked to – young and old – sounded optimistic about the future. Definitely, today's China is a very different place than the one I visited in 1990.

The Chinese explain it as a result of the policy of “opening up”, now thirty years old. In fact, in 1978, under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, the Chinese Communist Party decided that even more urgently than socialism, China needed economic progress. Deng's strategy for achieving these aims of becoming a modern, industrial nation was called the “socialist market economy.” Today the Chinese refer to it as the strategy of “opening up”.

Whatever you call it, the results speak for themselves. The Chinese economy has increased at a sustained rate of around 10% per year for nearly 3 decades. Living conditions have improved markedly in all areas of China. According to a recent article in the Economist, living standards improved 10% last year overall in China, and 20% in rural areas.

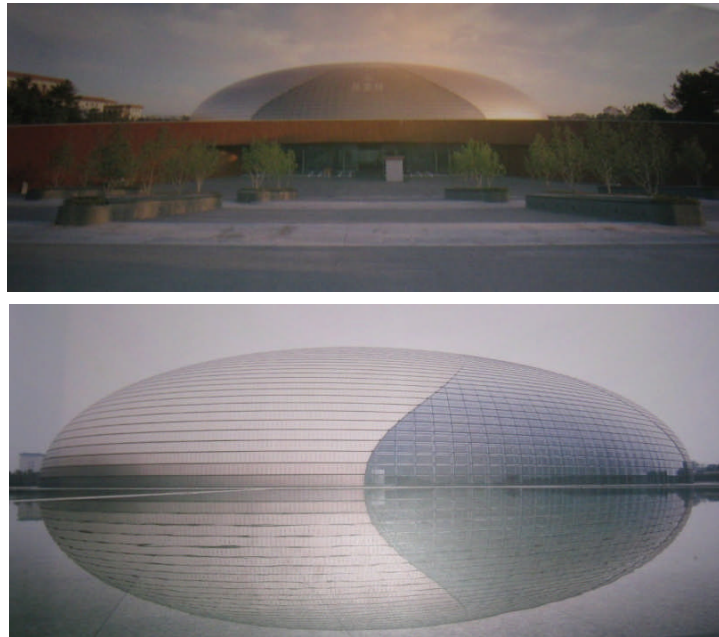
The policy of “opening up” has also encouraged foreign investment from other countries. Billions of dollars have flowed into China in joint ventures and in outright purchases. The resulting investment is overwhelming. China now sports thousands of kilometres of new auto-routes, dozens of new airports, tens of thousands of new offices and apartments. In the two years prior to the Olympics, Beijing alone constructed more than 50 new metro stations.

The Chinese economy has also been privatized to a large extent. Hundreds of former state enterprises have been closed or sold to private investors. Official statistics indicate that the private sector now controls over 60% of the Chinese economy. The sectors which remain under government control are ones judged key to China's economic success – sectors like banking, transportation, infrastructure, energy, and telecommunications.

Continued on page 18

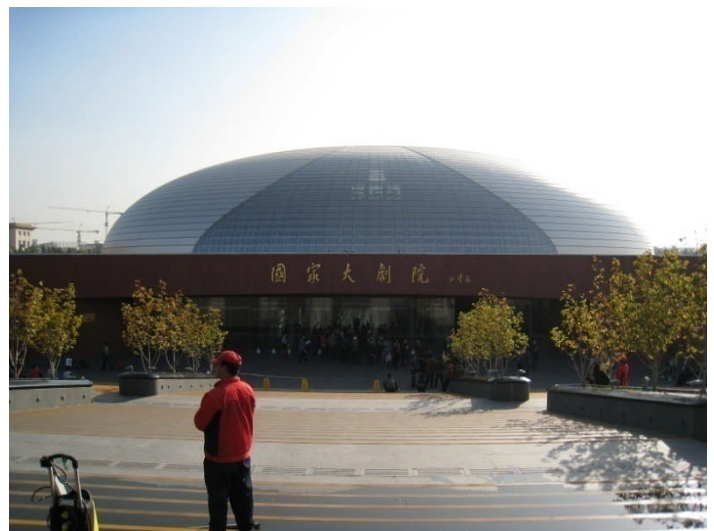
The Egg: National Centre for the Performing Arts of China

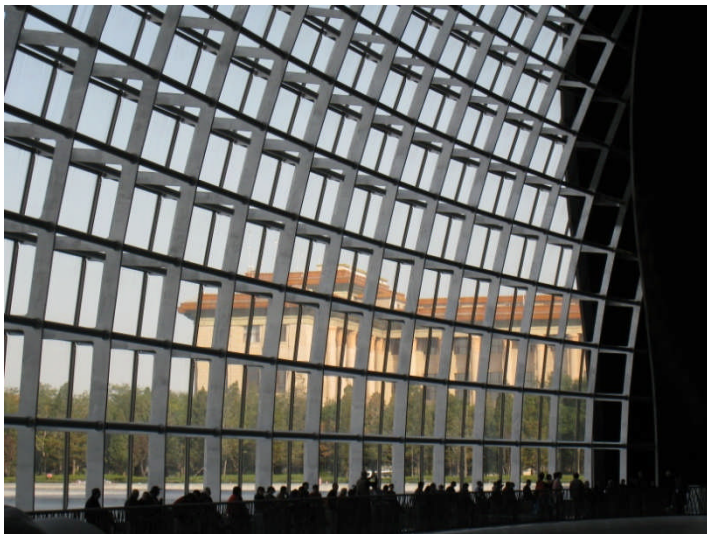
Architect's Drawings



The Centre is on the south side of Changan Avenue, west of Tiananmen Square and the Great Hall of the People. It was designed by French architect Paul Andreu. Construction began in December 2001; an inaugural concert was held December 24, 2007. It houses three theatres, a symphony hall, an opera house and a theatre for dramas with a combined capacity of more than 5000.

Photos





Gloria MacLeod and Joan Wicken



Report on the Hunan Friendship Forum

Gloria MacLeod, President VCCFA

Nov. 6th, 2008, Beijing. After months of preparation by the Chinese Peoples Assn. for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) and the Federation of Canada China Friendship Assns, 11 delegates from Canada joined with delegates from nine other countries. The arrangements were meticulous. On arrival we were given information on room numbers in each hotel, the table arrangements for the lavish banquets, and the number of the bus assigned to our group. The other delegations were from USA, New Zealand, Australia, Jamaica, Grenada, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu. Many were important government people including the First Lady of Vanuatu. The opening banquet was held in the CPAFFC compound. Director General Yao Mingyu welcomed the delegations. (Some VCCFA members may remember he was one of the first YOUXI students to study for a year at the UVic.)



Yao Mingyu, Gloria MacLeod, Li Jianping, unidentified Sister Cities delegate

The Canadian delegates were invited as observers to the two-day Sister City Forum in Beijing. Li Jianping, vice president CPAFFC hosted this forum. (He was a student at UVic 24 years ago.) Many speeches were heard on the

relationship of the Sister Cities (SC). Such phrases as "Harmonious World", "Cities are the symbols of human development", "Vehicle for harmony", "Cooperation instead of competition", "Support for less developed countries", "Honour nature using respectfully", and "Important window and platform for exchanges." There were 500 delegates from 35 countries in attendance. Canada had no official delegates. There is no Federation of Sister Cities in Canada so there is no one body for China to interact with. The next SC forum will be in Shanghai in 2010 in conjunction with the Shanghai Exposition. (From my research there are 35 SC with China within Canada.)

The day before the Sister Cities Forum began, a tour of the Olympic sites, and a bus trip to the Great Wall gave the delegates and CPAFFC hosts an opportunity to mingle. Joan and I had arrived in Beijing 3 days early along with some of our other delegates. We traveled with ease on the upgraded transportation systems. An evening was spent with one of the delegates from the previous forum who is now working in Beijing. For part of a day Michael Copeland and we two explored the hutongs, dining in a little café in an alley, and visiting "the Egg", the new performing arts theatre.

On Nov.10, the Friendship delegations left Beijing and arrived in Changsha City, Hunan Prov. On arrival we boarded a bus for Shaoshan City to visit Chairman Mao's former residence in a peaceful country setting. Our mates on the bus were the three delegates from Papua New Guinea and four from Vanuatu. We were well amused on the long bus ride as each gave a summary of some aspect his country and culture. Hansen Mataskelekele, the First Lady of Vanuatu rode in a private car with CPAFFC escorts and a member of her staff. We felt sorry she could not take part in the lively discussions taking place on our bus. The police escort provided her throughout benefited all of us as we traveled unimpeded through all our days together.

The welcoming banquet was that first night and we were required to arrive in formal dress and on time. The bus arrived at the hotel 10 min before the banquet was to begin. The scrambling began and all of us presented ourselves on time in tie and shirt or fancy dress. We were welcomed by representatives of the Changsha municipal government at a sumptuous banquet.

China now also has a real estate market. On the main street of Zhangjajie, (a provincial town in Hunan Province) is the sales office of a local developer.

Continued page 16

Report On the Hunan Friendship Forum

Joan Wicken, Vice President VCCFA

On arrival in Beijing we were welcomed by Qing Boming and Karen Yi of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries. Boming and Karen had visited Toronto, Gravenhurst, Ottawa, Montreal, Calgary and Victoria in September. In Victoria they spent the whole tour with us and we were overwhelmed by the hospitality.

After the opulence of the Olympic Venues and the new buildings in Beijing we flew into Changsha and it was like going into another world as we bused across Hunan Province, for the forum in Zhangjiajie.

I thought as I did on my first trip in 1990 nothing has changed since Pearl Buck wrote *The Good Earth* although I'm sure it will soon, as the infrastructure and plans are in place for great developments in Hunan Province.

Wednesday 12th November, 2008

Opening session 8.30am "Celebrating 30 years of Friendship."

The Chairman was Mr. Xie Yuan, Deputy Director General Dept. of American and Oceanian Affairs. Speeches by other CPAFFC Dignitaries welcomed us..

The Guest of Honour was the Honourable Hanson Mataskelekele Vanuatu First Lady. By chance her birthday was November 12, the day of the Friendship Forum in Zjangjiajie

Right

Blowing out the birthday candle.



The developed countries themes were what they had done to raise awareness of China in their countries & what they had done for China after the recent disasters.

After the earthquake N.Z. had developed a dwarf walnut tree which produced nuts this year helping the local economy.

N.Z. has had Government Grants, but with the new government the future of grants is uncertain. Half their delegation were business people who were not association members.

Karen Ye with NZ delegation members
Yani Johanson, a town councillor and Matt
Lawrey, a political organizer.



The leader of the delegation sent by the new Friendship Association in Papua spoke. Member of Parliament Malakai Tabor stated if you have friends you don't need money. Apparently after the monsoon there, a group of Chinese workmen arrived to help rebuild without thought of reward.

Left

Malakai Tabor and Michael Copeland



Fay Pickersgill, President Jamaica F.S., said the Chinese had rebuilt the stadium so the people would have a meeting place.

Ferron Lowe, V.P Grenada's ruling Party, also stated what China had done for them after the recent disasters had struck their countries, saying what are friends for but to help in adversity with no thought of repayment.

Ferron Lowe(2nd from right)
with Papua-New Guinea delegation
Huangpu river cruise in Shanghai



The main theme from the delegates and our hosts was the environment, in fact Boming Qing and Karen Yi were facilitating an environmental study in Australia on 20th November, 2008.

Right
Qing Boming and Karen Ye
during their September visit to Montreal



Some suggestions:

Plant fruit trees in earthquake ravaged areas. A project for schools?

Friendship Parks: a quiet place for friends to meet.

Send new members of the CPAFFC to visit other countries to see the value of the Friendship associations& their role in raising the awareness of China.

Nancy Huppert, The President of the USA's Sister Cities Friendship Association said their motto was: "Change the World one Person at a Time."

Right
FCCFA delegation members at
China International Friendship
Cities Conference in Beijing



Fred Drewe's report, continued from page 2

It is difficult to know why Canadian cities were not included, although we believe it is because there is no Federation of Sister Cities in Canada and we were left out. It is also difficult to know how the existing connections are faring. I know that in Winnipeg we have allowed a once thriving relationship to lapse with a changing of mayors. Nevertheless, the conference convinced us of the value of such relationships when both sides are committed, and I believe we all came away with the thought that we can do more to foster sister city relationships. In fact, Morag MacLellan and Donna Lamb are investigating a sister park relationship between Hunan's beautiful Zhangjiajie National Forest Park and our equally magnificent Banff National Park.

The next Sister Cities forum will be in Shanghai in 2010 in conjunction with the Shanghai World Exposition. We will have to ensure that Canadian sister cities are strong and duly represented at that prestigious event.

Virtually every night we were in China there was a banquet with magnificent food, and excellent camaraderie. The opening banquet was held in the CPAFFC compound. Director General Yao Mingyu welcomed the delegations. Gloria MacLeod reminded us that Director General, Yao Mingyu, was one of the first Youxie students to study for a year at the University of Victoria. We also had a huge banquet following the Sister Cities Conference and we were able to meet people from around the world. We were entertained by children's song, dance and Tai Chi performance.

From Beijing we flew to Changsha in Hunan province. Most of the time in Hunan was focused on Hunan's primary tourist sights. We began by taking a bus to the home of Mao Zedong in a peaceful country setting near Shaoshan City. Upon returning to Changsha that first evening in Hunan, representatives of the Changsha municipal government hosted a sumptuous welcoming banquet.

The next day we boarded a bus and headed for Zhangjiajie City. We were welcomed outside the Zhangjiajie Hotel by young people dressed in minority costumes and playing traditional instruments as we walked the red carpet with an honour guard of hotel staff.

Soon after we were taken to the Yellow Dragon Cave; this Cave is huge and impressive, so large that we actually boarded a boat for short time to move from one part of the cave to another. This cave has been developed for tourists and is surely one of the most impressive in the world.

The Friendship Forum conference was held on November 12th in Zhangjiajie City. The conference was the best of recent years. There are several reasons for that, I believe. The introductory comments by Deputy Director, Xie Yuan, Vice-President Li Xiaolin, and local officials were positive and emphasized friendship.

The heads of each delegation were given a short time for to speak about the work of groups in their country, and those delegate speeches were on the whole, to the point and meaningful. Delegate leaders were also given the opportunity to chair sessions. We especially appreciate that Mr. Wang Zuonan, Vice Administrator of State Administration for Religious Affairs, spoke on religious matters in China and Mr. Zhao Weiping, Deputy Director General of the Department of North American and Oceanian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, spoke on issues of foreign policy.

The fact that time was set aside for questions after each speaker was immensely valuable. All in all, there was a good spirit, variety, and interaction at this conference!



Fred Drewe chairing a session of the Friendship Forum in Zhangjiajie

The Conference was ever mindful of the terrible destruction in Sichuan province and several leaders and delegates addressed the issue. Mme. Li Xiaolin, Vice president CPAFFC, posed the question, "How do we respond when people ask us 'Why do we need to send money to China for earthquake relief, when China is such a wealthy country?'" Mme. Li responded, "It is not about the money but about the expression of love and caring for the people affected." She also assured us that there is still much poverty in China. The third session began with a speech by Qin Lin, Sichuan Provincial Peoples Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, who fought back the tears as she spoke of the earthquake in her province, and of the gratitude she felt for the expressions of love and material help they had received from around the World.

It should be noted that each of our Associations in Canada has made substantial contributions to the relief effort in Sichuan through a variety of fund raising efforts.

Canadian Delegation with Mme. Li Xiaolin at Friendship Forum in Zhangjiajie



Front row: Joan Wicken, Victoria CCFA, Gloria MacLeod, Victoria CCFA, Michael Copeland, FCCFA Treasurer, Li Xiaolin, Vice President, CPAFFC, Gilliane Lapointe, Ottawa CCFS, Morag MacLellan, CCCFS, Donna Lamb, Calgary CCFA, Rear: Peter Larsen, Ottawa CCFS, Jim Steele, Ottawa CCFS, Fred Drewe, Acting President, FCCFA, Lorraine Farkas, Ottawa CCFS, Bob Raeburn, Manitoba CCFA

The next day we were on the move again, this time to the fabulous *Zhangjiajie National Forest Park* and mountain area. This is undoubtedly one of the great sights in China and because it is some distance away from the major airports I am sure it does not attract the tourists it deserves.

Later that day we were transported to the beautiful historic town of Phoenix. A night tour along the cobblestone paths through the markets and along the scenic river was another tourist highlight. Later that day we visited the Jishou Folk Cultural Museum, before preparing to leave for Shanghai.

Throughout our stay in Hunan we traveled back and forth across the province by bus. There were times when the bus travel was tiring, but it was an opportunity to see rural China. Upon first arrival in Hunan we were struck by the contrast with Beijing but as we continued we could see the rapid growth of the countryside and the rural towns. There were new roads,

new buildings, and in some places new factories. Everywhere there was bustling activity as people went about their daily activities. For some on our tour, this opportunity to see rural China was the highlight of the tour.

The frequent bus travel also ensured that we constantly interacted with our fellow travelers and learned more about each other in Canada and those from other countries who shared our bus.

One of the interesting features of our tour was that the First Lady of Vanuatu, Hanson Mataskelekele, accompanied us, but she rode in a private car with a member of her staff and CPAFFC escorts. This was one time when high status was not a benefit, for the First Lady missed the lively discussions and general fun that took place on our bus. However, we did appreciate the police escort provided for the First Lady's car which benefited all of us as we traveled unimpeded through towns and cities throughout the tour.

Shanghai is more impressive every time you see it. We visited the City Urban Planning Hall which displayed the planned development of Shanghai in a mini re-creation of existing streets and buildings, including proposed changes. We also took a boat excursion along the Huangpu River through the heart of Shanghai, and visited the Yu Garden shopping area where many of us gathered some last minute gifts.



Fred Drewe pauses awaiting completion of translation.


In the background,
Vanuatu First Lady
Hanson Mataskelekele &
Shanghai Friendship Association
President Zhou Muyao

On the final evening we had a grand banquet hosted by President Zhou Muyao of the Shanghai People's Association of Friendship with Foreign Countries. This was a chance to have a last celebration but we also realized we were saying goodbye to our old and new friends of the past ten days, friends from several countries.

I was invited to give the final thank you to our friends in Youxie. That day I had surveyed members from all the participating countries to obtain their comments on the tour. The viewpoints were universally positive.

I stated in my final speech in Shanghai that the Youxie staff and the officials that assisted us throughout the ten days were exceptional. The detail of the organizational planning was flawless. However, the most striking aspect was the way we were treated as exemplified by the extra effort that was extended to assist the elderly on the tour. All the staff, from Youxie, local officials, tour guides, everyone was there to help us and guide us. I also mentioned the series of outstanding banquets along the way for often that was where we best shared our friendship and camaraderie. The friendships we renewed or developed for the first time will be the most memorable and important features of the tour overshadowing even the spectacular scenery.

As we look forward to other possible tours in the future we have a number of questions to consider such as the complement of our group and the organization of our tour. Many thanks to Peter Larson of Ottawa who distributed and tabulated the results of a questionnaire about the tour, as this has resulted in many good ideas to be considered for the future. Also please see Peter's thoughtful article on his reflections on visiting China which is also in this newsletter (page 4).

We can only hope that Canada's relationship with China will continue to grow in a positive direction. This tour and the personal connections that were made will enhance that friendship. 

Gloria MacLeod, continued from page 8

Nov. 11th. Zhangjiajie City and Yellow Dragon Caves. The four-hour bus trip through the beautiful countryside gave us a chance to interact with our fellow travelers and to observe the lives of the country people. There is still much poverty in this province, but infrastructure in the way of roads, railroads and housing is being put in place to accommodate the plan to move industry in and to encourage tourism to this very beautiful region. The banquet this night was hosted by government leaders from Hunan Province and Zhangjiajie City. We were welcomed outside the Zhangjiajie Hotel by young people dressed in minority costumes and playing traditional instruments as we walked the red carpet with an honour guard of hotel staff.

At the end of the forum and another beautiful banquet, we enjoyed a traditional cultural performance.

Nov 12. Friendship Forum The day long forum began with greetings from Mr. Xie Yuan Director Gen. of American and Oceanian Affairs, followed by speeches by various officials including Mme. Li Xiaolin, Vice president CPAFFC, who is well known to some of us as she has visited Canada including VCCFA. An excerpt from Mme. Li Xiaolin's speech:

The advantage and uniqueness of Friendship Forums lies in its communication grid, which breaks the one-to-one communication pattern and brings all of us together. To hold this forum every two years guarantees its regularity and timeliness. Distance fades away in communication.

Later in the forum one of the delegates posed the question, "How do we respond when people ask us 'Why do we need to send money to China for earthquake relief, when China is such a wealthy country?'" Mme. Li responded, "It is not about the money but about the expression of love and caring for the people affected." She also assured us that there is still much poverty in China.

Following the opening speeches a representative from each delegation gave a summary of the friendship work carried out in their country that included how each Friendship Assn. had responded to the earthquake. The delegate from Granada told how following the hurricane there, China had rebuilt the National Stadium, supplying 500 workers - many who have remained in Granada.

The third session began with a speech by Qin Lin, Sichuan Provincial Peoples Assn. for Friendship with Foreign Countries. She fought back the tears as she spoke of the earthquake in her province, and of the gratitude she felt for the expressions of love and material help they had received from around the World.


The 4th session began with a speech by Yao Mingyu, Director General CPAFFC. He gave a summary of the friendship work undertaken in the past year by the CPAFFC, and an overview of the worldwide response to the earthquake. He told us that Vanuatu (formerly the New Hebrides) is a newly formed nation. It is the first Friendship with China Assn. in the South Pacific. He invites non-Friendship members to come as self-paying guests to the Forums (at a good price), and suggests that young CPAFFC could visit our Associations, staying in our homes, and becoming familiar with our work. The CPAFFC invites suggestions for diverse and innovative change in the format of the Forum. An idea put forward by one of our delegates is that each delegation includes one or two young people who would benefit greatly from the experience.

The final speech, before the end of the Forum, was by Nancy Huppert, a delegate from Sister Cities International, *"Peace cannot be successful if left to politicians. The Sister Cities Associations and the Friendship Associations have the capacity to change the World"*

Nov. 13th. Bus trip to Yuanjiajie Mountain --- the mountains we see in many Chinese paintings. Lovely to stroll along the paths through these magnificent mountains and have a chance to visit and exchange ideas with delegates and our CPAFFC hosts. Yao Mingu was with us throughout. I was able to spend a little time with him, now in his near retirement years, and reminisce about his time spent in Victoria when I knew him at the start of his career. Following lunch our bus delivered us to Phoenix Town, Fenghuang, a very old town -- one of the most beautiful in China. We had a night tour and saw the merchants at work, pulling ginger candy, making hake sakes, and preparing food for sale. A day tour gave us a better chance to admire the old buildings and see the people coming to town with ducks in tow and those all-purpose baskets on their backs. This area would be great for tourism.

Nov. 14th. Bus to Jishou City for lunch banquet hosted by Jishou municipal government, and a visit to the most interesting Jishou Folk Cultural Museum. Then on to Shanghai for a late evening arrival.

Nov. 15th. Tour of Shanghai City Urban Planning Hall, lunch at Dynasty Restaurant, Pudong New Area, boat excursion on Huangpu River and shopping in the Yu Garden area. The final grand banquet was hosted by President Zhou Muyao of Shanghai Peoples Assn. for Friendship with Foreign Countries. Many sad goodbyes were said and a few tears flowed, knowing for many it would be a last goodbye to our new friends of the past 10 days.

If I were to summarize my experience I would say it reinforced my belief that friendship work is vital to the survival of society and the general good of our world. 

Peter Larson, continued from page 4

Smartly dressed young sales people show prospective buyers just which apartment they can buy, as soft music plays in the background. A penthouse suite on the 23rd floor was selling for about \$120,000 Canadian. Mortgages are readily available and Chinese financial regulators demand a minimum of 20% down payment. Many young Chinese people are saving their money

for the day they can leave their parents' crowded apartment and buy their own home.

In broad strokes, then China's economic framework today seems rather similar to what we had in Canada back in the 70's. At that time, most of the economy was in private hands but different levels of government owned major companies in various parts of our economy including Petro Canada, Air Canada, CN, various Hydro companies, CBC, etc. etc.

Too little free enterprise... or too much?

Many of the "high profile" failures of the Chinese economy can be attributed to an **excess** of free enterprise rather than a **lack** of it. The recent milk scandal, for example, in which milk product was tainted with melamine, causing health damage to thousands, arose because of a lack of government regulatory capacity.

China's ability to deal with its notorious environmental problems is also weakened by a lack of government regulatory capacity. Too many private companies can and do pollute watercourses and the atmosphere because they can do so with impunity. While China's western critics complain about the heavy hand of government, to many Chinese the problem appears to be that private owners have too much leeway and can make fortunes at the expense of others.

There have also been many reports of developers and speculators who take advantage of a weak legal framework to expropriate peasants or other poor homeowners in favour of big and very profitable building projects.

In its enthusiasm for encouraging free enterprise, China has loosened the rules to a degree that most of us in the Western world would find uncomfortable. Although there is debate on whether or not Deng actually said it, his perceived catchphrase "To Get Rich Is Glorious", unleashed a wave of personal entrepreneurship that continues to drive China's economy today.

The rewards for those who are successful are extremely high. There are now thousands of Chinese "self made men" who have risen from rags to riches. One Canadian colleague of mine was astonished to find out, when visiting a Chinese friend who works in the financial industry in Beijing, that her bonus for last year was 5 million yuan (approximately \$1 million Canadian)!! This is on top of her already significant salary. This new class of Chinese yuppies thinks nothing of buying a \$10,000 Rolex, a \$50,000 BMW or flying to Macao for the weekend to gamble away thousands of yuan....

But China is still a long way behind us...

These emerging characteristics indicate that the major economic difference between China and the west is no longer that we are “capitalist” and they are “communist”.

The major difference is that China, despite its very rapid economic growth is still very much a “developing country” facing some huge economic and social challenges. Three jump to mind.

The first is that China’s vast countryside is still extremely poor. According to the Economist, China’s GDP per person, including (including, of course, its bulging new urban middle class) is about \$2000 US per person. In rural areas, the number could be less than half that. (The same source estimates Canadian GDP per person at \$39,000.) Agriculture is still characterised by small plots using farm animals or human labour.

The second dramatic difference is that unbridled “free market” economic development has brought about a dramatic increase in disparities between the rich and poor. In today’s Beijing and Shanghai, BMW’s now sidle along bicycles and even a few rickshaws. In the developed capitalist economies, progressive taxation tends to redistribute wealth from the richest to the poorest sectors of the society. (Some people call this “socialism” of course.) Only recently has the Chinese government agreed that “growth at any cost” needs to be moderated by other considerations.

Of course all this newfound, and newly flaunted, wealth is causing its own social and political problems. Few pedestrians like to be honked at by a pair of young Chinese yuppies in their new black Audi. Before the introduction of the reforms, China was poor, but the poverty was generalised. Now everyone is getting richer, but the very rich are getting very much richer. This has led to increasing pressure for the state to play a stronger (not weaker) regulatory role.

The third significant difference between China and any other country in the world (except, perhaps, India) is that the rising economic demands of its massive population are running up against the physical limits of the country. Only a generation ago, the material aspirations of Chinese were summed up as “a watch, a radio, and a bicycle”. That objective has been long since attained, and the new generation of Chinese want things that are much closer to what we want – a car, an apartment, a television and a fridge, and perhaps a 2 week vacation.

Take automobiles as an example. At the present time, there are only 4 private vehicles in China for every 100 of population. (Compare this to North America, where there is approximately 1 vehicle per person.) Yet China's highways and expressways are already near the saturation point in many cities, and this despite a huge investment in public transportation. And China's auto sector is booming because of huge pent-up demand. Will it be physically possible for China to come anywhere near the North American level of auto use?

And what about energy consumption? On a per capita basis, China is much more environmentally friendly than Canada, using only 15% as much energy as the average Canadian. But its population is 42 times that of ours. A rising standard of living will rapidly increase energy consumption far beyond China's current petroleum reserves. China desperately needs sources of energy. But its use will also intensify the already difficult environmental issue. If there are "physical limits to growth", China will face them.

What about the censorship, human rights abuses and political control?

China remains a "one party state", something that no Canadian would like to see in this country. Even Chinese authorities agree that there is less political freedom in China than in Canada, the rule of law is less well developed and human rights abuses are more widespread.

However, I was surprised to see how little this seemed to affect any of the Chinese I spoke to. Most of the students I met, for example, were much more concerned by the control their parents exerted over their lives than by state control.

After centuries of poverty and social disruption, most Chinese seem to think that things are finally getting better. Not surprisingly, they don't really feel very sympathetic to anybody (or any group) who threatens to disrupt that progress. In fact, a recent poll undertaken by the Pew Research Centre in Washington, DC revealed that 81% of Chinese approve of the leadership of the Communist Party and feel that the country is heading in the right direction.

It's tempting to put that down to "brainwashing". But a simpler explanation is that the Chinese are happy because for 30 years in a row, life has been getting better. China's ranking on the UN's "Human Development Index" (which in addition to GDP per capita also factors in health and longevity) has risen 50% over the last 3 decades. According to David Kang, China has

brought over 400 million people out of poverty in the last 30 years – the biggest such improvement in the history of mankind!

They know that this improvement in living standards has come about because the Chinese government has led the country with a very strong hand. When roads need to be built, or rivers dammed, or an Olympic site constructed, it has plowed straight ahead.

They know, of course, that these actions hurt some people and have sometimes caused strenuous resistance. According to figures from the Ministry of Public Security, 87,000 "mass incidents" were reported in 2005, including a deadly clash between police and villagers over the seizure of land for a power plant. However, in the interests of the majority, the government has pressed on.

For the same reason, censorship does not seem to be a major concern for most people. Although western reporters have focused on China's "pervasive" censorship, the Chinese young people I talked to in my recent trip seem to be very well versed in what is going on in the west (and certainly much better versed than their Canadian counterparts would be about developments in China). At the main bookstore in Nanjing, Barak Obama's autobiography in Chinese was prominently displayed, for example. Chinese youth are avid users of the internet. Several "blew off" my questions about censorship indicating that it was a "snap" to get around.

Although I am not particularly internet savvy, at several internet cafés in different cities in China, I had no trouble accessing the Globe and Mail, the New York Times, the BBC and any other newspaper I could think of. Nor did I have any difficulty in finding articles in Wikipedia which were quite critical of Mao Zedong. (NOTE: I did see some evidence of censorship, however. When I googled "Falun Gong" in China, all I got were articles critical of that movement. When I do the same thing in Canada, most of the articles I find support Falun Gong and criticise the Chinese government).

It is now surprisingly easy to travel around China – and millions of Chinese do. We were able to travel freely by taxi, subway, bus, train and airplane. On a couple of occasions we were offered a lift in a private car by friendly locals. But in general, nobody appeared to care in the least where we were going, who we were talking to or what we were doing. At our hotels we did have to produce a passport, but then we have to do that in Europe as well.

“We know there are problems – we want someone to keep them under control”

The Chinese are worried that any one of its many problems could boil over and disrupt the phenomenal growth of the last 30 years. Anger over a growing gap between rich and poor and an inadequate social security system could threaten the country's stability. Retirees increasingly cannot live on their pensions, crime and divorce rates have apparently escalated, and clashes have broken out between security forces and farmers whose fields and villages have been swallowed by development. Ethnic tensions in Tibet and Xinjiang are also bubbling. (All of these tensions can expect to be worsened if, as expected, the growth of the Chinese economy slows as a result of the global economic crisis.)

In 2006, as a result of these pressures, China's Communist Party formally endorsed a political doctrine laid out by President Hu Jintao that called for the creation of a "harmonious society," a move that signaled a shift in the party's focus from promoting all-out economic growth to solving worsening social tensions. The four-day plenary session, according to the Washington Post, “was the first in 25 years to focus on social issues rather than on economic or political development.”

The Chinese seem to feel that these tough challenges demand a strong hand from their government – that in a country of 1.3 billion people, a “heavy hand” is sometimes the only way forward, and they are not particularly worried if some individual rights get squished in the process. Some examples:

- They want the government to deal with the population problem. (76% of Chinese approve of the 1 child policy. (Pew Research)
- They want the government to do something about the environment. In Beijing, for example, the city has banned 2 cycle motorcycles as an environmental measure. It has also restricted the number of days you can use your car in the city. Some car owners have complained loudly about their rights, but the majority seems to be fully behind the measure.
- They want their government to deal firmly with corruption, and do not seem in the least upset when a few greedy party bosses were executed for extensive graft.
- They also want their government to protect China's sovereignty and borders (and that means finding a way to deal with unrest in Tibet and Xinjiang).

What should Canada do?

Canadians and their government need to take a careful and pragmatic look at our approach to China today.

It is in our interest to help China grow and find solutions to its environmental, economic and social challenges. A growing Chinese economy, particularly the elimination of poverty in the rural areas, will help stabilize the Chinese population, and solidify an economic market for our goods and services.

On the other hand, if the current government of China is not able to solve its huge problems, the potential for political and social unrest is immense. Famine and huge internal migration is possible. China's potential as an economic partner could be diminished for a generation. And we also face the possibility of vast waves of immigrants – both legal and illegal flooding into neighbouring countries, including Canada.

Here are seven steps we can take to help China evolve in a direction that is in our interest:

1. We should start by recognizing that the Chinese leadership faces huge challenges and adopt a positive, helpful approach that focuses on what we can do together, rather than leaping on every opportunity to criticize the country.
2. We need to recognize that Canada needs China much more than China needs us. This is true not only in an economic sense, but also in a geopolitical sense. What happens in Canada does not make much of a difference to China. But what happens in China will affect our world.
3. We should help China in its search for energy sources. China needs oil and gas, and we have lots of it. This is in our interest as a producer of oil and gas. And at a geo political level, it does not serve our interests to make it difficult for China to get access to the energy sources it needs to help its people move out of poverty.
4. We should reinforce current efforts to help China modernize its political infrastructure. Currently, for example, Canada is helping train Chinese judges and is helping to modernize its public service. Both of these actions are in our interests because they help promote the rule of law and the merit based public service.
5. We should continue to criticize human rights abuses in China. Canada has a good record in human rights and this is one of our important values. But we should ensure that our approach is even handed and consistent

with our approach to other countries. To focus on Chinese human rights abuses, while closing a blind eye to well documented abuses by some of Canada's "friends and allies" seems overly ideological.

6. We should be very careful about what we say and do with respect to Chinese internal affairs – particularly the sensitive (and complex) issues of Taiwan and Tibet. We should remember that China has carefully refrained from making any statement in respect of Quebec independence, for example. Nor am I aware of any criticism it has made with respect to our handling of aboriginal issues. The Chinese rightly regard these issues as "internal Canadian affairs". We should show similar caution.
7. We should encourage exchanges between Canada and China at all levels – government, business and civil society. We should also encourage tourism - both ways. We can make it easier for Chinese visitors to come to Canada to see our country and how we do things. China's tourism infrastructure – roads, hotels, restaurants, national parks - has developed tremendously in the last decade. Canadians should take advantage of the "opening up" of China to take a look at the new China.

The Chinese have ditched their ideological approach to public policy in favour of a pragmatic one. Isn't it time we did likewise?



Dr. Kenneth John Merklinger

Ken passed away on February 4 this year. The FCCFA has lost a valuable member for Ken contributed to both the national federation and was a key figure in the success of the Ottawa chapter in the last few years. He was Editor of the Ottawa Newsletter since 2005.

I wish to express my sympathy to Lolan, and other family members and friends. I knew Ken primarily from my few visits to Ottawa, and phone conversations. He attended a conference in Winnipeg a few years ago and I showed him around the city. I am pleased I had this opportunity to spend some time with Ken for I learned to respect and admire him. I found him to be a soft-spoken thoughtful gentleman.

Fred Drewe

Two Summer Camp Ideas

*One for adopted Chinese kids,
the second open to any child.*

China Heritage Summer Tour

This camp offers children adopted from China a firsthand experience of Chinese culture and history. It offers them a connection to their ancestral roots and an experience of China that will likely resonate deeply for the rest of their lives. They will explore the country of their birth, taste the food, see wonderful sites and meet Chinese people. No classroom experience can compare with the immersion experience this trip provides.

This **Heritage Summer Camp** is a 13 day tour of China which includes trips to Beijing, Chengdu and Guilin. Offered through the Toronto District School Board in partnership with Qiaoban (Department of Culture and Education) China Overseas Exchange Association, it consists of two separate camps: Beijing National Camp (July 18-22) and Liaoning Provincial Camp (July 22-July 29). For more information, call Jolly Yang at 416-209-7459 or by email at jolly.yang@tdsb.on.ca

2009 Shanghai International Youth Interactive Friendship Camp

To promote international understanding and friendship the Shanghai People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and Shanghai Youth Federation will run the **2009 Shanghai International Youth Interactive Friendship Camp** on August 2 - 13, 2009 in Shanghai, China.

The purpose of the event is to provide an opportunity to set up a bridge of friendship and an exchange platform beyond language and cultural barriers to foster and develop a spirit of mutual help and cooperation. A theme forum on **Civilized Lifestyle and Qualified Talents** will be held during the camp according to the theme of "Better City, Better Life" of the World Expo 2010.

We invite you to organize a group of youths between 9 to 18 years old to attend this event. The delegations to the camp shall be responsible for their international travel expenses and pay 60 US dollars per person per day to cover the camp's program, board and lodging and local transportation in Shanghai and Zhejiang.

FCCFA Board of Directors

Lolan Merklinger, Immediate Past President
Fred Drewe, Manitoba, Vice-president Acting President
Michael Copeland, Toronto, Treasurer Editor, FCCFA Newsletter
Sheila Foster, Calgary, Secretary
Directors Morag MacLellan, Calgary Gilliane LaPointe, Ottawa Jim Steele, Ottawa Gloria MacLeod, Victoria

The FCCFA logo was designed by Tsin Van.



The Chinese central character is 友
(*you* in Pinyin, pronounced yeo, as in yeoman).
You is short for *youhao*. It means *friendship*.

Aims of the FCCFA

To promote friendship between
the people of Canada and China
by fostering mutual understanding
and appreciation of each other's society,
their historical development and their
functioning social and economic institutions.

To promote cultural, educational,
scientific, athletic and other exchanges
between the Canadian and Chinese people

Visit our website www.fccfa.ca

Principles of the FCCFA

Any person who agrees with these aims and principles
may join a Member association of the Federation,
regardless of racial, ethnic or social origin,
or religious or political affiliation.

The Federation, and its member associations, are not political
organizations, nor do they support any political movements.

The Federation and its members aim to reach out to people
of all walks of life and enlist their interest
for developing a mutually beneficial
Canada-China relationship.

The Federation and/or its member associations may
organize activities for its members in order to exchange
viewpoints, discuss and study particular questions
relating to Canada-China relations.

The Federation and local member associations will function democratically
to ensure that all members have a voice in the affairs of the Canada-China
friendship movement and to encourage the broadest and most active
participation of all members in friendship activities.