



Canada-China Friendship Society® La Société d'amitié Canada-Chine

Ottawa Chapter. Founded 1976. | Section d'Ottawa. Depuis 1976.

Canada-China Friendship Society of Ottawa (CCFS-O) Annual General Meeting, November 21, 2017

CO-PRESIDENTS' REPORT

The year 2016/17 has been an extraordinary year for the Canada-China Friendship Society of Ottawa with our 40th anniversary celebration, new milestones and record breaking events. The most ambitious new activity was the launch of the annual Ottawa Canada-China Film Festival.

For those of you who were at last year's AGM you may recall that we reported on the Executive's Strategic Planning Session. At the Planning Session there was an agreement on the need to broaden and diversify our "product lines" including film events. Subsequently the Executive decided to launch a multi-year Ottawa Canada-China Film Festival. The plan was to start with a small event this year in order to learn about the array of issues and options for organising a film festival; and, to grow it over time to a significant event for 2020 when Canada and China will celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relations.

On September 22, 2017 the first annual Ottawa Canada-China Film Festival was opened at the launch reception, by our patron The Honourable Sheila Copps. Three films were presented over two days. One, *Soul Mate*, was an Ottawa premiere. Two of the films, *Soul Mate* and *From C to C* were directed by a Canadians, one of whom is a Chinese Canadian. *From C to C*, was a docu-drama that explored the systemic legal discrimination faced by early Chinese immigrants to Canada and their subsequent struggle to secure a Government apology and redress. This film was followed by a panel discussion. *Soul Mate* and the third film, *Coming Home*, were set in contemporary times and the Chinese Cultural Revolution respectively, and reflected the very different realities of those times. Virtually all of the available seats were sold and the feedback from the audience was very positive.

Many lessons were learned about identifying, reviewing, and securing quality films; and about venues and projection technologies, as well as advertising, receptions, and fund raising. One of the biggest lessons was the importance of financial sponsors. Even with the support of numerous donors the festival did not make a profit. This underlined the necessity to continually strive to reduce costs and attract more sponsors, while providing a quality cinematic experience.

Other notable activities during the year included last December's celebration of the 40th anniversary of the CCFS-O at the Chinese Embassy. The Embassy welcomed the entire membership to a wonderful reception at the Embassy which included a sit-down dinner and movie. The Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. Wang Wentian welcomed the members of the CCFSO and congratulated the CCFSO on its record of accomplishment. Peter Larson, the founding President

of the CCFSO, spoke of the motivations for forming the CCFSO in 1976 and their early challenges. He noted the continuing relevance of the CCFSO's mission: "helping Canadians learn about China and understand it better". Co-Present Roy Atkinson noted that this reception was the largest gathering of CCFSO members in our history, and was very likely the largest single gathering of members of Canada-China Friendship members ever. He also spoke about the Executive's plans and aspirations for the future, including the intent to maintain the high quality of the speakers programme and to add additional products and services.

The Speakers Programme also had an excellent year. The details are listed in an Annex 1 to this report. We would like to highlight three events. Last October Alexandre Trudeau spoke to us about his recently published book on his travels in China and attracted the largest turnout to a Speaker Event in our history, 175 people.

There was also a large turnout for Professor Paul Evan from the University of British Columbia who spoke on the future of Canada China relations in the era of Justin Trudeau. In June 2017 Professor Robert Ross of Boston College and Harvard University gave a penetrating presentation on US-China Relations and the challenges faced. This event was organized in co-operation with the University of Ottawa and we thank them for their assistance and support

Our annual Chinese New Year's Banquet which was held in February was enjoyed by 184 members and guests, and had a very successful silent auction. We would like to offer many thanks to banquet Chair, Diana Cartwright, and to Tracy Tian who organized the silent auction. The silent auction has become a major source of financial support for the CCFSO.

While most of our activities and programmes are focussed on large events open to all members, our China Reads Book Club is by comparison relatively intimate. This year its fiercely loyal 11 members turned out for 6 bi-monthly meetings for the regular treat of book nourishment and warm hospitality of the rotating hosts.

Unlike conventional book clubs, the China Reads designates just two members each meeting to review books and articles, which then become the subjects of discussion, debate and cerebral 'massage' as members fill in their knowledge gaps and increase their understanding of China's political, social and economic history and cultural norms. Coming from diverse backgrounds, their common interest in all things China unites them. Subjects this year have ranged from China's political challenges, new biographies, science fiction, science, technology and innovation and Giller Prize winners; to the views of various academics on the future of China and the decline of America. To add to these diverse topics, they were treated to the Chinese film "Edgar Snow and Mao", enlightened by the highlights of the Association of Asian Studies Meeting in Toronto and entertained by an evening which included a display of scrolls. More details on the books reviewed in the past year are in Annex 2 to this report.

We would like to acknowledge the support of the Ottawa Embassy of the Peoples Republic of China. In addition to providing many items for the silent auction, and hosting our 40th anniversary celebration, the Embassy was also a major financial supporter of the film festival.

Our membership remains at or close to all-time highs fluctuating over the year between 225 and 250 members. Our finances, as will be reported by our Treasurer, continue to be sound.

The coming year may well be one of special challenges with the potential for important transitions at the CCFSO. Many things are changing from the macro effects of increasing global instability, to President Trump's withdrawal of the USA from international leadership, to China's declared intent to assert global leadership; and, the engagement of Canada and China in free trade negotiations. In this setting the need for Canadian's learn about China and understand it better has never been greater. In response there are a growing number of organisations with a focus on China, media such as the Globe and Mail and the Economist regularly report in China, and there is a multiplication of internet channels available where Canadians learn about China. All of which creates challenging questions about the role and strategic positioning of the CCFSO.

At the same time a number of stalwarts of our Executive will not be returning including founding member and Past President Lorraine Farkas, Vice President Roxanne Hamel, Treasurer Cat Situ, Diana Cartwright Chair of the Banquet Committee. In addition, Gary and I have reached the end of the term limits allowed for the President of the CCFSO. Gary and I will "graduate" to the role of Past President on the Executive and we plan to actively support the new leadership.

The CCFSO is fortunate to have an exciting panel of members presenting themselves for the 2018 Executive, including several new members. We look forward to seeing the directions that they will choose to take the CCFSO.

We wish to thank all members of the Executive and our volunteers for their hard work and dedication during the year. For those who are not returning to the Executive we hope to see you at our events; and, if the time arrives when your lives are not so busy you will be welcome to return the Executive. In addition there are always valuable roles as a volunteer available.

In closing we would like to offer a special vote of thanks to Lorraine Farkas for her dedication and tireless devotion to the CCFSO. Lorraine was one of the founding members of the CCFSO. She served as President during the recent period of rapid growth in membership, and she has been a great a source of wisdom for all of us. Thank you, Lorraine.

Gary Levy
Co-President

Roy Atkinson
Co-President

Annex 1: CCFS-Ottawa Events During Fiscal Year 2016-2017

October 12, 2017	Alexandre Trudeau: A Barbarian in China
November 10, 2016	Paul Evan, Canada China relations under the Trudeau Government
December	Reception for Members of the CCFS offered by Embassy of China
January 12, 20-17	Jean Kunz. Local to Expat: A Shanghai Native reconnecting with her home city.
February 11, 2017	Year of the Rooster New Year's Banquet
March 21, 2017	Professor Liyong Dai on, Urbanization in China
April 26, 2017	Art Hanson on China and Global Green Prosperity
May 17, 2017	Ron MacIntosh on China Taiwan Relations
June 6, 2017	Professor Robert Ross on China-United States Relations
September 22, 23, 2017	First Annual Ottawa Canada-China Film Festival

Annex 2: China Reads Book Club: Summary of Books Read and Discussed During Fiscal Year 2016- 2017

1) Lewis Walmsley's *Bishop in Honan: Mission and Museum in the Life of William C. White*, pub. 1974; a biography of William C. White, born in England, raised in Ontario, and trained in theology to become the first Anglican bishop in Henan province. He would succeed to combine his 37-year missionary career in China, from 1897-1935, with a decade-long role as the Royal Ontario Museum's purveyor of Chinese art, in which he excelled with his mastery of the Chinese language. Owing to White's tireless efforts in collecting that was aided by White's boundless energy, physical stamina, and intellectual appreciation, the ROM is able to boast of its important collection of ancient Chinese bronzes, wall frescoes, and Tang ceramic figures.

2) **Hao Jingfang's *Folding Beijing***, trans. by Ken Liu, won the Hugo Award for Best Novelette in 2016; it is a science-fiction story in which the residents of an crowded Beijing endure a city that is physically folded to give each of its three classes time on the surface.

3) **Reading and discussion** led by Yong-Zhi Wang of **three journal articles** in English on **China's growth, pollution and life expectancy**.

4) A Christmas dinner was held Dec. 15 at the Palais Imperial restaurant with general discussion on China-related books and topics.

5) **Madeleine Thien's *Do Not Say We Have Nothing***, presented by Marilyn Collette pub. 2016; this Chinese-Canadian author's novel won the Governor General's Literary Award and the 2016 Scotiabank Giller Prize. It is a family's multi-generational and multi-layered story in China during the tumultuous period from the Mao years until the aftermath of the 1989 Tiananmen crisis. As background it examines the lives and sufferings of musicians in 20th century China.

6) **A Chinese film 'Edgar Snow and Mao'** was viewed and discussed. The late 1990's film features Gilliane Lapointe and Jim Bonthrom in principal roles.

7) **Presentation** by China Reads member Lolan Merklinger on highlights of China sessions she attended at the AAS (Association of Asian Studies) meeting in Toronto, March 2017.

8) **Presentation** by China Reads member Margaret McCuaig-Johnston of an overview of *China's science, technology, and innovation on governance, programs, policies, and trends*.

9) **Presentation** by China Reads member Marilyn Collette on some perspectives on the new China Infrastructure Development Bank, the BRICs Bank and the implications for China following a visit to Ottawa from an Asian Development Bank representative.

10) **Gideon Rachman's *Easternization: America's Decline and Asia's Rise from Obama to Trump and Beyond***, pub. 2016; a survey of a transformed Asia; an analysis of how a new era of global instability has begun as the flow of wealth and power turns from west to east.

11) **David Shambaugh's *China's Future*** pub. 2016; a compact yet comprehensive overview of the many policy challenges facing China today - the environment, employment, the banking system, financial transparency, social services, demographics; with a discussion of existing trends in Chinese politics, and a list of possible outcomes of political reform.

12) **Anthony Doerr's *Memory Wall: Village 113***, pub. 2011; part of a collection of short stories; Village 113 is a story in a Chinese village soon to be flooded by the Three Gorges dam.