

**Canada-China Friendship Society of Ottawa (CCFS-O)**  
**Annual General Meeting, November 28, 2013**  
**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

The Ottawa community is increasingly interested in China. Growing numbers want to see China's significant achievements and understand its challenges, and are visiting China. Mayor Watson recently led a trip of city officials and regional business people to Beijing. The National Arts Centre Orchestra made an impressive first tour of several cities in China. A group of students from Sir Wilfrid Laurier Secondary School were excited about their widely publicized trip to China last spring. Several organizations in Ottawa, although not dedicated to the China theme, held successful conferences on China during the year.

In this context, the CCFS-O continued to host monthly public meetings featuring knowledgeable speakers on a wide variety of topics. Attendance at meetings continued to be strong and question periods were lively. Details about our events are included at the end of this report.

Our China Book Club got underway this year. An enthusiastic group of members have been meeting on a regular basis to discuss some of the multitude of books available on China.

We have also enhanced our Facebook page. We are trying to reach out to the community where they are and in an interactive way. Our website continues to be updated. Also we have done our best to advertise the events pertaining to China organized by other organizations, to advise our members of other opportunities to learn more about China and understand it better.

In other activities, the Society sent delegates to events in China, at the invitation of our Chinese counterparts. We sent two students to the Shanghai International Youth Camp in the summer. Another two delegates attended an international conference on elder care in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, in September. Lastly, three delegates are attending an international friendship conference on urban development in Beijing in November. Reports received so far, that is from the first two groups, indicate that our delegates thoroughly enjoyed their experiences.

The CCFS-O continued to be an active member of the Federation of Canada-China Friendship Associations, which is composed of six chapters in all. The Federation accepted our motion to suspend chapter dues to the Federation for two years in view of the Federation's very comfortable cash position.

Other aspects of the work of CCFS-Ottawa during the past year were:

**Membership and Finances:** Although attendance at our events remained strong, membership has decreased from a high of 225 early in the year to 185. Finances show a comfortable balance, reflecting careful spending, dues from memberships, revenue from the Chinese New Year's banquet and donations. However, we will need to increase our memberships in order to meet the increasing costs of room rentals and to provide a program of interesting speakers, some of whom come from outside the region. Otherwise we will have to raise member dues.

**Executive Committee:** We achieved an impressive mix on our executive of experienced and inexperienced, younger and older members, women and men. We have also benefited greatly from other loyal members who took on substantial responsibilities. Nine executive committee meetings were held during the year in rent-free premises.

**Chinese Embassy:** We have greatly appreciated our cordial relationship with the Chinese Embassy. Ambassador Zhang hosted a reception in December for CCFS-O members, which included the showing of the Chinese film *Close to the Sun*. Embassy staff attended some of our

events, provided information materials at events, and generously donated door prizes and wine for our Chinese New Year's banquet.

This was my fourth and last year as president. I will continue on the executive as immediate past president. We have achieved a lot in the last four years. Above all we adjusted the focus of the Society to promoting knowledge and understanding of China, to meet the needs of the community. We have hosted excellent speakers on varied subjects related to the past, present and possible future of China. We formed a board of patrons, with the Honourable Sheila Copps and former ambassador Robert Wright as our first patrons. We have developed other ways to promote interest and understanding, through Facebook, the book club, tours of T&T, etc. As a result the Society has grown over the 4-year period and has achieved a much larger profile in the community.

Although membership has fallen off in recent months from a record high earlier in the year, I believe the CCFS-O plays a valuable role in the community. There is a thirst and a need for more, better and easily accessible information about China. To remain dynamic, the Society has to find ways of encouraging those who support its aims to become members. It also needs to appeal to more members to become active volunteers who will assist with tasks of the Society.

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to the executive and the other active members for their strong commitment and considerable efforts to carry out their tasks as volunteers. They also attend conferences and other events, and are constantly advocates for the Society. My sincerest thanks to Lolan Merklinger who has been on the executive since 1998 and in the last four years as immediate past president. Also my gratitude to the other executive members who are stepping down or left during the year—David Yip, David Burke, Janice Zaharko and Jean-Pierre Bolduc. Also my thanks to Peter Larson who stepped down as editor of our newsletter. I thank our speakers who devote precious time preparing and delivering without compensation. I thank our patrons for their very helpful support and advice. I thank our members who have attended our events and helped out in other ways to support the Society's work.

*Lorraine Farkas*  
Lorraine Farkas

#### CCFS-Ottawa Events during 2012-2013

- Jan. 2013: ***Beijing's New National Museum: The Shaping of China's Self-image***, Victor Rabinovitch, former CEO, Canadian Museum of Civilization
- Feb. 2013: **CCFS-O's Year of the Snake New Year's Banquet**, a ten-course banquet for members, friends and distinguished guests.
- Feb. 2013: ***China's Leadership Change and Economic Policy***, Mark Kruger, Minister Counsellor, Economics and Finance, Canadian Embassy in Beijing
- April 2013: ***Bringing the Miracle of Hearing to Poor Chinese Children***, J.B. Robillard, President, Robillard Hearing Aid Centres, Ottawa
- May 2013: ***Ai Weiwei and the history of political art in China***, Professor Ming Tiampo, Carleton University.
- June 2013: ***China's workers rising***, Cathy Walker, former Director, Health, Safety and Environment, Canadian Auto Workers.
- June 2013: ***Contemporary Chinese Reggae***, Guo Jian, Long Shen Dao band, Beijing, and Ember Swift, singer, Beijing
- Sept. 2013: ***China's Innovation Strategy***, Wang Qiming, Chinese Embassy, and Margaret McCuaig Johnston, University of Ottawa
- Oct. 2013: ***Investment in Canada by China's State-Owned Enterprises***, Hugh Stevens, Asia-Pacific Foundation, and Craig Wilson, OS Micro Trends
- Nov. 2013: ***China and the Challenge for Canadian Foreign Policy***, David Mulroney, former Canadian ambassador to China.