

Campus Community News

December
2009

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January
2010

Inside This Issue	That was the year, that was!	
P2 Letter to the Editor Campus Notices	<p>As the year comes to a close, here are some of its highlights, good and bad, as reported in Campus Community News.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ CUWO - 20 years old! We reported on the milestone and the gala dinner attended by the founder, Mrs. Gwen Kao. Well done, CUWO. ♦ Opening of the new Hyatt Regency Hotel - a major coup for the university, this hotel goes from strength to strength! ♦ Our monthly Arts Calendar kept us informed of the latest in the performing arts scene - an invaluable guide. ♦ The East gate Controversy - residents complained about safety issues at the east gate entrance; after meetings and discussions, we still have no definite solution to the problem - something for 2010, perhaps ♦ The tragic accidental death of a construction worker and the plight of the family he left behind. The University was able to inform our community of what was being done for the family and CCN assisted in raising donations for his widow. ♦ Replacement of the mobile post office; we lost the service in summer, 2008 and are still waiting for a replacement, despite the efforts of university staff on our 	
P3 CUWO report and events		
P4 CUWO Mulled Wine Evening		<p>behalf; a definite "thumbs down" to Hong Kong Post on this one.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Safety of students became an issue again, with jaywalking and a bicycle accident. We now have more safety barriers and students have once again been reminded of the importance of protective head-gear.
P5 Children's Page		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Health issues highlighted, included joint health, inflammatory breast cancer and the human papilloma virus and cervical cancer.
P6- Arts Calendar 8		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ We bid a sad farewell to the SCR's ClubHouse, which closes to make way for new colleges as our university continues to expand.
P9 Final Posting dates for Christmas		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ And, finally - our community shared the joy when we learned Professor Charles Kao had been awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics. A great honour and recognition of all he has done for our world.
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We are sure there will be more to come in 2010. Meanwhile, we wish you all

**A Very Merry
Christmas and Happy
New Year**



Letter to the Editor	Campus Notices
<p>Dear Editor,</p> <p>May we refer to the letter to the Editor from "Frustrated book-lover" in the November issue of CCN please?</p> <p>As staff quarters residents may have been aware, no built-in bookshelves are provided in Residence No. 16 and 17. This design can allow a greater degree of flexibility as some families may use all 3 rooms as bedrooms. For those who still use one of them as a study, they can place movable bookshelves or bookcases in the way they want. If they rent furniture from the University, bookcases are already included in the standard provision.</p> <p>Hope this can help explain the rationale for our policy. Residents are always welcome to direct their enquiries and opinions to our unit (telephone number: 2696 1876; email: uquarters@cuhk.edu.hk).</p> <p>Amanda Chan Staff Quartering Unit</p> <p>Letters to the Editor may be sent, with contact details for verification purposes only, to CCN, c/o Mrs. Storey, Residence 14, Flat 12A, or by email to the editor, Gillian Kew, at gilliankew@yahoo.com.</p> <p><u>Submission Deadline for the February Newsletter - January 20th</u></p> <p><i>Please note that letters may be edited at the Editor's discretion and that the opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the editorial board</i></p> 	<p>Bookworms Children's Library</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have a couple of hours a month to spare? • Do you like to see our children enjoying books? • Bookworms Children's Library needs your help! <p>We are open on Saturdays from 10am to 12pm and we are staffed entirely by volunteers. Usually we work only one session per month; and starting January, we need at least two volunteers to replace the two families leaving the campus and keep this service going.</p> <p>If you can help, or want to more, call Joan on 9353 1944 or email cuwo.cuhk@gmail.com</p> <p>THANK YOU!</p> <p>Public Holidays Dec/Jan</p> <p>Friday Dec. 25th - Christmas Day Saturday Dec 26th - Boxing Day Friday, Jan 1st. 2010 - New Year's Day</p>  <div data-bbox="824 1388 1284 1728"> <p><u>Our Team</u> Gillian Kew (Editor) Charlotte Weiss (Arts Editor) Anita Chan Nerissa Ngan Frances Storey Joan Tsui</p> </div>



中文大學婦女會
THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION
Shatin, N.T.

CUWO talk on Cervical Cancer and HPV:

On Tuesday, November 24th CUWO organized a lunch-time lecture on cervical cancer and the relatively new vaccination programme to protect women from some of the more deadly strains of the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV).

Dr. Cheung Tak Hong, an expert in Gynaecological Oncology from the Prince of Wales Hospital spoke at length about the virus, the cancer it can cause and the new hope that lies in the HPV vaccination.

The talk was very well received and produced lively debate among the almost all female audience. CUWO would like to thank Dr. Cheung for sharing his expertise on this subject.

As one of the organizers of the talk (and a woman) - a few final thoughts:

- Kudos to the single male who attended this "woman's talk" - he is clearly a man of vision.
- Cervical cancer is a sexually transmitted disease passed from males to females.
- There are vaccines that can help prevent it - we may not be near eradication but we are getting there.
- Men (and more importantly, young men) in the USA are now offered vaccination against HPV strains 6, 11 (the low risk types) and 16, 18. (high risk). When they accept, they protect themselves and the women they care about.

To read the informative article by Dr. Ha Ying Chiu, visit <http://www.gilliankew.org/newsletter.shtml>

Additional information is available at: the CDC's website - <http://www.cdc.gov/STD/HPV/>

DECEMBER COFFEE MORNING

Date: Fri. Dec 4th
Time: 10 30 - 12 00
Place: Recreation Room,
Residence 14, CUHK



Special Event - Come along and have fun decorating the Christmas Tree - children welcome!

Please contact us on
cuwo.cuhk@gmail.com or call Scarlet Suen 9407 5292 or Judy Luk 9386 2904 if you have any queries.

January Coffee Morning, 2010

Date: Friday January 8th
Time: 10 30 to 12 00
Place: Recreation Room, Residence 14, CUHK.

Don't miss the first coffee morning of 2010!

As always, we
welcome all who would
like to join us!

**CUWO's Christmas
Mulled Wine Party
will be held on
Friday December 11th.**

CUWO Christmas Mulled Wine Party

Date: December 11, 2009 (Friday)
Time: 7:30 PM (Children's lucky draw starts early)
Place: Residence 14, Recreation Room, CUHK Campus
Door Fee: \$30 for CUWO members, \$40 for non-members
No charge for children ages 14 and under
Enquiries: Email: cuwo.cuhk@gmail.com
Call Scarlet Suen 9407 5292 or Judy Luk 9386 2904

Traditional holiday fare (including mulled wine and mince pies) will be served as well as punch, baked goods and delicious finger food. There will be two lucky draws, one for children (small gifts) and one for adults a little later in the evening. Lucky draw tickets are \$10 for children and \$20 for adults. This is a family event and a good time to see friends and neighbours!



If you would like to bring a dish or mince pies, we are more than happy to receive them! You can email us on cuwo.cuhk@gmail.com to let us know what you are bringing.

NOTE: If your child/children will be attending, please email CUWO with their age/s and gender (M/F). This will help us prepare the lucky draw gifts.



NOTE: If you or your child would like to sing, play an instrument, etc. please email CUWO. Please notify CUWO asap for planning purposes.

Children's Page

Fun things to do in December



♦ **Hong Kong 2009 East Asian Games (EAG)** - 5th to 13th December 2009. This is one of Asia's show-piece athletic gatherings featuring top-class athletes from nine participating countries and places: The People's Republic of China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Hong Kong China, Japan, Korea, Macau China, Mongolia, Chinese Taipei and Guam. Around 2,300 athletes, the largest number ever to compete in the EAG will compete for 262 Gold medals in a record-breaking 22 sporting events at 21 venues. The theme of the Hong Kong 2009 EAG is "Be the Legend" and the friendly mascots who will greet visitors to these Games are called Dony and Ami. For more information visit the EAG website at: www.2009eastasiangames.hk/en/participation/ticketing.html

♦ **Ocean Park** - Still a great value outing for the whole family; educational, fun and your dollars go to a worthy cause. Don't miss Ocean Park's "Christmas Sensation", 'Spellbound on Ice', a magical world-class figure skating performance! Visit Santa's lodge and discover your own talents at the interactive Magic Academy and enjoy a thrilling ride down an icy slope!

♦ **Hong Kong Disneyland** - Disney is offering a slew of Christmas activities, including the "Lights of Winter Parade", "It's a Small World Christmas", "Festive Foods" and "Main Street Christmas". Visit: http://park.hongkongdisneyland.com/hkdl/html/Christmas/en_US/index.html

♦ **Go ice-skating** - Festival Walk has your nearest rink and it's fun for the whole family. While you're there, you can take pictures next to the giant Christmas tree and maybe watch the new Scrooge movie, "A Christmas Carol". I don't know

how long it's going to be on, but it has received good reviews and I'm told you get to wear cool, 3D glasses! It may be a little bit darker than some versions but it's a Disney film, so how dark can it be?

♦ **Finally, something to do at home** - make your own Christmas treats (with an adult supervising, of course)!

Christmas Squares

Ingredients:

3 cups - Rice Krispies
1 cup - Coconut (desiccated)
¾ cup - Dried Milk
½ cup - Icing Sugar
2 oz - Mixed Candied Fruit (chopped)
2 oz - Chopped Red & Green Candied Cherries
¼ cup - Raisins
4.5 oz - Block Margarine (white if available)
4.5 oz - White Chocolate Chips

Method:

Brush a 9 x 13" pan with oil.
Line base and sides with baking paper.
Mix Rice Krispies, coconut, dried milk, icing sugar and all fruits in a large bowl.

*** **Chop the margarine into cubes**
Place with the chocolate in the top of a double boiler over simmering water. Stir until mixture is melted and smooth. ***

Combine chocolate and Rice Krispie mix. Press into the prepared pan and refrigerate until set.

Remove from the pan.
Allow to stand for 10 minutes.
Cut into squares with a sharp knife.

Note: Adult supervision required, especially for the steps highlighted and starred.



Arts Calendar ... by Charlotte Weiss

As we come to the end of 2009 and enter 2010, Hong Kong will be full of festive music and cultural events to get you through the two months in style. As always, there's no shortage to choose from with everything from a Christmas show for the kids to "high-art" entertainment for everyone. Note that LCSD is offering once again a special series of events under the rubric, "**Cheers*", which means good entertainment and cheer for the entire family.

Don't forget too, that *RTHK Radio 4* has organized a very special concert that has become a real tradition in Hong Kong: *RTHK's 2009 Christmas Concert in the Park – the Messiah* which will take place at Olympic Square, Hong Kong Park, on Christmas Eve at 5:00pm. The concert will also be broadcast live on *RTHK Radio 4*. I've included as many highlights as possible to whet your cultural appetite for the long holiday so go out on the town this December and January!

+++On Campus: (both recitals are in Lee Hysan Hall, Esther Lee Bldg.)

In Shatin Town Hall:

•27 December

**Cheers: Fenmo, Fragrance of the Opera by Jinan Acrobatic Troupe of China* (an award-winning programme with acts such as "Stacked Chairs" and "Twirling Hoops")

In Tai Po – at the Amphitheatre of the Tai Po Waterfront Park:

•9 December (7:00pm – FREE)

Tai Po International Concert with City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong

(in conjunction with the Cultural East Asian Games, this is a top-hits classical concert performed under the stars with local/international soloists)

At other venues and by performing group:

City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong

•6 December (3:00pm & 7:30pm)

**Cheers: Clown Around with Melvin Tix*, at City Hall Concert Hall

•19 January

Alvarez & Hoffman (Tango dancers), at City Hall Concert Hall

Hong Kong Ballet

•18-19 & 23-26 (7:30pm) and 19-20 & 25-

27 (2:30pm) December

**Cheers: The Nutcracker*, at Cultural Centre Grand Theatre

(you've seen it once, twice, every year?)

The ever-popular ballet comes around again with live music by the Hong Kong Sinfonietta)

Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra

•19 (8:00pm) and 20 (3:00pm) December

The Music World of Animation – Joy to the World!, at Cultural Centre Concert Hall

•8-9 January

HSBC Presents Eroica – Tan Dun and the HKCO, at City Hall Concert Hall

(featuring the world-famous composer Tan Dun's greatest hits for orchestra and the premiere of *Internet Symphony No. 1, Eroica*, arranged for the YouTube Symphony Orchestra)



City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong

Arts Calendar ... by Charlotte Weiss

•22-23 January

The Great Wall Capriccio – Composers' Festival of Hong Kong 2010, at City Hall Concert Hall

(this concert will include works by the influential contemporary Chinese composer Liu Wenjin of "Jasmine" fame)

Hong Kong Oratorio Society

•17 December

**Cheers: Pum Pum Fum Fum Christmas Eve*, at Cultural Centre Concert Hall)

Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (2 months of star-studded concerts!)

•3-4 December

De Waart's Mahler: The Song of the Earth (a Song Symphony), at Cultural Centre Concert Hall

•16 December

The Mozart Effect, at Cultural Centre Concert Hall

(featuring Rachel Cheung, piano; Mark Vines, French horn; Wang Liang, violin and Natalie Jen Hoe, clarinet in an "energizing selection from 12 of Mozart's timeless classics")

•23-24 December

Christmas with the Philharmonic with Sara Macliver, soprano, and the Hong Kong Children's Choir, at Cultural Centre Concert Hall

•30-31 December

Viennese New Year's Gala, Johannes Wildner, conductor, at Cultural Centre Concert Hall (a "recreation" of the very first Vienna Philharmonic New Year's concert 70 years ago with a "real" Viennese conductor, Johannes Wildner)

•8 January

Trout Quintet: The Schubert experience I with Chen Sa, piano, at Cultural Centre Concert Hall

•23 (8:00pm) and 24 January (3:00pm)

The magic harp of Dan Yu, at Cultural Centre Concert Hall

(two different programmes of harp music featuring lovely Dan Yu and her harp and ending with the same orchestral works by Copland and Bernstein in both)

•29-30 January

Simon Trpceski plays Rachmaninov, at Cultural Centre Concert Hall

(absolutely one of my favourite pianists these days, Trpceski will play both the *Piano Concerto No. 1* and *Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini* in an all-Rachmaninov programme)

Hong Kong Sinfonietta

•12 December

Han-Na Chang Plays Haydn, at City Hall Concert Hall

(superlatives don't seem to be enough to describe this winner of the international Rostropovich Cello Competition 15 years ago when Han-Na Chang was only 11! Now, she's on everybody's "best" list of all-time great cellists. Tickets will sell out quickly for this one!)

•13 December

Decoding Haydn, at City Hall Concert Hall

•15-16 (7:30pm) and 17 (3:00pm) January
Disney in Concert, at City Hall Concert Hall (all the endearing orchestral selections from Disney classic movies)



Johannes Wildner

Photo: Dieter Nagl

Arts Calendar ... by Charlotte Weiss

•11 December

Sound of the Ocean, U-Theatre, at Cultural Centre Grand Theatre

(a mélange of theatre, percussion, martial arts and meditation in a “masterly and profound ritual spectacle”)

•23-26 December (English version) and 30 December-9 January (Cantonese version)
Scrooge, the Musical (A Christmas Tale), presented by Hong Kong Repertory Theatre, at City Hall Theatre

(an always-favourite tale for Christmas and beyond with singing, dancing and a super story – see www.hkrep.com for more details as well as performance times)

•24-27 December (performance schedule and tickets available at HK Ticketing outlets and at Tom Lee Music stores)

JUMP Live in Hong Kong 2009, at the APA's Lyric Theatre

(a comedy of acrobatics and martial arts, this Korean company is in Hong Kong for the 1st time for a spectacular series of maneuvers)

NOTE: Counter bookings for tickets for the *Hong Kong Arts Festival* are available at URBIX from 5 December onwards and any available tickets after pre-booking go on sale. The Arts Festival doesn't begin until 25 February but some events have already been completely or nearly sold out. I'll give you updates in February's CCN.

FILM: (find complete listings/times for the festival at URBIX)

•on until 13 December

The 38th French Cinepanorama, Hong Kong French Film Festival, at various venues including IFC Palace Theatre, Hong Kong Science and Space Museums and Broadway Cinemathèque (details of films and schedule at www.frenchcinepanorama.com)

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT:

Due to maintenance works in Shatin Town Hall, the Auditorium, Cultural Activities Hall and Exhibition Gallery will be closed from 1 January to 13 February, 2010. I'm not sure if the work will include the URBIX outlet but be forewarned as for the rest.












Final Posting dates for Christmas



Last dates for posting of Christmas airmail

To ensure that airmail items are delivered before Christmas, Hong Kong Post recommends that customers post their items on or before the dates listed below. More information is available at Hong Kong Post's website at www.hkpost.gov.hk. Enquiries may also be directed to the Hong Kong Post general enquiry hotline at 2921 2222. **Note** the earlier posting dates where you see the dove.

Destination	Letters and Cards	Parcels and Packets	Mail in first week
Asia Pacific			
Australia	December 14	December 9	
China, Mainland	December 12	December 12	
India	December 04	December 04	
Indonesia	December 11	December 11	
Japan	December 12	December 1	
Korea, South	December 10	December 10	
Malaysia	December 12	December 11	
New Zealand	December 11	December 11	
Philippines	December 9	December 4	
Singapore	December 16	December 12	
Taiwan	December 11	December 5	
Thailand	December 4	December 1	
Americas			
Argentina	December 10	December 10	
Brazil	December 9	December 9	
Canada	December 11	December 11	
Mexico	December 10	December 9	
USA	December 7	December 5	
Europe			
France	December 9	December 7	
Germany	December 7	December 7	
Italy	December 12	December 12	
Netherlands	December 16	December 12	
Portugal	December 11	December 5	
Spain	December 12	December 12	
Switzerland	December 11	December 11	
United Kingdom	December 9	December 7	

Food for Thought - by Charlotte Weiss

OK, here come the clichés and my scrooge act for this year but I can't help but comment on two glaring contrasts I came across recently; in a perfect world, I wouldn't have to write this article but as we all know, we're far from that scene.

I recently received an e-mail message from an unnamed relative (half my family members are lawyers so I must be careful!) who sent me the menu for a family Thanksgiving dinner, American style and here it is: "A locally raised FRESH bird (the biggest we can find), whipped potatoes, whipped sweet potatoes (with sweetened condensed milk, butter and toasted pecans), creamy corn (cream cheese, butter and Velveeta cheese), green bean casserole, pumpkin bread and rolls, cranberry Jell-O and three kinds of pies (apple, pecan and chocolate with ice cream and whipped cream), fruit punch and perhaps a starter veggie plate and cheese ball and crackers."

I did not change anything above and as my unnamed relative said: "a cardiac-arrest dinner!"

The same day I received this message, I saw a news report about the 2009 United Nations World Food Summit held in Italy. In an interview with a representative of the FAO, the "Food and Agriculture Organization" of the United Nations, he dramatically said the following: "1,2,3,4,5,6; every six seconds, a child dies of starvation in the world. In fact, over one billion people (1/6 of the world's population) are either malnourished or undernourished." In further commentary on the conference, the TV journalist said that it was taking place with nearly total indifference on the part of world leaders. According to *Oxfam's* website, in an article entitled, "Food summit offers crumbs", there was a "near total absence

of rich country leaders" and the conference received only a 20% success rating by not tackling some of the biggest challenges facing the world today. In fact, there were almost no major decisions made by this UN body to improve the situation. For example, *Oxfam* rated sustainable farming at only 5% and named this "the worst failure of the Summit". Much more emphasis was placed on biotechnology and new technologies which, in fact, do not help the poorest farmers to grow crops.

I realize that there are many people and many organizations "out there" that are battling the world's food problems on every front. For example in Hong Kong, where overeating and a waste of food is a known fact, a recent government initiative resulted in a forum for administrators in public schools to downsize the lunches provided for students at their schools. Quantities served will be cut back so that less food is thrown away and Styrofoam lunch boxes will be replaced by reusable ones. This is a small beginning but at least shows a consciousness-raising going on.

I continue to try to think differently about eating every time I hear news about world hunger. Even though I've been a vegetarian for many years and am convinced that this is one of the best ways to solve the world's food shortage problem, I feel that I need to do more. So, here are a few ideas that I'll share with you.

One of the best resources for becoming a vegetarian is the book, "Diet for a Small Planet" by Frances Moore Lappe who covers all aspects and advantages for the vegetarian diet including the positive effects on the environment, animals (!), disease and of course, nutrition..

Food for Thought

The original book that was published in the 1970s sold over two million copies and the 20th anniversary addition (only US\$7.99) on *Amazon.com* contains updated facts and recipes. One of her most compelling arguments to convert to this diet is the fact that it takes far less resources to grow grains for human consumption rather than for livestock.

Another source of information is www.madcowboy.com, a fun website written by a former American cattle rancher, Howard Lyman, who became a vegetarian. His regular newsletter has links to other sites and I read the following statistics on one of them: "The amount of greenhouse-warming carbon gas released by driving a typical American car in one day is 3 kilos. The amount released by clearing and burning enough Costa Rican rainforest to produce beef for one hamburger is 75 kilos."

So when you sit down for those big holiday meals or go to the buffets that stretch as far as a city block, think not only of your own health, but also of the planet's. Also, let's never forget those shameful statistics where priorities seem so far off the mark. Finally, please don't forget to give to food banks, charities and organizations such as *Oxfam* and *Operation Santa Claus* this holiday season. We must all work together for a better future.



How are some small farmers managing to have food on the table?

photo credit: Oxfam



Howard Lyman, "The Mad Cowboy"

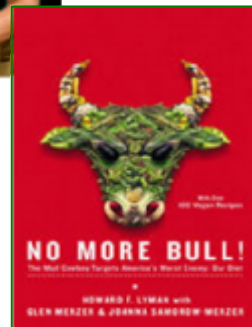


Photo: <http://www.madcowboy.com/>

Many Christmas Blessings By Anita Chan



With the falling snow in some countries, and the on and off cold spell in Hong Kong, the magic of Christmas is emphatically around us. The red of Santa Claus makes our eyes sparkle, bright and wild, casting away the solitude of human hearts, once again, the true sensation of warmth and radiance are at our side.

Down in misery lane, people smitten with the flu need God's blessing to bring them back to health. Down that lane, people with chronicle illnesses will suffer less with thy favours.

Down the campus zone, may residents and

all receive God's blessing to stay well and enjoy the zest of life! Down the Residence Road, may the bottle-brush trees keep on giving us joy and health all the year round! Down the Central library, may the swallows enjoy their new and old nests through wind and rain! Down all the lanes, throughout the campus, may safety and security reign!

May God's blessings blanket every inch of the campus and everyone with luck and health at Christmas and throughout the year 2010!

Aloe Vera Garden on CUWO's organic farm (A Christmas delight)

It was a tiny piece of wasteland with weeds growing atop broken flower pots and unwanted trash dumped on the farmland. It had also become a hotbed of mosquitoes and bugs. It was a scab on the campus grounds. I felt deep within myself that it must be removed. Thus, the answer came, in the form of the Aloe Vera, given to me by a dear friend.

Carrying seven chunky pieces of Aloe Vera from mid-hill to the farm, I waded into that small plot of wilderness; seven comfortable holes fit the plants wonderfully well. I was happy to see them delightedly tuned in the new land. How amazing to see their well-formed beauty! Some species of Aloe Vera may grow like weeds. But this breed seems to know its own limitations. They know where to move in a sensible way. I enjoy that sense as a farmer.

Sadly, six, five, four, yes three were gone. How sorry I was for the diseased ones! New soil was added around the plants to absorb the excess water, as they are accustomed to a desert climate. Then, all at once, I saw a new light – a very tiny baby Vera growing by its mother's side.

CUWO members make good use of its leaves for natural beauty. They use the jelly-like substances as a nourishing facial cream. Some others also wisely use it for health and medicinal perspectives. We harvest it tenderly and treat it gently; friends, we softly cut the leaves and prune them, leaving enough behind for new growth.

Like pets, plants are to be loved. They are like diamonds amid the weeds. Aloe Vera, long may you continue on Christmas days and further still - we are thoughtfully mindful of your blissful existence.



Something New for Christmas

An interesting new bookshop has come to our attention just in time for Christmas...

It's **The Photo Book Center**, Unit 227-228, Sim City, 41-57, Shantung Street, Mong Kok, Tel: 2781 1400 or email info@aophotobook.com

"Hong Kong's first-ever dedicated and professional and art photography book resource... for browsing, for research, for exploring ... no matter you're an established or aspiring photographer or an amateur... the book center is also a state of the art venue for printing your own works, into a photo-book".



And Don't Forget the New Year!

Don't have any big plans for the New Year? Don't fancy the crowds in Tsim Sha Tsui? Let's face it – few of us do! Then why not join a slightly smaller crowd in Shatin for **The 2009 New Year's Eve Countdown Carnival**, to be held (of course) on Thursday, December 31st, from 8 30pm until 12 15am on Friday, January 1st, 2010.

This popular annual event will be held in Sha Tin Park, Sha Tin Town Hall Plaza and City Art Square, and, according to the LCSD blurb, will bring you, "fascinating music and dance performances as well as interactive games", not to mention the "energetic roving artists" who will "help you explore the interesting sculptures at the City Art Square as well as the carnival site". Other entertainment includes, jugglers, magic shows and music. The climax of the carnival is clearly the countdown moment, following which everyone parties into the small hours.

Admission is free.

For information about ticketing and any other enquiries, visit the LCSD website at: www.lcsd.gov.hk/eo or call them on 2591 1340



Traditions - by Gillian Kew

We all have different traditions at Christmas - little odds and sods that make each of our Christmases unique; I grew up in a family that had, for generations, served pork pie, ham, stilton cheese and pickles for breakfast on Christmas morning. This particular tradition, however, did not cross well over the cultural divide, not to mention the near-impossibility of getting hold of a genuine Melton Mowbray pork pie in Hong Kong!

Gift giving takes place around our tree on Christmas morning, as each sleepy-eyed family member staggers into consciousness, assisted by the breakfast of their choice. My friend's family does it very differently - they have to work for their presents, being allowed to open only one gift each day *after* guessing what it is by following a set of hand-written clues. They seem to enjoy it, but I suspect I would have a riot on my hands if I tried it here.

Christmas dinner is, well, traditional - once referred to, somewhat unkindly, I thought, as "predictable". The table is set with the best china, days are spent preparing and finally, cooking the food, which is then consumed with gusto and washed down with glasses of bubbly. Yum!

We spend so much time preparing, and so little time enjoying, though, I sometimes wonder whether it's worth all the effort. But then what life would be without our traditions, the lynchpins of family and community life?

Christmas is not just about presents

and food (although I'm not knocking them). As it has devolved from a purely religious festival to an increasingly secular one, for it to have any real meaning, it has to offer something more. It is a time for families to be together, especially in a world where adult children often move far away and family members can be separated by continents.

As daft as some of our family traditions may seem (I still put out a Santa Sack for each of my adult children and we still have crackers and wear silly hats at the dinner table) they are a part of our unity, providing a sense of permanence and security. They are also a part of our identity.

Being part of a mixed family, they also remind my children of their dual cultural heritage. My in-laws have taught us all about Chinese traditions and I have shared the traditional "Kew" family Christmas with them. Sharing these traditions helps bridge the cultural gap and lets us see each other as more the same and less different. My mother-in-law has never "got" Christmas pudding (especially in the days when I used to put coins in mine), just as I will never truly embrace moon cakes, but we both make the effort and our families, and, hopefully their families in the future, are enriched.

Whatever Christmas means to you, I hope you are able to share and enjoy the season with your family and friends.



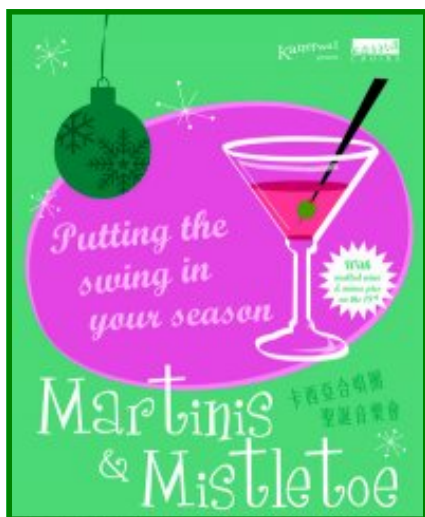
Community Notice Board

Textiles Fair & Friends Card Sales

Date: Saturday Dec 5th
Time: 10 30 am to 5pm
Venue: Fringe Club,
 2, Lower Albert Road,
 Central



Kassia Choirs sing for Christmas and charity!



DATES:
Monday 14th December 2009 at 8pm in
Sheung Wan Civic Centre Theatre
 Tickets: \$220, \$180 (concessions); Available from URB TIX (Ticketing Enquiries:

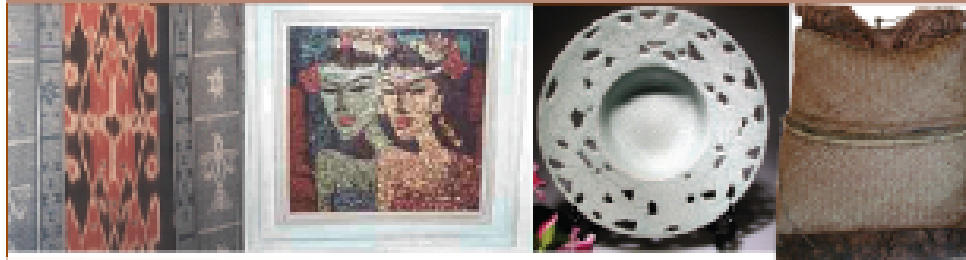
2734 9009; Credit Card Booking: 2111 5999; Online Booking: www.urbtix.hk
AND

Friday 18th December 2009 at 8pm in
Island School, 20 Borrett Road, The Peak; Tickets: \$200 (free seating); Available from Choir members or online order: www.tinyurl.com/kassiamm (The Friday show comes with mulled wine and mince pies. Proceeds of this concert go to support the charity "The Little Life Warrior Choir".

About "The Little Life Warrior Choir"

The Little Life Warrior Choir was set up in 2002 for children who are being treated at the Prince of Wales Hospital for cancer. The Choir is an important part of their recovery and gives them a chance to have fun, sing, be joyful and be in a group with children who are going through similar experiences. The children meet regularly to play games and rehearse in a specially designated room at the hospital. The Choir are looking to raise funds to equip a hospital with similar facilities in mainland China.

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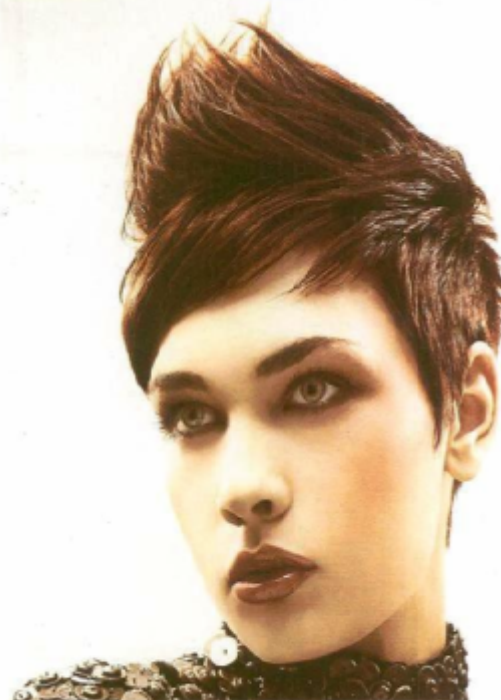
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