

Centered

on TAIPEI



Vol. 17 | 07

APR
2017



Taipei Living

Walking the walk: an interview
with three Photowalkers

A Jolt of Coffee (part two)

Teacups

The Cupcake Shop

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COVER IMAGE:
Waterfront in Dansui
by Billy C. Stagner

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website at
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Zhongshan North Rd.

Sprout – No. 33, Sec. 7, Zhongshan North Rd.

George Pai's Beauty – No. 14, Tienmu East Rd.

Downtown:

Grandma Nitti's Kitchen – 8, Lane 93, Shida Rd.

Ooh Cha Cha – 207, Sec.2, Nanchang Rd.

NakedFood – 22-1, Lane 160, Sec.1, Xingsheng South Rd.

Samyama (Art) Co., Ltd. – 2F, No. 1, Lane 119, Sec.1, Daan Rd.

Cool nights, chilly mornings and mild afternoons are encouraging signs that spring is not going to bypass Taipei this year. Thank goodness, for it has been a long winter.

This month, we have a unique collection of photography and article submissions. Each contributor presents a refreshing perspective on this month's theme, "Taipei living." So, with your copy of *Centered on Taipei* (COT) close-by, settle back and enjoy Kenneth Dickson's article A Jolt of Coffee: Taipei's Riding the Third Wave for Coffee! If you have a case of spring fever, or just want to get out and do something new and different, browse through the Center's April Activity Highlights, Events about Town and Kiddies Korner columns for ideas.

J. Caldwell's interview with three well-known expat photographers, Billy C. Stagner, Darren Melrose and Craig Ferguson from Photowalkers Taipei, gives us a chance to learn a bit more about their personal journeys with photography.

If you are out and about in the Daan area of Taipei and want an extraordinary encounter with one of Asia's popular art experts, visit John Ang at his Samyama Gallery. John's article on teacups highlights the importance of knowing the type of feeling you want from tea, its steeping technique, teapot, teacup and of course, the setting, for a memorable experience.

As many readers may know, this year the Community Services Center is celebrating its 30th anniversary. Throughout the year, we are recognizing those who have helped the Center to grow and become an important part of the international community.

In this issue, we would like to highlight Nannette Lites. Nannette and her husband, Dr. Milton A. Lites arrived in Taiwan on August 2, 1970, as missionaries. Nannette's training as a social worker, counselor and Mandarin speaker allowed her to play important roles within the expatriate community. One such contribution was her involvement with the initial efforts that resulted in the establishment of the Community Services Center.

There is a lot going on at the Center. Please stop by and share a cup of delicious coffee or tea with us. In the meantime, enjoy your life in Taipei!

Sue and Richard



COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTER

The Community Services Center (CSC) is a non-profit foundation. CSC provides outreach and early intervention through counseling, cross-cultural education and life skills programs to meet the needs of the international community in Taipei. CSC offers the opportunity to learn, volunteer, teach and meet others. Check out our website www.communitycenter.org.tw and drop by The Center to chat with us about our programs. You can also email us at csc@communitycenter.org.tw.

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Fun Activities for Kiddies

Here are a few exciting places to visit with your busy-bee kids, to keep them buzzing!!

TEXT: NOMITA KAVRA GUPTA

WHAT

WHY

WHEN AND WHERE

BAOSHENG CULTURAL FESTIVAL



The Dalongdong area, around two centuries old, is one of the few well-preserved historic neighbourhoods in Taipei City. The Dalongdong Bao'an Temple is one of the most popular temples in Taipei and is dedicated to the Baosheng Emperor. The temple is famous for hosting the annual Baosheng Cultural Festival, which showcases Taiwan's folk religious celebrations, architectural legacies and heritage revitalization efforts.

Address: Dalongdong Bao'an Temple, 61 Hami Street (Yuanshan MRT station)
Telephone: (02) 2595-1676
Timeline: April 1st – May 27th
<http://www.baoan.org.tw/english/baosheng.html>

PENGHU OCEAN FIREWORKS FESTIVAL



In 2003, the Penghu County Government officially hosted the 1st Annual Penghu Fireworks Festival, which has become the most anticipated festival under Penghu's night sky. The Penghu Fireworks Festival takes place at the Guanyin Pavilion in Magong City on the main island of the archipelago, where the unique ocean bay environment and the romantic Siying Rainbow Bridge perfectly complement the stunning fireworks. The fireworks are set-off only 300 meters away from the viewing area, which creates a unique sense of immersion for tourists. In addition to the spectacular fireworks display, numerous renowned artists and local performance groups take turns performing on stage.

Address: Guanyin Pavilion Leisure Park, 7 Jieshou Road, Magong City, Penghu County
Telephone: (06) 927-4400
Timeline: April 20th – June 22nd
<http://phfireworks2017.com/bin/home.php?Lang=en>

NANGANG PARK



Nangang Park is a tree-filled space with a large pond for spotting turtles and birds, grassy spaces for kids to run around, and a red Chinese-style memorial gate. The playground includes a fairly big playset and the swings are located in a separate area in the middle of the park. It's a great place for picnics, flying kites, absorbing the views of Taipei 101 or watching planes taking off from Songshan Airport.

Address: 170 Dongxin Street, Nangang District (Kunyang MRT station).
Hours: 24 hrs, Daily
Telephone: (02) 2785-3819
<http://parks.taipei/Web/Park/Detail/688B377F276F45B9899B622EE9AB236D>

JUMING MUSEUM



This is famed Taiwanese sculptor Ju Ming's largest artwork to date. He personally designed the architecture, landscapes, wiring and plumbing. With a total area of 110,000 square meters, artworks are arranged in the vast outdoor space of the museum, creating a dialogue and interaction with the mountains and ocean view.

The Children's Art Centre at the Juming Museum is perfect for children's arts education. Interactive learning from nature and art enlightens children's senses, and autonomous learning inspires their creativity and independent thinking.

The museum offers a range of gifts and designed products with aesthetic and practical appeal, as well as a selection of featured books. It also provides dining services in a family-friendly environment.

Address: Jinshan District, New Taipei City
Hours:
May through October
10 am – 6 pm
November through April
10 am – 5 pm
Open Tuesday to Sunday
<http://www.juming.org.tw/opencms/juming/index.jsp>

APRIL ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Fascinating Keelung: A Historic Walking Tour

Wednesday, April 12th
8:30am - 3:00pm; \$800

Guide: Richard Saunders

Keelung's position as one of Taiwan's finest harbors made it a common target for foreign aggression during the 18th century, and forts as well as other reminders from landmark events of the time such as the two Opium Wars can still be seen today. This walking tour includes stops at the French Cemetery, the last resting place of soldiers who were killed during the Sino-French War in the 1870s, and Ershawan Fort, the finest of Keelung's surviving fortifications. On our way back to Keelung Center, we will see the large temple complex and gleaming white statue of Guanyin that overlooks the harbor. There'll be time for lunch (not included) at the famous Miaokou market. This is a moderate three-hour walk, with many steps at the beginning and end. Tour ends at Taipei Main Station.

Indian Vegetarian: Samosas and Pakoras

Friday, April 14th
10:00am-12noon; \$1200

Instructor: Nomita Kavra

Nomita joins us this semester with some delicious Indian vegetarian treats. In this fun hands-on class, you will learn how to make vegetable pakoras, two types of chutney, green chutney and tamarind-mango chutney and two types of samosas, vegetable and soy. (this recipe is also great with meat). These delicious appetizers will be a hit with your family or at any party.

Introducing Raw Food Cooking

Friday, April 21st
10:00am-12noon; \$1200

Instructor: Coco Kojo

The raw food movement believes that eating raw food or food cooked at low temperatures is a healthy way to eat. For many, this might bring to mind munching on lettuce, celery and carrots, but not really eating a satisfying meal. If you have ever wanted to try raw food cooking, here

is your chance. Join Coco to learn some of her favorite recipes include beet hummus dip, raw Marinara sauce with veggie pasta and 'meatballs' (made with walnuts) and Coco balls (coconut and date) for dessert.

Exploring Taipei's Neighborhoods: Minsheng Community Tour

Wednesday, April 26th
10:00am - 12:30pm; \$500

Guide: Eddie Lai

Have you ever been to a place in Taipei that is quiet and organized but energetic at the same time? Possibly not! If this sounds intriguing to you, then come along for a walking tour of the Minsheng community neighborhood with Eddie, a long-term resident. The community is the first American model residential district in Taiwan, built half a century ago. With more than 20 parks, green trees and pretty flowers that change with the seasons are spread throughout the community. In addition to the beautiful natural environment, the community offers a diverse selection of

unique and interesting shops, markets, restaurants, and cafes that we will visit on our tour. Eddie will arrange lunch for anyone who would like to stay after the tour (not included).

The Culture of Tea: Brewing, Tasting and Drinking Tea in Taiwan

Friday, April 28th
10:00am-12:30pm; \$800

Instructor: Yasuko Hondo

Drinking tea in Taiwan goes beyond just quenching one's thirst—it is a social and cultural activity, which can be traced back to ancient China and is embedded into the culture of the country. For the Taiwanese, tea culture includes tea production, tea arts and wares, traditional tea ceremonies and the social aspects of consuming tea. If you would like to learn about Taiwan tea, including the proper way to brew, serve and drink it, join Yasuko, a Taiwan Tea Master, for this introductory workshop and try your hand at brewing a proper pot of Taiwan tea.

EVENTS ABOUT TOWN

TAIPEI POTLUCK & MUSIC CIRCLE - POTLUCK #101 APRIL 2, 2017

Music and drumming circle, veg food potluck on the first Sunday of every month.

A sharing event, to create community in Taipei. Join us! All are welcome. Please bring something (low impact and vegetarian/vegan) to share.

* On the first Sunday of each month – 3 - 9 pm at Da-an Park, in the 2nd pavilion north of the Heping/Jianguo Road Intersection. Park Map Entrance 5.

Enjoy acoustic music jams, drum jams, song-sharing, dancing, make some new friends, share your thoughts, languages, ideas, dreams.

Bring: your drums, guitars, mandolins, shakers, horns, hackey sack, frisbee,

juggling equipment, blankets, candles, etc. Bring: your own bowls and utensils to eliminate having to throw away stuff!! Bring: extra for those who have forgotten.

Bring: vegetarian/vegan food to share. No meat on the shared table please. Bring: other foods. Fruit, or cooked food in containers that you take back with you.

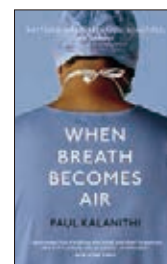
If it rains, we will still be there (we have a covered space!)

You don't have to be vegetarian to come. We just share veg food and snacks there, so everyone can eat.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/taipeipotluck/>

April 2017 – Book Clubs

When Breath Becomes Air
by Paul Kalanithi



Morning book club

Meeting on April 5 at 10:30 am
For meeting location contact:
mcelroy22000@yahoo.com

Evening book club

Meeting on April 27. For meeting location and time, please contact:
ljoews@hotmail.com

EVENTS ABOUT TOWN

FESTIVALS

Baosheng Cultural Festival



A colorful and historic festival that takes place in one of Taipei City's well-preserved historic neighborhoods, known for its breathtaking religious architecture, especially Bao'an Temple.

The temple hosts the annual Baosheng Cultural Festival, which is a showcase of Taiwan's folk, religious and heritage celebrations for the past two decades.

WHEN: Until May 27th

WHERE: Dalongdong Bao'an Temple, 61 Hami Street

MRT: Yuanshan (red line)

Info: (02) 2595-1676; <http://www.baoan.org.tw/english/baosheng.html>

Taipei Traditional Market Festival



There are various kinds of activities at this one-day annual market, which gathers many special stalls from every traditional market in Taipei. Besides traditional foods and crafts, the "World's Best Vendor Competition" is also an important part of the festival, when the top traditional market stalls are selected and awarded. If you enjoy Taipei's traditional markets, then this event is perfect for you.

WHEN: April 8th – 9th

WHERE: Yuanshan Plaza (next to Yuanshan MRT station)

MRT: Yuanshan (red line)

SPORT

2017 San Tai Zi ATP Challenger



San Tai Zi ATP Challenger has grown in popularity with the local tennis scene since its establishment in 2014, and is now one of the most anticipated ATP events in Taipei. This year, Chinese Taipei Tennis Association (which organizes the event) is looking to increase the top prize from \$75,000 to \$125,000.

WHEN: April 22nd – 30th

WHERE: National Taiwan University campus, Da'an District

MRT: Gongguan (green line)

MORE INFO: <https://www.sportsv.net/tennis/santaizi>

MUSIC AND PERFORMANCE

Sappo LIVE

Enjoy a laid-back and cool music environment in downtown Taipei.

Live music, dance floor, bar and good food. They also offer open mic and jam sessions.

Tuesday to Friday, 8 pm - 3 am

Venue: B1, no. 1, Anhe Road Section 1

Further information:

sappholivetaipei@gmail.com

Colbie Caillat in Taipei



Also known as Coco, Colbie Caillat is a Grammy Award-winning musician who rose to fame through the social networking website Myspace. She has written songs and has sung vocal backup for Taylor Swift. She also has three studio albums of her own, and a Christmas album, released in 2012. Colbie has sold over six million albums worldwide, and over ten million singles.

WHEN: April 15th, 7 pm

WHERE: National Taiwan University Sports Center

MRT: Gongguan (red line)

TICKETS: <http://www.viagogo.com/www/concert-tickets/rock-and-pop/COLBIE-CAILLAT-TICKETS/E-2051250?AFFILIATEID=624&PCID=AFFIAFFUKEVENT14FF953148>

ART

Rosa's Wound - Chen Chieh-Jen, Tetsugo Hyakutake, Dinh Q. Le, Sun Xun in Taipei



Rosa's Wound shows the collective works of a total of eight artists, and is curated by Hsiang Ning Huang. The exhibition takes on the representation of Rosa's wound

in *Coagula*, a poem by Jewish poet Paul Celan, and transforms the wound into two parts that connect moments and distance. The collection focuses on the darker areas of human emotions and evolution of self as it allows the audience to glimpse into how violence and trauma have transfigured and continue to linger in our society. Admission is NT\$50.

WHEN: Until April 9th

WHERE: Museum of Contemporary Art, 39 Chang-an West Road

MRT: Zhongshan (red line)

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Center will be closed Monday and Tuesday, April 3rd and 4th, for the Tomb Sweeping holiday



The Community Services Center
Invites You To Our:

April Coffee Morning

Taiwan Travel Spots

Speaker: Richard Saunders



Most visitors to Taiwan will have heard of several of the island's famous draw cards, such as the National Palace Museum, Taroko Gorge, Sun Moon Lake and Alishan. However, these popular favorites hardly scratch the surface of the enormous range of things to see and do on this amazing island. This coffee morning talk aims to introduce a few of the cultural, historic and natural attractions that make Taiwan a travel destination of unrivaled richness and variety.

Date: Thursday, April 13th

Time: 10:30am - 12:00pm

Where: Community Services Center
Zhong Shan N. Rd. Sec. 6, Lane 290, #25
台北市中山北路六段290巷25號

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The 2017 ECCT-ICRT International Charity Golf Cup

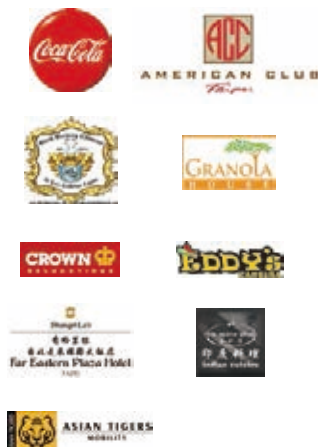
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The 2017 ECCT-ICRT International Charity Golf Cup marks the 14th consecutive year that the European Chamber of Commerce Taiwan (ECCT) and International Community Radio Taipei (ICRT) have joined together to organize this well-known charity event.

Taiwan's association with golf began during the Japanese period. Its first golf course was built in Tamsui in 1919. Today, due to an avid and continuing interest in golf, especially by many renowned Taiwanese golfers, Taiwan now has seventy distinguished golf courses.

The Royal Kuan-Hsi Golf Club, Hsinchu, was the original venue for the first Charity Golf Cup, and will be this year's venue. It is an 18-hole championship layout covering an area of over 103 hectares, and was built by J. Michael Poellot, one of the most popular course designers in the world. The rich, carefully constructed, diverse terrain offers a challenging test of strategic golf.

Participants will be competing in teams of four, with each team representing a company, organization or country. A maximum of twenty teams will be

admitted to the tournament, with proceeds going to the Taipei Community Services Center (CSC) a non-profit foundation. The Center offers a wide range of community services for the local and international community; counseling, cross-cultural/educational classes and activities, Mandarin language classes, hikes, trips, information and support services.

Mr. Freddie Hoglund, CEO of the ECCT, explains his continued enthusiasm and support for this particular charity event: "For the European Chamber of Commerce Taiwan, corporate social responsibility is a very important value of the organization. ECCT puts on other events where a portion of the proceeds go to charity, but this event is a special one...for the foreign community, and can help some of the most vulnerable in it."

Since space is limited, it's recommended that those interested in this year's tournament register and confirm participation by fax ((02) 2772-0530) as soon as possible. Only twenty teams will be accommodated and slots are given on a first-come first-serve basis.

For sponsorship information, contact Ms. Kimi Kan at (02) 2740-0236, ext. 217/ kimi.kan@ecct.com.tw/ Fax: (02) 2772-0530.

For registration, contact Ms. Lucy Huang at: (02) 2740-0236, ext. 214/ lucy.huang@ecct.com.tw
Registration deadline: Wednesday, April 12th, 2017.



Taiwan 101: Essential Sights, Hikes and Experiences on Ilha Formosa

by Richard Saunders

Taiwan 101 presents Taiwan's finest attractions to anyone who wishes to get to know this island of kaleidoscopic charms, complete with transport information and GPS coordinates of nearly 800 fascinating places.





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Taipei American School Joanna Nichols Visiting Scholar Dr. Nancy Steinhardt

TEXT: MICHAEL O'NEILL, COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER IMAGES: TAS

When people think about ancient Chinese art and architecture, they may not associate it with words like “cutting-edge” and “fast-paced.” Instead, the image of an archaeologist painstakingly digging up relics and slowly restoring them to their former glory may come to mind. However, Dr. Nancy Steinhardt, the Taipei American School 2017 Joanna Nichols Visiting Scholar, put that notion to rest during her month-long visit with upper school students and faculty.

Dr. Steinhardt is the Department Chair and Professor of East Asian Art at the University of Pennsylvania. She is also the Curator of Chinese Art at the Penn Museum. She holds a Ph.D. from Harvard University, and has spent her career researching art and architecture with a particular focus on China and border problems between Chinese and geographical neighbors. She has authored a number of books and journal articles, and has received grants from some of the most prestigious academic organizations, including the Guggenheim Foundation, National

Endowment for the Humanities, and Institute for Advanced Study.

At TAS, Dr. Steinhardt taught courses in the History of Asia, History of Asian Art, World History, Mandarin, Japanese, Architecture, and 3D Art. Her passion for this area of study became abundantly clear during a division-wide presentation to upper school students. At this event, Dr. Steinhardt discussed how scholars continuously make new discoveries in the world of Chinese art and architecture that often challenge our pre-existing worldviews. She spent time talking about the lesser-known Liao Dynasty that dominated northern China from the early 10th to 12th centuries. Drawing from her rich collection of photographs and her deep understanding of Chinese art, architecture, history, and customs, she brought to life two centuries of culture rarely examined in history books. For example, students and faculty were fascinated to see both the Western and Chinese Zodiacs depicted together on the ceilings of Liao tombs.

Dr. Steinhardt's visit to TAS was

her second visit to Taiwan. Her first occurred earlier in her career before China opened up to foreigners. Dr. Steinhardt visited some of the small towns in Taiwan that had masterfully protected architectural structures of old buildings and temples. Dr. Steinhardt listed both Tainan and Lukang just south of Taichung as areas that offer excellent opportunities to step back in time and explore Taiwan's rich architectural history.

Dr. Steinhardt's stay at TAS represents the sixth installment of the Joanna Nichols Visiting Scholar program, which is the result of the continuing, extraordinary generosity and vision of former TAS parent Mr. Kenny Cheng. The program brings relevant, distinguished, and stimulating figures such as Dr. Steinhardt to TAS each year to share singular insights and experiences with students. Next year's Joanna Nichols Visiting Scholar is Dr. Aaron Kyle, Senior Lecturer in Biomedical Engineering at Columbia University and Co-Founder/Lead Instructor at Hypothekids (HK) Maker Lab.



The kids sorting out the content of The Awesome Playgroup News

The Creativity of Children

A Conversation with Carol Yao

TEXT: WHITNEY ZAHAR IMAGES: CAROL YAO



Carol sitting next to her daughter, who sang and played the guitar solo for the first time at Stage Time and Juice

Children are very busy these days. They work very hard following curriculum standards in their schools during the daytime. At night, they juggle homework and time spent with family. Somewhere in between they may attend a plethora of extracurricular activities and lessons, and then they try to squeeze in time to tap out messages to friends on Facebook and other social media sites.

That doesn't leave much time for kids to be creative, unless it's under strict time limits and guidelines. However, most people who work with nurturing creativity in children believe that true creativity should be given a place of its own to bloom. Children need time to experiment and "fool around."

That's what Carol Yao believes is an important part of developing creativity in kids, as well as making sure it is "self-driven." "True creativity in kids should be self-driven, not parent-driven," she says when asked what is the best way for creativity to grow. In her mind, what parents and educators can provide are the stepping stones, the environment, and the building blocks, but they would simply be tools for the creative process which takes place individually.

Carol has been an active member of the Taipei City Playgroup for about twelve years, from the time she was looking for English-speaking friends and activities for her then-4-year-old son and 1-year-old daughter. "I heard about Taipei City Playgroup from another mother whose child was playing with

my son," she says. At the time, Taipei City Playgroup was very small and Carol found herself getting more involved in the group.

Taipei City Playgroup has grown from three moms, including another Red Room Stage Time and Juice Coordinator, Jennifer Joy, rotating and hosting activities between their houses, to a large group that meets in outdoor venues all over Taipei City. They've hosted charity events, such as rummage sales and their Lemonade Stand, and they do an annual Easter picnic and Christmas party. But they also host occasional playgroup dates, activities, and workshops.

One of the activities was the *Awesome Playgroup News*, which began about six years ago. The idea for this publication was proposed by her son, and taken up by a group of parents. "It was great because the children wrote without feeling self-conscious," says Carol. While the parents did check for spelling and grammatical errors, there were no writing conventions and standards imposed on the young contributors. Even though it stopped after being active for three years, the *Awesome Playgroup News* was on its way to becoming autonomous. "The kids had been doing it more than a dozen times, so they could almost carry it on their own," Carol says. "Although we had to stop because we lost many of the children editors, I think that at some point in their lives some of them may find themselves creating their own publication. In this case, the process was not self-driven, but I do think that we supplied them with the tools for the future."

More recently, Carol is one of the dynamic coordinators behind Red Room's Stage Time and Juice, which brings Red Room's signature open-mic format to a younger audience and to young performers. Stage Time and Juice is full of lively music, silly poems, and children's theater. "Several years ago, we wanted to set up a talent show for Taipei City Playgroup. We heard that Red Room was looking to set up children- and family-friendly programming."

When asked if Stage Time and Juice will be another example of "self-driven creativity," Carol answers, "There is a group of regular performers, who in the



The Awesome Playgroup News staff doing some research in preparation for making Kiva loans

beginning, struggled with their own performances. But as they've gotten older, they're beginning to notice each other more as they're performing." To use an expression she's heard from recent collaborator, Red Room Radio Redux's director Ruth Giordano, she finds the kids are "riffing off," or playing off each other, which she believes will inspire the kids to push each other more and to experiment.

Carol reflects on some of her favorite performers at Stage Time and Juice. There's a boy who performs with

his siblings and friends. "He pictures in his head how they will perform as an ensemble, and when they get up on stage, they are very natural and imperfect, which is wonderful." To Carol, it shows they are trying something new and are playing with innovation. Another one of her favorite acts was a group of three boys called the Minecraft Gang. They would sing parodies of Minecraft songs, and while the group went its separate ways as the boys became teenagers, she notices how seriously they take music when

they perform on their own.

Carol believes that Taiwan has a lot going on with culture and the arts if one takes the time to look for it. Because Taiwan is becoming more focused on design and technology, there is now more attention on the arts as a valuable skill and knowledge. What she loves about Taiwan and how the country contributes to children's creativity is that "the Taiwanese believe that children should be children. They have such a special kindness when it comes to children and they love to share with them." She feels that with groups such as Taipei City Playgroup and organizations like Red Room Taipei, there is a movement towards teaching children to embrace their creativity and to inspire it to be self-driven. "It's something I feel in my bones," she says.

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Whitney Zahar is originally from the U.S. and has called Taiwan home for six years. She is a mother, a writer, a teacher, and an active member of the Red Room community and Taipei Writers Group.

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A Jolt of Coffee:

Taipei's Riding the Third Wave for Coffee! (PART TWO)

TEXT: KENNETH DICKSON
IMAGES: KENNETH DICKSON & WEB

Kenneth Dickson started drinking cappuccino at Luvian's Coffee Shop thirty years ago, and hasn't stopped drinking, making and writing about coffee ever since. Taipei is his coffee heaven. Now he writes at PurelyCoffeeBeans.com about his love of coffee.



Life in Taipei is hectic, and coffee shops help to speed things along. But if you'd like to join the Slow Coffee Movement, you need to learn how to do it yourself. It's not a difficult process of just three steps: choose good quality coffee freshly roasted in Taiwan; grind just before you make the coffee; and prepare it by hand.

WHAT'S IN THAT HOPPER?

That is the NT\$500 question! You could simply hop over to Starbucks, and buy a bag of their Caffè Verona, Italian Roast, but how fresh is that? It was probably roasted months ago, before enduring a long sea-voyage in hot metal containers. How fresh can it really be?

Taipei has gone way beyond the very traditional Japanese-era roasts of Brazilian, Ethiopian and Mandheling or such to embrace a wide range of roasting styles, regions and methods. Freshly roasted coffee smells and tastes great. Cama Café has won plaudits for its Pomona coffee blend, and Louisa Coffee sells Kenyan Dorman.

You'll find decent Colombian coffees from different regions and estates. Moreway sells great Indian Malabar in season, as well as fresh, delightful Guatemala. Zhanlu is harder to pin down, but I prefer their darker roasts.

BUYING LOCALLY

Besides roasting, Taiwan has a long history of growing coffee, reaching a peak during the Japanese colonial period, when coffee was grown as a cash crop for export to Japan. The Japanese influence on how coffee was drunk here remained for a long time. However, only small volumes of coffee are grown here, meaning that prices are high, rivalling Panama Geisha, Jamaican Blue Mountain or the finer Hawaiian grades. Consider it as a kind of "proper estate" coffee.

Gukeng coffee, from Yunlin County, is the pre-eminent local coffee variety, but beware adulteration with much cheaper Vietnamese or Indonesian coffee. Other areas around Taiwan also experiment with coffee growing, including Alishan,



Dongshan (in Tainan), Taiwu (Pingtung), and Chishang (Taitung).

Most coffee is grown and roasted locally in these areas, and sold for markets in the western parts of Taiwan. Very little is exported because of the small volume, but growing coffee here is as much a labor of love as a commercial enterprise, because of the long lead times needed from planting to first harvest.

THE ART OF GRINDING



Generally, you don't actually need to buy a grinder, as most coffee shops will grind coffee for you on the premises. Just inform the barista how you usually brew your coffee in the morning, and they will grind your coffee beans to the right grade.

If you prefer to grind regularly so that your coffee is as fresh as possible, most coffee shops sell grinding equipment, so buy the best you can afford: preferably a proper burr grinder. The burrs will crush the beans gently to the right size, producing a more consistent quality of coffee.

For less than NT\$1,000, you can buy a simple hand-grinder with quality ceramic burrs, which will take a couple

of minutes to grind up the coffee. Choosing a full-sized electric ceramic burr grinder is also an option for those with a bigger budget. Of course, prices are a little higher than in the US, but the convenience of quick grinding will easily win you over. Prepare to pay from NT\$2,500 upwards for a grinder from Flying Horse, Capresso, or Baratza.

POPULAR COFFEE-MAKING METHODS

The simplest methods are the best, but the variables are always the same: coffee roast, grounds size, time, and heat.

HARIO V60 DRIP FILTER: POUR-OVER METHOD



V60, first produced by Hario of Japan, is a really popular device for making coffee these days. Its unique design features a hole at the bottom of its conical shape, with ridges inside that will improve water flow and extraction. The paper filters are the same conical shape.

The V60 produces a much finer drink, accommodates many different coffee types and roasts, is easy to use for making coffee, and is easy to clean. If you know how to make coffee in a traditional drip filter, then you can already use the V60, as it just requires refinements of your technique, and a little bit of time.

FRENCH PRESS: SOAK AND FILTER

The French press is a popular way to make a small pot of coffee, one that you will find easy for making, dispensing and cleaning. The French press pot glistens in the light, begging to be filled with coarsely ground



coffee and hot water. With the plunger extended, the pot just sits for 3~4 minutes: almost as long as the anticipation can bear. Finally, the plunger is pushed carefully into the dark, steamy liquid, right to the bottom. Then its goodness can be dispensed.

You can brew most kinds of coffee in a French press, if you pay attention to the size of the coffee grounds. Don't grind too big, or the coffee will come out weak and nasty; if you grind it too fine, it will come out like watery mud. Most commercially-ground coffee isn't really suitable for the French press, because you end up with a solution of slightly gritty coffee.

COFFEE DRIP BAGS

Coffee drip bags have become really popular. Most major coffee brands in Taiwan have now developed their own line of products. A coffee filter bag is a little sachet of coffee presented in its own bag-cum-filter, wrapped in foil to preserve its freshness. Once the foil cover is opened, the sachet pops out. Each side has one flap that pulls out. Across the top center, there is usually a





mark to tear open to reveal the coffee inside. Once the bag is opened and the flaps extended, the drip bag can be fixed over a cup, ready for dripping in a mini-filter fashion.

These are usually sold in convenience stores in single packs or small boxes for between NT\$20 and NT\$40. Each sachet contains about ten grams of coffee. The simple design and methods are perfect for offices, workplaces and homes where convenience is important. If you look in quality supermarkets and coffee supplies stores, you can also find coffee drip bags for filling with your own favorite coffee. Ideal if you can't find a decent coffee blend in the commercial packs.

COLD-BREW WHAT?

If you've never tried cold-brew coffee, you've never lived. With nearly all the essential flavor-creating volatiles preserved, but low in acid and oil, cold-brew coffee is a taste sensation when served with crushed ice.

Made with cold water (not hot), the secret to a successful cold-brew is time, which eliminates the bitterness that is usually associated with iced coffee. Cold-brew coffee isn't bitter at all. You can find it in local coffee shops, but look for one that filters the coffee through a traditional cold-brew system. Usually there is only a limited quantity, because it can take 8~12 hours to prepare.

There are a few cold brew kits available on the market for you to make your own at home easily. Most kits here retail for about NT\$500 to NT\$1,000, and are simple to use, so you don't have to worry too much if the instructions are in Japanese. Remember

the grind will be similar to French press coffee, so you can't use pre-ground coffee, as it's too fine.

SYPHON COFFEE

Syphon coffee, also known as vacuum coffee, makes the best coffee you've ever had, but the system is not for novices. In fact, to appreciate the art of syphon coffee, you have to find a coffee shop that still prepares it, for there's a lot of drama and expertise in making coffee in such a beautiful way. Look for a branch of Key Coffee, or an old-school coffee shop.

The syphon produces a wonderful cup of coffee that is full of flavor and aroma, without any bitterness. With its glass bulbs it's a portable but fragile unit. It's best appreciated as a cultural icon, and totally unsuitable for making coffee before work.

So that's the simple way to enjoy top quality, freshly roasted coffee, made by yours truly!



Coffee Supplies Shortlist

Cama Coffee (cama 現烘咖啡)

Coffee drip bags, basic cold and hot brew equipment for manual coffee making. Coffee bean selection includes Yirgacheffe, Kenya AA, Brazil, and blends.

Louisa Coffee (路易莎咖啡)

Good range of coffee beans, including house blends, Ethiopian, Central American blends, Kenyan. Basic equipment selection.

Moreway Coffee (摩威咖啡館)

Wide range of coffee equipment from grinding to making coffee, mugs, grinders, and tools. Lots of coffee beans from many regions around the world. Also supplies single coffee drip bags with a wider selection of recently roasted, freshly ground coffee.





The Cupcake Shop

TEXT: JOAN H, HUNGRYINTAIPEI
IMAGES: HUNGRYINTAIPEI

Joan created Hungry in Taipei in 2005 when she moved to Taiwan from California and couldn't find much information online about restaurants in English. She has since blogged about over six hundred Taipei restaurants, found places to fulfill her Mexican, cupcake, BBQ and pho cravings, and explored Taipei's night markets, shaved ice, dumplings and fine-dining scene. Hungry in Taipei has been mentioned by BuzzFeed, CNN Travel, NY Post, Lonely Planet Taiwan, Taipei Times, Bizarre Foods and the Culinary Institute of America. <http://hungryintaipei.blogspot.tw/>



Usually when I eat a cupcake or cookie from somewhere in Taipei I think, I could make this better myself at home. There are of course a few exceptions to this rule, and there's one that definitely blows it out of the water. Several years ago, a friend brought over some cupcakes to a lunch and I couldn't stop eating them. I've ordered them a number of times since!

Not only do The Cupcake Shop's cupcakes taste delicious, they are also so pretty and fun. Roz, the Cupcake Shop's baker and master cupcake artist, does an amazing job with the frosting and detailed decorations. A quick browse through their Facebook page showed everything from Superhero logos to Olaf from *Frozen*, to *Despicable Me* minions, to just fun glittery pink and pastel cupcakes. The Cupcake Shop offers that rare frosting that tastes as good as it looks.

The cupcakes are quite moist since they are made to order, and there are quite a number of flavors to choose from. My favorites are red velvet, strawberry, carrot cake and chocolate. In the strawberry, you can actually taste real strawberries, it's not just bright pink cake. There are also other flavors like Oreo, lemon blueberry, pumpkin, mocha, banana and vanilla bean.

Cupcakes come in regular and mini sizes, and the minimum order is six cupcakes for regular and

twelve cupcakes for minis. There's an additional extra fee (usually a few hundred NT\$) for added decorations on the frosting. It's best to order the cupcakes at least three days in advance via email or telephone, both Grace and Roz communicate in English, or you can browse their Facebook site for more photos. Cupcake Shop doesn't have a physical store, so you must arrange a pick-up with them, usually near Taipei City Hall MRT. The cupcakes come in easy-to-carry boxes and are taped down so they don't slide around and mess up the decorations. Just be sure to open the box carefully, and keep away from curious little hands until they are ready to be eaten.

Of course, if you are going to make cupcakes yourself, it would be a lot cheaper. But the quality of the Cupcake Shop's decorated cupcakes is worth splurging on for a special occasion. They definitely taste better than a few birthday cakes I've had at other people's parties, where you *ooh* and *aah* for the photo op, but nobody ends up eating the cake. These cupcakes, on the other hand, will disappear quickly, and your friends will be asking where you got them and ordering them for their own parties.

THE CUPCAKE SHOP

Zhongxiao East Road, Section 5
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www.facebook.com/thecupcakeshoptw/



Teacups

TEXT: & IMAGES: JOHN ANG

smoothness of the tea. However, for a thick brew of Indian spiced milk tea with sweetened condensed milk (plus lots of sugar to cut the bitterness) a thicker-bodied teacup is preferred.

For those used to savoring different teas, the awareness that it has many similarities with wine tasting is vivid. When enjoying tea, just like enjoying a glass of wine, the "body" of the fluid is perceived as either full and rounded or flat and watery, running down your throat like thick drops of honey, or like water that has lost all surface tension. Depending on the type of feeling you desire from the tea you plan to drink, your steeping technique, teapot and teacup, all play an important role.

Drinking Chinese teas in Taiwan, the teacup is even more venerated. Its material, color, shape, form, decoration, thickness and surroundings are all considered.

The teacup has a long history of development. In the Tang dynasty, when tea was treated more like a soup, with condiments, herbs, spices, and orange peel, large white or green tea bowls were used. By the Song dynasty, tea bowls were reduced in size as the tea came in a powdered form and had to be whipped with a tea whisk. As the tea was bright green in color, black tea bowls were preferred. By the Ming, tea leaves were steeped in large teapots and drunk from large teacups, but by the period of Qing rule, the production of tea improved and tea was



Isn't a teacup just a cup for drinking tea? Well yes, to put it simply, but it can also tell what kind of person you are. Can you imagine being judged by the teacup you use?

I recall going to my aunt's for afternoon tea with my mum and hearing my aunt complaining how her maid can never remember which teacups go with which tea. I can picture how she would turn in her grave if she saw me trying to get a quick caffeine fix by flushing hot water into a mug with two Earl Grey tea bags (I'm allergic to coffee).

But of course, I do acknowledge that there is a great difference in the flavor

and taste of teas depending on the teacup you use; even if the tea is good and the teapot is correct, the wrong teacup may ruin everything. In Taiwan, TWG, a tea company from Singapore, is trying to introduce the perfect way to drink English tea, offering a selection of expensive teas using the proper paraphernalia, including the proper teacups.

Yes, English black teas from India cannot taste any better than when served in fine, high-fired porcelain teacups of regular size. The thinness that can be achieved only with porcelain matches so well with the

appreciated for its intense flavor and fragrance, so teapots and teacups were reduced to miniature size, to enhance this quality.

COLOR

I cringe at the idea of using dark-colored tea cups. It's fine if the teacup is colored on the outside, but the interior must be white, at least for me (and I believe for many others as well). This is because when tea is poured into a white cup you can tell whether the tea was steeped correctly. If the color is too dark, it means the tea was steeped too long, and the second time round you can shorten the steeping time. In addition to this, with a white tea cup you can actually judge the quality of your tea. Top quality Chinese teas usually leave little or no dust, and the tea remains crystal clear and clean with every steeping. When buying teas in Taiwan, I often go to tea houses that are very strict with their tea selection. I know that before savoring the teas they plan to stock they test them by pouring the steeped tea into a white tea cup and check for dust particles under a bright light.

Also, pure white porcelain teacups are best for such teas such as oolong, since their subtle, light, transparent green color can also show if the tea is lightly or heavily fermented. In the 17th century (during the late Ming period) it was a fashion to use these white porcelain teacups, but there was also a desire for



more visual variety, so often the teacups would be colored on the outside, while remaining white inside. In the late 17th century, white porcelain teacups with an orange glaze decorated with gold paint called *kinrande* by the Japanese were highly popular, as were teacups with brown glazes, but with blue cobalt patterns under the glaze inside the tea cup. The remaining white areas inside the teacup would still allow the drinker to know if the tea was properly steeped. Many of these brown glazed blue-and-white teacups made in the Chinese porcelain production area of Jingdezhen in Jiangxi Province, such as those found in the Nanking Cargo, were recovered along the coast of Thailand from sunken ships on their way to be exported to Europe. [The Nanking Cargo was a 150,000-piece hoard of Chinese porcelain and 125 pure gold ingots that



sank to the bottom of the South China Sea, and only discovered 235 years later, to be auctioned off by Christie's Amsterdam office in 1986]. For the more highly fermented oolong teas such as Tie Guanyin, Oriental Beauty or Keemun, bone china with a slight yellow tinge is considered perfect as it will bring out the transparent golden hue of these teas. For darker colored brews such as Pu-er and Liu-an, colored ceramics such as green celadon-glazed teacups are suitable.

Black glazed teacups or tea bowls are only used for Japanese powdered green teas. This is because the opaque bright green tea color juxtaposed against the black glaze of the tea bowl provides a striking yet elegant color contrast that balances well with the otherwise subdued Zen aesthetics of the surrounding tea room.

THICKNESS

Why are Japanese tea bowls thick and Chinese teacups thin? If you know your teas the answer is simple. For the perfect brew of Japanese *matcha*,





the temperature of the water must be below boiling (around 85 to 90 degrees) to bring out its sweetness. Boiling water would bring out the bitterness of its caffeine. After pouring the tea into the tea bowl, however, the temperature has to be prevented from falling too fast, since the tea bowl has to be fondled by the drinker's palms for a few minutes before drinking. This can only be achieved if the tea bowl is thick enough.

On the other hand if a Chinese teacup is thick, the cup will be too hot to hold for a while, since Chinese teas generally require boiling water and the small teacup is held with two fingers at its lip.

SHAPE AND SIZE

When I first came to Taiwan I noticed that two types of tea cups were used for the same tea. One was a tall, slender cup, while the other was shorter but with a broader rim. After I attended my first tea drinking session at the Wisteria Tea House, I realized the taller cup was not for drinking from. The tea master would first pour the tea into the taller

cup, then empty it out into the shorter one. The taller cup was then held with the fingers and wafted close to their nose by the drinker, to savor the sweet flowery or fruity fragrance of the tea. This form of tea drinking with two types of tea cups apparently is an invention of Taiwanese tea drinkers, because Taiwan teas are famous for being the most fragrant in the world. The fragrance of the best teas can be enjoyed even after eight steepings. Today, however, it seems that using these tall teacups for smelling the fragrance of the tea is out of fashion, and no longer deemed cool by tea experts.

Pu-er tea, the flavor of which spreads expansively, preferably requires a low tea cup with a broad rim, while for the more fragrant high mountain oolong teas, smaller teacups with smaller rims enhance the flavor, which dissipates in a less expansive way. A little like drinking pinot noir or Chablis, where two different shapes of glass are required.

For less formal Chinese tea drinking, say for example when you steep tea



for yourself at home, you could use a *gaibei* or a teacup with a lid. When you want to smell the tea, lift the lid and tilt it so that half of it enters the tea, then bring it close to your nostrils and take a deep inhalation.

SETTINGS FOR YOUR TEA CUP

Teacups are often hot and can cause marks on a table, so tea coasters are required. These can be made out of a variety of materials, from pewter to glass. Under the coasters come place mats. Hand-woven linen or Japanese silk *obis* can be chosen, depending on whether you prefer a rustic *wabi-sabi* look, or a more formal setting.



John Ang is the owner of Samyama Gallery, Taipei, an art space specializing in rare antique textiles and fine crystals. Educated in Singapore, the United States and Japan, John's extensive knowledge of Asian art has made him a popular international speaker and author.



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Walking the walk: an interview with three Photowalkers

TEXT: J. CALDWELL

IMAGES: KENNETH DICKSON, DARREN MELROSE,
BILLY C. STAGNER, CRAIG FERGUSON

If your life is centered on Taipei, then the urban jungle will challenge you every day. Escape may not be an option for you, but embracing Taipei's urbanity with your camera will help your artistic spirit escape. Billy Stagner's Photowalkers Taipei group brings together many photographers, including himself, Darren Melrose, Craig Ferguson and hundreds more motivated photographers. Let's look at three of these expats in Taiwan, read about how they work, their photography tips, and check out some of their work.

Billy C. Stagner, the founder of Photowalkers Taipei, describes his initial interest in photography as coming from Instagram. He claims that he just dabbles in photography, but his group meets regularly all over the city to bring photographers together to shoot and share.

Darren Melrose has been an active participant in Photowalkers for quite a while. His Instagram account shows his passion: shooting people on the street. From markets to parks, he is drawn to the people who fill Taipei's urban life. Take a look at his work on Instagram.

Readers will recognize **Craig Ferguson** from his work on previous covers of *Centered on Taipei* magazine. When he arrived in Taipei, his interest in photography focused on travel and culture. Since then he has transitioned to commercial or editorial photography for both international publications and local companies.

J. Caldwell is a photographer and Photowalker who has lived in Taipei for a few years now. In his free time, he likes capturing the streets of Taipei with his camera.



Billy Stagner in Action @ Hsinchu City

Q: How did you get started taking photographs in Taipei?

Billy C. Stagner: A friend introduced me to Instagram, and I started using it with my smartphone just over three years ago. I began to notice the wide variety of users, which included many professional photographers, and their work. When I noticed the high-quality photos and the creativity at Instagram, I went out and bought my first digital camera.

Craig Ferguson: When I first arrived here in the early 2000s, I already had an interest in photography. I'd shot a few jobs in Australia for an NGO, and some consumer work, but I mostly just shot for myself, predominantly travel, as I'd been on the road for quite a while. After I'd been here 3-4 years, I decided I would need a way to make a living. That's when I began the process of becoming a working photographer.

Q: What kind of photography do you specialize in? Why?

Billy C. Stagner: I don't really have a specialty, because I still consider myself a student of photography. But for the past couple of years, I've been trying more portrait work and I really enjoy that because I like the collaboration with the models.

Darren Melrose: I'll do anything from street photography and street portraiture to formal portraiture, event or corporate stuff. I think I specialize in people because they are always visually interesting and don't require the same level of patience of, say, a landscape photographer. People are always doing interesting things and there are ways to work around bad light that allow me to get shots every time, unlike landscape photography.

Craig Ferguson: These days I'm covering mostly people and food, and I have begun shooting more still life or product work. It's largely dictated by commercial realities, and what I'm willing to do. While I still have a soft spot for travel photography, at this

stage in my life I'm not willing to do the work necessary to excel in it. I've got something else I've been working on to be published in early May.

Q: How did you get involved with Photowalkers?

Billy C. Stagner: I met David Anjema through Instagram and he introduced the idea of photo walks to me. We met in person and went on the first of many photo walks together in Taipei. Then I came up with the idea for Photowalkers, a photography group on Facebook that has become a forum for creating photo walk events in Taiwan.

Darren Melrose: I came across a posting on Facebook that there was going to be a group shoot very close to my home. After attending that event, it was such a great group of people that I found it easy to join up.

Craig Ferguson: A few years back I was shooting some ad-work for an MMA clothing company at the Confucius Temple. Billy from Photowalkers happened to be at the same place and saw me. He reached out to me on social media, and we got chatting. I later did a free basic lighting workshop for Photowalkers.

Q: Tell us what you've been photographing lately.

Billy C. Stagner: As many Instagramers do, I take pictures with my phone almost daily and of whatever I find interesting, wherever I happen to be. It could be my lunch, an alley somewhere in Taipei, or a scene at a local temple.

Darren Melrose: Lately it has been entirely personal stuff, mostly street photography and street portraits. Unfortunately, there hasn't been as much of that as I would prefer.

Craig Ferguson: Over the past month or so, mostly corporate portraiture. Some work for a startup that should be published in the next month or so, and I'm off to Tainan in a few days to shoot some scientists for a German magazine.



Photowalkers in the river



Darren Melrose in Action

Q: Who or what inspires you to take better photos? Why?

Billy C. Stagner: Lots of Instagramers inspire me. The friends I've made via Instagram are a huge influence. We reciprocate genuine appreciation for each other's work and that's a very encouraging environment to be in.

Darren Melrose: Well, photography is the only area that I am even remotely skilled at. I love music, painting, sculpture, acting and pretty much any other type of art, yet I am spectacularly unskilled at all of them. With photography, I feel that I can at least put my stuff next to some very skilled people's work and not embarrass myself. There is also a techy/nerdy part of me for which photography is pretty appealing.

Craig Ferguson: Like a lot of my creative colleagues, I'm never really satisfied with the work I do. It's a definite case of imposter syndrome. Hopefully one day I'll produce something that I'm happy with, and it's that desire to do so that inspires me.

Q: What cameras or tools do you prefer to use? Why?

Billy C. Stagner: I use a Sony Xperia Z5 smartphone, a Canon 70D, a Samsung NX500 and a Lumix FZ300. Which camera I prefer to use depends on the circumstances. The Lumix is lightweight and has a long zoom range, which is great for photo walks. The Samsung is compact and can easily be carried around daily. The Canon is my choice for portraits or "serious" photos.

Darren Melrose: I use Pentax cameras and quite a number of Pentax and other brand lenses. For the most part, I shoot fixed focal lenses or primes, simply because they allow more light in and I have just become used to working that way.

Craig Ferguson: Camera-wise, I'm a Canon shooter. Through the 1990s I shot with Minolta, but I was in Bangkok in 2001, about to head to Tibet, and my camera died. I didn't have enough time to wait for it to be repaired, so I had to buy a new camera, and Canon was having a sale. For lighting, I've long been a user of Phottix, and on the software side of things, it's Capture One Pro and Photoshop.

Q: What advice would you have to new Photowalkers?

Billy C. Stagner: Remember that everyone in the group loves taking pictures. You can relax and feel at home in this group. Get involved and meet other group members. It's a great opportunity to learn more and share your passion for photography.

Darren Melrose: For someone new, the best advice I have is to think really hard about how you organize your photos. Find a system, like Adobe Lightroom, which I use. Be really diligent about backing up your photos, keeping them easy to search. It's boring, but years from now you will thank me.

Craig Ferguson: Shoot what you love. For most people,

if you like it, that's often good enough. Have fun with your photography.

So, no matter what inspiration you find or what images you make, St. John Dunn, a teacher, photographer, instructor at the Community Services Center and contributor to *Centered on Taipei*, reminds us:

"Find your passion first! Know what interests you and know what story you want to tell. Find photographs that you admire, too. Instagram is a great source of inspiration. After this, imitate those pictures, and once you've found your momentum, start to innovate. But above all, go out there and have fun!"



LookThroughTheLens.com

Photowalkers in the Mirror by Kenneth Dickson



Market by Darren Melrose



by Billy C. Stagner



by Craig Ferguson

Instagram

Instagram offers a wealth of Taiwan photographers to follow:

Photowalkers

Facebook: [photowalkertaiwan](#)

Instagram: [photowalkers](#)

Joining the group on Facebook or Instagram will introduce you to over five hundred members, many of whom share their work on either forum.

Billy C. Stagner

Flickr: [billycstagner](#)

Instagram: [freshwater.musings](#)

Darren Melrose

Website: [www.darrenmelrose.com](#)

Instagram: [darrenmelrosephoto](#)

Craig Ferguson

Website: [www.craigfergusonimages.com](#)

Instagram: [cfimages](#)

St. John Dunn

Website: [www.photobella.tw](#)



Taipei American School Breaks Ground on Tech Cube



On March 2, 2017, TAS officially broke ground for the construction of its newest facility, the Tech Cube. Board members, administrators, major donors, faculty, staff, students, parents, and members of the wider community joined together in marking this celebratory occasion. The Tech Cube will be a five-story, open-planned facility on campus dedicated to STEAM education with a focus on design, technology, and robotics. The Tech Cube will have dedicated floors for each division, allowing for collaboration, continuity, and teamwork without foregoing age appropriate learning spaces.

When the Tech Cube opens in December 2018, it will provide the canvas for 21st century learning that will give TAS students the necessary skills and experiences they need to make a real difference in the world. Upper school students will learn in an electrical engineering lab and design in a fabrication hub. The middle school floor houses a VEX arena and robotic design lab, as well as vast open areas for art and innovation. The floor dedicated to lower school students is designed to include “tinker and maker” spaces as well as an amphitheater.

The Tech Cube will serve a growing need at TAS for STEAM education. This year in the Upper School, over 42% of students elected to take additional robotics, scientific research, and computer science courses. In addition, students partake in competitive robotics clubs such as FRC, VEX, and ROV that compete in tournaments around the world.

Lower and middle school students program simple machines, blend arts and science with the use of 3D printers, creatively engineer prosthetic hand prototypes, and undertake many other design-focused projects.

In addition to being visually stunning and strategically functional, the Tech Cube will be in line with the school's commitment to environmental sustainability. The facility is planned to achieve the Bronze Level of Environmental Certification in Taiwan. This EEW (Ecology, Energy, Waste Reduction, and Health) certification will recognize the Tech Cube as an environmentally compliant building.

[www.tas.edu.tw](#)



Nannette Lites – MSW, missionary and early activitist for the Community Services Center

TEXT & IMAGES: DR. MILTON A. LITES

Nannette Webb Lites was born in Dyess, Arkansas, just a few houses down from Johnny Cash and his family. She attended Ouachita Baptist University and earned her Master's in Social Work at Southwestern Baptist Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

She and her husband Milton Lites and two children arrived in Taiwan on August 2nd, 1970, on the occasion of their eighth wedding anniversary. Following language study, they both became deeply involved in music promotion among Chinese churches, Nannette assisting with children's choirs as time and opportunity permitted. As the children grew, her opportunities for involvement in the expatriate community also grew and she found herself on the Board of Directors of the Taipei American School (TAS). After completing her social work study during a furlough in the US, doors opened for her at Gateway Taiwan. This allowed her to put her training in counseling to good use.

Many expatriates living in Taipei had felt the need to expand Gateway's ministry to include the entire community, so planning was soon underway to meet these needs. Nannette was vitally involved in the initial efforts that resulted in the establishment of the Community Services Center, and served there faithfully as a counselor for many years. She continued to be involved in the Chinese churches as well, assisting some of them to begin programs that sought to meet the social needs within their communities.

Nannette served as a valuable resource person at the Community Services Center, assisting with Newcomer Orientation programs

for new arrivals within the business community, and leading seminars sponsored by the Center. One of these seminars was a Marriage Enrichment Workshop, which she led, along with her husband.

One of the more memorable cases in which she was asked to assist within the expat community was a murder case involving some children of American parents. Since her background was in family counseling, she was called on many times to counsel the children of expatriate families. In addition to her counseling duties at Gateway and the Community Services Center, she was also asked to provide counseling for students at TAS. Due to her language ability in Chinese, she was also asked to assist with needed communication between the school and the parents of Chinese students.

During her term of service in Taiwan, Nannette gave freely of her time in both the Chinese and expatriate communities. The Taiwan Baptist Mission invited her to become the director of their Language and Orientation Center (LOC), which provided training in several different languages, as well as orientation into the Chinese culture. The LOC maintained training centers in three locations, from Taipei to Kaohsiung, so this required frequent trips down island. It is to her credit that she was



Language and Orientation Center
Coordinator



Singing for Chinese Wedding

able to maintain a balance between the Chinese and expatriate worlds, while providing valuable support to her husband Milton, in starting new churches in the Taipei area.

After serving in Taiwan for twenty-four years, she and her husband felt that God was calling them to transfer to South America, where they served for four years in Colombia. While there, Nannette continued to make use of her counseling skills, assisting families of students killed in a plane crash in dealing with their grief.

In 2013, she and Milton retired from missionary service and moved to Little Rock, Arkansas. They currently live in a retirement community in Bedford, Texas.

.....
Dr. Milton A. Lites, Undergraduate study at La. Tech University. Bachelor of Music, 1959. DMA (musical arts) from Southwestern Baptist Seminary, Ft. worth, TX 1988, Married to Nannette Webb Lites for 54 years. Served as missionary with SBC (Southern Baptist Convention) International Mission Board for 34 years. 24 of those in Taiwan. Currently adjunct professor at Dallas Baptist University, teaching "Ethnomusicology in Christian Missions."



Spring Neutral

TEXT: ZEE DLAMINI IMAGES: WEB

Being “fashionable” may be regarded as wearing the trendiest new fashions, but for most people it is just about being presentable and comfortable in your own skin.

Age, lifestyle and job generally tend to subconsciously dictate what type of clothes we wear on a daily basis. Commonly, we shy away from wearing the newest trends, and with fast fashion thrown into the loop, perhaps that is a wise financial decision.

When it comes to shopping for colorful clothing, personality and taste are often the key factors. While others do admit that they do not feel confident enough to make bold color statements, soft-colored garments in pastels and neutral colors are seemingly liked and wearable across all ages, professions and lifestyles.

In Taipei, it's not rare to spot neutral colored outfits. In fact, this is what adds to the city's interesting fashion landscape. It's more about cuts, comfort and classics rather than creating ultrafashionable statements.

This spring, neutrals and pastels take center stage for daily wear, including some familiar favorites like khaki, pale dogwood and a soothing blue called island paradise.

Zee Dlamini is a digital PR strategist turned fashion stylist/fashion blogger, in addition to being a full-time mommy with a zest for life and a lover of all things good.



KHAKI

For a long time beige was considered boring, or only good enough for a safari holiday, but thanks to street style influencers and women's daily fashion needs, neutral hues are now widely accepted as a timeless fashion color. Not only did runways heavily feature this color during Spring 2017 shows, but smaller fashion businesses have caught on and are providing this color classic at great prices for the everyday woman. A color to own? YES.

ISLAND PARADISE

Blue may be easier to accept as a neutral color than orange. It's also an easy color to wear because of the different shades that are available, and simple to pair with other clothes that you may already have. The biggest blue trends are stripes, ruffled shirts and off-shoulder ruffled dresses.



HAZELNUT

Hazelnut is a blend between pale pink and khaki. It is a versatile, earthy color that can either make you stand out or easily blend in, depending on how you style your outfit. It looks great in linen, satin and many other fabrics. Its adaptable nature makes it a wonderful all-year round neutral.



PALE DOGWOOD

This is a muted shade of pink: think of diluted pale or blush pink. It gives off peaceful and tranquil vibes. It can be used as a base color for styling with browns, saturated pink hues or prints, and just like its cousin hazelnut, it's good all-year-round.

GREENERY

Not lush green, not kale green but a zesty yellow-green hue, which includes a brighter shade of olive green, and grass green. This color may fall into the “too colorful” category, but is not as bold as a flame orange or fuchsia pink, and pairs well with most colors. It works well in a print.



TIP

Spring 2017 neutrals are also good for interior décor, and you may have spotted them at weddings in the past. Hazelnut is a perfect transitional color for other seasons of the year, and if you love bold color statements, try to pair it with a kale green piece.

RICHARD SAUNDERS EXPLORES TAIWAN'S LESS-TRODDEN PATHS

Zhenxibao Ancient Tree Grove

TEXT & IMAGES: RICHARD SAUNDERS

A hike to at least one of Taiwan's awesome groves of giant red cypress trees is a compulsory experience on any trip here, and Lalashan (拉拉山) in southern Taoyuan City, with its wide, easy trails and relatively easy access, makes a great day trip from Taipei if you're short of time. Those that can spare two days and a bit more effort, however, can venture far deeper into the mountains and enjoy the two less well-known groves of giant trees at Zhenxibao (鎮西堡) in southern Hsinchu County. Standing straight across the valley from Zhenxibao, the much better-known ancient tree grove at Smangus (司馬庫斯) has become hugely popular with local tourists, which compromises the feeling of remoteness and pristine natural beauty that's one of the main reasons for coming out here. Crowds aside, the fact that the "Granddaddy Tree" at Smangus is the third largest tree in Taiwan is perhaps reason alone to pay a visit, but if you must go, visit during the week to enjoy this spectacularly beautiful place in relative peace.

If, during your time in Taiwan, you have time to visit just one grove



of these awesome giants, make it Zhenxibao. There are actually two distinct groups of giant trees here. More popular by far is grove B, which has the better-maintained trail, is less steep and has the largest number of impressive trees. Count on 4-5 hours out there and back, including rests. Fitter hikers should consider also doing the hike to grove A. There are fewer trees there and the trails are steeper and less well-defined, but the hike offers more pristine landscapes, and an even more remote atmosphere. It's a very fine trip, especially if you go as far as the evocatively-named Poison Dragon Lake, in which case you should allow at least six hours for the return trip.

The loop trail around Ancient Tree

Grove B climbs through the woods, passing more than ten magnificent trees (each well over two millennia in age, and surrounded by a wooden fence to protect it from the damaging feet of visitors). Most have names, such as the King (naturally the biggest in the grove), the Queen, Adam, and Eve. The trail (seven kilometers for the return trip from the car park) is easy to follow, and the gradients are moderate all the way.

Zhenxibao lies in a very remote part of Hsinchu County, with no public transport, so you'll need private transport to visit. Full details about the grove (including GPS coordinates and info on getting there) can be found in my book, *Taiwan 101 Volume II*, on pages 24-32.



Richard Saunders is a trained classical musician and writer who has lived in Taipei since 1993. He has written several books (available at the Center and in bookshops around Taipei), including Yangmingshan: the Guide (a complete guide to the National Park on Taipei's doorstep), Taipei Escapes I and 2, which together detail sixty day trips and hikes within easy reach of Taipei city, and The Islands of Taiwan, a guide to Taiwan's offshore islands. His latest book, Taiwan 101: Essential Hikes, Sights and Experiences around Ilha Formosa, is out now.

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Conflict as a Source of Harmony

TEXT: WENDY EVANS IMAGE: WEB IMAGE



Do you like conflict? We often assume that a “Yes!” answer to this question means that a person is aggressive and provocative. However, in reality, if we understand the role of conflict more deeply, and if more people in our circle of relationships become comfortable with conflict, all of us will benefit.

Conflict is inevitable in all relationships, whether among family, friends, or co-workers. Relationships devoid of conflict are often missing enthusiasm and passion. For example, marriage relationships that end in divorce often end not because of what was said but because of what was not said over time. In other words, we should risk saying more rather than less in our relationships. Relationships and work places thrive because of energy and passion coming from individuals who feel comfortable in an environment where it is safe to bring out new ideas that others might not like. This phenomenon can cause disagreement and conflict, but ultimately leads to improvement and growth of relationships and work places.

Once we accept the fact that conflict is an inevitable part of close relationships, instead of making it our goal to avoid conflict, we can aim to learn how to effectively deal with or manage it.

Here are some important steps we can put to use when we find ourselves in conflict with another person:

1) Stay Calm and Listen to Understand

Thomas Jefferson once said, “Nothing gives one so much advantage over

another as to remain always cool and unruffled under all circumstances.” Staying calm helps us to engage more effectively in conflict. The angrier we become, the harder it is to really take in what the other person is saying. When someone is confronting us in an angry manner, we tend to focus on what our response will be, and on how we can defend ourselves from accusations. This tendency can lead us to miss important aspects of what the other person is saying, and can also project to the other person that we are not really listening to them.

However, an effective way to solve conflict is to focus very carefully on what the other person is saying, rather than focusing on our response. If the person appears angry, consider that really listening to them (rather than trying to deflect their anger) is one of the most effective ways to diffuse the problem. Helping to facilitate a calm environment will put us in a position to more effectively resolve the conflict.

2) Communicate Effectively

After listening well to the other person, we should choose our words carefully and prepare to communicate our own perspective, without escalating the conflict. Outlined below are four steps to help communicate more effectively when experiencing conflict in relationships:

- a) Rather than starting with accusations against the other person, take a moment to reflect on anything you may have done to contribute to the conflict, take responsibility for this, and apologize for your part.
- b) Avoid using the words “always”

and “never.” It’s rare for someone to “always” or “never” say or do a certain behavior. Using these words can intensify the conflict, rather than leading to resolution.

- c) Use “I statements” to communicate what you found to be offensive. I statements can be a significant contributor to resolving conflict more quickly. Using the communication format of “When... (something happens)... I feel ... (emotion) ...” is a word choice that helps to prevent the other person from becoming defensive and subsequently less able to hear you. Rather, talking about your own feelings can diffuse those hurt feelings. An example of an I statement would be: “When you speak so loudly to me, I feel like you are angry with me.”
- d) Don’t become “hysterically historical.” Try to stay focused on the specific issue at hand. Bringing up other offenses from the past is not helpful in resolving conflict. A great reason for applying the principles in this article ASAP is that if you don’t develop the habit of resolving conflict as it arises, unresolved conflict gets stockpiled. Then minor conflicts have a tendency of turning into major disagreements because of unresolved past issues.

3) Anticipate Conflict

It’s safe to say that when you are in relationships with others there will be things that you do to offend

other people, yet have no idea what it was that you did. All of us have experienced times when someone suddenly changes the way they interact with us. Perhaps they become quiet and distant, or maybe they seem more irritable towards us. Before you begin to distance yourself from that person, make it a point to communicate with them and ask them if you've done something to offend them. After listening to them, you are likely to hear one of two scenarios. Either you did something that was indeed offensive, for which you need to take responsibility and apologize, or your words or actions were misunderstood by the other person. Too often conflict is the result of a misunderstanding. We need to do all we can to anticipate that

we will have conflict in relationships and to proactively seek to understand and be sensitive to others around us.

BENEFITS TO CONFLICTS

To help us contrast the frequent inferences of conflict as a negative encounter, let's consider some of the benefits of conflict as mentioned in the book *Interpersonal Conflict*:

- Conflict increases our awareness that a problem exists
- Discussing conflicting views can lead to better solutions
- Managing conflict regularly is more effective than letting conflicts build, which can result in a clash that is difficult to resolve
- Managing conflict in a healthy way helps to build self-esteem

- Conflict encourages people to grow

Just as oysters turn grit into pearls, confrontation can turn conflict into harmony in our relationships. The key: learning to disagree without being disagreeable.

.....
Wendy Evans is a USA certified counselor with more than twenty years of experience in working with people challenged with various issues, including marriage/relationship tensions, depression, parenting, weight management, disordered eating, substance abuse, anxiety, and cross-cultural adjustment.



APRIL GALLERY

A percentage of all proceeds of items sold at the Gallery will go to the Center. Please remember that by displaying your items or shopping at the Gallery, you will be helping the Center to continue to provide valuable services to the international community.



KRISTI THORNBURY

Kristi is presenting a new line of pure, safe, non-toxic and eco-friendly skin care and nutrient products for holistic living. All items are certified as being vegan and gluten-free. She is available to answer questions and to provide suggestions about her products. Contact her at kristithornbury@gmail.com

ROSEMARY GARDEN - ERICA KUO

Eating fresh, and being able to choose safe, certified organic herbs and natural foods is a major concern for individuals seeking a healthy lifestyle, according to Erica Kuo, a clinical certified herbalist. Erica's Rosemary Garden offers a wide range of tea blends, natural herbal specialties, essential oils and bath delights for clean living. For further information, please contact Erica at erica.kuo@gmail.com

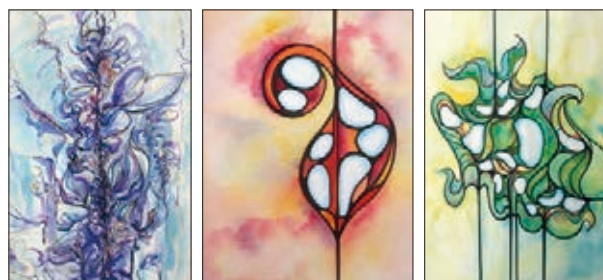
ASMA AHMED'S TRADITIONAL PAKISTANI HANDICRAFTS



A lovely, eye-catching collection of traditional blue pottery (decorated with floral & geometric patterns, and accentuated by stunning turquoise

glazes), and intricately designed jewelry with semi-precious stones are just some of the unique Pakistani handicrafts being presented at the Center this month.

THE ARTIST GALLERY - AN EXHIBITION OF VISUAL RESONANCE - INK AND WATERCOLOR PAINTINGS BY KRISTI THORNBURY



Feeling a deep connection with nature, Kristi tries to capture the essence of being in a particular place, and the way that place resonates in her memory. Taiwan's natural beauty provides her with endless inspiration, and her experiences with nature are best described through color, light and movement. The resulting imagery is a visual resonance that represents the special moment of a particular time and place for Kristi.



Kristi is the founder of Yili Arts Studio (opened in 2014), where she holds classes as she fulfills her dream to create beauty through art and her passion for teaching. She can be contacted at www.yiliarts.com

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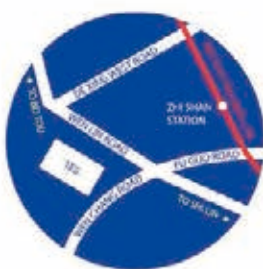
A Taiwan Photo Gallery

This month, we are pleased to present Virginia Lee, a photographer whose photos reflect her love of Yangmingshan National Park.



Wisteria Flowers by Virginia Lee

Section française de l'Ecole européenne de Taipei Taipei European School French Section 台北歐洲學校法國部



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