#### **Issue THREE. 2009**

ISSN: 1998-0787

**TheNewsletter** 



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## **Dear Hong Kong Branch Members:**

I'm delighted to be writing to you again for this our third Branch newsletter again put together by our Communications Director Mark Robson. Without being painful we would really like to see some of you folks take a quarter of an hour with a cup of coffee to send him something of interest to everyone. It can be a personal opinion, item of interest to us all, or description of event past or future. We have also now been approached by people interested in advertising to our members. Please just send something to Mark at mark.robson@portfolio-asia.com

In the area of communications with Members I'm also pleased to advise you of the great progress that our secretariat has achieved in setting up our Branch website. Please take a look at <u>www.polyu.edu.hk/htm/ioh</u>.

We are establishing a confidential area which may be used by our members who wish to communicate with other members by entering their member's pin. This website actually mirrors the new main IoH website which of course gives our members access to everything happening with IoH across the world as well access to over 300 eBooks plus valuable journals & online catalogues.

As previously mentioned I urge all members receiving this newsletter to make other members known to them who do not receive our information to provide Jenny Kim (Ms.) at the Secretariat tourism.jen@gmail.com with their e-mail address. We are going through difficult times and I put it to everyone that we really should be trying to assist each other through those difficulties which appear to be coming our way this year. There never was a time when a local branch of the Institute could be more beneficial.

Having established the Secretariat, the newsletter, and now the website we at the Executive Committee would really like to ramp up the number of Branch events in 09. It is interesting that although it is always difficult to get members to participate those events that we did put on in 08 were definitely enjoyed by anyone who did attend. Leslie Bailey of McDonalds put on for us an extremely professional presentation of their Research & Development Centre in North Point which generated considerable interest in those who did come along at the end of the day.

We have been motivated by these events to put together the following tentative schedule of events for this year for which we would really appreciate your active support both in assisting to put on the event or of course your attendance. We are looking for some hopefully high profile controversial speakers, and affordable locations

AGM & Lunch Meeting – Thursday, April 23rd @ 11.30 p.m. Breakfast Meeting – Thursday, September 24th @ 8 a.m. Lunch Meeting – Thursday, November 19th @ 12.30 p.m.

Visit to the Jockey Club – Sunday, June 28th @ 11.30 a.m. Visit to a Casino Hotel in Macau – Saturday, July 18th. Christmas Dinner- Wednesday, December 9th

It has never been our intention that participation in the local branch should be a time consuming activity, but we really do hope that as the branch does improve then more of you will be motivated to help including joining our Executive Committee for which we would certainly appreciate expressions of interest.

I certainly look forward to the next time that I have the opportunity to get together with you.

9 Heibel

Ted Theobald, FIH

## **INDUSTRY NEWS**

## Challenges to Vocational Educators

#### By Catherine Poon, FIH

The Indian revere him. The Spanish fight him. The Chinese pet and enslave him. Yes, I am talking about the ox who, poor ox, has arrived in 2009, his 'image year', in the midst of the great global financial tsunami. Donald Tsang says export in December has suffered a double-digit fall (5.3% drop in November), and unemployment rate will soar. The Tourism Board chiefs say visitors will drop by 1.6%. Indeed, misfortune does not rain; it pours.

As a vocational educator in the hospitality industry, I am first and foremost concerned about the maintenance of a steady stream of supply of trained manpower to meet the changing needs of the industry. In 2009, the traditional 5-2-3 education structure will breathe its last breath and become 3-3-4. This means that in 2011 there will be no zero – Secondary 5 graduates who have hitherto been a main and important source of students for vocational education providers generally, including the VTC and Caritas. This is a serious challenge in itself, and there will be derivative problems of an immediate redundancy of staff and other resources. Some fears are fermenting that some vocational education teachers may have to retire by choice or compulsion, and many more to switch to other businesses. The challenges are completed by an expected bulge in 2012 of senior secondary graduates who will have completed their new six-year secondary school curriculum, and the consequential need to replenish the educator capacity depleted in the 'gap year'. According to the VTC Executive Director, Dr. Carrie Willis, it has plans, some of which are already in development, to further diversify its services and achieve a more balanced development in both pre-employment and inservice programs. Courses are being enriched and new satellite offering sites set up to reach out to more potential students (VTC New Year Message).

There is, of course, a great need for help and co-operation from employers in the industry. They have a long history of making unflinching, essential and massive contributions in feeding the educators with manpower needs, market data and trends, and opportunities for students' practical attachments. Their continued support is necessarily the surest way to help all stake players to ride over the turbulences of the tsunami in the Year of the Ox and its aftermath. I take the opportunity to express to them our appreciation and thanks.

## Catherine Poon, FIH, is, Head of Department of Hotel, Service and Tourism Studies of Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education. (Email: ykcpoon@vtc.edu.hk)

## The Challenges of 2009

#### By Cynthia Leung, MIH

The start of 2009 is characterized by lots of challenges and uncertainties – the credit crunch, the flu epidemic, possible large scale layoffs, high unemployment rate, and stagflation. It is forecasted that the economic downturn will hit the revenue seriously. To face these challenges, the management has to devise appropriate strategies and contingency plans. Some hotels and catering companies have started implementing no-pay leave; cutting down the number of part-time staff; freezing the pay increase in order to lower labour cost. Apart from cutting down operating costs, it is vital for the management to take a more pro-active and positive approach to boost up sales. To achieve a growth in revenue under this critical situation, the company needs to distinguish itself and outperform its competitors by offering more "value-for-money" services and products. This is essential since the potential customers are more cautious on every single dollar they pay and want to maximize the propensity of satisfaction on each dollar they spend, no matter it is a low-end or an affluent market sector. For instance, some hotels offer more membership bonus points when customers book for every 10<sup>th</sup> night in their hotel chains or offer a "free" night on every 5<sup>th</sup> night.

Although the economic tsunami strikes through the globe, the most affected hospitality industries are luxurious hotels (4 to 6- star ranking); airlines and travel agencies; however, some catering industries such as institutional catering is not seriously affected due to its business nature. Institutional caterers that feed the staff workers and school students are less affected; while those that cater for outside catering and parties are affected the most since many corporate companies cut down budget for the banquet events. Therefore, it is time for the hoteliers; airline operators; caterers to review both their short-term and long-term business strategies in order to minimize the impact of possible recession and to diversify the economic risks in the coming future. For instance, hotel owners can focus on maintaining the long-stay guest residence rate or developing service apartment business so as to secure the "bread-and-butter"; airline operators can offer some "loyalty discount" for the frequent business travelers to secure the threshold passenger numbers; while outside catering operators can offer some "corporate discounts" to attract more corporate businesses.

## Cynthia Leung, MIH, is Assistant General Manager of LGC Catering Ltd. (Email: cleungsm@netvigator.com)

## am Troubled Times and Time to Think.

#### By Amanda Hyndman, MIH

Sure we are all spending a fair amount of our time at the moment pondering the enormity of what we hear and see in the media. We certainly also have our work cut out for us whether it is budgeting, forecasting or re forecasting, best case, worse case and medium case scenarios, how to take even better care of less customers but whom have less to spend, how to keep the team motivated, take even better care of them and most of all, how to make them feel secure and confident about their livelihoods and futures in this great business that is the hospitality business.

Everyone does it differently – early morning meetings, late night conference calls, consultants & advisers, cross functional brainstorms, corporate office directives, peer group discussions etc. With respect to all these time honoured methods, however, I find that clear thinking and better ideas often come to me as I am out walking. It also helps at least psychologically, to burn off some of the excesses of the festive season.

I am reluctant to say 'hiking' since I was somewhat scarred being the offspring of two parents who met at the Fell & Rock Climbing Club, and as a child was dragged up and down the peaks of England & Wales in varying degrees of unpleasant British weather.

Coming from London I enjoyed the parks of the capital but new to HK, I was not in too much of a hurry to join the trail walkers in colourful gear, racing up & down the trails commemorating former Governors. Even I as a flat walker however tired of Circular Walk on the Peak, more so since it resembles the Hennessy Road crossing by Sogo, particularly on a Sunday, and likewise my wanders around Victoria Park and along the Wanchai Board Walk were slowed by feline and canine creatures respectively littering the way.

Since needs must I sought something a little more interesting and when The Luxe Guide said that you didn't need Louboutin's for the Dragon's Back, I dared to give it a go and it is now one of my regular trails, ideally ending up at the Chinese/ Thai restaurant at the roundabout in Shek O for a late lunch, and was in fact the route of the inaugural Excelsior Team Hike at the end of last year.

Team Excelsior just completed our second team hike 'Turtles on Violet' starting off at Wong Nei Chung Reservoir (just beneath Park View) to see the basking turtles, then a

lovely one hour or so meander around Violet Hill on Tsz Lo Lan Shan Path with

spectacular views down to Ocean Park, Deep Water Bay, Repulse Bay, Middle and Lamma Islands. Approximately half the route is along a catch water and the remainder is on a flat but stony path. When you reach the junction dissected by the stone steps there are 6 options depending on your mood and inclination:

- 1) For the energetic, turn left and up the steps over the peak of Violet Hill and back to Park View.
- 2) For concrete 'all the way' go straight ahead and along the catch water which brings you out at Tai Tam upper reservoir and then head right and follow the road back down through Tai Tam Country Park.

Or alternatively go down the 200 steps to the right until you reach Tsin Shui Wan Au and the mapboard then:



- 3) Head to the right further along the catch water which brings you around the southern slopes of HK Island, with lovely views of Stanley, ending up at Stanley Gap Road
- 4) Just 10 paces along the catch water there is a very overgrown path going straight down the hillside to the right and with warning signs! It is a bit of a scramble but is the quickest way down and brings you out next to the HK International School in Repulse Bay.
- 5) Follow the sign to Stanley Gap over 'The Twins' but beware although the steps are marked every 100, there is no sign warning you that there are 1200 steps to the top, straight up and literally straight down the other side. I admit the views of Stanley are stunning but by half way up I was having a severe sense of humour failure and on reaching the top felt quite nauseous (I am maintaining it was the altitude as opposed to my poor fitness level)
- 6) Follow the path down to the left along the rugged but pretty path next to Tai Tam Tuk Reservoir and back along Tai Tam Reservoir Road to the entrance of the Country Park.

The walking (or hiking) in HK is amazing and a great antidote to business challenges and city living. If people could just be persuaded not to dump their litter along the way and if someone would put a sign post about those 1200 steps it would be perfect. But I am certainly never short of a challenge to ponder or a good meal to burn off and I plan to make the most of the cooler weather. Enjoy.

#### Amanda Hyndman, MIH, is General Manager of The Excelsior. (Email: ahyndman@mohg.com)

## **P**olyU Gears up to Support Further Development of MICE Industry

By Pauline Ngan

The School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM) of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) has been working in close collaboration with the industry to develop relevant programmes to groom the next generation of convention and event managers for the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions) industry.

Introducing this development, SHTM Director Professor Kaye Chon said the School is mindful of Hong Kong's push to strengthen its leading position in the market. He said, "With the spread of convention and event management as a specialist field in Asia, there is a pressing need to train the right people to satisfy industry demand."

To develop an innovative programme of direct relevance to the MICE industry, SHTM has set up a dedicated taskforce with industry leaders to work on the curriculum development of Hong Kong's first Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Convention and Event Management conversion programme, to be launched in 2009/2010.

A distinct feature of this new programme is that it has responded to industry needs from inception. Programme Director Dr David Jones described the process as "unique and progressive", with industry involvement to ensure the curriculum mirror the realities of the changing business climate to meet the needs of the industry. It will offer subdegree holders the opportunity to upgrade their qualifications to the degree level.

"The industry members of the taskforce were asked to outline 'what competencies the industry would want from a student graduating from PolyU with a degree in this field.' Their recommendations were then developed into subject proposals, which were taken back for further input until our faculty members could produce a series of new subjects," added Dr Jones.

The newly developed subjects would cover the broad areas of meeting planning, exhibition management, venue management, and convention sales and service. One of the new subjects has already been incorporated into the School's most popular BSc (Honours) programmes in Hotel Management and Tourism Management.

SHTM students enrolled on the elective of Meeting Planning are also given the challenging opportunity of practising their skills in real life settings. They are now actively involved in organizing the International Convention and Expo Summit 2009, to

be held from 18 to 20 May this year. With its theme "Connect Asia Today", the Summit would provide delegates with an inter-disciplinary forum for fruitful exchanges.

The two-year BSc (Honours) in Convention and Event Management programme is a self-financed conversion programme which is targeted for holders of Higher Diplomas and Associate Degrees, and others who want to complete their bachelor degrees in the convention and event management area. For registration and further details, please click on the Study@PolyU website (www.polyu.edu.hk/study).



Professor Kaye Chon, Chair Professor and Director of SHTM (left), and Dr David Jones, Associate Professor and Undergraduate Programme Director of SHTM (right), introducing the new Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Convention and Event Management conversion programme.



Professor Kaye Chon (far right), Dr David Jones (far left) and SHTM students of the organising committee of the International Convention and Expo Summit 2009. The Summit will be held in Hong Kong in May 2009.

Pauline Ngan is Marketing Manager, School of Hotel & Tourism Management of Polytechnic University. (Email: hmpn@inet.polyu.edu.hk)

# **B**reakfast Meeting with Tourism Commissioner

By James Lu, FIH



The Institute of Hospitality Hong Kong Branch organized a breakfast meeting on 26 February 2009 and invited the HK Government Commissioner for Tourism Miss Margaret Fong to meet our members and speak to us about her vision and new initiatives in tourism after the Government had announced their budgets for 2009/2010 the day before.

Speaking on the need to make Hong Kong more attractive as a major tourism destination in Asia, Miss Fong shared her experience while working in Washington DC as the Chief Representative of the Hong Kong Government in the USA and listening to how Hong Kong was perceived by them as a travel destination not to be missed in Asia.

In reiterating the importance of building and enhancing the Hong Kong destination brand and image, Miss Fong believed that it is the vibrancy of the city and the quality of people in Hong Kong, plus the natural sceneries and our beautiful harbour and peak views that provided the stunning attractions of Hong Kong to lure more visitors here.

Yet, she was completely aware of the limitations that Hong Kong faces in continuing our success story and spoke about the need to make visitor experiences more



memorable for them to revisit Hong Kong more regularly.

The new Cruise Terminal at Kai Tak which is due for opening in 2014, aims to provide a new visitor experience of combining the joy of cruising with an exciting cruise terminal that will offer mall shopping, great food and entertainment to showcase Hong Kong.

IoH Hong Kong Branch members and invited guests spoke about different aspects of activities and programmes that can add value to enhance the attractiveness of Hong Kong as a major visitor destination and position Hong Kong as an even more successful MICE city.

Among these comments and suggestions were: to make Hong Kong a bicycle hiking center when we have beautiful mountains around us; make Hong Kong more user friendly to visitors and encourage them to explore Hong Kong by taking walking trails; visit our islands and sail in our junks; provide more slots for the education and training of our young people and prepare them for our future needs; and supporting the Pacific Asia Travel Association by offering Government support for its initiatives and activities.

Miss Fong responded graciously to our comments and suggestions and undertook to continue the conservations in the near future to collect more views and information from us and explore other issues and inputs as well.

Mr. Ted Theobald, Chairman of IoH Hong Kong Branch warmly thanked Miss Fong for her support and attendance at the breakfast meeting and looked forward to the next opportunity to meet. IoH Hong Kong Branch will no doubt always be at the forefront of striving to make Hong Kong a more successful visitor destination in the future.



Mr. Sam Yau (General Manager, LGS Catering Ltd.), Ms. Cynthia Leung, MIH (Assistant Manager, LGS Catering Ltd.), Mr. Ted Theobald, FIH (General Manager, The Park Lane Hotel) -From Left



Mr. Shane Pateman (General Manager, Novotel), Mr. Leslie Bailey, MIH (General Manager, McDonald's), Ms. Amanda Hyndman, MIH (General Manager, The Excelsior), Mr. Mark Robson, MIH (Director, Portfolio), Mr. Peter Wong, FIH (General Manager, Royal Plaza Hotel), Mr. Kamal K. Chopra, FIH (Partner, Abacare Financial & Insurance) – From Left



Prof. Kaye Chon, FIH (Chair Professor and Director of SHTM) and Ms. Catherine Poon, FIH (Head of Dept. of Hotel, Service and Tourism Studies, Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education) – From Left



Ms. Margaret Fong and Mr. Theobald, FIH

#### James Lu, FIH, is Executive Director of Hong Kong Hotel Association. (Email: james@hkha.org )

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## What's On?





## **P**olyU to host International Forum on China Hotel Brand Development

By Pauline Ng, Marketing Manager of SHTM

Co-organised by The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) and the Jiangsu Provincial Tourism Bureau, and co-hosted by PolyU's School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM) and Jinling Hotels and Resorts Corporation, the 3rd International Forum on China Hotel Brand Development will take place in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China from 27 to 28 April 2009.

The Forum is sponsored by the K. Wah Group and supported by the China Tourist Hotels Association.

In response to the fast expanding opportunities in the hospitality industry in China, PolyU's School of Hotel and Tourism Management is proud to have initiated the International Forum on China Hotel Brand Development in 2007. The Forum has been successful in providing an invaluable platform for industry practitioners, academics and government officials to discuss the development and management of hotel brands in China, and it has since become one of the most important forums in fostering open discussions on this important topic.

Professor Kaye Chon, Chair Professor and Director of SHTM, said, "I am pleased to note that, due to our location and history, our School is uniquely positioned to play a leading role in facilitating the development of China's hospitality industry. I am certain that the Forum will provide impetus to the further development and management of branding particularly for Chinese hotel chains." He added, "This year, I am delighted that we have the strong support from the Jiangsu Provincial Tourism Bureau and the Jinling Hotels and Resorts Corporation. I also thank the K.Wah Group for sponsoring this Forum for the third year."

The Forum will be organised around, but not limited to, the following topics:

- Views of the top leaders in China's hotel industry
- The "crystal ball": Seeing through 2009 and beyond

- Effective strategies to develop new brands
- Re-branding strategies of established hotel chains
- Development strategies of state-owned hotels, privately-owned hotels, deluxe hotels and budget hotels
- Investing in brands: How to bridge the gap between hotel brands and owners
- Development of Chinese Leadership in hotel industry
- Case studies on developing successful brands

Experts in the hospitality industry will share their views in the Forum, including:

- Professor Kaye Chon, Chair Professor and Director, School of Hotel and Tourism Management, PolyU
- Professor Dai Bin, Deputy Dean, China Tourism Academy
- Mr Tang Wenjian, Chairman and President, Jinling Holdings Ltd
- Mr Zhang Rungang, Chairman, BTG-Jianguo Hotels and Resorts Management Company
- Mr Chen Miaolin, Chairman and President, New Century Tourism Group
- Mr Yang Weimin, CEO, Shanghai Jin Jiang International Hotels (Group) Company Ltd
- Mr Sun Jian, CEO, Home Inns and Hotels Management Inc
- Mr Bernold O. Schroeder, Senior Vice President and Managing Director Hotel Operations, Banyan Tree Hotels and Resorts
- Ms Belinda Yeung, Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer, Regal Hotels International Holdings Ltd
- Mr Andrew Hirst, Operations Director, Asia, Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group
- Mr Romain Chan, Group General Manager, Miramar Hotel Group
- Mr Stephen Ho, Senior Vice President of Acquisitions and Development, Starwood Asia Pacific Hotels and Resorts
- Mr Lin Cong, Vice President of Hotel Development (China), Marriott International

China has become one of the most visited destinations of the world, with international tourist arrivals recorded at 53 million in 2008. It is also forecast by UNWTO that China will become the first destination in the world by 2020 and the fourth largest source market.

PolyU's School of Hotel and Tourism Management is a leading provider of hospitality education in the Asia-Pacific Region. It is ranked No. 4 among the world's top hotel and tourism schools based on research and scholarship, according to a study published in the Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research in 2005.

With 60 academic staff drawing from 18 countries, the School offers programmes at levels ranging from PhD to Higher Diploma. It was awarded the "2003 International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators Institutional Award" in recognition of its significant contribution to tourism education, and is the only training centre in the Education and Training Network in Asia recognized by the United Nations World Tourism Organization.

## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

#### **IoH:** Annual General Meeting & Lunch Meeting

Date: 11.30am, Thursday, April 23, 2009 Venue: The Park Lane Hotel Contact: Jenny Kim, Secretariat of IoH Hong Kong (Email: <u>tourism.jen@gmail.com</u>)

#### IoH: Visit to the Jockey Club

Date: Sunday, June 28, 2009 (Tentative) Venue: The Jockey Club, Shatin

- Welcome Drinks
- Welcome Speech
- Presentation on the Jockey Club
- Lunch & Racing
- Racecourse Tour

Contact: Jenny Kim, Secretariat of IoH Hong Kong (Email: tourism.jen@gmail.com)

### **PolyU: Industry Appreciation Dinner**

Date: Friday, 17 April 2009, 6:45 p.m. Venue: Ballroom, The Mira Hong Kong Contact: Ms. Kelly Wang (Email: <u>hmkelly@polyu.edu.hk</u>) Webpage: www.polyu.edu.hk/htm/appreciation\_dinner/2009/

## The 3<sup>rd</sup> International Forum on China Hotel Brand Development

Date: April 27-28, 2009 Venue: Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China Contact: Dr. Qu Xiao, Assistant Professor, SHTM, Polytechnic University (Email: <u>hmqxiao@polyu.edu.hk</u>) Webpage: <u>www.polyu.edu.hk/htm/conference/3CHBD</u>

### The 15th Asia Pacific Tourism Association Annual Conference

Date: July 9-12, 2009 Venue: Incheon, Korea Contact: Sang-Mi Lee (Email: <u>smlee@dau.ac.kr</u>) Webpage: <u>www.apta.asia</u>

#### Sixth China Tourism Forum

Date: May 12-13, 2009 Venue: Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China Contact: Ms. Nicole Shum (Email: <u>hmnicole@polyu.edu.hk</u>) Webpage: <u>www.polyu.edu.hk/htm/conference/6ctf</u>

#### **International Convention and Expo Summit**

Date: May 18-20, 2009 Venue: Hong Kong Contact: Summit Secretariat, SHTM, Polytechnic University (Email: <u>hmices@polyu.edu.hk</u>) Webpage: <u>www.brilli-ant.net/ICES2009</u>

## 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Movie and Television Tourism

Date: May 21-23, 2009 Venue: InterContinental Grand Stanford Hong Kong Contact: Ms. Leslie Fung (Email: <u>hmlfung@polyu.edu.hk</u>) Webpage: www.polyu.edu.hk/htm/conference/movie2009/

### International CHRIE Annual Conference "Bridging the Visions of Hospitality and Tourism Education Worldwide"

Date: July 29-August 1, 2009 Venue: San Francisco, USA Webpage: <u>www.chrie.org</u>

#### **Innovations in Tourism Marketing**

Date: September 7-9, 2009 Venue: Dorset, UK Contact: Alan Fyall (Email: <u>afyall@bournemouth.ac.uk</u>)

### International Conference on Tourism Development and Management (ICTDM) 2009

Date: September 11-14, 2009 Venue: Kos, Greece Contact: Dimitrios P. Stergiou (Email: <u>dstergiou@eap.gr</u>) Webpage: <u>www.ictdm.net</u>