

# FEATURES

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## Books, bands and BENEVOLENCE

*Whose Travel Charity Book Exchange hits Taipei, Taichung and Kaohsiung tomorrow*

BY ALITA RICKARDS  
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

In winter, a well-stocked library is almost as comforting as a well-stocked cupboard. Food for thought to while away those chilly gray days is on its way in the form of the Whose Travel Charity Book Exchange to be held tomorrow. While the event is familiar to those in Taichung where it has been held for the last 4 years, this is the first year that it is being brought to Taipei. Last year it was expanded to include Kaohsiung. The goal is to make the annual event island-wide.

The exchange is the brainchild of Whose Travel owner Dale Mackie, who is also the ward of the Canadian Trade Office in Taichung. He teamed up with veteran performer, musician and promoter Patrick Byrne of Moneyshot Horns to create this charity event. Volunteers have been collecting donated books for the past few months, and tomorrow they will be sold for a minimum of NT\$50 each. One hundred percent of the proceeds go to a



Dana Wylie and other musicians rock for charity tomorrow.

PHOTO: ALITA RICKARDS

local charity — this year it is the Maria Social Welfare Foundation (瑪利亞社會福利基金會), which provides care and assistance to orphaned and disabled children (on the Net: [www.maria.org.tw](http://www.maria.org.tw)).

Musician's are donating their artistic skills to make this a fun event, with groups playing at the venues free of charge.

"You run a business here, live here, [so] it's nice to show the Taiwanese community that we do have a sense of caring for deeper social issues and don't just come here to work," said Byrne. "[We're] trying to become a more integrated part of the community. I've always worked along the same lines musically as well."

Though traditionally most of the books gathered for this event have been in English, this year the organizers canvassed for more Chinese-language books. The event is well-known in the south of Taiwan where donations are plentiful, but for those in Taipei, it's not too late. Feel free to donate unwanted books at Bliss today and tomorrow morning.

In all three cities the event starts at noon tomorrow and goes until 9pm, with a wide variety of books available from the minimum donation up to whatever

price you put on supporting charity.

From 10pm today, there will be a pre-party at 89K, 21 Takuan Rd, Nantun Dist, Taichung City (台中市南屯區大觀路21號) with Skaraoke and Byrne's band Moneyshot Horns from 10pm.

In Taichung, the fund-raiser will be held at Frog 1, 105, Huamei W St Sec 1, Taichung City (台中市西區華美西街一段105號) and features music by Pat Reid, Landis, Three Day Bender, City of Earth, The Rising Hedons and The Dolittles.

In Kaohsiung, it's at Foster Hewitt's Pub and Grill, 30 Wenchung Rd, Kushan Dist, Kaohsiung City (高雄市鼓山區文忠路30號) featuring Ryan Fernandes solo, Uli and the Rulers, and the Juan Peruvian Band.

In Taipei, the event is at Bliss, 148, Xinyi Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市信義路四段148號) with music by Nate Javens (of Public Radio), Thoroughly Modern Dinosaurs (a new project by Greg Russell), The Sons of Homer and The Dana Wylie Band.

### [ SOCIETY ]

## 'There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life'

*Ariane Sherine came up with the idea of a 'rational' publicity campaign in response to a Christian advertising campaign on London buses*

BY ANNA TOMFORDE  
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For many Londoners, queuing for a tardy red double-decker bus may on occasions have prompted the utterance of a swear word or raised doubts about the existence of a deity altogether.

From this week, those with lingering doubts will have their views confirmed in an atheist advertising campaign rolled out on 200 of London's iconic buses, the Underground (tube) network and transport systems in other major cities.

"There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life," is the principal slogan of the campaign.

It is the brainchild of a television comedy writer and is backed by the British Humanist Association, as well as prominent atheist Richard Dawkins, the author of *The God Delusion*.

Posters featuring quotations from prominent figures known to have endorsed atheism — such as Albert

Einstein, Douglas Adams and Katharine Hepburn — are to be placed on London Underground stations.

The words, "That it will never come again is what makes life so sweet," are quoted from the poet Emily Dickinson.

Ariane Sherine said her idea for an atheist publicity campaign was born out of anger at a Christian advertising campaign on London buses this summer.

Those who followed the "Jesus Said" campaign to its Web site were told that non-Christians "will be condemned to everlasting separation from God and then you spend all eternity in torment in hell."

Sherine said she believed that a lot of people had been outraged by the evangelical advertisements, without knowing what to do about it.

"Our rational slogan will hopefully reassure anyone who has been scared



A cyclist passes a London bus bearing a "rational" poster in London, England, on Wednesday. About 800 buses bearing the slogan set off on Britain's roads on Tuesday in a campaign that will also see posters plastered across London's Underground.

PHOTO: EPA

by this kind of evangelism," she said on launching the atheist campaign. "I hope they'll brighten people's days and make them smile on their way to work."

Sherine said support for a fund-raising drive to finance the adverts had exceeded all expectations, with donations totalling US\$210,000, as opposed to

the original target of US\$8,350.

As the campaign starts rolling, there is every indication that it could go global, Sherine wrote in the *Guardian* newspaper.

In Spain, the Union of Atheists and Freethinkers has launched buses with a translation of the slogan in the northern city of Barcelona, and Italy's Union of Atheists, Agnostics and Rationalists was also planning to roll out atheist buses.

In the US, the American Humanist Association had been inspired to run a similar campaign on buses in Washington, but in Australia, a bus advertising scheme by the Atheist Foundation had been rejected by the country's biggest outdoor advertising company.

In Britain, where the British Humanist Association says up to 40 percent of the population has "non-religious beliefs," the atheist poster

campaign has met with a measured response from church leaders.

"We would defend the right of any group representing a religious or philosophical position to be able to promote that view through appropriate channels," said a spokesman for the mainstream Church of England.

"However, Christian belief is not about worrying or not enjoying life," he added.

The Methodist Church welcomed the atheist bus campaign as "an opportunity to talk about the deepest questions in life."

It could open up a dialogue between Christians and atheists that would "allow misconceptions to be challenged," said the Methodist church.

Dawkins, however, said he would have preferred the main slogan to read: "There's certainly no God" instead of: "There's probably no God."