



PIGEON POST

Exhibition marks anniversary of Berlin Wall's fall

CULTURE The German Cultural Center will open a photo exhibition today to mark the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. "Before the Fall-Laten Utopia" features photographs and video footage of East Germany before the wall came down by Leipzig-based photographer and conceptual artist Maix Mayer who has been Taiwan a few times to take pictures of Taipei 101 and corroding remains of the abandoned "UFO" apartment resort development in Sanjhij (三芝), Taipei County. The exhibit is open from 1pm to 8pm, Monday to Friday, until April 30. For more information, contact Deutsches Kulturzentrum Taipei at (02) 2365 7294, or www.dk-taipei.org.tw.

MECO services available on April 5

DIPLOMACY The Manila Economic and Cultural Office (MECO) said its First Sunday Passport Services for overseas workers who need passport, labor and welfare assistance will be open this Sunday even though April 5 is Tomb Sweeping Day. The First Sunday Passport Services are available in Taipei, Taichung and Kaohsiung on the first Sunday of each month. MECO will be closed for Araw ng Kagitingan on Monday, April 6, and Maundy Thursday on April 9 as well as Good Friday on April 10. It will also be closed for Labor Day on Monday, May 1, Dragon Boat Festival on Thursday, May 28 and Philippine Independence Day on Friday, June 12. For information about passport services or labor affairs, call MECO-Taipei at (02) 2508-1719.

Fu Jen celebrates Italian culture

CULTURE The Department of Italian Language and Literature of the Fu Jen Catholic University and the Italian Economic, Trade and Cultural Promotion Office (IETCPO) in Taipei cohosted the department's Piazza Italia last Saturday, an annual event to promote Italian culture and language. Department chairwoman Antonella Tulli said Taiwan and Italy have many things in common. The Lan Yang Dance Troupe, established by Italian priest Father Giancarlo Michelini, was the best example of the link between the two countries, she said. Saturday's event featured an exhibition of Italian foods, a cooking demonstration by an Italian chef from the Shangri-La Far Eastern Plaza Hotel and a speech by Italian illustrator Stefano Misesti on his work in Taiwan. The event attracted some 300 participants.

STAFF WRITER

Italian engineer thanks surgeons for saving him

GRATEFUL PATIENT: Alberto Zaffaroni said his doctors in Italy told him there were few Italian surgeons who could have performed the operations

BY JIMMY CHUANG
STAFF REPORTER, WITH CNA

Italian engineer Alberto Zaffaroni spends a lot of time in hospitals because of his work, but he is very grateful for the two months he spent at Taipei Medical University Hospital (TMUH) almost two years ago — and the Taiwanese surgeons and hospital staff who saved his life.

Zaffaroni, 47, who job entails installing sophisticated medical equipment in hospitals, was working in Guanyin Township (觀音), Taoyuan County, on June 15, 2007, putting in a 50m-long piece of machinery, when a 317.5kg, 5m-tall metal poll collapsed, striking him and a colleague.

Hit squarely on the head, Zaffaroni suffered a severe skull fracture, facial trauma and lost consciousness.

He was first taken to Chang Gung Memorial Hospital in Linkou Township (林口), Taipei County, before being transferred to TMUH, thanks to a contact between his employer and university hospital superintendent Wu Chih-hsiung (吳志雄).

The Italian spent seven weeks at TMUH and underwent two major surgeries.

"When I first saw him, his skull was damaged and his face was twisted. You could say it was difficult to tell that it was a human face," said Chiang Yung-hsiao (蔣永孝), director of the hospital's neurosurgery department.

Zaffaroni first underwent five hours of reconstructive surgery on June 30.

Chiang said plastic surgeons removed some of Zaffaroni's stomach muscle and tissue to replace the damaged tissue on his head.

"This is what we often do when the patient's face and skull are seriously damaged," he said. TMUH president Wu Chih-

hsiung (吳志雄) said the greatest challenge for Zaffaroni's doctors was that he was leaking 100cc of cerebrospinal fluid a day.

"When it [the spinal fluid] was coming out from Zaffaroni's nose, it meant that there was an open tunnel where germs could have entered his brain and killed him," Wu said.

On July 19, Zaffaroni underwent 11 hours of neurosurgery to stop the leakage.

Wu and Chiang said they were surprised when they heard the first thing Zaffaroni said when he woke up was he wanted some cabbage dumplings.

"I had no idea why I would say that," Zaffaroni said earlier this month.

"I just said it because I ate that kind of dumplings before and I really loved them. After I woke up from the surgery, I felt so hungry and I could use some cabbage dumplings," he said.

He returned home to Milan on Aug. 15, where he underwent six months of rehabilitation therapy.

His doctors there told him there were only two or three surgeons in Italy who were capable of performing the kind of surgery he underwent in Taiwan.

Zaffaroni returned to work after his recovery and has continued to travel the world for work.

One thing he was no longer able to do after the accident was scuba diving. He was told not to dive again because his skull may not be able to take the water pressure.

He can still jog, however and he completed the 42km 2008 Firenze Marathon in Florence on Nov. 30 last year.

Zaffaroni was back in Taiwan earlier this month to thank the surgeons and medical staff who saved his life.

As a show of gratitude, he presented them with the certificate he received for completing the Firenze Marathon.

"Taiwan is my second home. People here care for me very much," Zaffaroni said.

"If I were anywhere else, I am afraid I could not receive such care," he said.

ICRT moves to a new location

NO INTERRUPTIONS: The country's only English-language radio station moved from Taipei City to Sinhuang just a few weeks before it starts to celebrate its 30th anniversary

BY JENNY W. HSU
STAFF REPORTER

After almost 30 years of broadcasting from Taipei, International Community Radio Taipei (ICRT), Taiwan's only English-language radio station, moved to its new home in Taipei County yesterday.

Its broadcasts, however, continued uninterrupted.

ICRT will keep its listeners in the loop on the hottest new music and news from around Taiwan and the world, but from Sinhuang (新莊鎮), instead of its home for the past nine years in the Broadcasting Corp of China building on Songjiang Road.

It's not the first time the station has had to move.

It spent its first two decades near the top of Yangmingshan, in what had been the US Armed Forces Network Taiwan (AFNT) facility in Shanzaihou, not far from the Chinese Culture University. It moved off the mountain and into Taipei City in April 2000.

Station staff and DJs said last week that they were looking forward to the latest move.

"This is an exciting adventure. It's like we are setting up a whole new company," veteran disc jockey Ron Stewart said last week, promising even "sillier shows because I am so delighted with the new office."

Content and Creativity director Tim Berge said the rent at the new facility was cheaper, but that a lower rent had not been the major driving force behind the move, initially.

Now, however, the station is counting its pennies because it has to move its transmitter in central Taiwan to a new location because the Republic of China (ROC) military is building a radar station on Loshan in Hsinchu County at the current transmitter site.

ICRT will have to move its transmitter to a lower elevation on the mountain, Berge said yesterday.

Berge said listeners could be reassured that the station's pro-

gramming would not be affected by either move.

In addition to shifting offices and equipment, ICRT is also gearing up to mark its 30th anniversary on April 16.

A series of nationwide events will start in the middle of next month to celebrate ICRT's three decades, Berge said.

However, neither the foreign community in Taiwan nor the ROC government wanted to see an end to the only all-English radio service in the country.

The president of the American Chamber of Commerce, Robert Parker, helped put together a group of community and business leaders to try and save the station.

Then president Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國) and premier Sun Yun-suan (孫運璿) were also interested in keeping an English-language

transmission.

As the station's Web site says: "ICRT assumed the official duties of serving the foreign community in Taiwan and forging a cultural link between the Chinese population of Taiwan and the English-speaking residents of the island."

The station's mandate is to serve the expatriate community in Taiwan, but Taiwanese listeners have long made up its core audience.

Jack Guo (阿杰), 27, said calls himself a diehard fan of ICRT because "it plays really cool music from different genres."

"I started listening to ICRT back when I was in college. It was a great way for me to beef up my English listening ability," he said.

"Besides, Ron Stewart is really funny and Joseph Lin always plays the songs I like," Guo said.

Berge said ICRT's new address is 19-5F, No.107, Sec. 1, Jhongshan Rd, Sinhuang City, Taipei County 24250 (24250台北縣新莊市中山路一段107號19樓之5).

The station's new switchboard number is (02) 8522-7766.

ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY STAFF WRITER

“This is an exciting adventure. It's like we are setting up a whole new company.”

— Ron Stewart, ICRT disc jockey

ICRT, operated by Taipei International Community Cultural Foundation, went on air at midnight April 16, 1979.

AFTN pulled out of Taiwan as part of the departure of an official US military presence in the country after the US severed diplomatic relations with the ROC in 1978.

radio station going in those pre-Internet days and instructed the Government Information Office to provide assistance.

A deal was worked out to transfer the AFTN facility and equipment to the newly formed ICRT and ICRT took over AFTN's broadcast functions without a break in



VERY IMPORTANT PERFORMERS

Members of the "VIP band" from Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines, dressed in the traditional costumes of their countries, perform in Taipei City on Thursday.

PHOTO: CHANG HSUN TENG, TAIPEI TIMES

Swede publishes new tour guide

EYES ON TAIWAN: Louise Bystrom has joined forces with Malaysian Elizabeth Lim and Taiwanese businessman Chang Chih-tsung to produce a uniquely formatted magazine

BY DAN BLOOM
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Louise Bystrom hails from Sweden, and now has her eyes set on steering a monthly tourist magazine toward gaining a steady readership of locals, expatriates and international visitors.

Taiwan This Month is a free monthly guide distributed in shops, hotels and airports, Bystrom said in an e-mail interview.

"This is a fantastic island with a fabulous natural heritage, and the most wonderful people we have ever met," she wrote in a publisher's letter in the inaugural issue of the English-Chinese magazine this month.

"This, together with our [team's] willingness to share our amazing experiences here, led us to start this magazine," she said.

Bystrom first visited Taiwan in 1985 with her husband, a Swedish diplomat, when he was stationed in the Philippines and had some work to do in Taipei, she said.

"I remember I went to Wulai (烏來) in Taipei County, and you know, it looks pretty much the same today as it did then, beautiful and impressive," she said.

"Now we've been in Taiwan since 2001, almost seven-and-a-half years. My feeling is that the Taiwanese people are extremely friendly and helpful," she said.

"In addition, I think the level of English-language skills has improved a lot over the past 20 years. If a tourist or an expat runs into communication problems with local people, there is always a solution

available. In stores, hospitals and other public places, there is always someone who can speak English and is more than willing to help you," she said.

Bystrom, who studied law as an undergraduate at Stockholm University, said she has been enjoying her time in Taiwan immensely, adding that the magazine venture is part of how she takes part in life here.

She said she hoped the new magazine would help boost Taiwan's image overseas and among tourists around the world.

Bystrom launched her new magazine with two other: Elizabeth Lim, a Malaysian who has been in Taiwan for about 10 years, and Chang Chih-tsung, a Taiwanese who has run Cross MultiMedia, an information technology firm, for more than 11 years.

"Mr Chang has been very successful with his business here, and he saw a chance to help promote Taiwan through our magazine venture," Bystrom said.

"In addition, he has been able to set up a good Web page for us and that's an important strength these days. The three of us met through the Rotary Club here in Taipei," she said.

The main mission of the monthly magazine is "to promote Taiwan," Bystrom said, adding that she hoped to break even "in about a year."

The magazine was intended for all visitors to Taiwan, from all



Louise Bystrom in her office in Taipei where she edits *Taiwan This Month*, a new guide that began publishing this month.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF TAIWAN THIS MONTH

“This is a fantastic island with a fabulous natural heritage, and the most wonderful people we have ever met.”

— Louise Bystrom, publisher of *Taiwan This Month*

countries, she said. *Taiwan This Month* is printed in a unique format, almost like a pocket guide — slim and easy to hold.

"We wanted a size and a format that would be easy to read and could easily be put in a person's jacket pocket or in a handbag," Bystrom said.

For the initial press run, they printed 7,500 copies, and they hope to increase that figure to 10,000 for

the June issue and to print 30,000 copies monthly by the end of the year, Bystrom said.

When asked if Swedes sometimes confuse Taiwan and Thailand, as often happens overseas, she said yes.

"When I talk to people in Sweden who I don't know, yes, sometimes they mix up Taiwan with Thailand," she said.

Hopefully, *Taiwan This Month* will help set the record straight.

Long-term care program will bring caregiver changes

BY JIMMY CHUANG
STAFF REPORTER, WITH CNA

Insured people are likely to be required to hire a licensed caregiver to qualify for insurance payments under a long-term care insurance system scheduled to be introduced in 2011, an expert participating in the planning of the system said on Saturday.

The requirement will mean that the current practice of hiring unlicensed foreign workers to work as caregivers for a family member will have to be changed once the new system is implemented, said Yang Chih-liang (楊志良), vice president of Asia University and a member of the Council for Economic Planning and Development's planning panel.

PAY DIFFERENTIAL

Insurance payments for people hiring foreign caregivers will probably be only half of the payment given to those who hire licensed local workers, Yang said while attending a conference in Taipei organized by the Taiwan Long-term Care Professional Association.

The restrictions are intended to prevent an influx of foreign caregivers after the launch of the long-term care insurance system, which would reduce salaries and undermine the competitiveness of local caregivers, he said.

The current average hourly wage of NT\$180 for professional caregivers is already considered so low that few Taiwanese are willing to enter the profession, Yang said.

Council of Labor Affairs (CLA) statistics show that Taiwan has 160,000 foreign workers are working as family caregivers and there are 30,000 licensed Taiwanese caregivers.

REQUIREMENTS

People interested in becoming certified as a caregiver must complete a 90-hour training course and pass the licensing exam for a license, the council said.

Many families prefer hiring foreign workers because their monthly salary of around NT\$20,000 is lower than the minimum NT\$30,000 required by local caregivers.

In addition to tending sick and elderly family members, foreign workers are frequently expected to take care of their employer's children and do domestic chores — work that a professional caregiver will not do.

Taiwan Long-term Care Professional Association secretary-general Chai Wen-ying (蔡文英) said the new regulations would increase the pressure on foreign labor brokers.

"It will make their jobs more difficult because they need to look for foreign laborers who possess the necessary licenses for nursing services, or they have to train them to pass our exams for the license," Chai said.