

# Newsletter



Hong Kong Toastmasters Club

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## "Seven Sai Kung Sensations" by Greg Hagen

Having visited Sai Kung for 15 years and lived there (or thereabouts) for 7 years and being a member of two boat clubs in the area and other activities, I certainly think Sai Kung is such a great little get-a-way from the hustle and bustle and stress and maddening crowds of Hong Kong. And I wanted to share with you six Sai Kung Sensations. Let me begin. First...

### Seafood under the Stars:

After about 8:00 at night, when pedestrian traffic slows down, the sea-side strip restaurants are allowed to put tables out on the promenade; so you can dine al fresco. How rare is that in Hong Kong? What does all this cost?

- Tall Heineken - \$34
- Seafood shared with friends - \$150
- Leaning back in your chair and looking up at the sky on a clear night and seeing the stars! In Hong Kong? Priceless.

### Sun, Sand and Surf (Tai Long Wan):

This is the best beach in Hong Kong but it is hard to get to. Taxi, ferry, junk, walk, they are all long trips. You will probably kick yourself en-route and ask yourself "how did I get talked into this". But when you arrive eventually; it will all be worthwhile. I really recommend camping overnight for two reasons. One: you can hear the waves crashing on the shore just outside your tent. And two: when you wake up, you will have the whole beach to yourself - almost - because the day trippers (hikers and boaters) won't arrive until later in the morning. The cost?

- Taxi to nearest drop point - say \$200
- Beer & noodles from the Da Pai Dong- \$60
- Standing with your toes in the sand looking at the sea while the most crowded city in the world is literally a few hours away, but figuratively a lifetime away: Priceless.

### City Square (ali oli):

I'm going to cut to the chase here and go straight to the prices.

- Cappuccino - \$18 (\$34 for a large)
- Fresh baked quiche - \$14.
- Newspaper - \$6
- Pocket money for kids to go to corner shop to buy bubble blower, yoyo, Pokeman cards, etc - \$10
- Having a quiet moment to read the paper, sip your cappuccino, and people watch: Priceless.

### Exercise and Scenery:

Sai Kung country park. I had a friend, a Phys-Ed teacher, that came to visit from Canada and I took him for a run in the park. It was beautiful. Green views on the left. Sea views on the right. And at the end, he said to me "Greg, if I had a run like that in Canada, I would run every day". And I thought to myself, wow that is amazing. Canada is nature's playground and he's telling me that Hong Kong has a more beautiful run. And he was right. The cost.....

- Gatorade: Available right at the park gate, and so cold you have to carry it for a while to let it warm up otherwise you will freeze your throat (I'm serious) - \$14.
- Pair of running shoes - \$500
- The fresh, fresh air in your lungs and a chance to stretch your legs out after sitting in a desk all week at the office... Priceless.

### Ski on the sea (wakeboarding):

I know what you're thinking - Wakeboarding? That's for 17 year old extreme athletes doing flips and jumps. Yes, but also perfectly assessable for middle aged average people like me. Well - ok.... It did take me 5 tries to get up. But my wife, sitting right over there, just "popped" out of the water the first time and had a beautiful balanced run. For the first time! And my ten year old son too; first time. What does this cost?

- 1) Treat yourself to a new CD at HMV and give it to the driver so you can listen to your favorite tunes - \$100
- 2) Boat hire - \$700 per hour; but with 7 people on the boat pretty comfortably, that is only 100 bucks a head each.
- 3) The sense of satisfaction and surprise in getting up and balancing on the wakeboard even for beginners the first time, and the smile that will automatically crease your face... that is priceless!

### Sampan to Sharp:

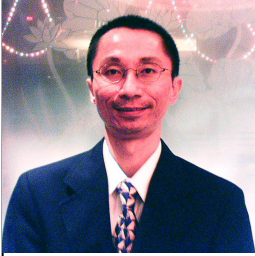
Last (but not least). The great thing about the Sampan option is that you don't have to plan or book in advance. You can just pitch up on Sai Kung pier and it is guaranteed that someone will be ready to take you for a ride. I like this option for visitors. Because after about 3 days they all think Hong Kong is nothing more than a big shopping mall. And a Sampan definitely proves them wrong..The cost:

- Make it a picnic. Stop at the wine store and pick up a nice bottle of wine - \$100.
- Baguette, and cheese - \$65
- Sampan - Well actually no one knows because it is negotiable but no more than \$100; maybe \$200 if you include a pre-appointed pick up.
- But.... The old woman grabbing your visitor friend's arm and gesticulating wildly to Sharp Island and the Sampan and then watching her grin as he wonders if she really can drive this thing: That is priceless!

There you have it, six ways to escape the crowds and unwind in Sai Kung after a busy work week. I hope you have tried one, or will have a chance to try one soon.

## *New Member's Corner*

### **Benjamin Ng**



Our new member, Benjamin Ng is 43 years old and single. He has accumulated China experiences by having worked in Beijing for more than 4 years. He is back this year and is now studying a part-time Master degree in HK Baptist University. He likes reading; walking; swimming and playing golf. Same as some of our new members, the reason for his joining the club is to sharpen his presentation and public speech skills.

## *Members' News*

1. Elsa Law has commenced her own legal practice. Many Congratulations!
2. Jo Manning is looking to switch field of work from top sales to top customer services.

## *Want to Know Something?*

At our meeting earlier on this month, our legendary Champion speaker, Donald Yee acting as our General Evaluator has this to say about making successful speeches :-

1. There is no perfect speech until you practice it
2. Practices make a speech perfect ( he rehearsed a hundred times before each of his contest speech)
3. Humour is when you speak honestly from your heart
4. Know your audience, no matter how great a speech it is, it will be of no interest to them if the speech is not something that is applicable to them

## *Sport Shoes and Diamond Ring by Louisa Tsang*

(A winning speech at our Club Humorous Speech Contest in September 2005)

Sports shoes and diamond ring, Ladies and Gentleman can you see any relationship between these two items? No? Nether can I. But these two items keep reminding me of an essential element that affect our interpersonal communication, which I am going to share with you with two stories.

The first story comes from my colleague, Susan. Her son, Tom, at fifteen, wanted to buy a new pair of sport shoes. Susan turned down his request as she thought that his old shoes were still in good condition.

"But this is a new model, specially designed for playing soccer."

"I couldn't see any reason why you can't play soccer with your existing sport shoes"

"Mom, it's different, please, it costs you only \$600."

"Let me think about it!!"

The following Sunday, Susan went shopping with Tom and Kitty, her daughter. Susan wanted to buy a diamond ring for a long time. She always believes that a woman must possess a one carat diamond ring, otherwise, her life will not be complete. As usual, she just couldn't resist the jewelry shop and entered it. This time, she saw a diamond ring which color and clarity were very good. She was dizzied with the glittering diamond.

Susan asked her children if the ring was beautiful, Tom replied "The price is very beautiful, sixty thousand dollars, my sport shoes only cost \$600, I can play soccer with the shoes, what can you play with this diamond ring?" Susan's daughter Kitty said "Mom, my friend just bought a fake one at \$600, it's almost the same with this one. Oh no! The diamond is much bigger than this one, and I couldn't tell any difference between a fake one and a real one. Can you? If not, why don't you buy a fake one?"

Susan didn't know how to answer both questions, she left the jewelry shop disappointed.

She turned to her husband and asked him to show his eternal love, but her husband thought that it's an insult to question his love with something made from carbon; and it's even more stupid to fall into the trap of Diamond Company's marketing strategy. "My life wouldn't last forever, how could my love? Don't be silly!" Susan just couldn't forget the diamond ring. She couldn't help herself but purchased it and settled the payment with credit card at 60 interest free installments. She was so happy and wanted to share her happiness with her family, but when she saw her son she felt guilty; she dared not tell her children that she had bought the diamond ring. So I suggested that she put the diamond ring in the office and wore it during office hours only. Here ends the first story.

The second story comes from my family. My father wears sport shoes everyday, either for shopping, working or playing sports activity. He never bought a new pair of shoes, not until he couldn't wear the old shoes on rainy days. Even if the sole of his shoes were going to come off, he would insist wearing them on sunny days. He even argues that the cracks on his shoes have their function. "They help to cool down the temperature of my feet."

From this perspective, you might think that my father is a stingy person, but the truth is he applies this principle to himself only. He is extremely generous to his children; he never disappoints us, never turns down our request. Sometimes, he even surprises us.

When I was 25, he bought me this diamond ring as my birthday gift without even asking about the price. On my birthday, he took me to the jewelry shop and told me to choose whichever one I liked and settled the payment. Can you see it? Both the color and clarity are very good.

Members and guests, we all have a ruler here to measure others' behavior, thinking that this is right, and that is wrong; however, we seldom use the same ruler or standard to measure ourselves. Susan used a short ruler to judge her son's need, but she adopted an extremely long ruler for herself. My father employs a short ruler himself, but he gives me a ruler without limit, that's why he earns my respect and Susan feels guilty in front of her son.

This ruler not only applies to your parents, children, but also to your friends, lovers, colleagues or even a stranger sitting next to you. When you are making judgment on someone's behavior, will you take a pause and ask yourself; am I using the same standard to measure myself?

Ladies and Gentleman, how long is your ruler?

## *Upcoming Events!*

To be announced later

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