

# WACA WORLD NEWS

Spring Edition  
May 2014

*Bali*

Silk Road 2010

Kilimanjaro 2012

Porto AGA 2014



WACA.ORG

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# The President's Message

Dear Interliners,

Communication with our members is high on our agenda and we are pleased to bring WACA closer to you, be it via the WWNews, emails and facebook. I am happy to note as reported by Julian Chau, the WACA Chief Marketing Officer that we have joined Twitter and LinkedIn as well. This will give us an opportunity to be more visible to attract potential members in all its diversity on an individual basis, as well as new member clubs or corporate members and to show the world what WACA is doing.

WACA is an Association of Responsible Travelers with membership from different parts of the globe joining together by participating in various international packages organized by the Association with a view not only to develop friendship, mutual understanding and good fellowship but to make a difference in demonstrating the social responsibility of each member whilst travelling by contributing to the community at large and the planet at the same time , in a sustainable manner.

Our Association is committed to :

1. Protect the environment - wildlife and fauna
2. Adapt to the Climate Change
3. Help in eradicating poverty and in providing education to needy children
4. Protect children from Sexual Exploitation in Tourism
5. Respect the National Heritage and the Cultural Identities of fellow nations.

At WACA, each Travel trip is an opportunity to make a difference. The last Bali package speaks for itself. Our participants at the last WACA Bali package had the opportunity not only to discover the cultural tourism of the country but also to participate for a good cause in expressing compassion to the children of the country in offering them educational materials brought by each and every one as a symbol of caring for the education of the children of the world. WACA supports the initiative of UNICEF, UNESCO, the Code, Ecpat, IIPT, ICTP, IATA, ICAO, UNWTO.

Our next main annual event will be the Interline Celebration in Porto, 5-10 October, and I am seizing this opportunity to extend a personal invitation to all WACA members and their loved ones to join this forthcoming grand event organized by the Interline Club of Portugal.

Warmest regards,

*Maga Ramasamy*

Maga Ramasamy  
President of the World Airlines Clubs Association



Dear Interliners,

Welcome to the Spring Edition of the WACA World News. This is the second issue of the WWN since the Budapest AGA and Interline Celebration and the WACA Council is determined to keep the publication of the newsletter a regular occurrence. In this edition, I have included stories from past WACA trips, which were unpublished previously and interliners can now read about them, and also new reports on recent trips, such as the Bali tour.

It has to be stressed that the WWN is a very important communication tool for WACA and disseminates the latest news and happenings in the Association. It is therefore important that member clubs and individuals contribute to this endeavor to keep our global membership informed. I therefore encourage you to contribute, even if there is a story that you feel must be shared amongst the interliners of the world.

The Bali tour just concluded recently and it was a successful event with an attendance of 30 participants. The upcoming Madagascar event is also drawing a large contingent and late comers are put on a waiting list. The successful enrolment of the Madagascar package also helped the numbers in the Dodo's Nest package organized by the Indian Ocean Islands Interline Club, and the AIM Region, as numbers are the best in recent years. The Israel Interline Club also have their Holy Land tour on the Calendar but unfortunately, the Great Circle tour organized by the Vancouver Interline Club had to be cancelled as the minimum required number was not reached. The VIC had put a lot of effort to organize this tour, with considerable support from the Tourism Authorities of British Columbia. Hopefully the VIC will put forward this tour again for next year, as it is a spectacular tour with lots to see.

Looking ahead, the Interline Club of Portugal is busy preparing for the upcoming Annual General Assembly and Interline Celebration in Porto, Portugal, in what is shaping up to be a well-attended event as pre and post tours have seen brisk registrations. WACA will also announce the venue for the 48th AGA in the very near future, which is set in an exotic locale steeped in the psyche of the latter half of 20th century history.

Meanwhile, our President, Mr. Maga Ramasamy, visited the ITB in Berlin last March, where he took the opportunity to attend the Annual General Meeting of the CODE, an organization dedicated to the protection of children from Sex Tourism. This is a noble cause that everyone in WACA should support.

WACA is also moving into the digital age by setting up in social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Facebook especially has been very well received by our members, with close to 400 members in our Group Page. A Paypal account was also successfully set up with assistance from IATA IT which will allow for the easier payment of deposits for events organized by WACA, and membership dues.

The WACA trademark has also been successfully registered with the Canadian authorities and this will ensure our trademark will not be abused by 3rd parties.

On a final note, I encourage readers to provide feedback on how we can improve upon the WACA World News. All queries and suggestions can be sent to our email at [waca.travel@gmail.com](mailto:waca.travel@gmail.com)

Yours in Interlining,

*Julian Chau*

Julian Chau, Chief of Marketing & Events, WACA



# The Interairline Club Zurich celebrates its 60th Anniversary this year

The Interairline Club Zurich has always been a very active club in WACA with lots of history. In 2014, the Club celebrates its 60th Anniversary and has donated a package of 2 for Interliners to join them in their celebration. You can win this prize by buying the Bonanza Grand Venture tickets from your WACA rep. The draw for the package will be held in June 2014.



On April 21, 1954, a small group of airline employees got together in Zurich to establish a club for reservation agents working at airline offices only.

But already a year later in 1955, regulations were changed and all employees of IATA companies could also become a club member. At a get-together party the same year the club already counted 187 members and in December the first Christmas party took place where 7 complimentary airline raffle tickets were to be won.

In 1966 Interairline Club Zurich was one of the founder clubs of WACA which took place in Cannes, France. 1981 the club counted 566 members. The yearly local events were a ski-weekend, filmshow, different trips and of course the well-known Aviatik Ball. In 2004 IACZ became 50 years old and celebrated a phantastic party with guests of Waca friends from all over the world.

This year we will celebrate our 60 th birthday on September 7, 2014. Anyone who is interested is most welcome to join us in Zurich (see [www.airline-club.org](http://www.airline-club.org) or ctc Mia Zwahlen). Times are changing and at the moment there are 150 members. We as a club are still active, enthousiastic and proud to be a member of WACA !



Mia Zwahlen,  
Waca Rep IACZ



Win  
a package for 2  
to attend the celebra-  
tion in Zurich. Buy your  
bonanza tickets  
now!





*"The title indeed says it all. For anyone who has been to Bali they understand for those that have not it is a must on their 'bucket list'"*

Anita, Patrese, John and Stephen from San Francisco are in front. Fleurette and Cathy are just behind them.  
First night's dinner at the Magani Hotel

This interline (WACA Tour) of thirty people from across the world united in Bali for a cultural, educational, gastronomical, and picturesque tour. The first 3 nights were spent in the town of Kuta at the Magani Hotel. This centrally located Hotel (a few blocks off Kuta Beach) was alive with restaurants, bars, shops, and spas. This meant easy walking and access to everything!!!

Our Charity for this WACA event was a small local grade school in a village outside of Kuta. Nyoman, our Balinese Guide chose this school as donations would indeed help both the school and children of the village. We asked Nyoman if any other organization had been to this school and they had not, also a reason for this choice. In the grade 6 classroom we visited the children had prepared a song to sing for us and each stood up and told us what they wanted to do after finishing school.

Lots wanted to be school teachers, doctors, nurses, policemen and mechanics. We teased them as no one was interested in the airline industry. The children learn English in grade 4 so their understanding and speaking of the English language was off to a great start. The children were excited about the donations we brought for their school.

Temples in Bali are situated either overlooking the waters or within beautiful lush vegetation.





We had the opportunity to visit the Taman Ayun Temple, Tanah Lot, and Ulu Watu Temple. Before heading inland to Ubud (the artistic town made well known from the book and movie Eat, Pray, Love) we had the opportunity to spend a day at Pandawa Beach soaking in the sun, water and enjoying the roasted corn, coconut milk and ice cold Bintangs.

After 3 days in Kuta we hopped on our coach heading to Ubud and our Artisan part of the tour. We enjoyed a Barong dance show, artisan villages which featured crafts in making silver jewelry and wood carvings and a visit to the monkey forest temple where a few brave interliners fed the monkeys while they sat on their shoulders. We viewed the Tegalalang Rice terraces and the Mt Batur Volcano which last erupted 12 years ago, and a stop at a coffee plantation to taste different coffees and teas along with the famous Luwak coffee made internationally known from the movie the "Bucket List".

Clockwise:

1. On the grounds of Taman Ayun Temple. 2. Legong dancer at the Barong Show. 3. Relaxing at the lobby of the Magani Hotel with Linda, Al, Jeannie and Judy. 4. Group picture at Tanah Lot Temple. 5. Cathy and Fleurette enjoying a fresh coconut at Padawan Beach. 6. Visiting a local primary school.

Center Picture:

Debbie Day with a macaque on her shoulders, Monkey Temple.





What made this tour special for us was the smiling and knowledgeable tour guide Nyoman. He is voted the number 1 tour guide on tripadvisor and it is indeed proven true. He informed us about Balinese customs and rituals. He was so kind and fond of us all that he actually brought us to his family compound (home) where he lives with his extended family of 28 people. They have owned this property since 1820. We were offered food and drinks and given a tour and an explanation as to how they live in Bali and all about their coming of age (16) teeth filing ceremony.

Our hotel in Ubud, the ARMA Resort was on acres of land filled with statues, ponds, bridges and pathways. It was hard to imagine that you were in the town of Ubud. Each accommodation was unique to themselves and indeed a photographer's paradise including an Art museum.

Our final dinner together was at a fine dining restaurant "Bridges", where food, wine and service were 5 stars. A wonderful way to end a great adventure with 30 interliners from around the world who mingled, laughed and genuinely enjoyed each other's company and all the wonders Bali had to offer.

The article is contributed by **Linda Lenters**, Calgary Interline Club.

Linda left Bali on the 12th of April and many stayed behind for the extended tour, and the climax to the package was a spectacular Legong and Satya Brastah Dance Show put on by the ARMA Resort's troupe, one of Bali best.

More pictures of the tour can be found at:

[https://www.flickr.com/photos/j\\_chau/sets/72157644023157833/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/j_chau/sets/72157644023157833/)

For interliners wishing to visit Bali in the future and want to use the services of our exceptional guide, Nyoman Grago, you can contact him at Bali Traditional Tours.

<http://www.balitradiationaltours.com/>



Our guide, Nyoman, shares a tender moment with his family at the family compound



Clockwise at the Gala Dinner, Bridges Restaurant: John, Stephen, Anita and Patrese from San Francisco



From left to right, at the Bridges Restaurant: Meenakshi, Kavita and Usha from Mauritius





Clockwise from top:

1. Seafood dinner at Jimbaran Bay.

2. Legong dancer at the ARMA Resort's spectacular Satyah Brastah dance show.

3. After dinner drinks at the ARMA Resort.

4. Freddie get a blessing from Nyoman at the Gunung Kawi Temple.

5. Sheer cliff at the Ulu Watu Temple.

Photos by Julian Chau and Linda Lenters







### How the Bali Package was put together!

Few places in the world conjure up images of a tropical paradise, a Shangri-La, a hedonistic heaven, a cultural jewel, like Bali can. Of course, the legend of Mata Hari (although she grew up in neighbouring Java), and novels like *Eat, Pray, Love* have elevated Bali to a mystical stature amongst travellers. Today, Bali, despite its charms, is overrun with development and mass tourism and with this in mind, it was a challenge to present an itinerary that will still capture the charms of the island and offer the participants of the tour a balanced perspective of the Island. By Julian Chau

When WACA President, Mr. Maga Ramasamy, first approached me to build an itinerary for the tour, I immediately brainstormed on ideas on how to make the tour a memorable one. In order to be successful, the tour has to meet the following criteria: (1) Ease of getting to venue on sub-loads. (2) Pricing. (3) Interesting itinerary and customised to appeal. (4) Value for money. (5) Management of the tour details.

(1) Potential participants were asked when would be their best period to travel taking sub load availability into account. Of course other factors were also considered, such as the weather etc.

(2) Pricing! In order to make the package competitive without sacrificing quality, we engaged the hotels directly to get the best available rates with no commission paid to middlemen. Restaurants were selected based on their reputation and variety and menus were discounted. No agent was used and thus the middle man cost is removed.

(3) Bali has a lot to offer. We could have based the group in a large resort hotel in Nusa Dua, but participants would see very little of the true Balinese soul. Instead, we chose to stay in 2 places, in Legian where the modern contemporary Bali can be found, and in Ubud, where Bali in its full cultural heritage can be experienced. We looked into our past experience and tailor made the itinerary to the “likes” of previous interliners. We ensured the itinerary was not too stressful and food must be good and varied. We added a school visit to cater to WACA’s charity endeavours and hired the best guide available on the Island who gave an unparalleled insight on his culture and home, including a visit to his family compound.

(4) Making sure people felt they got what they paid for when they see the quality of the excursions, food and accommodation.

(5) A WACA rep to ensure any issue is resolved immediately and the tour runs smoothly. The WACA rep also provides a comfort zone to participants knowing that they are being looked after.

Most important of all, when one is putting together an itinerary, one has to convince oneself that one is just as interested in the itinerary as any potential participant. The above is a recipe for organising a successful tour program.



# The Silk Road 2010

## PROLOGUE

“The air is thin and cold, snow drifts higher than a person, piled up high on both sides of the road.”

As we pushed and huffed, trying to get the bus unstuck from the icy mud at over 4000 meters altitude, we gazed in amazement at the stunning scenery of the Kyrgyzstan Pamirs. We had come a long way, and the distant memory of Xian still lingers, and the fabled and exotic outposts of Bukhara and Samarkand beckoned beyond the high desolate mountains. Then a Kyrgyz nomad boy riding a out of horse appeared from nowhere.



Kyrgyz Nomad Boy

## BEGINNINGS

The Silk Road has always fascinated travellers over the millennia, being a conduit of ideas and trade between the ancient civilizations of China and those to her west, such as Persia and Rome (and its successor, the Byzantine Empire). Established in the 2nd century BC by the Chinese Emperor, Han Wudi, the route traces its origins to the ancient capital of the Han Dynasty at Chang'An, present day Xian.



From Xian, the Silk Road skirts the mighty Tibetan Plateau and the forbidding Gobi Desert, before branching into several routes terminating in various points such as Constantinople (present day Istanbul), Antioch, Aleppo, and Isfahan in Iran etc.

Many legendary outposts and cities sprang up in the old Silk Road, such as Dunhuang, Kashgar, Bukhara, and Samarkand. Some prospered throughout the various epochs of history while others perished under the shifting desert sands or by the savagery

of war. It was against this backdrop in 2010 that the Hong Kong Interline Club hosted an ambitious tour to retrace the footsteps of the legendary Silk Road.

Due to the cost of the tour, and the various bureaucratic red tapes to obtain the various visas (nations of China, Kyrgyzstan, and

Uzbekistan), many were deterred and only 9 adventurous souls finally enlisted for the trip. They were Al and Sobie Toledo from Miami, Lorie Boehme and Don Wright from Ohio, Fran and Walt Mercer from Toronto, Jean Choo from Vancouver, Jenny Jiang from CN adventure and myself, Julian Chau.

## XIAN – ANCIENT CAPITAL OF CHINA

Xian has been the capital of China longer than any cities, including Beijing. It was the capital of several illustrious dynasties such as the Qin (which gave China its name), the Han (which gave ethnic Chinese their tribal affiliation) and the Tang, the most illustrious dynasty of all of them.

The group met up in Xian and we camped out at the well located Bell Tower Hotel in Central Xian, right in the center of the ancient city. The group was given an introduction to the city with a stroll through the Muslim quarter, where snack shops displayed various animal entrails, shish kebabs grilling on hot charcoals; sheep carcasses hung in front of...

restaurant windows, and roasted walnuts. The atmosphere lends credence to Xian's far distant history as a meeting point of cultures, where once large communities of Turks, Persians, Afghans, Arabs and Indians congregated in their various quarters in the Tang imperial capital of Chang'An, once the mightiest and most splendid city on earth.

The next day, we visited a souvenir shop on the way to the famous Terracotta museum. The shop manufactures replicas of the terracotta warriors of all sizes and there were some very good Chinese furniture on sale too. Jean could not resist and bought a beautifully lacquered coffee table with four stools. They could even ship it to Canada at no extra charge, and it was a bargain at 1000 USD. With



Jean satisfied of her purchase, we headed for the Terracotta Museum, a Unesco world heritage site.



Big Goose Pagoda, Xian

The terracotta warriors rank amongst the greatest archaeological finds in the 20th century, when farmers digging a well stumbled upon the broken pieces of the warriors. I have been there twice previously, and it never ceased to amaze me when I stare at the scale and immensity of the collection of warriors, with details so unique no one warrior is the same. This was a testament to the megalomania of China's first Emperor, Qin Shi Huangdi, who also built the Great Wall. A visit to the museum ranks amongst the great highlights like visiting the Louvre in Paris or the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. Our day's last sightseeing venue was at the City Walls of Xian, the only intact wall still existing in any major Chinese city. We capped off our day by watching the famed Tang Dynasty Dinner show, where we enjoyed immensely the colorful and extravagant

music and dancing show based on the illustrious Tang Dynasty that existed between the 7th to 10th centuries CE.

Our last day in Xian was spent visiting the Shaanxi History Museum and the Museum of Stone Steles. Due to the historical significance of the area as cradle of Chinese civilization, Xian's museums are well endowed with artefacts. Our train left Xian that night and it was a long trek to the station platform as the station prohibits tour buses from stopping in the immediate vicinity of the station, a puzzle given the importance of tourism in this city. Anyhow, after a rather tough trek to the station, we boarded an overnight train to Jiayuguan in Gansu province. As we settled into our soft sleeper berths on the train, we fell asleep to the whistles and rumbling of the train, our journey to the West had begun.

Al Toledo (right) joined his first WACA tour organized by the Airline Club of Thailand. He, along with his lovely spouse, Sobie, are now some of the most active members of WACA.





## ON THE TRAIN TO JIAYUGUAN

We awoke in the morning to the crisp cool air near Lanzhou, capital of Gansu Province and the Yellow River, China's second longest river after the Yangtze. As the train rumbled along, it got really chilly and soon, there were some white stuff on the ground, and it was snow! After another hour, snow was falling in blizzard conditions, in the middle of May! We quickly put on our jackets and sipped hot drinks to stay warm. The snow capped Qilian Mountains of the Tibetan Plateau were now clearly visible to our left while the Gobi desert was now apparent with its aridity to our right. We were now chugging along the Hexi Corridor, a narrow strip of land in Gansu Province sandwiched between the Tibetan Plateau and the forbidding Gobi Desert of Inner Mongolia. After passing through the towns of Zhangye, where Kublai Khan was born, and Jiuquan, where the Chinese space center is located, we pulled into Jiayuguan station in the late afternoon. Jiayuguan is a relatively new city built on the back of its steel industry. It has wide boulevards and looks modern in appearance. However, it can be quite desolate as it is in the Gobi Desert and its main tourist attraction is the Jiayuguan fort, the eastern terminus of the Great Wall. We checked into the Huayuan Hotel for the night.

### JIAYUGUAN

You could not have asked for a better day weather wise. The snow blizzard of the previous day gave way to a clear day with blue skies. The snow capped Qilian Mountain range was clearly visible and provided a dramatic backdrop to the Fort. Jiayuguan is probably the most impressive medieval Fort in China and its desolate location in the Gobi Desert, framed by snow capped mountains in the background gives it one of China's most famous vistas (one you can see upon arrival at Beijing Capital Airport Terminal 2). The fort was built in the 14th century to defend Ming China's frontiers against the Mongolians and Timur's pending invasion threat, the earlier whom they overthrew and expelled from China proper just a few decades earlier. After enjoying a couple of hours in this impressive fort, we headed over to the Wei-Jin tombs in the outskirts of Jiayuguan. The tombs complex is built deep underground and dates from 1700 years ago during the Northern Wei dynasty. The coffins have now been removed from the tombs but the vivid art on the tomb walls are quite interesting depicting the daily lives of its owners, providing an insight into a long gone era in Chinese history.

A snow blizzard in mid-May, along the train track from Xian to Jiayuguan



After lunch, we hopped back onto our bus and began a 3 hour long drive to Dunhuang across the Gobi Desert along a modern expressway. When I led another WACA group here in 2005, the road was still under construction and the arduous trip took a bone jarring 8 hours. Thankfully, we arrived at the Silk Road Hotel in the late afternoon, with time to spare until dinner. The Silk Road hotel has been upgraded from a 3 stars to a 4 stars hotel since our last trip and the rooms are tastefully decorated. We had dinner in town, where stir fried donkey was served, we thought it was venison. We only found out later after a few donkey dishes! Yuck!



## Dunhuang

Breakfast at the hotel was truly dramatic. The meal was held at the hotel rooftop patio, overlooking giant sand dunes of the Kumtag Desert. Fran and Walt woke up to see the sunrise, but I stayed up a bit longer to squeeze in an additional hour of sleep. Our itinerary this morning started with a visit to the nearby dunes, where we got on a camel train to head up to some nearby dunes. The camels here have 2 humps, and are known as the Bactrian camel. Every one of us had a good time riding the camels but it is ill advised to provoke them, as Sobie found out the hard way when she got spat on by her camel. We all got a good laugh and our time spent at the dunes and the Crescent Moon Spring would become one of the highlights of our tour.

The main attraction of Dunhuang is actually the Unesco listed caves which showcase an impressive collection of Buddhist sculptures and wall art. There are hundreds of caves bored into the sandstone cliff faces but only a score or so caves are opened to tourists. We got our own private guide and were shown artwork from over a thousand years ago with its paint still fresh and gigantic Buddha statues that rank as some of the largest in the world. The caves date from the Wei dynasty to the Qing, the last dynasty of China. We were joined by a Spaniard



during the visit and he rode his bicycle all the way from Spain, with his intended final destination in Xian! We complained over trivial matters on our travels, but this chap left his wife and child back home and endured hardships for months, and even years riding his bike going through all kinds of inconveniences. After our pleasant visit to the dunes and the impressive caves of Dunhuang, we killed off time in a carpet factory, which had some very good quality carpets on display. Jean's shopping bug was again re-ignited, but this time, she walked away without committing to a purchase. It was also in Dunhuang that Lorie started her fascination with the stuffed camel toys, naming them, two-eeey, for the 2 hump Bactrian camel.



Riding camels at Dunhuang

That night, we would board an overnight train again for Turpan, located in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. We would be leaving the Chinese cultural world tonight. Tomorrow would bring in a different phase in our trip. Instead of Buddhist temples, it would be mosques from then on, instead of pork and rice dishes, the cuisine would be dominated by mutton and nan bread.

**ALL PICTURES FEATURED IN THIS ARTICLE WERE-TAKEN BY JULIAN CHAU**



## TURPAN, CHINESE TURKESTAN

Arriving in the pitch black of early morning, we were met at the train station outside Turpan by our guide, Zulfiya. She is a Chinese citizen, but she looks so different from your typical Chinese lady. She has light coloured hair and eyes. She is a member of the Uyghurs, a Muslim people who speak a Turkic language and are indigenous to Xinjiang. When we arrived at the hotel, it was still very early and we were really happy that we could get our rooms and it looked like we would have at least 4 hours of sleep before the day's tour starts. Since Xinjiang runs on Beijing time (it is actually 3 time zones behind Beijing), the business day for locals start at 10 or 11 am Beijing time.



For me, it was a fitful sleep, and one that I needed badly. Refreshed, we joined Zulfiya for our tour in Turpan. Turpan is an Oasis situated not far from the Tianshan Mountains and the Northern fringes of the Takla Makan desert. It is also the second lowest location on earth after the Dead Sea. As such, it is the hottest place in China with temperatures soaring to over 45 degrees Celsius in summer. Our first sight-seeing stop in Turpan was the aptly named Flaming Mountains, which are intensely coloured in red and appears to burn under the hot sun, hence its name.

Hidden in the flaming mountains are the Bezeklik Thousand Buddha Caves. Although most of its Buddhist sculptures or arts have been destroyed or carted off by a German explorer, Albert Von Coq, the site is still worth a visit. The caves are reminiscent of the sand houses on the planet Tatooine in the Star Wars movie and many of its artwork were unfortunately destroyed in the Berlin Museum by Allied bombing during World War 2. It was here that we were introduced to the Uyghur string instrument called the Rawap. Fran appears to be fascinated by it and posed playing the instrument next to an old Uyghur musician.

Turpan is also famous for its grapes and our next stop was at the Grape valley, Where the local Uighur commune grows grapes and dry them into delicious raisins, the best in China. In addition to grapes, which were out of season at the time, there were mulberry trees in abundance, with many fruiting and its sweet berries could be picked off and eaten. Zulfiya gave us an insight into the lives of the locals and their spacious courtyard houses. Al remarked how different Turpan was from China. It just didn't feel like we were in China. The people and culture are so different from the stereotypical view people have of what Chinese people should look like. We had lunch at a very local Uyghur restaurant, where we had tasty lamb kebabs, cool yoghurt and Nan bread, and this was our first introduction to Uyghur cuisine on the tour. That night at a cultural show in Turpan, I learnt a lot about Zulfiya. She came from a small town of Artush near Kashgar and studied law in College. She was still single and was waiting for her visa to Turkey to be approved, where she was planning to study tourism. I wished her all the best.



Playing the Rawap, Bezeklik Caves, Turpan

Zulfiya

## ON TO URUMQI

One thing about the ancient Silk Road, cities rose and disappeared. Jiaohe or Yarkhoto was no different. Built over 2000 years ago, it fell to the Mongolian hordes in the 13th century and was destroyed, its ruins a standing monument to its past glory as a cosmopolitan trade centre where various religions thrived. Jiaohe was our last stop in Turpan and afterwards we drove about 2 hours to Urumqi, capital of Xinjiang Province, along a modern expressway.

Urumqi is a large and modern city with a superlative to its name, the furthest place on earth from an Ocean or Sea. It is mainly an ethnic Chinese city with a large Muslim Uyghur minority. Urumqi is now considered the trading hub of Central Asia. Upon entering Urumqi, we made an urgent stop for the Kentucky Fried Chicken joint in the Grand Bazaar. After a week in China, the North Americans were craving some fast food, and they got it. Business at the Grand Bazaar had been slow since the riots of 09, but nonetheless, we walked through the cavernous interior where Turpan raisins, Uyghur knives, silk and various items were on sale.

After checking into the Hoitak hotel, we visited the Xinjiang Provincial Museum in the afternoon. The museum has an excellent cultural display of the various ethnic groups who live in Xinjiang, such as the Uyghur, Kirghiz, Kazakh, Mongolian, Tajik and the Tartar etc. but its most famous attraction are the ancient mummies dug up from the Takla Makan Desert. The mummies display Caucasian features and are probably of European origin, whose presence in the region even predated the Uyghurs. They were so well preserved that 1 or 2 mummies looked like they had just passed away yesterday. The most famous of all the mummies is the female mummy known as the Beauty of Loulan, which was featured in various National Geographic and Discovery Channel documentaries and articles.



Top: Urumqi's Grand Bazaar.

Centre: Jean Choo riding a Kazakh horse near Tian Chi in the Tian Shan Mountains.



Below: A Uyghur man grills some delicious shish kebabs at Tian Chi.





## HEAVENLY LAKE AND THE KAZAKH YURT

The breakfast at the Hoitak Hotel was very good, with a good spread of Western and Chinese choices, such as waffles and omelettes etc. We gorged and feasted on the bountiful breakfast.

This morning, we headed to a Kazakh Yurt camp in the Tian Shan Mountains. After an hour's drive, we left behind the urban sprawl and smog of Urumqi and entered the beautiful alpine landscape of the Tian Shan Mountains. The concrete blocks of Urumqi are replaced by the Yurts of the Kazakh nomads. The Kazakhs are a Turkic people who migrated into Xinjiang after the Russian Czarist and Bolshevik repressions in their homelands in Kazakhstan. While the Uyghurs live in the lowland Oasis towns, the Kazakhs dominate in the mountains of Northern Xinjiang.

After a short horse ride in a Kazakh camp, we headed up the Mountains to the stunning Heavenly Lake, or Tianchi. The Lake is ringed by snow capped mountains in a serene environment, but the wear and tear from mass tourism was clearly visible. It is possible to stay in Yurt camps around the lake and many used these camps as a base to explore the rugged upper slopes of the Tian Shan.

After a cruise and a stop to visit a Taoist shrine (Tianchi is an important pilgrimage destination for Taoists), we concluded our visit to the Mountains by having a lunch of local Pilaf rice at the Yurt camp. Pilaf is a major dish of the Uyghurs and no one can make it more delicious than they can. It is a simple dish with short grain rice, yellow carrots, onions and mutton cubes. It was the first dish of Pilaf we ate on the trip and there were more to come in Kashgar and Uzbekistan, but it was the tastiest Pilaf of all of them.

As the China Southern flight climbed out from Urumqi International Airport, the scenery outside the aircraft window was breathtaking as masses of snow capped mountains dominated the far horizon. These are the mighty Tian Shan Mountains that cut through the countries of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Tian means heaven in Chinese, and it appropriately describes the great heights of the peaks. After almost 2 hours in the air, we were finally in fabled Kashgar, in the far western end of China.



Tianchi - Heavenly Lake





## KASHGAR - THE FABLED OUTPOST OF THE ANCIENT SILK ROAD

Last time I visited Kashgar with a large WACA group, we had to walk across the tarmac to the terminal. As was the case elsewhere in China, there had been a quantum leap in infrastructure development. This time around, we were led across a docking bridge to the new glass terminal and were met by our local Uygur guide, Mr. Mehmet Jan. Upon leaving the airport, one could notice right away that the city was very different from China. As dusk approached, we arrived at our hotel through the chaotic traffic of a zillion weaving mopeds.

Kashgar was one of the most important trading outposts on the ancient Silk Road and had been ruled during various times by the Persian, Chinese, Turkic, Mongolian and Indian Kushan Empires. The old mud walled houses in the old town and the swarthy looking people would give the impression that one might have been in a Middle Eastern town. Kashgar's main draw is its Bazaar, which is the largest in Central Asia, and its livestock market is uniquely interesting, and one of the highlights of the tour. After our visit to the Abakh Khoja Mausoleum, which is the burial ground of a prominent Kashgar religious family, we made a beeline for the livestock market.



The presence of the Livestock Market was made known when we observed convoys of donkey carts, mopeds and tractors heading in a general direction. The Livestock market itself is enclosed by 4 walls and as you enter, there is a sense of organized chaos with dust swirling around, mixed with the smell of greasy kebabs wafting through the air. Every part of the market is catered to a specific activity. For example, one area is reserved for the trading of sheep, another part for cattle, and yet another part for horses and donkeys.



One could even test drive a horse cart on the side, and observe the throngs of people haggling over the prices of the goods. It was a kaleidoscope of colour and cultures, Uyghur men haggling with ethnic Kirgiz, Uzbeks doing business with Kazakhs, and a smattering of other ethnic groups, each dressed in their own colourful ethnic costumes. The whole scene was like a movie about life in the middle ages in Central Asia, a scene that will be seared into your mind forever.



In our second full day in Kashgar, we took an excursion to Lake Karakul (Black Lake in Turkic) in the Chinese Pamirs. The journey on the Karakoram Highway to the lake in itself was the highlight, as we passed through the high Pamirs, with soaring snow capped mountains topping 25,000 feet in altitude. The area is near the junction of the national borders of China, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan; and home to Kyrgyz nomads, who make a living herding their flocks and any tourism income they could earn through renting out their yurts and horses.

Pictures from top to bottom, right to left:  
Potential buyers at Kashgar's livestock market.  
Sheep tied together for sale, livestock market.  
The Abakh Khoja Mausoleum in Kashgar.



## IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE, AND THOUSANDS OF KILOMETRES FROM CIVILIZATION

Early next morning, we left Kashgar for the border of Kyrgyzstan, a few hours' drive up the Pamirs. Our guide Mehmet and his driver dropped us off at the desolate Irkeshtam Pass between China and Kyrgyzstan. After saying goodbye to Mehmet and completing the border formalities on the Chinese side, we were driven across no man's land until we reached a small creek, which marked the actual border, and then we had to drag our luggage for a few hundred meters more through a long queue of trucks, before we were met by Kyrgyz border guards, who were small in stature but friendly. Our Kyrgyz guide, who was supposed to meet us at the border, was nowhere to be seen. Here we are, in the heart of Asia, in a desolate location, and in the middle of nowhere. Uncertainty was clearly in everyone's mind. What now?

Part 2 to be continued in the next issue of the WACA World News, the adventure continues as the Silk Roaders continue on their travels through Kyrgyzstan, the Fergana Valley, Tashkent, Bukhara and Samarkand in Uzbekistan...

### Visions of the Silk Road in Kashgar



KASHGAR

Kongur, highest peak of the Pamirs  
Along the Karakoram Highway



Follow the adventures of the WACA Silk Roaders, as they had to cope with surprises, hardships, and discovery as they crossed the Pamirs in Kyrgyzstan in the next issue of WACA World News.

## Airline Jargon

### TARMAC

Meaning: A portmanteau for “tar-penetration macadam,” a highway surfacing material patented in Britain in 1901. Eventually it came to mean any sort of asphalt or blacktop. You hear it in reference to airports all the time, even though almost no ramp, apron, runway or taxiway is actually surfaced with the stuff. Real tarmac becomes soft in hot weather, and would turn to mush under the wheels of a heavy jet. Like many words, it has outgrown its specificity, and there are linguistic traditionalists who are bothered by this.



We have a date  
18-22 Oct 2015



### Interline Clube of Portugal adds a Second Package for the Azores!

Due to popular demand, the ICP has put on a Package B which will be the same price and dates as Package A, but the flights will be different. Azores Sometime between 1427 and 1431, the Portuguese navigators discovered the islands of the Azores. The initial settlement, dating from 1440 with the arrival of Gonçalo Velho Cabral, was carried out by people who came from the Portuguese regions of Estremadura, Algarve and Alentejo. Later, other communities made up of Moors, Jews and foreigners (namely French) also settled on the islands. The fertile soil and the existence of some safe bays quickly transformed the major island into a trading post. The economic growth was sustained mainly by the production and export of wheat and woad which boosted the island's settlement.

Would you like to also explore these unique islands in the blue Atlantic Ocean, between two continents? Then sign up quickly with the Interline Clube Portugal at [waca2014porto@interline.pt](mailto:waca2014porto@interline.pt) for the AGA post-tour from 10–15 October!



Mount Pico Volcano

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Sperm Whale





The 2014 Annual General Assembly and Interline Celebration will be held in Porto, Portugal, from 5th to 10th of October 2014. Although it is not the first time an AGA has been hosted by the Interline Club of Portugal, it is the first time they have hosted this event in Porto, Portugal.

**P**ORTO, occasionally also known as Oporto in English is the second-largest city in Portugal, after Lisbon, as well as one of the major urban areas in Southern Europe and the capital of the second major great urban area in Portugal. The urban area of Porto, which extends beyond the administrative limits of the city, has a population of 1.3 million (2011) in an area of 189 km<sup>2</sup> (73 sq mi), making it the second-largest urban area in Portugal. The Porto Metropolitan Area includes an estimated 1,7 million people. It is recognized as a Gamma-level global city by the Globalization and World Cities (GaWC) Study Group, being one of five cities on the Iberian Peninsula with global city status, the others being Madrid, Barcelona, Lisbon and Valencia.

Located along the Douro river estuary in northern Portugal, Porto is one of the oldest European centres, and registered as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1996. Its settlement dates back many centuries, when it was an outpost of the Roman Empire. Its Latin name, Portus Cale, has been referred to as the origin for the name “Portugal”, based on transliteration and oral evolution from Latin. In Portuguese the name of the city is spelled with a definite article as O Porto (English: “the port”). Consequently, its English name evolved from a misinterpretation of the oral pronunciation and referred to as Oporto in modern literature and by many speakers.

One of Portugal’s internationally famous exports, port wine, is named for Porto, since the metropolitan area, and in particular the adegas of Vila Nova de Gaia, were responsible for the production and export of the fortified wine. The Porto region is also a major producer of cork. Porto has also been named 2014’s best European destination to visit.

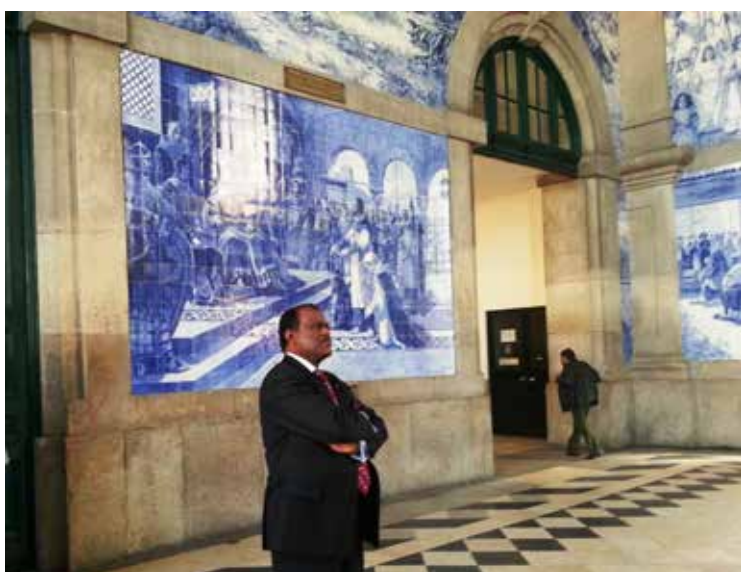
Above extracted from wikipedia.



## Viva O Porto

### Site Visit of the 47th AGA Venue

In early March, WACA President Maga Ramasamy was received the Interline Club of Portugal for a site-visit to the venue of the coming AGA and Interline Celebration in Porto. The President of the Interline Club of Portugal, Antonio Ferrão and his team members tried to give an impression not only from the hotel and its facilities, but also from the city of Porto and part of the tours to be offered to our interline friends in October 2014.



The event will be held from the 5th to 10th of October, 2014. The registration for the pre and post tours are very brisk, with the ICP setting up a second tour to the Azores Islands. The Interline Club of Portugal has generously donated one each a package to the AGA and the Madeira pre-tour for the Grand Venture Bonanza raffle draw, due in June. Contact your WACA rep for tickets.



### Information on the 1st Day Tour during the Interline Celebration

#### Guimarães

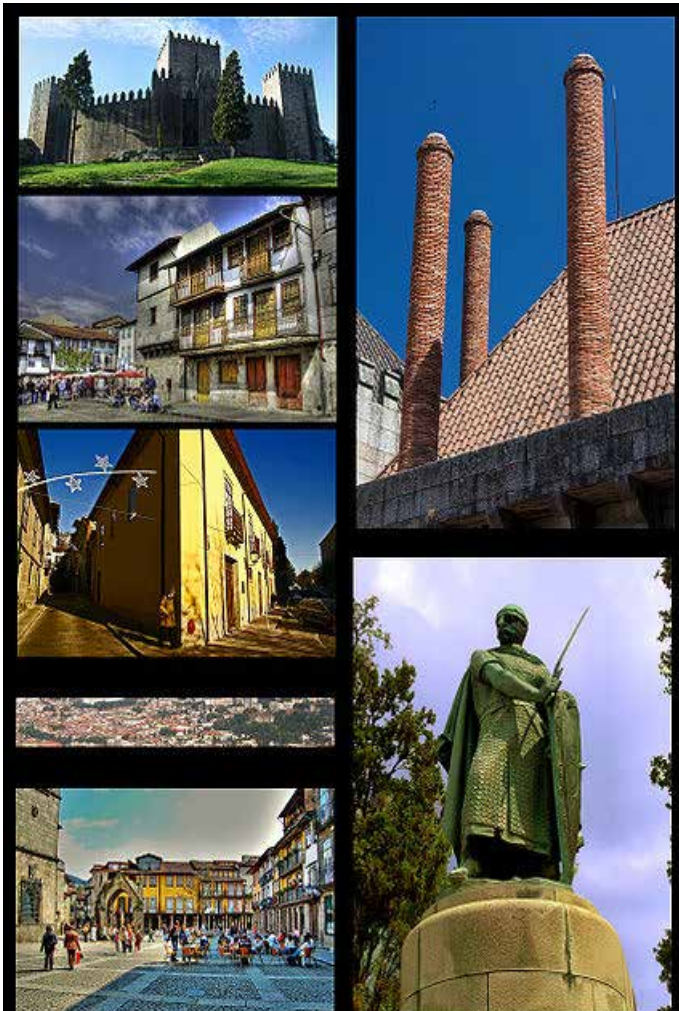
The first stop on the full day visit to the North of Portugal during the 2014 Interline Celebration will be the city of Guimarães, some 50 km away from Porto. Guimarães is a city with a glorious historical past whose history is linked to the foundation of the Portuguese national identity and the Portuguese language in the XII century. The historic centre, listed as a World Heritage property, is a single trace of a particular type of city design which had its own evolution, due to the morphology of its medieval urban fabric. This fabric forms a succession of great squares of formal value and environmental quality as well as of a particular type of construction. It is typologically diverse, but with a large formal unity as a whole, entirely built with traditional construction techniques and bearing rammed earth and mud to trundle the adobe. This exceptionally well preserved city reflects the evolution of some private buildings from medieval times to the present, with particular focus between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Famous also for its manufactures, the tradition of leather work is already old in Guimarães. News found that the activity developed, since the Middle Ages, outside the ancient walls along the river through the city, in an area once known for being the town of Hides and where currently there are still traces of this ancient connection to the manufacture of fur.

#### Braga

Continuing on the full day tour we will visit the city of Braga. Braga is the oldest Portuguese city and one of the oldest Christian cities in the world with more than 2,000 years of history. During the second century B.C., the region was taken by the Romans who built ...contd.





Guimarães



Braga



the city in 16 B.C. with the name Bracara Augusta, in honour of the Emperor Augustus Caesar.

After the conquest of the Roman Empire, Bracara Augusta became the political and intellectual capital of the kingdom of Suevi, who embraced Galicia and extended into the Tagus River.

In the eleventh century the city was reorganised, probably with the new designation of “Braga”. The construction of the city walls and the cathedral was started on the remains of an ancient Roman temple dedicated to the goddess Isis and would later have been converted into a Christian church. The city was developed around the cathedral which was protected by the walled perimeter.

### Santa Luzia in Viana do Castelo

Before ending the day in the North of Portugal we will see the sun set from the Hill of Santa Luzia in Viana do Castelo. The town of Viana da Foz do Lima, as it was called at that time, received a charter from King Alfonso III of Portugal on 18 July 1258. Situated on the river Lima, the town became an important trading post and prosperous from the port trade.

The town built a defensive tower (Tower of Roqueta) the function of which was to repel pirates from Galicia and northern Africa. The flourishing maritime trade with northern Europe, involving the export of wines, fruit and salt, and imports of tableware, fabrics, tapestries and glass as well as the commercial spirit of Viana reached such proportions that Queen Maria II of Portugal granted the licence Commercial Association of Viana do Castelo in 1852. It was only in the last century, the main commercial port in northern Portugal was relocated to Porto, which has benefited in importance from wine growing.

## Santa Luzia in Viana do Castelo



## The Venue of the 47th AGA and Interline Celebration

## Tiara Park Atlantic Porto



*“On the Avenida da Boavista, in the heart of the city’s business and cultural district, this modern 5-star hotel exudes pure luxury and comfort.*

*Only a few miles from Porto’s beautiful beaches, Hotel Tiara Park Atlantic Porto is the perfect choice. Enjoy magnificent views from the comfort of your spacious room or venture out into the city. All public and private spaces are elegantly furnished, radiating a warm and cozy atmosphere.”* **Hotel Review**

WACA President, **Maga Ramasamy**, is pleased to report that he has made a visit to the Interline Celebration facilities in Porto with Antonio Ferrao and his organising team from the Portugal Interline Club. The hotel was inspected for all the required facilities and venues to host a successful event, e.g. meeting rooms, Ballrooms, Welcome Ceremony location, Gala Night location, Regional Evenings venues, etc. The service providers such as restaurants, wine caves and transportation coaches, as well as the Tourism Board, were contacted introduced to Maga and they are all very keen to receive WACA. As it was explained to all the various stakeholders, WACA through its activities is promoting sustainable tourism with each of its participants a responsible traveller.

From the airport the hotel is easily accessible by the underground system and surface transport. A registration desk will be set up in the arrivals lounge of the airport before customs with a WACA banner which the Airport Authority has agreed to display.

The hotel is only 50 metres away from a supermarket and ATM machine and is also close to various boutiques and shops.



# Port Wine

Perhaps more people in the world have heard of Port Wine, rather than the city of Porto, from whose name the wine's name was derived. Port is produced from grapes grown and processed in the Douro region (along the banks of the Douro River). The wine produced is then fortified by the addition of a neutral grape spirit known as “aguardente” in order to stop the fermentation, leaving residual sugar in the wine, and to boost the alcohol content. The fortification spirit is sometimes referred to as brandy but it bears little resemblance to commercial brandies. The wine is then stored and aged, often in barrels stored in a cave (meaning “cellar” in Portuguese) before being bottled. The wine received its name, “port”, in the latter half of the 17th century from the seaport city of Porto, which is located at the mouth of the Douro River, where much of the product was brought to market or for export to other countries in Europe. The Douro valley where port wine is produced was defined and established as a protected region, or appellation in 1756, making it the oldest defined and protected wine region in the world.

The reaches of the valley of the Douro River in northern Portugal have a microclimate that is optimal for cultivation of olives, almonds, and especially grapes important for making port wine. The region around Pinhão and São João da Pesqueira is considered to be the centre of port production, and is known for its picturesque quintas - farms clinging on to almost vertical slopes dropping down to the river. [Source: Wikipedia.](#)

Participants of the half day tour in the AGA program will be able to visit a Port winery.





# The Porto Cruise of the AGA and Interline Celebration Program

The Douro River Cruise is part of the AGA and Interline Celebration Program. The Douro is one of the major rivers of the Iberian Peninsula, flowing from its source near Duruelo de la Sierra in Soria Province across northern-central Spain and Portugal to its outlet at Porto. While it's not exactly in a forgotten corner of Europe, Portugal's Douro River does tend to be off the beaten river cruising track in comparison to the popular Rhine, Danube and Rhone. Yet one can experience the breath-taking beauty of the Douro during the Interline Celebration with the river providing unforgettable experiences that may surprise those unfamiliar with this region. There are long, blissful spells on the water without seeing other boats, cruising stretches of the Douro between steep, rocky slopes on which thousands of hectares of port wine grapes are cultivated.



Some travellers join a cruise that can take a whole week that start from Porto and end at Salamanca in Spain.

Although a Douro cruise sets a pretty leisurely pace, there are some wonderful experiences along the way. One could wander around medieval hilltop villages that have barely changed over the centuries. At the conclusion of the cruise, we will visit a Port Wine Museum showcasing the history of some of the big port-growing dynasties at Regua and we can also see some of their names gracing the steeply terraced vineyards along the river in huge letters. It was the British who started the port wine industry 300 years ago with their Portuguese partners. This will be a very beautiful cruise accompanied by cocktails and music. Bring your music CDs along!

Below is a story on the Telegraph Newspaper of the UK about a Douro River Cruise. Some of the pictures used in this WACA article are borrowed from the Telegraph.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/cruises/10628791/Duoro-river-cruise-to-the-heart-of-Portugal.html>

DOURO RIVER CRUISE  
PORTO TO REGUA







# WACA

## President Visits

# ITB Berlin 2014



WACA President Mr. **Maga Ramasamy** visited the ITB Berlin in March this year. The Travel Trade Fair is the largest of its kind in the world. In addition to establishing contacts between WACA and those in the travel industry, Maga also attended the Annual General Meeting of the CODE, an Organization dedicated to protecting children from sex tourism. Above, Maga met with the Secretary General of UNWTO, Dr Taleb Rifai, after the conference on Illegal Trafficking and Tourism.

**The Code** represents one of the first initiatives to define the role and obligations of tourism companies with regard to the issue of child sex tourism. The goal of The Code is to work with travel and tourism companies to combat this crime.

The Code believes that, by endeavouring to meet the six criteria of The Code, tourism companies can integrate child protection into their business operations. The six criteria were formulated to turn child protection principles into concrete actions. In this way, they will uphold their commitments towards sustainable and ethical tourism by taking tangible actions to help protect children from sexual exploitation. WACA, as a responsible Organization that supports sustainable tourism and moral ethics, fully supports the initiatives of the Code. You can find out more about the Code at [thecode.org](http://thecode.org)

The Code employs the following six criteria (the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism), which members of the tourism industry must adhere to once they join The Code:

1. To establish a policy and procedures against sexual exploitation of children.
2. To train employees in children's rights, the prevention of sexual exploitation and how to report suspected cases.
3. To include a clause in contracts throughout the value chain stating a common repudiation and zero tolerance policy of sexual exploitation of children.
4. To provide information to travellers on children's rights, the prevention of sexual exploitation of children and how to report suspected cases.
5. To support, collaborate and engage stakeholders in the prevention of sexual exploitation of children.
6. To report annually on their implementation of Code related activities.



# WE PROTECT CHILDREN FROM SEX TOURISM



SHOW YOUR  
SUPPORT

# WACA Charity Corner

## Bali School Visit



Pupils at the No. 3 Penarungan School pose in front of their classroom

Giving to the local communities which we visit is always a core WACA value. We have charity functions at AGAs by identifying a particular charity or institution to support. So when WACA organized the tour to Bali in April this year, it was only expected that the Association chose to make room in the tour itinerary to deliver badly needed school supplies such as stationery to a local school.

The no. 3 Penarungan Primary School welcomed the WACA delegation and stopped classes to receive us. The young pupils told us one by one what they wanted to do when they grow up, with most wanting to be engineers, policemen, nurses or teachers. Some impromptu English lessons were also given to the pupils by the WACA people. The visit to the school was the first stop on the tour itinerary, showing the priority WACA assigned to it. Miss Linda Lenters from the Calgary Interline Club donated the items on behalf of WACA and the participants of the tour. Although the Indonesian Government provides the local communities with school facilities and teachers, many of the children's families have to pay for essentials like school uniforms, books, and stationeries.





# *The Ultimate Challenge*

2012

*The Kilimanjaro Climb was part of the Interline Celebration activities at Zanzibar in 2012.*

Thanks to the AIM Region of WACA and their foresight in believing in some of their members' fitness or willingness to become fit to take up the ultimate challenge, to climb Kilimanjaro and reach Uhuru summit at close to 20,000 feet high; eight of us jumped at the opportunity to accept this challenge.

Two Hong Kong Members Evelyn and John and six Calgary Members Jan and Mike, Helene and Bruce, and Linda (myself) and Dan set out on a 6 day endurance adventure in October 2012 in Tanzania, East Africa. We got to experience what few people will ever have a chance to do. Our tour company was one of the best on the mountain and called themselves the Dream Team, One Team, One Dream. This was our Mantra throughout the climb and kept our spirits up during the cold evening dinners and waking up to a frost covered tent as the porters would bring us ginger tea.



One Team One Dream

## Kilimanjaro



The Swahili expression "Pole Pole", which means slow slow was used by our guides, porters and all Tanzanians that passed us on the hill. As we started our climb we could not believe how slow they expected us to walk and watched as younger climbers passed us. Being older and respectful we listened to our guides and continued this slow pace. We discovered that we were never tired, never had to stop for a rest as we would overtake and pass the younger climbers, which in turn to be passed by them later once again. We learnt after our summit climb that only 55 percent (that week) of those on the hill were able to summit and most that did not make it were much younger. Pole Pole gives you the time to acclimatize and when we were tested for our oxygen levels before the summit night, all of us were good to go. Our Guides also reminded us along the way that we were on vacation and should stop take pictures and take in all the wonderful scenery around us.

We climbed at the right time of year and had the weather on our side with only the first day pouring rain in the rain forest which is natural and helped keep some of the dust down in the days to follow.

Climbing in only 6 days instead of the recommended 7 set some challenges for us and unfortunately at this pace one of us had to turn back summit night just too tired to make it to the top. On our last day we started our climb to the last base camp at 0800 arriving around 1730. We had supper at 1900 and laid down for a rest at 2030 we got up at 2300 preparing for our midnight ascent. As this is it, all of us were too nervous and excited to sleep.



*“As this is it, all of us where too nervous and excited to sleep.”*

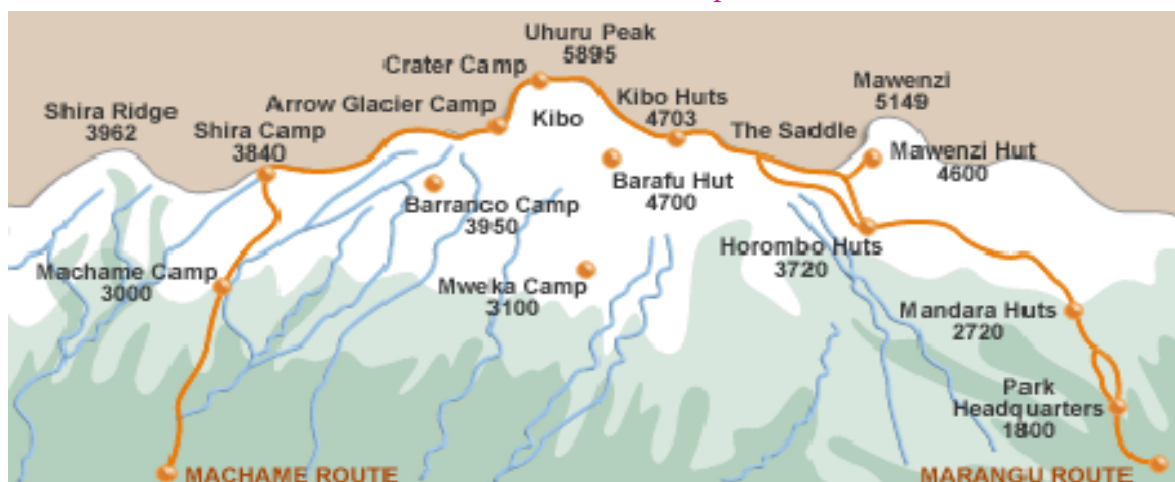
After hiking all day we now start our climb to the summit in about -20 to -25 celsius following the trek of headlamps up the hill. It was cold, windy and difficult to see but as we had done through out the hike it was pole pole one step at a time. We reached the first summit at 0700 hours, Stella Point 5,745 meters. Exhausted but very proud, we were only six left as Evelyn was struggling and stayed back with one guide and John's legs just wouldn't allow him to go any further and he had to turn back and wait for us at base camp.

With the sun shining we headed up the last 45 minutes to the summit Uhuru Peak 5,895 meters. The highest mountain on the Africian continent arriving at 0745.

We did it! Now the challenge. We were all so focused on reaching the summit we never thought about the descent. After climbing all day and all night being at almost 20,000 feet which meant only being allowed to stay at the summit for 10 minutes we had to start the long climb down to base camp for a short rest and then gather up our gear for a climb to the last camp. This meant going down about 5k in a very steep decline that put alot of pressure on tired legs and sore knees with another 15 k the next day to the bottom. Good thing we were all so high on the excitement of summiting and now glad it was only a 6 day hike as we were all tired of the food and sleeping in tents.

Safe at the bottom we received our well earned certificates for making the climb and the next day flew over Mt Kilimanjaro on our way to the 45th AGA in Zanizibar for a well earned rest. To put it in perspective the height of Kilimanjaro, when Dan and I left DAR on KLM we watched the map onboard and it took over 20 minutes by air to reach 20,000 feet. **Linda Lenters, Calgary IC.**

**The Team took the Machame Route up the Mountain**





{{Did you know how the motto of the WACA Council came about?}}

*“One Team One Dream”*

We were inspired by the exploits of the WACA expedition on Mount Kilimanjaro, where the average summit success rate is around 50 percent, yet 7 out of the 8 WACA members successfully summited the peak. This was achieved by unity and determination to reach a goal. As such, when you hear the WACA Council extol the motto “One Team, One Dream”, you will know the origin of this inspirational saying.

**“Pole Pole”**

**“Slow Slow”**

Swahili



**“We did it!”**

Teamwork

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COMMON  
GOALS



## [WACA moves into the Digital Age, Social and Networking Spheres]



Since WACA introduced the [Facebook Group Page](#) last July, response has been very positive and there are close to 400 members as of today.

You can request to join this page by making a request. This can be made directly at the group page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/wacaorg/> Make sure the page name is “World Airlines Clubs Association (Official)”, so as not to be confused with other pages with a similar name.



You can also follow WACA on [Twitter](#) on the following account <https://twitter.com/WacaHQ> You will have to join Twitter in order to receive tweets.



You can also connect with WACA on [LinkedIn](#). Look us up and connect with [WACA WACA](#)





WACA recently caught up with **John Silva**, ex-President of the Airline Club of Singapore. John was the President of the Club when it hosted the most attended Annual General Assembly ever with over 700 interliners from around the world, the **20th AGA in 1987**. When you counted the ACS members who attended, and affiliates in the Travel Industry in Singapore, attendance was well over 1000 persons!

The AGA was held in the then Westin Stamford, the tallest hotel in the world at the time. Singapore was just recovering from the worst economic recession since its independence from Britain and the hotel was willing to offer an attractive rate to attract business. Nonetheless, for such a young club at the time, it was a daring and audacious move to host the big event.

John had worked in the hospitality business for a few years before joining United Airlines Singapore, mainly serving in a management capacity in Marketing and Sales. John left the Airline industry after 17 years and currently runs his own music business as a senior Drumming Teacher and Educator at Ossia Music School Singapore. He also heads a popular Blues band called the "Blues Express".



John Silva today

We asked John some questions about the 1987 WACA Annual General Assembly in Singapore and he gladly shared his thoughts on that memorable AGA.

**WACA :** What was your position at the ACS and what years did you serve?

**John:** I was the President of the Airline Club Of Singapore (ACS) during the period 1985-1989 and served the Club as President for five consecutive terms. I was the Vice President in 1984.

**WACA:** Given the fact that the ACS was only a few years old as a WACA member in the mid 80s, was the ACS aware of the complexity and challenges of hosting an AGA and in your point of view what made it a roaring success?

**John:** Yes, we were but we had a lot of good advice from a heavyweight sister club, the Airline Club of Thailand, whom we were very close to and of course with close assistance by Wally Gibbes, my good friend and Regional VP back then. I also had a great Executive Committee made up of hardworking and committed individuals from many airlines and the Singapore Air Terminal (SATS) people who were extremely professional in their work for ACS and who could work with me in hosting a great AGA in Singapore. We also had the backing of all the airlines here, a great hotel to work with, and the full backing of the Singapore Tourist Promotion Board.

Picture taken while the past WACA President Julio Seiz was giving a speech on stage during the Opening Ceremony



**WACA:** What was the most memorable moment of the AGA for you?

**John:** Looking down at the huge gathering of overseas WACA delegates, members, our own airline and travel industry directors, the excited and proud faces of my Excom guys, and the appreciative faces of our guests of honour who included our then Minister Of Transportation, Dr Yeo Ning Hong and two other Members of Parliament from our Singapore Government when I delivered my President's Opening and Welcome address onstage at the AGA Grand Opening Ceremony!

**WACA:** Thanks for sharing!

From left to right: Martin Whyting (Asst to FE and Australasia RVP), R. Siva (VP ACS), **John Silva** (President ACS), Prof. L T Soon (MP), Mr Yeo Ning Hong (Minister of Transport) and Mr CT Teo (MP).

# Around WACA

## Sydney Interline Club Celebrates St. Patrick's Day

The Club celebrated St Patrick's Day by having a Celebration Lunch on the 17th March. Their little leprechaun waitress had volunteered to have her head shaved a couple of days before for "Breast Cancer" charity. **Margaret Lee**



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## Jordanian Interline Club's End of Year Celebration Party

Mr. Yousef Yousef (Africa, Indian Ocean Islands, and Middle East Region Co-ordinator) standing between Easa (Issa) Al Nimri (the current president of the JIC) and Miss Ghada Al Nimri.



## Airline Club Singapore elects new Committee

The Airline Club of Singapore had their Annual General Meeting on 15 April 2014 and Captain Dara Singh Junior (SQ) was returned as President. Mr. Douglas Jador returned as Honorary Secretary and Mr. Josef Ho was elected Honorary Treasurer. The ACS has seen a resurgence in membership over the past few years, with membership around 200 members.

**Burhan**



St. Patrick's Day Celebration Vancouver Style with Sharon Revel and Inge Hansen. Below







The Committee of the Airline Club of Thailand and its members went on an educational trip to Sri Lanka late last year.

It was a Pilgrim & Charity trip to Kandy, Sri Lanka, which took place on the 26-30 Oct'13. The ACT and its members donated money to the children's schools in Kandy and the ceremony took place in a Thai temple. Kandy is a Buddhist pilgrimage site as it contains a holy relic of the Buddha. **Orathai B**



The ACT Bowling Tournament was organized for the Charity of the Foundation of Princess Mother's Medical Volunteers. We opened an ACT booth selling donated items from members and leased 2 booths for our own members to sell their items. All income totalling around 3,125 USD from sponsors, sales & fees were collected and donated to the Foundation. Below is the banner for the Charity event and its sponsors. **Orathai B.**



การแข่งขันโบว์ลิ่งการกุศล

สมาคมสโมสรการบินแห่งประเทศไทย

เพื่อสมทบทุนมูลนิธิแพथยาสาสมเด็จพระศรีนครินทร์ทราบรมราชชนนี(พอ.สว)

วันเสาร์ที่ 16 พฤศจิกายน 2556







Carmen  
Thoumy  
(seated)  
at Mann's Chi-  
nese Theater  
in Hollywood,  
Los Angeles,  
Terminus of  
the Cruise

We were around 24 participants on the WACA organized Panama Cruise. The destinations were very nice places to visit : Punto Vallarta, Huatulco, Puerto Chiapas, Puntarenas, Cartagena, Costa Rica, but the Panama Canal was amazing. Two boats from the same company, the Norwegian Pearl and the Norwegian Sun (our boat) crossed the canal together which allowed us to watch the details of the crossing clearly. After having an afternoon get together organized by Angela, a draw took place and we all left with a small present.

During the cruise, we all woke up very early and the passengers were trying to find a small place on the deck balcony to have the best pictures taken. Entertainment on board was great and the food yummy! It was a great idea from Angela to organize this cruise. We had lots of fun and good memories with our WACA friends. **Carmen Thoumy**

The Cruise was organized by the then WACA Secretary General, Miss Angela Leresche as part of WACA's Interline Festival initiative.



Marcelle, Angela and Miriam



## *Yousef Yousef* *Jordan Interline Club*

# WACA People

Yousef Yousef, past President of the Jordan Interline Club and ex-Regional Vice President of the Africa, Indian Ocean Islands, and Middle East Region, is currently living in Lagos, Nigeria. Yousef is well known in the WACA Community and is affectionately known as Zouzou by his interliner friends. Yousef had worked for Middle East Airlines in Jordan and after his official retirement from that airline, started his own travel company in Jordan, Bright Travel.

In 2012, when Royal Jordanian Airlines decided to exploit the large African market in Nigeria, it couldn't have selected a better and more capable person than Yousef to set up its Lagos office and run it. On the 3rd of July 2013, Royal Jordanian started operations to Lagos and he has been working there since. Yousef is still very active in the WACA Community and the Jordan Interline Club, having accepted the position of the AIM Region Co-ordinator after the adoption of the new WACA structure at Budapest last year.



**Clockwise:** Yousef with the press at Lagos, Nigeria, on RJ's launch in that country; at his Lagos office; with his Nigerian staff at the Lagos office; Yousef giving a speech at the Zanzibar Interline Celebration in 2012.

Yousef Yousef was behind the organization of the 2012 and 2007 AGAs and Interline Celebrations, and organized several successful interline tours to Egypt and Jordan.







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Pictures of the Budapest AGA 2013, Best of Bohemia  
and Tuscany Tours organized by the Hungarian IC  
Photos contributed by Debbie Day of the Detroit Interline Club



FLORENCE - BEST OF TUSCANY - FIRENZE



# Calendar of Events

Event Name	Hosting Club	Dates	Cost Based on twin share	Contact Details	Deadline	Remarks	Availability
Madagascar	AIM/IOIIC	May 25 - June 02 2014	1580 USD	waca.zanzibar@gmail.com	Closed	Price inclusive of waca fee	Poor
Dodo's Nest	AIM/IOIIC	June 3- 8 2014	875 USD	waca.zanzibar@gmail.com			Good
Summer Holy Land Tour	Israel	July 10-17 2014	989 USD	aharon.gabbay@gmail.com	June 10, 2014		Good
Madeira	Portugal	October 1-5 2014	540 EUR	waca2014porto@interline.pt	June 1, 2014	Pre AGA Tour	Fair. Few spots still available
47th AGA Porto Portugal	Portugal	October 5-10 2014	654 EUR	waca2014porto@interline.pt	June 1, 2014		Good
Azores Islands	Portugal	October 10-15 2014	720 EUR	waca2014porto@interline.pt	June 1, 2014	Post Tour. Second tour added	Fair. Second tour added.

Please refer to the events page of [waca.org](http://waca.org) for more information on the above packages.

## WACA has PayPal

After a few weeks of form filling, testing, telephone calls, etc. I am delighted to announce that a final test has been made and WACA has a functioning PayPal account!!!

The account will allow the WACA membership to pay for services such as Member Club dues, Member-at-Large fees, international event WACA fees, Grand Venture Bonanza tickets, etc. Details of how to pay for these services will be advised in due course but, in the meantime, if you want to set up a personal PayPal account, the following is the Website where this can be done: [www.paypal.com/ca/webapps/mpp/paypal-payments-standard](http://www.paypal.com/ca/webapps/mpp/paypal-payments-standard).

Keith Miller, WACA Administration Manager





WACA has successfully registered the WACA Acronym and Logo with the Canadian Authorities!



### Summer Holy Land Tour

This Summer's Holy Land tour hosted by the Israel Interline Club takes you to Jerusalem, a holy city of three Abrahamic Religions, the Dead Sea, Masada, Nazareth and other places of interest. More details on [waca.org](http://waca.org)

Interested parties can contact Mr. Aharon Gabbay for registration details at [aharon.gabbay@gmail.com](mailto:aharon.gabbay@gmail.com)

### Corrections

On our brief about the WACA Council meeting in London in the last issue of the WWN, we erroneously stated that Mr. David Cianfarani was one of the founders of WACA. Mr. Cianfarani was actively involved in the early WACA Executive and was a past President of the London Interline Club. We thank Mr. David Larkin, past President of WACA and member of Honour for pointing this out.

However, Mr. Cianfarani will be featured on the WACA One on One in the Summer issue of the WACA World News. Keep posted!

### *In Memoriam*

Peter Gritis, husband of past Secretary General and Member of Honour Ann Lenehan Gritis of the Washington Interline Club, passed away on 1 March 2014.

Gerry Morrill passed away on the 20 Nov 2013. Both Gerry and her late husband, Rod, retired from Eastern Airlines after they had both worked over 30 years for the company. Known by many interliners, Gerry and Rod travelled the world to numerous WACA events especially when Gerry held the position of President of the Miami and Orlando Interline Clubs on different occasions and represented those Clubs at many WACA AGAs. To continue her close connection with WACA after the Orlando Interline Club disbanded in 2000, Gerry became a Member-at-Large and faithfully renewed her subscription every year.

### On the next Issue....

#### Madagascar

Steve Charlton of the Montreal Interline Club will give us a first hand report of the tour.

#### Silk Road Part 2

Julian Chau of the Hong Kong Interline Club will continue on his account of the second part of the Silk Road adventure, how they braved dangerous roads in Kyrgyzstan and arrived in the jittery city of Osh.

#### Porto 2014 AGA

A detailed presentation and an information package on the upcoming Interline Celebration in porto, Portugal.

#### Dodo's Nest

Interliners gather again in the tropical gem of the Indian Ocean to renew interline bonds and enjoy the iconic package.

#### 2015 AGA Venue

Get a heads up of this exotic AGA and Interline Celebration location.

#### WACA Council Meeting Roundup

The team reports on the progress since the last AGA in Budapest.



# GRAND VENTURE BONANZA TICKETS DRAW

## And the Winners are ...

The first draw of 2014 for a package for one person (based on double or twin occupancy) to the Dodo's Nest in June graciously donated by the AIM Region was made today by ATA Assistant, ICAO Relations, Anna Manocchio. There were 449 tickets in the draw and the lucky winner was **John Jennings** from the Sydney Interline Club with ticket number 3597. Congratulations!

The second draw of 2014 for a cash prize of USD 100.00 donated by WACA was made by IATA Assistant Director, Administration, Evelyn del Rosario. There were 448 tickets in the draw and the lucky winner was **Elfriede Erak-Schwitzer** from the Interairline Club Zurich with ticket number 2277. Congratulations!

The third draw of 2014 for a cash prize of USD 100.00 graciously donated by the Sydney Interline Club was made today by IATA Assistant Manager, Finance, Heidi Stoeff. There were 487 tickets in the draw and the lucky winner was Member-at-Large **Nancy Loughhead** with ticket number 3203. Congratulations!

## Next Draw

The remaining 447 tickets will now be included in the next draw to be held at the beginning of May for a cash prize of USD 100.00 graciously donated by the Sydney Interline Club.

## Remainder of Other Prizes Graciously Donated in and to be drawn in June 2014

**First Prize** - 47th AGA Package in Porto, Portugal

**Second Prize** - Madeira Package (Pre-AGA Tour)

**Third Prize** - A package for two people donated by the Interairline Club Zurich to attend the Club's 60th Anniversary celebrations on 6/7 September 2014 (2 nights).

**Fourth Prize** - One more USD 100.00 cash prize donated by WACA.

## ID TRAVEL



## RENT THIS SPACE

Contact [info@waca.org](mailto:info@waca.org) for more details