



Qingdao foresees Olympic legacy

► Mayor believes 'sailing city' benefits a lot in different areas

By Ju Chuanjiang and Zhang Xiaomin

QINGDAO: "Qingdao has benefited a lot from hosting the Olympic Sailing Regatta, which made the city a well-known brand as a 'sailing city,'" said Xia Geng, mayor of the coastal city in east China's Shandong province.

gatta is finished, it will leave Qingdao a huge legacy, including the sporting facilities and the cultural progress the city has made in years of preparation for the Games," Xia said. The mayor believes the pleasant environment and improved social habits of its citizens will continue to be symbols of Qingdao.

aquatic sports center in two or three years, according to Xia. The city will continue to play an important role in developing and popularizing sailing in China, because the city will host major international sailing events every year.

After the Olympics, sailing center buildings will be converted into an Olympic regatta museum, a national sailing school, a public gymnasium and a yacht club. The Olympic Village will be transformed into Qingdao's first super five-star hotel and the secondary breaker-water will become a passenger

liner terminal. The area is expected to remain a magnet that continues to attract tourists from home and abroad.

The city has already organized a program to retain and protect the Olympic legacy. The Olympic regatta museum will house important artifacts like the torch, sailboats, written documents, pictures, videos and gifts. It will also display distinctive Olympic items made or donated by the public.

Qingdao set up a multilingual call center to serve foreign visitors in their mother language

that will continue to serve visitors after the Games.

"During the preparation for the Olympics, we accumulated experience in organizing big events as well as a number of technical professionals. They are also part of the Olympic legacy," said Sun Lijie, secretary-general of the Qingdao Olympic Sailing Committee.

Qingdao has held 10 sailing events since 2006, including two test regattas for the Olympics. Next February the Volvo Ocean Race will come to Qingdao, marking its first stopover in China.

The next two seasons of the Clipper Round-the-World Yacht Race will stop in the city and the yacht Qingdao will compete.

"I believe Qingdao will play a pivotal role in developing and popularizing sailing in Asia," said Goran Petersson, chairman of the International Sailing Federation. "I am sure that even after the Olympics, Qingdao will be a prominent sailing center that hosts many international events."

As the city made preparations for the Olympics, increasing numbers of citizens and students began sailing. The

government purchased 1,000 boats and invited coaches from other countries to train 1,000 students to be young sailors. Currently, there are more than 100 sailing clubs for youngsters and 40 sailing schools.

"Many sailing clubs, schools and yacht-manufacturing companies grew with the Olympics. They will continue to grow fast as the Olympic legacy and will help foster the champions of the future," said Xia Geng.

"I hope in the future more Chinese sailing medalists are from Qingdao. That will be a pride of the city," Xia said.



Beauty and the best After hosting a successful Olympic sailing competition, Qingdao will continue to play an important role in developing and popularizing the sport in China.

Ju Chuanjiang

Foreigners enjoy Laoshan Mountain

By Du Shu and Huang Yanhong

QINGDAO: After a tour of Laoshan Mountain, one of famous scenic spots in Qingdao, the Chatzidamianou family from Cyprus agreed it was a fulfilling experience.

Famed as a Taoist shrine, Laoshan is China's only sacred mountain with a sea view. A divine combination of water, tree shadows and fog makes the mountain appear truly mystical.

"The green forest and the majestic mountain impressed me very much, and the water gives it all vitality," said the father, Christos.

One of the most attractive spots on the mountain is Beijiushui, or "nine waters", renowned for its beautiful pools and streams.

"Like other people, we threw coins into the so-called sacred water. It is said that it will make my dream come true," the younger sister Nikolina said.



The Chatzidamianou family from Cyprus pose for a picture at Laoshan Mountain in Qingdao.

Along the water, oddly shaped outcrops with names like Camel Rock and Lion Rock adding their own presence to the mountain.

Gavriella, the older sister, made her wishes blessed in the Taiping Palace, a Chinese Taoism temple.

"There are different rules for men and women when they enter the temple. The men should first raise his left leg and women the right one," Gavriella said.

The 2,100-year-old palace was built during the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 24). The god in the main hall of Sanqing is the highest deity of Taoism.

The tour enabled the family to fully enjoy Chinese culture and folk-customs.

The sisters were overjoyed when they bought two big fans on which the calligraphy master wrote poems with their Chinese names.

A happy tour of the mountain won the family's admiration for the city. They are willing to see more.

"We will go to the aquarium and Jimo Road market next," the father said.

Laoshan Mountain by the shore of the Yellow Sea is often a bright image on Qingdao post cards.

Pu Songling, renowned Chinese writer in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), left many masterpieces with Laoshan Mountain as a backdrop.

This special supplement is co-published by the Information Office of Qingdao municipal government and China Daily



Qingdao INFO specialist Diane Pearson talks with her team members.

Australian captains Qingdao media center

By Zhao Ruixue

QINGDAO: Thanks to Diane Pearson and her colleagues, journalists get the latest information every day in the media center.

Checking the weather to see whether races will start on time, going out for interviews with sailors and then coming back to write stories, picking out daily quotes and writing a preview of the next day are the jobs Pearson does every day.

Originally from Australia, Pearson has been working as a Qingdao information specialist at the Olympic Sailing Competition for more than four weeks.

"I try to keep it simple so that everybody who is not out on the water can understand sailing by going to the system and picking up our words. It is a great system."

"Knowing people can not wait so long, we update the system right after we get off the water."

Interest in sailing and a talent for writing make Pearson a good sailing journalist. She won the Australian Media Award for Sailing last year.

She heaps praises on the sailing center, the event itself and its volunteers.

"The venue is huge. It is so big. In Sydney, you can walk around the venue in maybe 12 minutes," Pearson said.

"The inauguration ceremony was incredible. I have never seen anything like it. The cos-

times they wore — here the history goes back so far. It is so amazing."

Volunteers have left a strong impression on Pearson, a big difference from other host countries of the Olympic Games.

"The Chinese have put great effort into the Games. I have never seen such a huge volunteer force. They were seriously trained two weeks before the Games started, bearing in mind that sailing is so new to China and it is a difficult sport to understand."

"They don't know the words 'I can't do that' or 'It's too hard'. They just insist. I can always see big smiles on their face. I am really amazed at their dedication to their work," Pearson noted.

As an information specialist, Pearson pays close attention to every race.

"The event has been good. Qingdao has mysterious weather, so it gives everybody a fair chance. We have had some heart-pounding races," Pearson said.

Pearson has been working as a sailing journalist for 23 years. She has built good relationships with sailors from all over the world, especially Australian sailors.

When Australians won two gold medals, Pearson was so excited that she could not hold back her tears.

"When they came on shore, there were tears of happiness, hugs and laughter. We are like a family," she said.

China's Yngling team eyes bright future

By Guo Xin

QINGDAO: In their Olympic sailing debut, China's Tiantai Yngling team finished 8th in a field of world-class competitors, showing the nation's young sailors may have a way to go, but they have already come a long distance.

"Representing China in the Olympics and making it into the medal race with a medium place means a great deal," said Wang Yong, coach of the Tiantai team. "Chinese sailors have begun to show themselves on the world sailing stage."

Song Xiaqun, the skipper, said she felt a bit sad after the medal race.

"This is my first and last Olympics. If I were given another chance, I would like to start all over again," she said.

Song's crewmate Li Xiaoni is looking forward to London. "Participating in the Games was a great pleasure for me. If I can make it to the next Olympics, I will put in more effort and make more progress," Li said.

The women's keelboat class first appeared as an Olympic event four years ago in Athens. The Chinese Tiantai Yngling team was established in Qingdao in December 2004 with six girls including Song, Yu and Li.

The team was selected from top sailors and windsurfers

from across the country. Song was the gold medalist in the 420-class at the 2002 Pushan Asian Games, the 2005 Asian champion in the 470 class and the six-time national 470 champion. But all were freshmen in the Yngling class.

"It was really starting from scratch. Beginning with reading documents, we set plans, practiced skills and then went to competitions," recalled coach Wang. "Like building a house, we were laying a solid foundation."

To acquire experience, the Tiantai Yngling team competed in regattas at home and abroad over the past two years.

At the Olympic test event in 2006, the girls captured by

Song gave a good show in their home venue and surprised many with a third place. A year later, they ranked sixth in the last test event before the Games.

Beginning in January the team participated in more races in the United States and Europe, entering the medal round in two of the five international regattas. Their best result was fourth place, which closed the gap with the world's finest Yngling sailors and increased their confidence.

But compared with their Olympic peers, mostly top world sailors with rich experience, the Chinese girls were rookies — yet their rookie results drew widespread attention.



Yu Yanli, Li Xiaoni and Song Xiaqun (left to right) wave to the spectators after finishing the Yngling class medal race on August 17.

Ju Chuanjiang