

Bridging the Digital Divide

Progress in the "Bridging the Digital Divide" program under the "Challenge 2008: Six-year National Development Plan" was showcased from November 22 to 24, 2002, at Puli Middle School in Nantou county. The project was jointly organized by the Ministry of Education (MOE), National Chi Nan University and the Nantou County Government under the direction of the Executive Yuan.

The exhibition was divided into the following four areas:

- 1) Prospects: Blueprints, direction of implementation and anticipated prospects on "Bridging the Digital Divide"
- 2) Current Results: Promotion of digital education for aboriginals, integration of educational resources in remote areas and offshore islands, and improvement of the network environment for the handicapped
- 3) Digital Resources: Exhibits in this section introduced the lifelong education resources available from the MOE and libraries under the ministry's jurisdiction; status of TANet development and information application training for primary and middle school teachers; training for primary and middle school teachers in network use, website resources, and the MOE's law knowledge website; results of university and vocational school e-learning plan and educators; and achievements of county governments in promoting information education.
- 4) Private Exhibitions: This area was devoted to local and foreign information technology companies, university clubs and cultural and educational foundations, including displays of applications of software and hardware R&D and competitions.

The NCL also showcased its "E-Learning Campus" at a display staffed by Ms. Cheng Pao-mei (鄭寶梅), Mr. Lin Wen-ya (林文雅) and Ms. Liao Hsiu-man (廖秀滿). A handbook, promotional flyers, and educational CDs on the E-Learning Campus were provided free to visitors. The courses offered through the system

were also introduced in a slide presentation, which attracted widespread attention and valuable feedback from the visitors. Since October 2001, nearly 30,000 people have used this system.

In the future, the NCL will continue to strengthen the E-Learning Campus by enhancing course content, publicizing the system through related online education activities, and seeking financial support to continue producing CD course material, as well as other resources and handbooks.

(Chinese text by Liao Hsiu-man. 廖秀滿)

Readers Rallied in Fight Against SARS

Between late April and June, Taiwan was pulled into a state of economic torpor, political silence and social anxiety by the spread of SARS. At the same time, however, this period was also marked by a vibrant renewal of interest in reading and activities aimed at spiritual growth.

Regular hand washing and temperature taking aside, the fight against SARS added a literary note as the media and publishers urged the public to beat the disease by reading up on it. At least 10 books on SARS have been published in Taiwan in the short time since the disease first emerged on the island, and more than 30 titles on the epidemic have hit the bookstores in mainland China, with many joining the list of best sellers there.

Taiwan's two biggest media groups have also organized activities and invited leaders from the political, academic and cultural worlds to recommend good books and encourage the public to read. Among these notables, Chen Chien-jen, the director-general of the Department of Health, suggested the award-winning *Spring Wind in the Apricot Grove*, a book he regularly uses to teach courses on