

The Asian Reporter

Volume 32 Number 4
 April 4, 2022
 ISSN: 1094-9453

The Asian Reporter is published on the first Monday each month.

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News Service **Associated Press/Newsfinder**

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MY TURN

■ **Wayne Chan**



They should have called it the "Powernap Express"

For many folks in Hong Kong, the perfect antidote for being stymied by China's strict COVID-19 quarantine and travel requirements is to take a 51-mile round trip bus ride around Hong Kong to get a little shut eye.

To be sure, the "Sleeping Bus Tour" organized by a local travel company does indeed stop at a number of picturesque locations, but the main attraction of the route is to allow patrons to snooze right through it. They should have called it the "Powernap Express." For those who have been to Hong Kong, it's no surprise it's a city that never sleeps, where locals routinely stay up well past midnight then get up early to go to work. Combine that with living in cramped high-rises in a bustling (and noisy) setting, than throw in the government's aggressive coronavirus protocols, and it's no wonder folks are seeking innovative ways to get a little respite.

I can see the attraction, though. The bus follows its leisurely route while providing riders a climate-controlled environment, gently swaying them back and forth amidst relaxing music that lulls them into a blissful slumber. With people still wearing face coverings while on the bus, and many of the "slumber tourists" wearing night eye masks to block out the sun, you can imagine the horrific reaction of those uninitiated few who encounter the busload of mummies slouched in a bus travelling down the road.

To each their own, but if I was able to customize a personalized bus ride, I would have several other "attractions" to better suit me. In fact, I think there should be a whole bevy of customized bus tours available when one arrives at a bus terminal.

I can see it now.

Me: Excuse me, Mr. Bus Manager. Where's the terminal to board the "Peanut Butter Cookie Express?"

Terminal Manager: Oh, just head over to the left, past the "Foot Rub Main Line," but before you get to the "Snowball Fight Metro Line."

Me: The "Snowball Fight Metro Line?"

Terminal Manager: Yes, but if you change your mind and want to go on that route, we sell protective goggles in the gift shop.

I suppose that with COVID-19, each country deals with it differently. Hong Kong and its "zero-COVID" approach has pushed locals to ride busses in order to get a well-deserved nap. On the other hand, Hong Kong's approach has led a city of 7 million people to record more than 1.2 million total coronavirus cases and 11,002 COVID-19 deaths.

Back here at home in the U.S., we believe in personal freedom and the choice to wear a mask or receive a vaccine if and when we want. For the sake of comparison, a state like Georgia, with a population of more than 3.9 million people, has recorded about 2.5 million total cases and 36,576 COVID-19 deaths.

To each their own, right?

For me personally, while the Omicron variant was spreading at full tilt this winter, I isolated at home a lot more. I managed to clean up the yard and got rid of a lot of clutter. But there's one thing I can really appreciate: being at home has given me a lot more time to get some rest and take many well-deserved naps.

Wait a minute ...

Humor writer Wayne Chan lives in the San Diego area; cartoonist Wayne Chan is based in the Bay Area.



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The Asian Reporter is published on the first Monday each month. News page advertising deadlines for our next three issues are:

May 2, 2022 edition:

Space reservations due: Wednesday, April 27 at 1:00pm
 Artwork due: Thursday, April 28 at 1:00pm

June 6, 2022 edition:

Space reservations due: Wednesday, June 1 at 1:00pm
 Artwork due: Thursday, June 2 at 1:00pm

July 4, 2022 edition:

Space reservations due: Wednesday, June 29 at 1:00pm
 Artwork due: Thursday, June 30 at 1:00pm