

E-Newsletter of the Organization of Chinese American Women

April 2013

(from Linda Devine)

My thanks, as always, to all who submitted material for this issue. This is our longest one to date, at 53 pages, and it would not have been possible without the efforts and diligence of all the authors.

Special kudos to my husband Ed, who spent a large amount of time on photo preparation work. This was by far the greatest number of pictures we have featured in an issue, and I appreciate his willingness to go the extra mile for OCAW.

Suggestions or recommendations for any aspects of the e-newsletter are always welcome, and you can reach me at: devinefive@att.net.

Update on the OCAW History Book

飲水思源

(from Puanani Woo)

April 5, 2013 *(with recent updates)*

Dear OCAW Sisters:

By the time you receive this e- newsletter, the manuscript of the OCAW book will be at the printer's, and it is expected off the press by TUESDAY, MAY 28, in time for the book launch planned for THURSDAY, MAY 30. The printing company is located in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Books should be ready for ordering June 1, 2013. Here is the ordering information:

- \$19.00 is the price per book. 500 books are ordered, and 250 of the 500 are already pre-ordered. The size is 8½" x11". There are 59 pictures.
- The best way to order is through the University of Hawaii Press's website: uhpress.hawaii.edu. The shipping & handling cost will be automatically calculated according to the number of books ordered and the delivery address. The buyer can pay with a credit or debit card.
- If you have any questions or want to contact the University of Hawaii Press, write to:

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2840 Kolowalu Street
Honolulu, HI 96822-1888, USA
Telephone: 1-808-956-8255, toll free 1-888-UHPRESS (North America only)
Office hours: M-F 7:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Hawaii Standard Time
FAX: 1-808-988-6052, toll free 1-800-650-7811 (North America only)
Email: uhpbooks@hawaii.edu

It has been my deep privilege to have worked with Pauline W. Tsui, principal compiler and senior editor of the OCAW book, and the 22 other writers, for a total of 23 writers, who have written for the book. Inspiring themes to me, from their writings, are:

- ✓ Be kind – reach out – globalization
- ✓ Equality for Chinese American women extends to equality for all women, men, children, families, humanity
- ✓ Social engineering for positive outcomes replaces mainstreaming
- ✓ Best wishes and a ‘you can do it’ spirit to the present and new generation of OCAW leaders and to all OCAW members

Mahalo to the 4 Advisors/Editors: Yeu-Tsu Margaret Lee, M.D., past very active OCAW Los Angeles Chapter President early 1980s and 1st OCAW Hawaii Chapter President 1989; Sybil Kyi, Hawaii; Linda Devine, Maryland; and Cynthia Chin-Lee, Silicon Valley, California.

Here is an outline of the book:

Ambassador Julia Chang Bloch, Faith Lee Breen, Ph.D., and Jeanie Fong Lee Jew (Lee Mei Hor) each wrote a **FOREWORD**, followed by Pauline W. Tsui, **PREFACE and ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**, followed by Cynthia-Chin Lee, **INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 1. Beginnings: The 1970s

1 writer: Pauline W. Tsui
5 pictures

Chapter 2. Growth Years: The 1980s

5 writers: Josephine Lo, Esq.; Hon. Lily Lee Chen; Margot Wei; Florence Kwok; Lily K. Lai, Ph.D.
19 pictures

Chapter 3. Reaching Out: The 1990s

3 writers: Linda Devine; Lungching Chiao, Ed.D.; Sybil Kyi
9 pictures

Chapter 4. The New Millennium: 2000 through 2009

9 writers: Margaret Wu; SVC writers – Cynthia Chang, Jean Chen, Anne Hu, Dorothy Lee, and Ai-chu Wang; Rosetta Lai; Chelsea Lo; Betty Butz
3 pictures

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Excerpt from “Chinese American Women: A Brief History and Bibliography,” funded by the Women’s Educational Equity Act Program, U.S. Department of Education, 1983

Appendix 2: “Chinese American Women Organize,” *Congressional Record* 125:28 (March 8, 1979), pages E 1014-1015

Appendix 3: “Asian/Pacific-American Heritage Month,” *Congressional Record* 138:141 (October 4, 1992), pages H 11278-11281

Appendix 4: OCAW National Leaders, 1977-2009

Appendix 5: OCAW Guest Writers

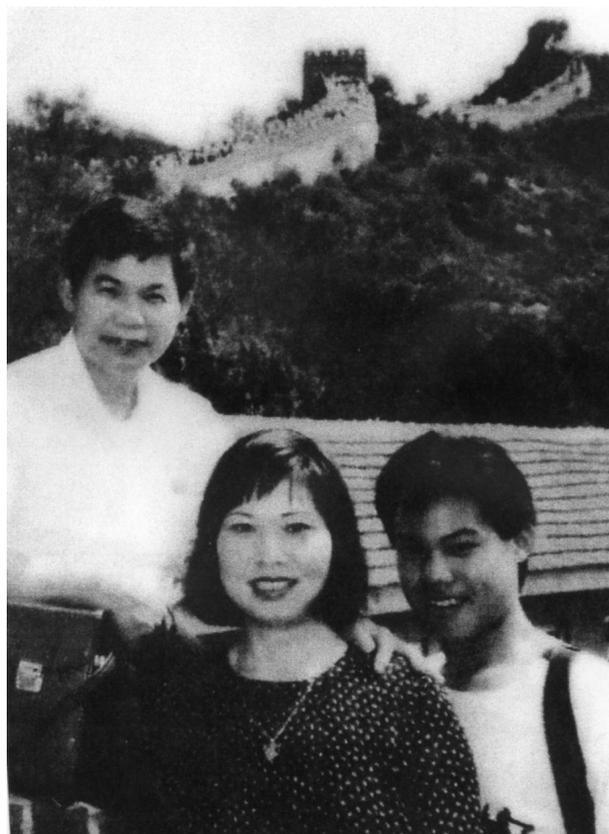
Appendix 6: OCAW History Book Donors

There is no Index.

Here are some examples of pictures that will appear in the book.



Stuart M. Bloch, Esq.
and Ambassador Julia Chang Bloch



Dr. Lily K. Lai and Family



Chapter 3. Office in Bethesda, Maryland. Photo taken January 11, 1997.

I like to know *beginnings* and *endings*. It has taken 2 years and 5 months to complete the book.

- ***Beginnings:*** Wednesday, January 12, 2011 was my start date of the OCAW book project. It was the date of my 11-page “A BUSINESS PLAN briefly outlining production of proposed book tentatively titled, *History of the Organization of Chinese American Women,*” requested by Christina Chang, OCAW National President, for distribution to and discussion by the OCAW National Board, composed of 13 ladies: 7 OCAW national officers; 1 interim executive director, and 5 chapter presidents in geo-alpha order: California SVC, Hawaii, Maryland, New Orleans, and Virginia.
- ***February 2011 OCAW E-Newsletter Message from the President:*** “After serious consideration the National Board made two decisions:

OCAW’s National Board encourages all Chapters and individual members to support the ‘History of OCAW’ book project, but notes that this project is not a formal National Board project.

OCAW’s National Board will not enter into a contractual agreement with the University of Hawaii Press.”

- **Plan B:** (1) The Ruth H. Kuo and Rhoda How Memorial Fund of The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region was then named Publisher of the book; (2) the University of Hawaii Press provided the needed ISBN at cost; and (3) the Publisher successfully contracted with the UH Press to produce the book.
- **Endings:** The University of Hawaii Press, Copy Editor, and Photo Editor have worked diligently with Woo and Tsui, and the result is a book I am very proud of for its scholarship and old history traceable data, designed into the right combination of classical and today's 'techie' language arts for today's readers.
- **3 purposes:** I feel the first two purposes for writing the book have been accomplished. They are (1) to professionally record OCAW's sustained, well planned, educational and social outreach programs to integrate Chinese American women into the mainstream of America's activities and programs during the last quarter of the 20th century and first decade of the 21st century; and (2) to give recognition to those who contributed to the accomplishments of OCAW.

Purpose (3) will be accomplished by early June 2013. Purpose (3) is to have the history of OCAW available as study material in WOMEN'S STUDIES and ETHNIC-ASIAN STUDIES PROGRAMS throughout the United States of America, at least, and in selected parts of Asia. 200 books have been pre-ordered for this phase.

I have volunteered to mail out all 200 books working from my home office. I live in very rural Kawaihae on the island of Hawaii. I have the addresses of 100 colleges/universities with programs in WOMEN'S STUDIES in the U.S. and am waiting for 100 names of programs in ASIAN-ETHNIC STUDIES that Pauline is compiling with help from others.

Thanks to Jeanie Jew for suggesting the month of MAY for the OCAW history book launch. OCAW morphed from seeking equal treatment for Chinese American women to seeking equal treatment for all. Congress proclaimed the month of MAY as ASIAN/PACIFIC-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH, and Jeanie is named as the creator of that idea starting in 1977 in the *Congressional Record*. See APPENDIX 3 in our book for the full history of that idea from 1977 through 1992. (*Congressional Record 138:141 (October 4, 1992), pages H 11278-11281*)

Sincerely yours,

Puanani Woo
Project Director

News from the Maryland Chapter

Lunar New Year Dinner for the Homeless Community

(from Patricia Fenn)

On Wednesday, February 13, 2013, the OCA-Greater Washington, DC Chapter hosted a program at Shepherd's Table in Silver Spring, Maryland, to celebrate the new year with members of the homeless community. A free Chinese dinner was served to needy guests. There was a cultural sharing of our Asian

heritage, with a presentation about the Lunar New Year and the Year of the Snake. Patricia Fenn and Virginia Woo of the OCAW Maryland Chapter were among the hard-working volunteers that evening.

Supporting a manager and a dietician/chef on staff were about 20 volunteers. Kudos also to Ivan, a volunteer police officer, who manned the door and who has been volunteering his services for many years. About 15 round tables accommodating about 8 people per table were set. Decorations adorned the room. There were round, red/gold tasseled cloth lanterns, which produced a great effect, along with a big, accordion-style paper dragon. Music lent ambience.

Most people arrived with their belongings. It was all a very sad and cautionary tale, reminding us how fortunate we are.

A delicious dinner was served to about 110 guests this year. It consisted of General Tso's chicken, a pork/cabbage dish, a broccoli dish, fried rice, bread and butter, desserts, and juice. A GREAT hot, egg-drop soup was served separately. After the guests had had a chance to eat, the doors were reopened for seconds and MANY returned. A lot of the attendees conversed at the tables about how delicious the food was (and how different from the usual fare).

Welcoming remarks were given, along with a presentation about this year's zodiac animal, the snake, as well as the Chinese calendar year.

After the guests left, volunteers washed dishes and cleaned up, and they also dressed a bushel of kale for the following night's dinner.

It was a very rewarding experience for guests and volunteers alike.

(from Camilla Ng, Maryland Chapter President)

Pat and Virginia responded to OCA-DC's call for volunteers to help serve Chinese food to the needy at Shepherd's Table, in a celebration of the Lunar New Year. I would like to give recognition to Patricia and Virginia for their support of a grass roots community project.

(from Mary Tom, lifetime Maryland Chapter member and President of the OCA-Greater Washington, DC Chapter)

Thanks to ALL for your HEARTS OF SERVICE at our Shepherd's Table Celebration of the Lunar New Year!

(Editor's Note: Mary sent a very gracious message, warmly expressing her gratitude for the generous efforts of all of those involved with this "wondrous event on behalf of our needy community." Among the many individuals she cited were Patricia and Virginia. She also expressed "much thanks to Camilla Ng, President of OCAW Maryland, for circulating our call for volunteers."

Congratulations to Mary and to OCA-DC for their leadership in organizing and hosting such a wonderful community outreach event!



Photo courtesy of the OCA-Greater Washington, DC Chapter. OCAW Maryland Chapter members pictured are Virginia Woo (standing, far right), Patricia Fenn (seated, far left), and Mary Tom (seated, second from left).

Celebrating the Year of the Snake with a Lantern Festival Dumpling Party

(from Christina Wong Poy, Treasurer, and Pam Wong)

On Sunday, February 24, 2013, OCAW-Maryland celebrated the Lantern Festival with red lantern decorations. Faith Lee Breen, immediate-past OCAW National President, opened her lovely home to a gathering of 26 (25 women and 1 man). We marked the 15th (which is the last) day of the Lunar New Year festivities by wrapping, cooking, and dining on three kinds of delicious dumplings: northern style meat and vegetable filled jiaozi; Cantonese shrimp wontons in broth; and black sesame filled tang yuan dessert. Attendees brought a variety of delectable side dishes and desserts to share.

As both our membership drive and kick-off event for the year, this activity was free for members and featured a reduced lifetime membership price (\$150 at the event vs. \$1000). While Treasurer Christina Poy introduced members and guests from both Maryland and Virginia Chapters, she explained the benefits

of membership and collected money during this annual membership drive event. OCAW-MD President Camilla Ng demonstrated making and cooking the wontons in an aromatic broth. Our annually featured jiaozi chef, Ru Fan, generously prepared the jiaozi filling ahead of time, made the wrapping dough from scratch, and donated all of the jiaozi ingredients for the party (thank you, Ru!).



The floor plan of Faith's home lent a balanced flow of productivity, networking, and our favorite pastime – eating – as we enjoyed four spacious rooms of the first floor. Members, guests, and our newest lifetime members (Mary Tom who is the President of the OCA-DC Chapter, Nancy Toy, and Novita Sulistio) floated easily from cooking in the kitchen, to filling and wrapping the dumplings in the dining room, to chatting in the living room, to eating a cornucopia of scrumptious potluck offerings in the sunroom.







After all of the savory dumplings were cooked, we took a break to welcome new members and for President Camilla to introduce the 2013 board members: June Cai as vice president, Christina continuing as treasurer, and Susan Young as secretary. Camilla provided a list of the Board's proposed activities for the upcoming year and asked for any suggestions to be emailed to: ocawmaryland@yahoo.com. Christina then took a moment to present "money tree" plants (*pachira*) as tokens of gratitude to our gracious hostess Faith and our chef-extraordinaire Ru. Our newest board members, Susan and June, led the preparation of the sweet dumpling "tang yuan" dessert to complete the dumpling feast and to conclude our celebration of the Lantern Festival!

*(Editor's Note: I would like to add my personal thanks to Faith for graciously hosting the event, and to all the chefs – in particular, Camilla and Ru, who spent nearly the entire time in the kitchen unselfishly preparing food for everyone. I would also like to express my great admiration for all the participants who were able to wrap the dumplings *so artistically!* My attempts, on the other hand, were VERY sorry, but being a non-cook all my life, I have at least mastered the skill of washing dishes, pots, and pans pretty efficiently, and felt grateful that I could at least contribute to the event in that way! :))*



All About Meihua

(from the Maryland Chapter Board)

On the sunny but rather chilly morning of Saturday, March 2, 2013, several of us from OCAW-MD visited the home of Dr. Akey Hung. Dr. Hung, a scientist retired from the U.S. Department of Agriculture who loves Chinese poems and meihua, had kindly invited us to pick meihua from his yard. Meihua, scientific name *Prunus mume*, is commonly called “plum” or “Japanese flowering apricot” in English. Both are botanically misnomers because the meihua is neither an apricot nor a plum. Meihua (or ume in Japanese) came from China. Dr. Hung has cultivated meihua for many years. He has established an informative blog on planting meihua (<http://Nubesinfinitea.blogspot.com> – see posts of October 2011, and February and March 2013).



(from left) Cathy Roberts, Akey Hung, Pam Wong, Christina Wong Poy, Camilla Ng, and Ling Yuan Tai. Photo by Dick Roberts.

As one can imagine, it was amazing to see the blossoms in his front yard, for this was the only house that had flowers blooming in late winter. The backyard was even more beautiful with many varieties of meihua trees. The flowering trees were well spaced equidistantly from each other. Dr. Hung explained the differences of each variety. Among them, La-mei, which is yellow in color, is actually not a meihua. La-mei blossoms are waxy yellow and hence, it's called La (beeswax in Chinese)-mei. La-mei has a distinct elegant and bold fragrance. La-mei blossoms have only one color – yellow. It is actually a shrub, not a tree. The meihua blossoms range from white to pink to deep red, but not yellow. Some are a single layer of petals, while others are doubles, with layers of petals.



Pictured on the left, meihua blossoms. On the right, la-mei blossoms.

(Editor's Note: The photos above and all the ones following were taken by Camilla Ng.)

Meihua originated in the southwest of China over four thousand years ago. To date, there is a meihua tree over 1600 years old in Mainland China. The meihua tree was first transplanted to Korea and then to Japan and other places. It can grow 5 meters tall (16 feet) or more. In different areas, it may bloom in different months of winter, generally January to April. The flower buds reach their fullness within a week, and can last for 2 to 3 weeks. There are over 300 varieties of meihua.

At a quick glance, meihua may look like cherry blossoms. We have had numerous debates with others regarding some meihua designs on products such as tumblers and tissue box containers. The easiest way to



distinguish the meihua from cherry blossoms is in the growth pattern of the flowers and the branches. Meihua buds grow directly from the main stems and tend to line up along the stems, whereas cherry blossoms grow on small stalks as clusters. Another difference in appearance is less obvious in that the cherry's petals are usually oval and can have a small split on some of the edges, whereas meihua petals are usually perfectly round with smooth edges. Knowing these differences, one will recognize that there are meihua designs mistakenly labeled as cherry blossoms, or they are presented ambiguously.

Meihua has been the subject of innumerable classical Chinese paintings, ancient poems, and songs throughout Chinese history. Among the poets are famous Song Dynasty (12th century) Lu You and Wang An-shih. Here is a poem titled "Mei Hua" by Wang An-shih.

Branches of plum blossoms in the corner,
Blossoming alone in the cold,
From distance I know it isn't snow
As it gives fragrance before one gets close.

Interestingly, in Mainland China, even Mao wrote a poem for meihua. It has even been adapted as a Beijing operatic performance and musical; both are on youtube. Nonetheless, the famous Baidu search engine didn't mention it at all in its topic.

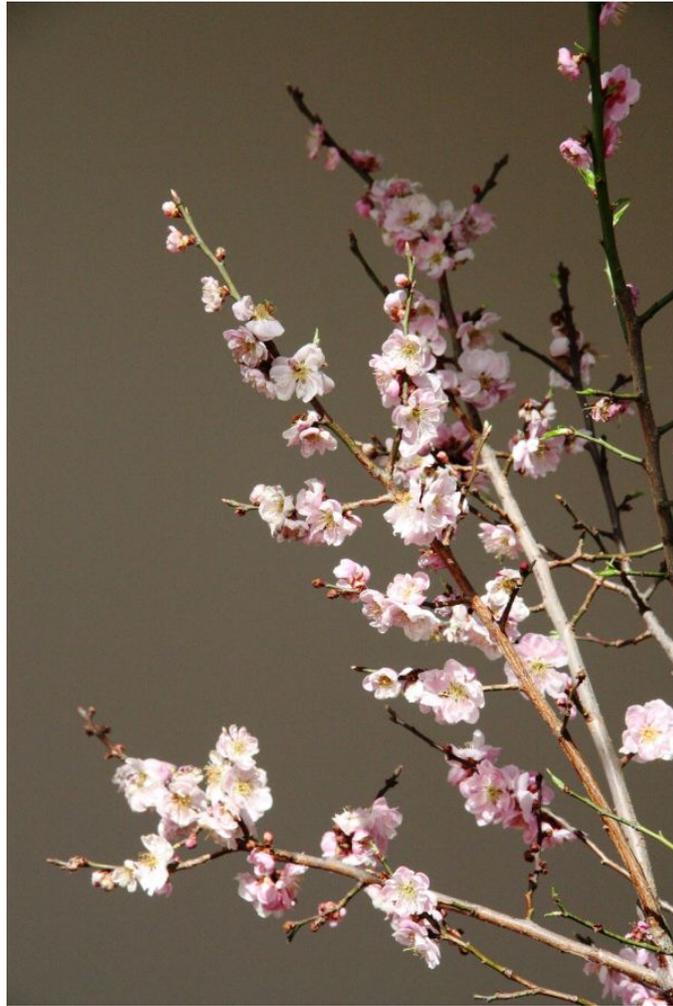
Part of the reason for such enthusiasm over meihua among the Chinese is that it symbolizes resilience, perseverance, and courage in the face of adversity during the harsh winter. "The Colder it is, the more it blooms. Where there is land, there is meihua..." The famous song, "Mei Hua," illustrates meihua's characteristics precisely. Teresa Teng was probably the best person to make such a beautiful debut of the song. Despite the Mainland Chinese government naming the peony as their national flower, meihua is also called the "five luck flower" there, as the five petals are regarded as symbolism for happiness, luck, longevity, smooth journey, and peace.

On July 21, 1964, recommended by Madame Chiang Kai-shek, the Chinese Nationalists in Taiwan named the meihua as the national flower of the Republic of China. The triple grouping of stamens (three stamens per petal) on the national emblem represents Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People (San-Min Doctrine), while the five petals symbolize the five branches of the government. Meihua is featured on coins of Taiwan.



As we have been writing this article, we have been astonished by the amount of material on meihua which is available on websites, and how much we have learned beginning with the visit to Dr. Hung. Besides its significance and elegance, meihua is also associated with romance, fairy tales, various foods and drinks, and even martial arts as well as fengshui! In addition to Wikipedia and Baidu, below is a list of selected sites that the reader may browse to enjoy and learn about meihua. However, the best site to learn about meihua in America is probably still Dr. Hung's blog.

In addition to giving a variety of meihua branches to each visitor, Dr. Hung also gave each of us a potted meihua seedling. Meihua has become a symbol of friendship in our community. Perhaps in the U.S., we can say the three stamens signify resilience, generosity, and compassion in our community. Coincidentally, the English writing of "meihua" for plum flowers is the same for American (mei) Chinese (hua). This reminds us of the history of the Chinese in America. We have come down a long and hard road since the Chinese trailblazers came to Gum San to build the railroads in the West in the 1800s. Over the years, each generation has had to struggle and overcome much discrimination, and triumph through determination. The Chinese Americans, like the meihua, bloom in spite of the severity of the winter's cold.



Addendum: Selected websites for the reader to enjoy about meihua:

General information about meihua in addition to Baidu and Wikipedia:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xw7aHEg0LzQ> (Selected varieties of meihua)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iP_a0jQ15L0 (Meihua in Taiwan1)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iNX5EUxYqLI> (Meihua in Taiwan2)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sLoO7MPLoH0> (Meihua in Japan)

Meihua in various arts and entertainment:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8acqbOkOp7s> (Meihua painted by ancient Chinese painters)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRqNhAjXeRO> (Paint meihua with Chinese brushes)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hw-J_eO7z_A (How to make artificial plum flowers)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbSO6NYfS4k> (Fairy tale of plum flower and deer)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NHst6iIJ_Ao (Meihua line dance)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DoPuI3aDLR8> (Meihua sung by Indonesian girl)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCWiKnL4ARQ> (I love Meihua, mandarin recital)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FaX0ooAbOQU> (Meihua Miniature)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PE3WxTyJNpI> (Enjoy Meihua with Chinese music)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F3qf8Uetr-g> (Meihua with Lyrics sung by Teresa Teng)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jDJbBcskBsY> (One mei blossom sung by Fei Yu-quin)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TxlxZbVDw6k> (Meihua in the snow sung by An Dong)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOGdX1m8Xn8> (Dream of meihua sung by Xiao Ya)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=12ePZ2Qvi74> (Three variations of meihua, Chinese flute)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LG36RdGZOAs> (Movie Meihua)

Meihua and martial arts:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucDybT9IoDc> (Meihua quan)
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meihuaquan>

Meihua – foods and drinks:

<http://feastmeetswest.wordpress.com/2009/10/10/how-the-plum-blossom-inspired-a-new-way-of-eating/>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prunus_mume
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izDpMYcQhg> (How to make mei-wine)

(Editor's Note: This delightful meihua outing was courtesy of Dr. Hung, friend of Camilla Ng. Dr. Hung graciously extended a second invitation to Maryland Chapter members for the following weekend.)



Meihua outing Saturday, March 9, 2013
(from left) Patricia Fenn, Akey Hung, Hong-yee Chiu, Ru Fan, and Reuy Min



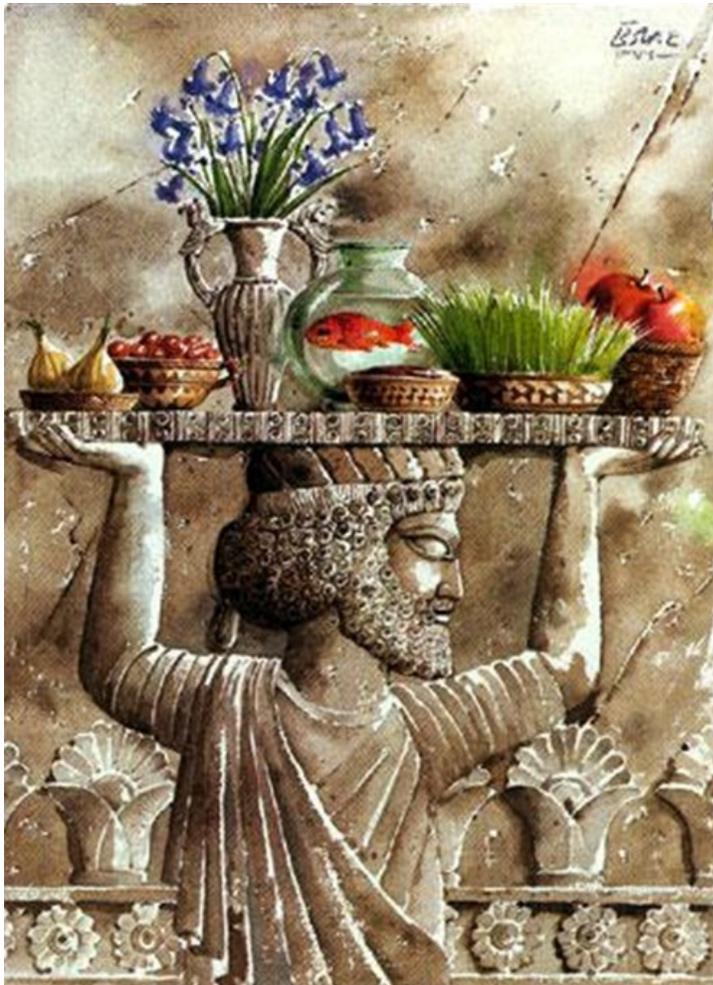
Akey Hung also discussed penjing with the meihua outing participants.

The Celebration of Nowruz, the Persian New Year

(from Camilla Ng, President)

Maryland Chapter Board member Susan Young and her husband Mehrdad Soumekh (*aka* Ben) graciously led chapter members in a celebration of *Nowruz*, widely known as the Persian New Year. This special cultural event took place on Sunday, March 31, 2013, at the home of Camilla Ng in Alexandria, Virginia.

Susan and Ben shared with us the rich cultural heritage and tradition of Persia and the holiday. Meaning the “New Day,” *Nowruz* is the first day of the spring equinox, and is a Zoroastrian holiday celebrated in Iran and in parts of Central Asia, Caucasus, South Asia, Northwestern China, the Crimea, and the Balkans region. It has been celebrated for over 3000 years.



The picture to the left is of the Haft-Seen (the seven ‘S’s), a traditional table setting of *Nowruz*.

A variation of Haft-Seen items includes:

Mirror – symbolizing Sky
Apple – symbolizing Earth
Candles – symbolizing Fire
Golab – rose water symbolizing Water
Sabzeh – wheat, or barley sprouts
symbolizing Plants
Goldfish – symbolizing Animals
Painted Eggs – symbolizing Humans
and Fertility

Susan and Ben spoiled us with delicious homemade *Kookoo-Sabzi*, a spinach pancake; *Salad-Shirazi*; and *Kumpot*, poached pears. Ben also demonstrated the cooking of *Gondi Isfahani*, an Isfahani Jewish Persian dish of rice, meat, and vegetables. While he cooked, he shared with us the story of his family and his journey to America, and the history of the Jewish people in Persia as far back as the 6th century B.C. The struggle of the Jewish people was captured in the Old Testament Book of Esther.

We enjoyed all of the deliciously seasoned food, and washed it down with Persian tea flavored with rose water and cardamon. We appreciated not only the excellent meal, but also Susan and Ben enriching our cultural understanding through this enjoyable experience.



Mehrdad Soumekh (Chef Ben) and Susan Young

Below is an article authored by Ben. It includes a brief history of Persian Jews as well as several great recipes for you to try. Enjoy, and bon appetit!

Persian and Jewish Persian History and Foods

by Mehrdad Soumekh (Chef Ben)

What would be the most popular “secret ingredients” for an *“Iron Chef Iran”* TV program? The answer is ***Sabzi***. ***Sabzi*** is the class of green vegetables, most of which have wonderful and pleasant aromas, that includes: cilantro (*geshniz*), parsley (*jafari*), dill (*shivid*), mint (*nah-nah*), spinach (*esfenaj*), leeks (*tareh-farange*), leek chives (*tareh*), fenugreek (*shambalileh*), and tarragon (*tarkhoon*). ***Sabz*** translated into English is the color ***green***.

NOTE: Do not throw away the stems of cilantro, parsley, dill, leek, etc. Just cut a ¼ inch from the bottom to get rid of the area near the root that could be a bit muddy.

The taste and smell in a Persian food comes mainly from the added **Sabzi** and not the meat. I believe that **Sabzi** actually hides the smell of meat. (In old times, meat used to have a stronger *gamey* smell since it didn't come from hormone and antibiotic-fed animals. Lack of refrigeration might have also been a factor in ending up with a meat with strong odors.) I should also mention that Iranians not only use **Sabzi** as an ingredient in cooking a meal but also as a side dish in raw/uncooked form. Some raw **Sabzi** are also used in preparing salads; see the ingredients in **Salad-Shirazi** that is discussed later. Some **Sabzi** can be found fresh in both conventional grocery stores (e.g., Giant and Safeway) and ethnic grocery stores (e.g., Chinese, Persian, and Korean). However, some types of **Sabzi** are only available in dried form in Persian grocery stores since they quickly spoil in raw form. If you wish to take a shortcut and save time in cleaning and cutting **Sabzi**, you can just obtain the dried ones.

There are three other classes of non-meat ingredients that are crucial in Persian food. These are:

- i. **Spices** that include salt, pepper, cumin (*zereh*) seed or powder, turmeric (*zarchubeh*), cardamine (*hel*), saffron (*zafarun*), cinnamon (*darchin*), crushed or whole dried limes (*lemo*), and crushed dried or whole fresh sour grapes (*gooreh*)
- ii. **Beans** that include kidney beans (white, red, etc.), garbanzo beans (chick peas), and lentils
- iii. **Other vegetables** that include onions, garlic, ginger, carrots, green peas, green beans, eggplants, tomatoes, potatoes, red beetroots, cauliflower, cabbage, and okras

If I were to pick a non-spice item that is in all Persian foods, it would be **onions**. If you mention **sweet** onions to an Iranian, he/she would laugh at you. Iranians like strong onions (particularly **red** onions); a good onion should make you cry when you cut it.

A Brief History of Persian Jews

Before going through the recipes, here are some historical facts and stories about Persian Jews that is my background. My father was a Jew from a city called Isfahan. Isfahan is an historic major city in Iran that was also the capital during the powerful Safavid Dynasty. **Isfahani** translates into someone or something from Isfahan in English. My mother is a Persian Jew from another major city called **Mashad**. Persian Jews used to live in all major cities of Iran. Each Jewish group had its own customs, food, etc. It was very rare for a Jew from one city to marry a Jew from another city. (Marriage with non-Jews was not allowed.) How my parents (from two distant cities) ended up marrying each other has its own long story.

There was a major migration of Jews to Iran about 2550 years ago during the time of King Cyrus the Great who emancipated Jews from Babylonian prisons. It is believed that in the 13th century a group of Ukrainian Jews moved to Iran due to severe persecutions. In the 16th century during the Spanish Inquisition, a large portion of the Spanish Jews went to Turkey, and some might have eventually moved to Iran and Iraq (where large Jewish communities existed).

Persian Jews had ups and downs in their relationship with first the Zoroastrian majority and then the Muslim majority in Iran for the past 2550 years. During the past 500 years up to the time my parents became adults (that is, up to World War II), Persian Jews suffered from severe hardships. Similar to Russian Jews, they regularly suffered **pogroms** (mob attacks that resulted in killing and confiscation of properties). Among

Persian Jews, Isfahani Jews suffered the most since they were extremely stubborn and did not compromise on anything (e.g., forced conversion) with Muslims. They used Hebrew names for their newborns which made their Jewish identity more obvious. Ironically, the local government also required them to use the word *Jewish* for their middle name; my father had that middle name. Moreover, they were required to patch a piece of *yellow cloth* on their clothes around the chest area. (During Nazi Germany, the German Jews were forced to put a Star of David patch on their clothes.)

Mashadi Jews did not have a much better fate. During the childhood of my mother's parents, the local government threatened to kill any Jew that would not convert to Islam. As a result, Mashadi Jews decided to pretend to convert. As a way of preventing Muslims from forcing them to marry, they engaged their newborn daughters to the sons of their own relatives (e.g., cousins) soon after their birth. There are many more stories like these that can be found on the internet. But let's start our cooking study.

1. *Gondi Isfahani*

Gondi translates into *meatballs* in English. Gondi Isfahani is a dish that is made by Isfahani Jews. My mother is the genius cook who knew all the Isfahani and Mashadi Jewish foods. Her recipe for *Gondi Isfahani*, which is slightly modified by me to make it healthier, is as follows.

1. Start with a large pan; I use a medium-size Chinese Wok. Do not add any oil to it. Put the Wok on a high flame.
2. Cut a large red onion into small pieces and put it in the Wok. Use a wooden spatula to stir the onion pieces. This is intended to caramelize the onions without oil. (My mother uses oil.)
3. After a couple of minutes, add ¼ cup of balsamic vinegar. Stir for another minute.
4. Add ½ to 1 pound of turkey hamburger. Start breaking the hamburger into small pieces with the wooden spatula. Reduce the flame to medium. (You could use pork or beef hamburger instead of turkey. My mother uses beef.)
5. Add 1 teaspoon each of salt, pepper, cumin powder, and turmeric. Add a touch of (slightly sprinkle) cinnamon to the mix. Add one whole bunch of garlic. Cut the garlic pieces only in the middle; they do not have to be cut into small pieces. Add a few slices of fresh ginger or add grated fresh ginger. Stir the mix for a couple of minutes. Then add another ¼ cup of balsamic vinegar. Keep stirring the mixture until the hamburger meat is fully cooked.
6. Add ½ to 1 bunch of diced parsley and cilantro to the mix. Add ½ of a diced leek (both the white and green parts). Stir the mix for a couple of minutes.
7. Add a cup of lentils. (The lentils should have been washed and boiled for about 5-10 minutes the night before. Leave the boiled lentils in the water for the entire night. Make sure that the pan or the bowl you use is larger than 3 cups, since the lentils will expand in size overnight.) Stir the mix for a couple of minutes.
8. Add 2½ cups of white basmati rice and ½ cup of brown basmati rice. (Wash the rice before adding to the mix.) Stir the mix for a couple of minutes.
9. Add enough water to the mix until you see that it is entirely submerged in the water – that is, the water level is just above the mix. Now you can add ¼ cup of olive oil to the mix.
10. Switch the flame to high. Stir the mix for a couple of minutes. Then put the cover on the Wok. Now wait about 10-15 minutes for the water in the mix to reach the boiling point. You could remove the cover every 3-5 minutes, stir the mix, and then put the cover back on the Wok.
11. After the water starts boiling, turn the flame to medium-low. It takes another 30-40 minutes for the mixture to be fully cooked; at that time, there should be no standing water in the Wok. Every 8 minutes or so, you could remove the cover, gently rearrange or stir the mixture, and then put the cover back on. After 40 minutes, it should be all ready.

2. *Ghormeh Sabzi*

This is a well-known Persian dish (stew) that is served in just about all Iranian restaurants in the U.S. It is served over plain rice (that is described in the next section). As you will notice, the recipe is similar to the recipe for Gondi Isfahani with minor modifications.

1. Wash two pieces of beef *muscle* meat. Cut them into small cubes/pieces. You can skip to Step 5 at this point by ignoring the optional Steps 2-4.
2. **(Start of Option 1)** Take a small pan and fill 1/3 of it with cold water. Bring the water to the boiling point.
3. (Continue Option 1) Put the beef cubes in the boiling pot. Leave it at high heat until the water is boiling again. Let the beef cook in the boiling water for a couple of minutes. You will notice a foamy cooked blood appearing on the top of the pan.
4. (Continue Option 1) Remove the small pan from the flame. Rinse off the foamy blood from the beef cubes. This option/procedure is practiced only by Jews and is a *kosher* requirement. **(End of Option 1)**
5. Take a large pan; I use a medium-size Chinese Wok. Do not add any oil to it. Do not turn on the flame yet.
6. Put the beef pieces in the Wok.
7. Cut a large red onion into small pieces and put them in the Wok.
8. Add 1 teaspoon each of salt, pepper, cumin powder, and turmeric. Add a touch of (slightly sprinkle) cinnamon to the mix. Add one whole bunch of garlic. Cut the garlic pieces only in the middle; they do not have to be cut into small pieces. Add a few slices of fresh ginger or add grated fresh ginger. Add 1 cup of apple cider vinegar.
9. Add 1 bunch of diced parsley and cilantro to the mix. Add a diced leek (both the white and green parts).
10. Wash two cans of red kidney beans (to remove the salty water, etc.). Add them to the mix in the Wok.
11. Add 4-6 pieces of whole dried limes or ¼ cup of crushed dried limes. You can skip to Step 13 at this point by ignoring the optional Step 12.
12. **(Start of Option 2)** Wash two potatoes and two white turnips (or a Chinese White Luobo). Remove the imperfections on the potatoes' skins (you don't have to peel off all the skin). Peel off all the skin from the turnips. Cut the potatoes and turnips into small pieces. Add them to the mix. **(End of Option 2)**
13. Add enough (preferably already boiled) water to the mix until the water level is an inch above the mix.
14. Turn the flame to high. Stir the mix for a couple of minutes. Then put the cover on the Wok. Now wait about 15-20 minutes for the water in the mix to reach the boiling point.
15. After the water starts boiling, turn the flame to medium-low. It takes another hour or so for the mixture to be fully cooked. Every 10 minutes or so, you could remove the cover, gently stir the mixture, and then put the cover back on. If the water level is too low and/or the mixture is sticking to the bottom, add another cup of hot water to it. The dish should be ready in 60-80 minutes.

A variation of Ghormeh Sabzi that is cooked by Mashadi Jews is called *Chellow Nokhod Ab*. To make it, follow the above instructions with these modifications: i) replace two cans of red kidney beans with a can of white beans and a can of garbanzo beans; ii) include the white turnips and potatoes. You may replace turnips with cabbage or just use both.

3. *Plain Rice*

Iranians, just like the Chinese, take their rice very seriously. However, unlike the Chinese, Iranians do not

want the rice to be mushy; the rice has to be fluffy such that every rice piece can be separated. Making such rice takes some time. Here is the recipe for my shortcut.

1. Take a large pan; I use a medium-size Chinese Wok. Do not add any oil to it. Do not turn on the flame yet.
2. Wash 2½ cups of white basmati rice and ½ cup of brown basmati rice. Add them to the Wok.
3. Add 1 teaspoon of salt, ¼ cup of olive oil, a sprinkle of cinnamon, and 1 teaspoon of cumin seeds to the Wok.
4. Add enough cold water to the mix until the water level is an inch above the mix.
5. Stir the mix. Turn on the flame to high. Cover the Wok. Wait 10-15 minutes until the water in the mix reaches the boiling point.
6. Turn the flame to medium-low. It takes about 15-20 minutes for the dish to be fully cooked; at that time, there should be no standing water in the Wok. Every 5 minutes or so, you could remove the cover, gently rearrange or stir the mixture, and then put the cover back on. After 20 minutes, it should be all ready.

4. *Salad-Shirazi*

This is a well-known and popular salad that is also served in most Iranian restaurants.

1. Start with 4-6 Persian cucumbers. (Trader Joe's and Iranian supermarkets carry them.) Wash them well. Do not remove their skins. Cut/dice them into small cubes. Put the diced cucumbers in a large bowl.
2. Wash 3-4 tomatoes on the vine. Do not use 'plasticky' and tasteless regular tomatoes. (Trader Joe's has a new type of tomato that looks like a small vine-type and is very tasty.) Cut/dice them into small cubes. Put the diced tomatoes in a large bowl.
3. **(Option 1)** If you like green onions (scallions), wash and cut a bunch in small pieces and add them to the bowl. (The original recipe requires raw red onions. However, I doubt most of you would opt for that.)
4. Add ¼ cup of olive oil. Add ¼ teaspoon of salt and pepper (preferably, crushed pepper).
5. Add the juice (with pulps) of two limes.
6. Add ¼ cup of balsamic vinegar.
7. Cut/dice 1-2 parsley and cilantro stems with leaves on them and add to the mix.
8. **(Option 2)** If you like cheese, you can add some small pieces of, or a grated version of, any cheese you like to the mix. If you add feta cheese, then the mix is similar to Greek Salad (in which they might use lettuce instead of cucumbers). Bulgarian feta cheese is the best on the Earth!
9. Mix well and serve.

5. *Kumpot (Fruit Dessert)*

This is a simple and healthy dessert. It is basically the same as a canned fruit but is much tastier and without the less desirable matter which is added to the canned fruits.

1. Take a small pan and fill 1/3 of it with cold water. Bring the water to the boiling point.
2. Wash 4-5 pears and cut them into small pieces. Add them to the pan. You may use other fruits, e.g., apples, bananas, peaches, etc. Make sure you remove the skin of the apple that is full of wax and chemicals.
3. Add ½ teaspoon of cinnamon to the pan.
4. Add ½ cup of honey.

5. Add ½ cup of Rose Water.
6. Put on the cover, and let the mix cook on medium heat for about 15 minutes. Serve.



Salad-Shirazi and Kookoo-Sabzi

6. *Kookoo-Sabzi*

You can think of this as the Persian Sabzi Pancake. Kookoo-Sabzi is also a very popular food that is served in Persian restaurants. It is very tasty but admittedly a bit unhealthy since it requires frying.

1. Start with a small pan but do not put either water or oil in it.
2. Wash a bundle or a bag of spinach. (Giant sells it in a bag. It says it is washed, but it should be washed nevertheless, to avoid the possibility of salmonella.) Without cutting the spinach leaves, put them in the pan.
3. Put the pan on medium-low flame and cover it. Let it remain on the flame for about 15 minutes. You will notice that the spinach leaves give up a lot of water.
4. Remove the cooked leaves from the pan and put them on a plate (or similar surface). Use something (for example, paper towels) to squeeze as much water as you can out of the spinach leaves. Next, cut the dried cooked spinach leaves somewhat, and put them in a big (e.g., salad) bowl.
5. Add 1/8 bunch of diced parsley, cilantro, and dill to the bowl. Add 1/8 of a diced leek (both the white and green parts).
6. Grate ¼ of an onion, a few pieces of garlic, and some ginger, and add to the mix. (If you cannot grate them, just dice them into small pieces.)

7. Add ½ teaspoon of salt, pepper, cumin powder, and turmeric. Add a touch of (slightly sprinkle) cinnamon to the mix.
8. Add 2-3 spoons of balsamic vinegar.
9. Add 4 eggs to the mix. Your mix is now ready. Stir the mix thoroughly for a few minutes until the ingredients are fully combined.
10. Put a frying pan on a high flame and add 1/6 cup of olive oil. Slightly sprinkle turmeric in the pan and spread/mix it with a wooden spatula in the oil.
11. When the oil is hot, you are now ready to make your *sabzi pancake*. Use a large serving spoon to get some of the mix that is in the bowl, and then pour it into the hot pan. Flatten the mix in the pan, and put on the top. Lower the flame to medium.
12. After 5 minutes, remove the top. Use a flat spatula to make sure that the mix is not sticking to the pan. Flip the pancake. (You might have your own way of flipping a pancake. I put a plate on top of the pan, and then flip the pan, dropping the pancake to the plate. ***But be careful not to burn yourself with hot oil when you do this.***)
13. Put the pan back on the flame, and add a bit more oil. Slide the flipped pancake from the plate back into the pan. Put on the top, and let it cook for 5 minutes.
14. Remove the top. Use a flat spatula to make sure that the pancake is not sticking to the pan. Move the pancake to a plate.
15. Repeat Steps 10-14 for the remaining uncooked mixture.



(from left) Linda Devine, Dorothy Hsiao, Christina Wong Poy, Susan Young, Mehrdad Soumekh, Pam Wong, Audrey Lee, Camilla Ng, and Hong-ye Chiu (Mimi Hom not pictured)

News from the Virginia Chapter

(from Veronica Li, Secretary)

The Virginia Chapter hosted a Lunar New Year celebration on the evening of Saturday, February 2, 2013 at the Penthouse party room of member Amy Lee's apartment building. The occasion was also the inauguration of the new Chapter President, Connie Wong. Connie is a longtime member and will carry on the chapter's tradition of supporting organizations such as Families with Children from China and the Hepatitis B Initiative. Other officers were sworn in: Maria Yang (Vice President), Veronica Li (Secretary), and Amber Yen (Treasurer).

The group presented a thank-you gift to Camilla Ng, President of the Maryland Chapter, for acting as temporary president for Virginia. Because of her, the Virginia Chapter remained active throughout 2012 and enjoyed a variety of social and educational programs.

More than forty people attended the New Year event. As always, the potluck was a feast. Vice President Maria Yang gave an interesting lecture and slideshow about the Chinese calendar.









News from the New Orleans Chapter

(from Betty Butz, President)

Chinese New Year Celebration

One of many titles that the City of New Orleans has earned over its almost three hundred years of history is Northernmost Capital of Saints and Festivals. February 2013 was a time for another validation of this claim.

Super Bowl XLVII led the way in the midst of numerous parades that preceded Mardi Gras which occurred on February 12, followed by Valentine's Day. With a growing presence of Asian culture in the city, there are more days to celebrate. To rejoice in the good fortune, Chinese American groups held various observances of the transition into the Year of the Snake.

On Friday, February 15, 2013, the Confucius Institute at Xavier University of Louisiana held its first Chinese New Year celebration in the ballroom of the Student Center. Festivities began at 4:30 p.m. with ping pong and other games, and crafts tables prepared for decorating with Chinese symbols. A sumptuous buffet dinner was served, after which everyone enjoyed a full slate of spectacular stage entertainment.

The event was free and open to the public. Several hundred people, among them members of OCAW, and many happy children were in attendance.





Ping Pong



Chopsticks practice



New Year crafts



VIP Cynthia Lee Sheng and her children



Hosts for the evening Dr. Qianjin Zhang and Ms. Ahmeena Anderson



Xavier University Provost Dr. Loren Blanchard



Dance troupe from the Academy of Chinese Studies

(Editor's Note: Photos are courtesy of the Confucius Institute.)

News from the Silicon Valley Chapter

(from Alice Chiou, President)

On Sunday, March 24, 2013, Silicon Valley Chapter members took a trip to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. A group of 20 people took the Caltrain from Mountain View to San Francisco, then the Muni to the Museum of Modern Art. The trip was long, but members were able to chat and mingle.

Our tour guide, Teresa Huang (an OCAW member, and also the author of the book, Art Museum of S.F.), did a great job of introducing and explaining many modern art concepts and developments.

After the museum tour, the group walked to Yank Sing, a well-known San Francisco dim sum restaurant, for lunch.

After the dim sum luncheon, the group walked back to the Caltrain station. On the way, they stopped by AT&T Stadium, the home of this year's Baseball World Champions, the Giants.

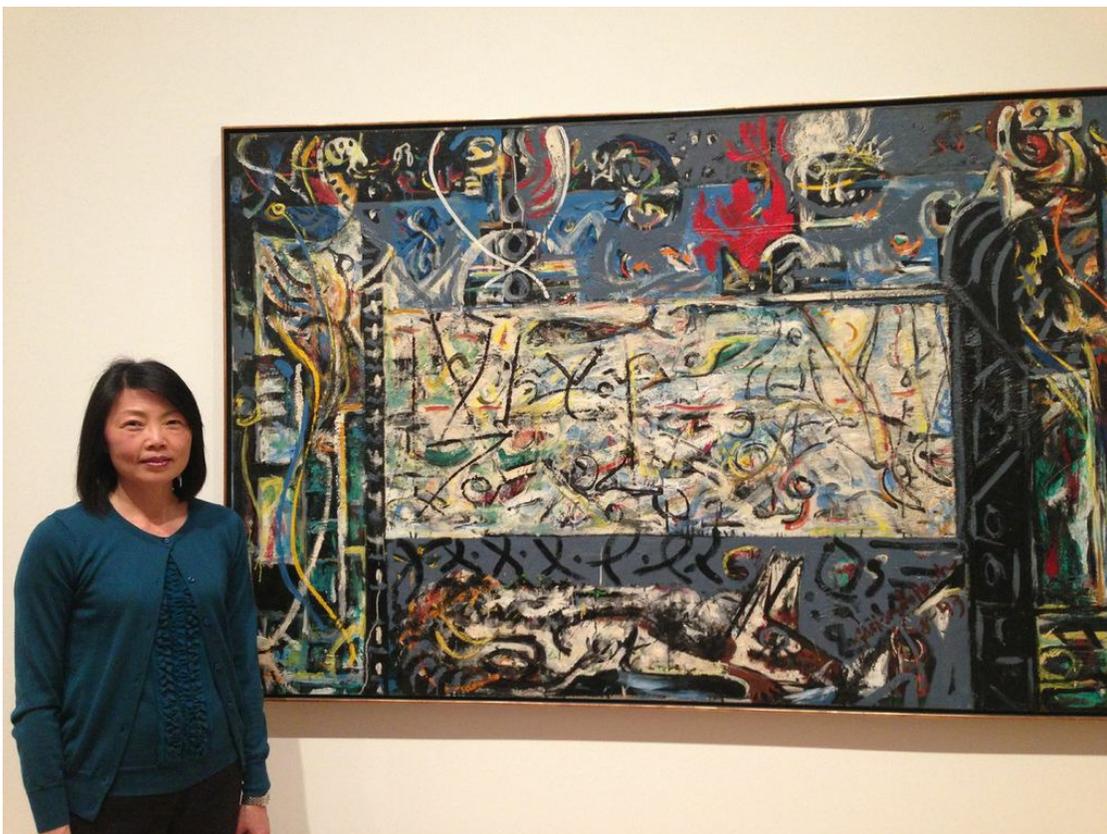
Overall, it was a great day trip.

Following are photos of our enjoyable excursion.













Upcoming Event

Our next event, “Inner Beauty,” will be held on Sunday, May 19. The speaker will be OCAW-SVC 2003-2004 President Anne Hu.

News from the Hawaii Chapter

(from Rena Young Ochse, President)

Our focus this year will be to recognize our own members.

We are pleased to have had 7 new members join our chapter since we started the Year of the Snake.

Christmas Installation Banquet

(from Geraldine Ko, Secretary)

On Sunday, December 2, 2012, the elegant, members-only Oahu Country Club was the place to stay a while – the site of OCAW-Hawaii's Christmas Installation Banquet. It was an idyllic morning that greeted us with the ephemeral flora and fauna released by the cool Christmas season, with blazing poinsettias and the wafting pine smell of gaily-decorated holiday trees.



2013 Officers: Rena Young Ochse, President; Helen Lee Char, Vice President; Geraldine Ko, Secretary; and Sharon Chun, Treasurer

The audience was an eye-feast. Age no longer looks like it used to. Guests looked grand, pretty, and ready to have fun as they took their places at the round tables, to share updates about their lives and loves, admire each other's good looks and beautiful attire, and engage in all other kinds of neat chat.

Dr. Sandy Young, the outgoing President, thanked the outgoing executive officers and her cabinet of wise women for having spent the last year trying to matter, to our club and the community, and then gave each of them gifts to show her appreciation.

The installation was competent and professional, presided over by Ms. Cora Lum Cardwell, an attorney formerly from the State of Hawaii Attorney General's office. Her aunt was the late Ms. Rose Lee, our dynamic President in 1999 who led our club through its fabulous 10th anniversary celebration with co-chairs past President Ms. Yun Soong Jim and Ms. Blossom Tyau.

In her acceptance speech, the new President Ms. Rena Ochse expressed admiration for the outgoing officers, congratulated the new officers, then presented her vision of where we go from here as once again we turn the page and continue to make history.

Since Christmas is about giving, in lieu of exchanging presents, we opted instead to bring unwrapped gifts to be donated to the homeless women from the Institute of Human Services. Also, in keeping with last year's theme of "Sharing with the community," especially the Chinese community, our club donated \$500 to the Canaan Gospel Community Center in Chinatown, headed by the Reverend Godwin Lai.

Gladys Lee took the floor, relating how she "discovered" the Reverend at a funeral at which he officiated. Ever alert at spotting opportunities for us to help, she immediately told the club about the Pastor's church in Chinatown. Then she and Bunny Look visited him at his church to witness first-hand what his church was about.

Bunny then discussed the country store fundraiser she chaired to raise \$500 to donate to Pastor Lai's church. Ms. Blossom Tyau donated a beautiful multi-strand pearl necklace which was purchased by Ms. Diane Wong for \$200 which, added to the country store sales, yielded the desired goal of \$500. Reverend Lai then told us how he used our \$500 gift to spread Divine Love.



Christmas is also about food, and at lunchtime, food was presented on a grand scale. After the feasting, my sister Isabella Rose Monzon came forward to showcase Polynesia's cultural beauty through dance, mainly Hawaiian and Tahitian, with changes of elaborate colorful costumes.



The credits came next for the unsung heroines behind the scenes: to Ms. Queenie Chee who expertly planned and coordinated our program, and through her membership at the Oahu Country Club made arrangements for the location of our festival; to Ms. Blossom Tyau, the gift who keeps on giving, who crafted and donated pretty centerpieces, awarded to the person at each table whose birthday in 2013 was closest to the founding date of OCAW-Hawaii (January 26 (1989)); and to Ms. Diane Wong who created the lovely tinsel lei for our newly-installed officers.

I totally enjoyed being Mistress of Ceremonies to a very responsive audience who spoiled me as they listened with undivided attention, snickered at my ad-libs, and laughed at my jokes with rip-roaring mirth. This party was yet another step towards the unity of our members through the vehicle of fun in social interaction, cultural entertainment, and charity endeavors. It was a most wonderful afternoon.



First Meeting of 2013

(from Rena Young Ochse)

The Hawaii Chapter's first meeting of the year was held on Saturday, February 23, 2013 at the Hee Hing Restaurant in Honolulu. It was a huge success as many members and guests participated, and we were served a delicious Chinese meal.

We were all interested in hearing about our member and speaker, **Hong Jiang**, who talked about how she came to America from a small town in Mongolia called Harbin and how she was educated in America. She is a teacher at the University of Hawaii at Manoa and is an avid authority on Chinese culture. She is also the Deputy Regional Director of New Tang Dynasty (NTD) Television (part of Oceanic Cable Television), which is the largest Chinese language TV station in Hawaii.

Our second speaker was our newest member, **Robin Lung**. Robin updated us about her passion in "Finding *Kukan*." She showed us clippings of her discoveries about Li Ling-Ai, who co-produced a 1941 Oscar-winning documentary called *Kukan* – an epic color film about war-torn China that has been lost for over half a century. Our members and guests were glued to hearing about her project.

In having our members speak to us, we learn about them and their success in what they have accomplished. This is what OCAW is all about. We recognize our own Asian-American women who have accomplished so much in Hawaii and all over the world.

Next Meeting

(from Rena Young Ochse)

Our next meeting will be held on Sunday, May 19 at the Hee Hing Restaurant. It will feature another remarkable woman, **Ms. Fawn Shang**. Fawn is one of Hawaii's leading experts on China and Chinese History in Hawaii and in China.

She has published books that include the educational "Think-A-Minute." She is originally from Shanghai and is a graduate of Fu Dan University with a degree in Chinese Language and Literature. She also worked for China News Service in Beijing.

Upcoming Events

(from Rena Young Ochse)

Upcoming is our fundraiser targeted for Reverend Lai's Canaan Gospel Church in Chinatown. Our members Gladys Lee, Bunny Look, and Jane Au will soon be announcing their plans to raise money for this project.

Also, we will be having an outing to Shangri La, a mansion built by heiress Doris Duke and now owned by the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art in cooperation with the Honolulu Museum of Art. Member Kimberly Oliveira is planning this activity.

New Orleans

by Betty Butz

(Editor's Note: Betty Butz is President of the New Orleans Chapter. Since she lives in New Orleans, she often finds herself answering questions from curious visitors. In the following essay, she shares some information about her beloved city.)

The City of New Orleans exists in conflict and in harmony with Mother Nature. The forces of wind and water and their interactions with land are dutifully observed with vigilance by all who care about the way of life in this place, in order to maintain the balance that allows all creatures to carry on. Water from the whole Mississippi River basin flows past, pouring silt into the sea. Marshes and swamps are formed and washed away constantly. New Orleans is built on this soft, unstable land, which sinks slowly and inevitably. In late summer and autumn, violent storms may spin into the Gulf of Mexico, bringing wind, rain, and surging waves wherever they happen to go. Hurricanes cause great destruction and suffering. Each one tests the resilient attitude required to live near the Gulf coast.

There are some rewards to enduring New Orleans' precarious situation. The region is rich in natural gas, petroleum, and seafood. Cotton and sugarcane thrive. The city is an export terminal for grain, sugar, and cotton. Imports include coffee, minerals, and manufactured goods. These factors provide the basis for the local economy, granting the chance to prosper in pursuing happiness, independence, and cultural identity. Trade is expected to continue to flourish as the Panama Canal becomes wider with new construction.

Explorers, soldiers, royal descendants, pirates, merchants, plantation owners, slaves, indentured servants, freed people, free citizens, and immigrants left their imprint on the city. Sieur de LaSalle came upon the Mississippi Delta in the late 1680s and claimed it for France. In 1718, Sieur de Bienville founded the City of New Orleans and made it into a permanent French settlement. In the mid-1700s, as a consequence of the French and Indian Wars, many Acadians relocated to the bayous of French-speaking Louisiana, and became known as Cajuns. The city was briefly under Spanish control, 1779-1801, but otherwise part of the French empire.

In 1803, Napoleon Bonaparte sold the city and the entire Louisiana territory to the United States. This was a huge boost to the U.S., opening a wide frontier to newcomers in search of a better life. Settlers from the east coast came to Louisiana as plantation operators. Slaves were brought from Africa and Caribbean islands to work the fields. After the revolution in Haiti in 1814, many former Haitians and their slaves settled in Louisiana. In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln declared the end of slavery, completely disrupting the social and economic order in the slave states.

Life in New Orleans was different from life on plantations. Immigrants from Europe supplied the markets with fresh produce. The city was a polyglot, cosmopolitan melting pot. To this day, it remains a place where one can define oneself by one's own standards and aspirations, find the best in oneself, and be proud.

Due to influences from French and Spanish cultures, the main religion in south Louisiana was Catholic. Membership in church was primarily based upon ethnic identification. Besides moral guidance, the church offered social cohesion, celebrations of life events, and spiritual observances throughout the year. The famous festival of Mardi Gras refers to the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of Lent and a period of reflection.

It is easy to fall in love with the lush landscape, rich cultural traditions, gourmet cuisine, plentiful fresh seafood, music, and parades. One can easily take a stroll on the Mississippi River levee or take a ferry cruise to watch the many vessels working on the river. It is just as easy to enjoy a simple dish of red beans and rice or shrimp etouffee under a giant magnolia tree. In the summer heat, nature seems to usher in a constant state of decay that somehow leads to the next set of blooms. Inhabitants and tourists alike thrive on the year-round festivals that remind us of who we are and the spirit of the place.

From and About Our Members

From Betty Butz, New Orleans Chapter President

(Editor's Note: Betty is an accomplished ikebana artist, and I requested a picture of the piece she submitted for this year's "Art in Bloom" exhibit in New Orleans.)

The New Orleans Museum of Art at City Park and the Garden Study Club of New Orleans presented its 25th annual "Art in Bloom" flower show March 20-23, 2013. The theme of the fundraiser was "Steel Magnolias,"

paying tribute to the strong women role models in our lives. Exhibitors included garden clubs, professional florists, creative designers, and bonsai and ikebana artists.



Betty Butz contributed her talent by displaying an ikebana piece in the Asian Gallery. The composition consisted of strong, flexible lines made up of African iris foliage and an aspidistra leaf anchored in a bronze crescent moon container. Lily buds were used to suggest promise of fulfillment, and seeded eucalyptus for fruitful outcomes in the form of seeds and round shapes. A sprig of golden euonymus was placed in front to reflect the moonlight depicted in the scroll hanging in the background.

Betty is a certified ikebana instructor of the Sogetsu School.

General Articles and Items of Potential Interest to Members

(from Camilla Ng)

Discovering the Asian Pacific American Voices: BookDragon website

At each Talk Story event held in Washington, D.C.'s Chinatown, I come away excited with information of available resources in the Asian Pacific American community that I want to share with my OCAW sisters. Here is one:

The Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center has a website, "BookDragon" – <http://bookdragon.si.edu/> – which is a fantastic book review blog by Terry Hong of Asian Pacific American books.

"BookDragon is a book review blog produced by the [Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center](#) (APAC). BookDragon is an education, outreach, and research initiative that features literary works which predominantly highlight the contributions of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans to [the American experience](#) and [world cultures](#), two of the grand challenges of the [Smithsonian Institution's Strategic Plan](#)."

The categories of books range from children's books to those for middle-grade readers to books for young adult to cookbooks to memoirs to fiction, and many more.

While it is nearly impossible for APA youths to find books that inspire them or speak to their cultural identity at the mainstream bookstores or libraries, here is a treasure trove of titles and reviews for them to glean from.

The next time you wonder what books to buy for a present for a niece or nephew, children, or grandchildren, check out the BookDragon website for suggestions.

(from Faith Breen)

Faith writes: "Below is an excellent article from *The New York Times* about some of the marriage issues that are still confronting women. Although this is focused on women in China, many of the preferences are still culturally ingrained in many Chinese American families."

(Editor's Note: The article is very lengthy. Below are excerpts which convey the essence. For the full piece, go to the link cited at the end.)

The Price of Marriage in China

by Brook Larmer
The New York Times
March 9, 2013

From her stakeout near the entrance of an H & M store in Joy City, a Beijing shopping mall, Yang Jing seemed lost in thought, twirling a strand of her auburn-tinted hair, tapping her nails on an aquamarine iPhone 4S. But her eyes kept moving. They tracked the clusters of young women zigzagging from Zara to Calvin Klein Jeans. They lingered on a face, a gesture, and then moved on, darting across the atrium, searching.

“This is a good place to hunt,” she told me. “I always have good luck here.”

For Ms. Yang, Joy City is not so much a consumer mecca as an urban Serengeti that she prowls for potential wives for some of China’s richest bachelors. Ms. Yang, 28, is one of China’s premier love hunters, a new breed of matchmaker that has proliferated in the country’s economic boom. The company she works for, Diamond Love and Marriage, caters to China’s nouveaux riches: men, and occasionally women, willing to pay tens and even hundreds of thousands of dollars to outsource the search for their ideal spouse.

In Joy City, Ms. Yang gave instructions to her eight-scout team, one of six squads the company was deploying in three cities for one Shanghai millionaire. This client had provided a list of requirements for his future wife, including her age (22 to 26), skin color (“white as porcelain”), and sexual history (yes, a virgin).

“These millionaires are very picky, you know?” Ms. Yang said. “Nobody can ever be perfect enough.” Still, the potential reward for Ms. Yang is huge: The love hunter who finds the client’s eventual choice will receive a bonus of more than \$30,000, around five times the average annual salary in this line of work.

Suddenly, a signal came.

From across the atrium, a co-worker of Ms. Yang caught her eye and nodded at a woman in a blue dress, walking alone. Ms. Yang had shaken off her colleague’s suggestions several times that day, but this time she circled behind the woman in question.

“Perfect skin,” she whispered. “Elegant face.” When the woman walked into H & M, Ms. Yang intercepted her in the sweater aisle. “I’m so sorry to bother you,” she said with a honeyed smile. “I’m a love hunter. Are you looking for love?”

Three miles away, in a Beijing park near the Temple of Heaven, a woman named Yu Jia jostled for space under a grove of elms. A widowed 67-year-old pensioner, she was clearing a spot on the ground for a sign she had scrawled for her son. “Seeking Marriage,” read the wrinkled sheet of paper, which Ms. Yu held in place with a few fragments of brick and stone. “Male. Single. Born 1972. Height 172 cm. High school education. Job in Beijing.”

Ms. Yu is another kind of love hunter: a parent seeking a spouse for an adult child in the so-called marriage markets that have popped up in parks across the city. Long rows of graying men and women sat in front of signs listing their children’s qualifications. Hundreds of others trudged by, stopping occasionally to make an inquiry.

Ms. Yu’s crude sign had no flourishes: no photograph, no blood type, no zodiac sign, no line about income or assets. Unlike the millionaire’s wish list, the sign didn’t even specify what sort of wife her son wanted. “We don’t have much choice,” she explained. “At this point, we can’t rule anybody out.”...

The New Matchmaking

Three decades of combustive economic growth have reshaped the landscape of marriage in China. A generation ago, China was one of the world’s most equal nations, in both gender and wealth. Most people were poor, and tight controls over housing, employment, travel, and family life simplified the search for a suitable match...

...As recently as 1990, researchers found that a vast majority of residents in two of China’s largest cities dated just one person before marriage: their prospective spouse.

China's transition to a market economy has swept away many restrictions in people's lives. But of all the new freedoms the Chinese enjoy today – making money, owning a house, choosing a career – there is one that has become an unexpected burden: seeking a spouse...

“The old family and social networks that people used to rely on for finding a husband or wife have fallen apart,” said James Farrer, an American sociologist whose book, Opening Up, looks at sex, dating, and marriage in contemporary China. “There's a huge sense of dislocation in China, and young people don't know where to turn.”

The confusion surrounding marriage in China reflects a country in frenzied transition...As many as 300 million rural Chinese have moved to cities in the last three decades. Uprooted and without nearby relatives to help arrange meetings with potential partners, these migrants are often lost in the swell of the big city.

Demographic changes, too, are creating complications. Not only are many more Chinese women postponing marriage to pursue careers, but China's gender gap – 118 boys are born for every 100 girls – has become one of the world's widest, fueled in large part by the government's restrictive one-child policy. By the end of this decade, Chinese researchers estimate, the country will have a surplus of 24 million unmarried men.

Without traditional family or social networks, many men and women have taken their searches online, where thousands of dating and marriage Web sites have sprung up in an industry that analysts predict will soon surpass \$300 million annually. These sites cater mainly to China's millions of white-collar workers. But intense competition, along with mistrust of potential mates' online claims, has spurred a growing number of singles – rich and poor – to turn to more hands-on matchmaking services.

...The goal of matchmakers...has usually been to pair families of equal stature for the greater social good. Today, however, matchmaking has warped into a commercial free-for-all in which marriage is often viewed as an opportunity to leap up the social ladder or to proclaim one's arrival at the top.

Single men have a hard time making the list if they don't own a house or an apartment, which in cities like Beijing are extremely expensive. And despite the gender imbalance, Chinese women face intense pressure to be married before the age of 28, lest they be rejected and stigmatized as “leftover women.”

Dozens of high-end matchmaking services have sprung up in China in the last five years, charging big fees to find and to vet prospective spouses for wealthy clients. Their methods can turn into gaudy spectacle. One firm transported 200 would-be trophy wives to a resort town in southwestern China for the perusal of one powerful magnate. Another organized a caravan of BMWs for rich businessmen to find young wives in Sichuan Province. Diamond Love, among the largest love-hunting services, sponsored a matchmaking event in 2009 where 21 men each paid a \$15,000 entrance fee...

...Diamond Love...now has six branches, with 200 consultants, 200 full-time love hunters, and hundreds more part-time scouts...

[It] runs a series of “how to be a better wife” workshops that coach women on the finer points of managing a wealthy household, reading their husbands' mood, and “understanding the importance of sexual relations.” The fee for two, 14-day courses is \$16,000.

But Diamond Love's chief target is men, the wealthier the better. The company's four million members are mostly men who pay from a few dollars a month for basic searches to more than \$15,000 for access to exclusive databases with customized assistance from a professional love consultant.

...Depending on a campaign's size, Diamond Love charges from \$50,000 to more than \$1 million...

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/10/business/in-a-changing-china-new-matchmaking-markets.html?pagewanted=print>

(from Faith Breen)

(Editor's Note: Faith thought this might be of interest to readers. It was forwarded to her by her sister Lanna Lee, and has made its way through the internet.)

Recognizing a Stroke

A neurologist says that if he can get to a stroke victim within 3 hours, he can totally reverse the effects of a stroke...totally. He said the trick was getting a stroke recognized and diagnosed, and then getting the patient medically cared for within 3 hours, which is tough.

Remember the '3' steps, **STR**.

Now doctors say a bystander can recognize a stroke by asking three simple questions:

S *Ask the individual to SMILE.

T *Ask the person to TALK and SPEAK A SIMPLE SENTENCE (coherently)

R *Ask him or her to RAISE BOTH ARMS.

If he or she has trouble with ANY ONE of these tasks, call 911/emergency number immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher.

New Sign of a Stroke – Stick out Your Tongue

NOTE: Another 'sign' of a stroke is this: Ask the person to stick out his tongue. If the tongue is 'crooked,' if it goes to one side or the other, that is also an indication of a stroke.

(from Faith Breen)

(Editor's Note: Faith writes that about two years ago, she had a terrible skin rash, and knowing that there was a natural way to calm the rash would have been of great benefit to her.)

Healing Poison Ivy Rashes, Insect Bites With Banana Peel

by Rita
June 30, 2005

“This natural method dries out the rash very quickly. Hope you have a quick recovery! I have to give this credit to Nancy, a client of mine. She uses it and swears by it. Make sure you wash clothes and shoes as soon as possible. To relieve itchy skin whatever it may be, give it a try.”

Ingredients

1 cup rubbing alcohol, if needed (or more)
1 banana

Directions

1. Be sure to cleanse exposed skin with generous amounts of rubbing alcohol.
2. Then shower, rinsing skin with water.
3. Apply meat side (inside) of banana peel on rash.
4. Relax and eat banana.

<http://www.food.com/recipe/healing-poison-ivy-rashes-insect-bites-with-banana-peel-128233>