E-Newsletter of the Organization of Chinese American Women

September 2012

(from Linda Devine)

I hope that everyone had a wonderful summer, whether it was traveling, participating in various summer activities, or just plain relaxing!

I appreciate all the submissions I received for this issue, and once again I would like to thank everyone for supporting the e-newsletter. This turned out to be one of our longest issues at 40 pages. My continued gratitude to my husband Ed and my daughter Amanda for the photo preparation work; there are a record number of pictures in this issue.

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

Opera International

(from Muriel Hom)

Lucia di Lammermoor

Opera International's 19th production, Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, was presented at The Music Center at Strathmore in North Bethesda, Maryland, on Sunday, August 12, 2012. The superb performance engaged and delighted the audience, and compliments abounded. Enthusiasm could not have been greater for this event.

The following are highlights from Cecelia Porter's review in *The Washington Post,* entitled "Opera International shines with 'Lucia di Lammermoor' at Strathmore:"

> "...Opera International's production of 'Lucia' at Strathmore's concert hall in Bethesda was a winning one, capturing the hatred between two families hopelessly locked in tribal warfare with the forces of intrigue, revenge, and murderous rage dooming two young lovers in Romeo-and-Juliet style.
>
> ...the production succeeded because of its sterling cast of singers, soloists, and chorus. As Lucia, Jessica Stecklein projected a ravishing, agile coloratura... Yingxi Zhang was a marvelous Edgardo. Especially in his final aria, "Tu che a Dio spiegasti l'ali," the flaming passion of his big, opulent tenor resounded to every corner of the hall. Enrico, sung by baritone Daesan No, was deeply resonant... Rolando Sanz eloquently and convincingly depicted Arturo, Lucia's unwanted pre-arranged husband. Bass-Baritone Kwang Kyu Lee as Raimondo and lyric tenor Eric Gramatges as Normanno were fully effective in their support roles. Caroline G. Gibson was a sweet-voiced Alisa... The chorus sang with energy and resonance."

Special thanks to The Li Foundation, Janet and John Biermann, Amy C. Lee, Mei-jong C. Hung, The Ruth H. Kuo and Rhoda How Memorial Foundation, and our many contributors for their support which made this

production possible. Producer-Director Muriel Hom and Co-Producers Janet Biermann and Mei-jong C. Hung also express their appreciation to the Organization of Chinese American Women under whose auspices Opera International has existed since 1994.

Comments by Dr. Liliane Willens

(Editor's Note: Dr. Liliane Willens, noted author of Stateless in Shanghai, was the featured speaker at OCAW's "Meet the Author" program in June, sponsored by the Maryland and Virginia Chapters. (See the June OCAW e-newsletter.) Dr. Willens graciously donated her time to the event, and in appreciation, Muriel Hom invited Liliane to be her guest at the opera. The following are her thoughts following the experience.)

Mimi Hom deserves a gold medal for her Olympian production of Gaetano Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*. The cast, the orchestra, and the chorus performed marvelously. The singers were dressed in modern clothes but this was most appropriate in this opera where the heroine, Lucia (Jessica Stecklein), was forced into marriage, for financial reasons, to Arturo (Rolando Sanz) although she was in love with Edgardo (Yingxi Zhang). One could relate to Lucia's suffering since such a situation still happens in our times. The lovers, Lucia and Edgardo, were a handsome young couple, who sang passionately about their love for each other. Lucia's brother, Enrico (Daesan No, the baritone), projected a fierce personality throughout the opera, threatening his sister and forcing her into an unwanted marriage although he knew she was in love with Edgardo. The highlight of this opera is of course the "mad scene" where Lucia, having killed her husband and wearing her wedding dress splattered with blood, sings of her love for Edgardo. Not surprisingly, some in the audience, including this writer, shed tears at this scene, which was followed by loud applause for the soaring voice of Jessica Stecklein.

Youth Guests of OCAW-Maryland

(from Christina Wong Poy and Camilla Ng)

In order to support Opera International and provide youths access to and cultivate in them an interest in opera, OCAW-Maryland bought $200 worth of tickets to *Lucia di Lammermoor* and donated them to students and mentors involved with AALEAD (Asian-American Leadership, Empowerment and Development for Youth and Families), the Chinese Community Church of Washington, DC, and LIFE & Discovery (Frederick, Maryland).

The youths were encouraged to submit essays on their first opera experience. Their spontaneous responses to the opera and their appreciation were delightful and gratifying. Their writings are below.

(Editor's Note: One of Opera International's stated missions is to encourage and inspire in young people an appreciation of opera.)

Essay by Jenny Ng (AALEAD)

On Sunday, August 12, 2012, I went to the Strathmore Music Center to watch the opera performance, *Lucia Di Lammermoor*, thanks to the Organization of Chinese American Women (OCAW) and AALEAD. It was my first time being at an opera and I loved the entire experience.

This was a great introduction to opera music especially because it was held at the Strathmore Center which I feel was the perfect place to view the opera. Attending this event was my first chance to actually get a good

look at Strathmore, which is an exquisite and modern facility. For me, it was a wonderful and unique experience, especially because not many people, particularly in high school, can say they went to go see an opera at Strathmore.

This was my first time listening to and attending an opera. It has elements of a musical, but the musical style is different. I loved it so much because I personally love music and singing. Actually, I was in my school musical this past year, so I can definitely appreciate the talent and hard work that went into this stage performance. The opera performance was so spectacular! It was so wonderful to listen to. I especially enjoyed female opera singer, Jessica Stecklein. The staging at Strathmore was also very impressive, with all of the beautiful lighting.

I am glad I have been introduced to the opera style of music. I can see myself listening to opera music, and attending more opera performances in the future. It was really fun to attend this event with my mentor, and I would like to thank AALEAD and OCAW for giving me this wonderful opportunity and introducing me to beautiful opera music.

Comments by Michelle Chung (AALEAD)

Something I found interesting about the opera was that the actors traveled a lot. I found this interesting because I also like to travel. Something I also found interesting was how loud the opera singers' voices were. This was interesting to me because the stage was pretty far below us and the size of the room we were in was huge, so I was surprised that they could project their voices that far. Overall, the performance was amazing.

Comments by Kathy Sawmmal (LIFE & Discovery)

On August 12, 2012, I and my younger sister and brother, Sonia and Joseph, went to see the opera *Lucia di Lammermoor* by composer Gaetano Donizetti, at the invitation of the OCAW-Maryland Chapter. We had a very busy morning that day but we managed to get through the cooking and cleaning before heading to the opera. Since we live in Frederick, Maryland, a trip to the Strathmore Center would normally take us 45 minutes, but unfortunately we got stuck in traffic for more than an hour. We finally arrived at 5:30 p.m. We were seated comfortably, and the Strathmore Center was a fantastic place. My siblings and I had a wonderful time, even though we were a little lost on what the story was about in the beginning since we missed the first act of the opera and half of the second act. But overall we were able to enjoy the performance and have this amazing opportunity to see opera for the first time. The music, the storyline, and the people were enjoyable, and we had such a wonderful time.

Thank you to OCAW-Maryland for this wonderful opportunity. The opera was the best part of my summer, and it was my first time getting to see opera.

From Sonia Sawmmal: "Thank you so much for the chance for us to see the show."

From Joseph Sawmmal: "Thank you for your kindness and thinking of us."

(Editor's Note: The Sawmmal children have suffered tragedy in their lives, and LIFE & Discovery has generously provided assistance to them. Among Camilla Ng's many activities, including leading OCAW's Maryland and Virginia Chapters, she volunteers for LIFE & Discovery and is Kathy Sawmmal's mentor. This is yet another example of how OCAW sisters contribute to their communities and make a difference in people's lives.)

Sonia Sawmmal (LIFE & Discovery), Joseph Sawmmal (LIFE & Discovery), Camilla Ng (Kathy Sawmmal's mentor), Kathy Sawmmal (LIFE & Discovery), Christina Wong Poy, Laura Collins (Michelle Chung's mentor), Michelle Chung (AALEAD), Jenny Ng (AALEAD), and Jenny Oh (Jenny Ng's mentor)

Update on the OCAW History Book

(from Puanani Woo)

飲水思源

September 13, 2012

Dear OCAW Sisters:

The book is coming out **MAY 2013.**

The announcement below is heaven sent and is gratefully accepted. All writers for the book were apprised of this book launch just prior to this initial public announcement which was prepared by the USCET staff.

OCAW Book Launch MAY 2013

Ambassador Julia Chang Bloch and **Rosetta Lai**, former Chair and National President respectively, of OCAW (Organization of Chinese American Women), are pleased to co-host the OCAW book launch in **MAY 2013** on behalf of the US-China Education Trust (USCET). This will be an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate OCAW co-founder **Pauline W. Tsui's** contributions to promoting the aspirations of Asian American women, through educational and social networking and activities in local OCAW chapters throughout the United States.

On this occasion, we will also recognize the University of Hawaii Press and the University of Hawaii Foundation for their indispensable support in making the publication of this book possible. Under **Pauline's** leadership as writer and editor and the narratives of all writers for the book, the publication of this book will ensure that the founding principles and history of OCAW will never be lost.

It is only appropriate that USCET is launching the OCAW book in **MAY**, which is the officially designated **Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month**, to enshrine the leadership and vision of a Chinese American women's organization. We hope that you will join us in honoring **Pauline W. Tsui**, the University of Hawaii Press, the University of Hawaii Foundation, all writers for the book, and OCAW and its leadership and supporters on their historic achievements. Details of the book launch will be forthcoming.

USCET is a program of the **F.Y. Chang Foundation**, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. It was founded in 1998 by **Ambassador Julia Chang Bloch** with the mission of strengthening US-China relations through education and exchange. **Rosetta Lai** will be joining USCET as Vice President for Development in October.

It is with deep pleasure that **Pauline and I** announce that **Cynthia Chin-Lee** has accepted our invitation to join the ADVISORS/EDITORS Committee, three of whom you met in the Feb. 2012 e-newsletter. Adding **Cynthia** makes it a total of four experienced writers. We have already leaned on **Cynthia's** evaluative mind and writing skills.

Cynthia was interviewed by **Christina Wong Poy** in the Nov. 2011 e-newsletter, noted as a *magna cum laude* graduate of Harvard University and a graduate fellow of the scholarly think-tank, the East-West Center, University of Hawaii in Honolulu. She is a lifetime member of OCAW and currently a member of the Silicon Valley Chapter. She is an award-winning speaker and author of seven books. Most of her books are for children and have an underlying theme of tolerance, inclusion, and community. Her book, **Amelia to Zora: Twenty-Six Women Who Changed the World**, is a best-seller and is published in ebook, paperback, hardcover, and Korean translation. Her most recent book, **Operation Marriage**, reveals the issues around marriage equality through the eyes of children.

I want to thank former National President, **Jeanie F. Jew, et al**, for proposing that the book launch be held in **MAY 2013** instead of in **FEBRUARY 2013 CHINESE NEW YEAR**. As coincidence would have it, the book launch found its perfect home**.**

Besides the 17 writers for the book I noted in the June 2012 e-newsletter, four more writers have been added because of our persuasive invitation. In alphabetical order they are:

- **Betty L. Butz**, President of the New Orleans Chapter, writing briefly about her Chapter's activities and about former National President Faith L. Breen's visit in the late first decade of the 21st century

- **Margot Wei** and **Chin-Fun Florence Kwok.** Each has submitted a story of their teaching experiences in "Job Skill Training for Non-Professionals" in the 1980s, and the present-day results of some of their students.
- **Garrick Tsui** will write the brief biography of his mom, **Pauline**, for the book.

Bertram S.Y. Mao of Maryland completed the calligraphy for the book cover which was sent to the **UH Press for their design work. Mao was born in Jiangsu Province, China and has practiced Chinese painting** and calligraphy for more than sixty years. A graduate of Georgetown Law School in 1965, he served as Cultural Counselor for the Republic of China Embassy in Washington, DC, and later as Director of the Department of Higher Education within the Ministry of Education in Taipei, Taiwan.

Pauline and I are in a serious period of writing and editing to meet deadlines. The final, approved manuscript will be sent to the **PRINTER MARCH 1, 2013**.

Sincerely yours,

Puanani Woo
Project Director
gpwoo@live.com

News from the Maryland and Virginia Chapters

(from Camilla Ng, Maryland Chapter President and Virginia Chapter Acting President)

Congratulations to Maria Yang, a longtime Virginia Chapter member, for volunteering her service to the Virginia Board as Vice President. The Board members of both the Virginia and Maryland Chapters are thrilled to have Maria on the team. With her background in education and her gracious personality, Maria will strengthen the leadership with new ideas and vigor.

The Fascinating Rediscovery of Chinese-American Heritage Treasures: Jake Lee's Twelve Paintings

(from Audrey Lee, Maryland Chapter Vice President)

On May 11, 2012, I was fortunate to have attended Part 3 of the ongoing Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month series at the Washington, DC Chinatown Community Cultural Center (CCCC), sponsored by OCA-DC, the Chinese American Citizens Alliance (C.A.C.A.), the 1882 Project, and the CCCC. The presenter, Sue Lee, is the Executive Director of the Chinese Historical Society of America (CHSA) in San Francisco, California.

Ms. Lee's presentation, "Finding Jake Lee," re-told the story of how the Chinese Historical Society of America acquired eight of the 12 Jake Lee paintings that were long believed to be lost or destroyed since their disappearance in 1972 from the landmark Kan's Restaurant in San Francisco's Chinatown.

As the account goes, the 12 Jake Lee paintings were commissioned by Johnny Kan in 1959 to hang in his Chinatown Kan's Restaurant. In 1972, when Johnny Kan died and his restaurant was sold, the paintings somehow disappeared. Then miraculously, in 2010, at an auction in Los Angeles, 11 of these paintings were showcased. Sue Lee (no relation to the artist) was able to acquire seven of these spectacular paintings, and the other four were sold to an anonymous buyer.

The mystery of the missing 12th painting, "Deadwood," unfolded after the auction when Ms. Lee tracked it down to an auto shop owned by a former Kan Restaurant kitchen worker. This magnificent 8-foot-long mural was hanging on the wall of the auto shop. Ms. Lee was able to restore the 12th painting with the other seven.

Champion Firehose Team of Deadwood, South Dakota, 1888

Champion Firehose Team of the Deadwood, South Dakota Fire Department, and winners of the Fourth of July race in 1888.

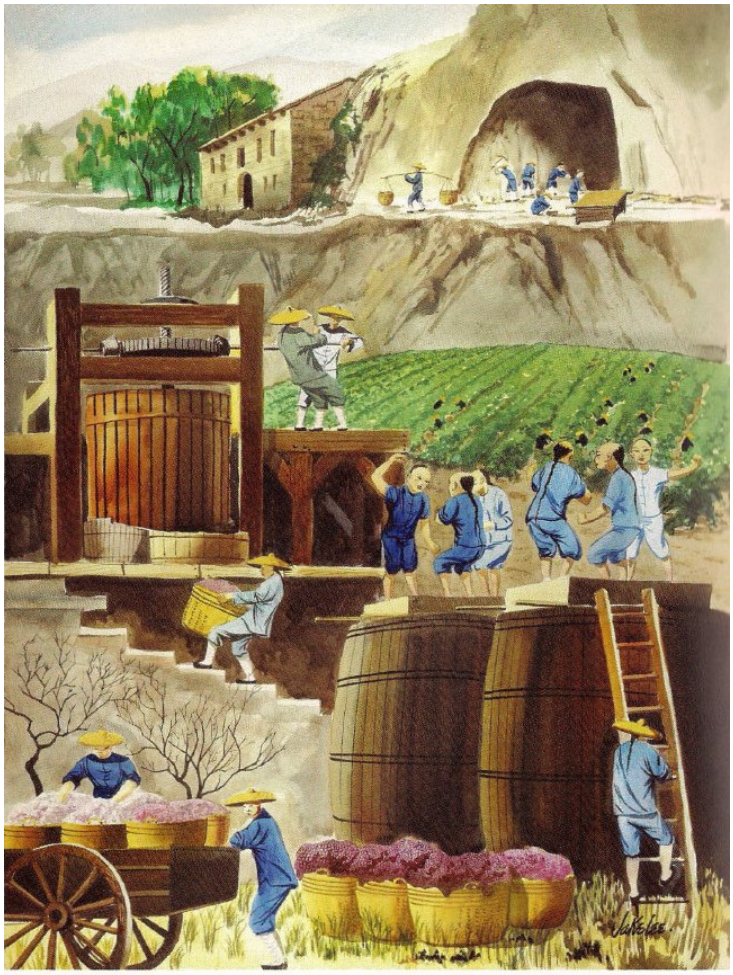
流水隊，屬南達科他州德活城消防局，於1888年七月四日，美國國慶競賽贏得冠軍。

Sue Lee's powerpoint presentation included photos of these paintings as well as a booklet, and I unabashedly admit I was overwhelmed by the clarity and composition of these tributes to our Chinese-American heritage. Each of the eight paintings now owned by the Chinese Historical Society of America Museum artfully portrays the life and hard work of our early immigrants seeking to earn a living in America in scenes of: Chinese disembarking from ships in 1849 at the San Francisco waterfront; Chinese laborers on the Central Pacific Railroad in 1869; Chinese cigar makers in a San Francisco factory circa 1862; Chinese vineyard workers in Sonoma County, CA; Chinese roasting pigs in Nevada City, CA; a Chinese New Year celebration in San Francisco's Chinatown before the 1906 Earthquake; Chinese attending the Chinese Opera House in San Francisco's Chinatown; and the wonderful "Deadwood" mural of the two Chinese Champion Firehose Teams competing in the 1888 Fourth of July race in Deadwood, South Dakota.

As someone whose great-grandfather first arrived in the United States in the late 1800s before returning to China, I was emotionally drawn to these paintings that beautifully narrate the history of our roots in America. I think that anyone who self-identifies as a Chinese-American will find these illustrative paintings by Jake Lee to be fascinating in their educational context.

Sue Lee has been trying to find a venue on the east coast to showcase these treasures but so far has been unsuccessful. Ms. Lee even contacted President Obama's brother-in-law, Konrad Ng, who is the current Director of the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Program. Sadly, even the Smithsonian has shown no immediate interest.

The other four paintings now in a private collection are: Chinese shoemakers in an 1870 Massachusetts factory; Chinese working in a shrimp factory near San Francisco Bay in the 1880s; Chinese gold miners in the 1850s at the Mother Lode Country, CA; and Chinese lantern makers in San Francisco.



Vineyard Workers in Sonoma County

Chinese tending vineyards and orchards in Sonoma County.
Wine caves were dug in Limestone Hills.
華工於舊金山以北的索諾瑪縣， 撫育葡萄園和果園。
保存葡萄酒的酒窖皆由石灰岩山裡挖出來的。

About the artist Jake Lee (excerpted from booklet information provided by his relations, George and Mary Lee):

Born in Yon Tin Village on the eastern edge of Toi Shan City in Guang Dong Province, China in 1912. At the age of two, with his mother and elder sister, Mr. Lee arrived at San Francisco's Angel Island and settled in Monterey, CA at his father's store, On Lee Company. After relocating south with his family to the Chinatown in Pajaro, CA, Mr. Lee played on the football team at Watsonville High School and painted signs for the local shops. In 1934, after Mr. Lee's family lost everything in the 1932 fire that destroyed the Pajaro Chinatown, the family returned to China. However, Jake Lee remained and went on to study art at San Jose State College. Jake, who changed his name from "William" to have a more "distinctive" name, also found work in 1944 as a movie extra playing Japanese soldiers (since most of the Japanese-Americans were interned in POW "relocation" camps) in the many war movies that later became "classics." Jake, the artist, passed away in 1991 after a memorable artistic career.

Chinese Opera House, San Francisco,
Chinese Opera House in early Chinatown, this is a cultural heritage which has been preserved to this day.
早期唐人街的中國歌劇院。這寶貴的文化遺產，一直保存到今天。

About the Chinese Historical Society of America (CHSA), 965 Clay Street, San Francisco, CA (from its brochure):

Founded in 1963, CHSA is the oldest and largest organization in the country dedicated to the documentation, study, and presentation of Chinese-American history. Through exhibitions, publications, and educational, public programming, CHSA promotes the contributions and legacy of Chinese America.

(Note: All of the above photos are from the Chinese Historical Society of America Museum catalog, "Finding Jake Lee: The Paintings at Kan's.")

The Fate of Our Chinatowns – an ongoing conversation

(from Audrey Lee)

On May 30, 2012, I attended the screening of a vignette titled "House of Happiness" at the Washington, DC Chinatown Community Cultural Center (CCCC). This presentation, organized by the OCA-DC Chapter, the Chinese-American Citizens Alliance (C.A.C.A), and the 1882 Project, was initiated for the Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month of May 2012. The vignette was presented to kick-start a post-screening conversation on Washington, DC's Chinatown: its past, present, and future.

The 10-minute vignette was selected from the 60-80 minute vérité documentary (post production was scheduled to be completed in August) profiling residents living in DC's Chinatown. The filmmaker, Ms. Yi Chen, was born and raised in Shanghai, China, and is currently working on her project here. Her vignette from "House of Happiness" focuses on the Wah Luck House residents and their monthly bus trek to the Northern Virginia suburbs to shop at the Great Wall supermarket. Due to the dearth of grocery stores with fresh Asian vegetables in the DC area, residents of Wah Luck House have organized a bus that unfortunately can only seat 52 of the 246 participating residents. The rest must wait for their respective month (designated by floor) for a seat on the bus.

Ms. Yi Chen's idea for her documentary sprang from the July 2011 article by David Nakamura, "From Chinatown to Chinacorner," highlighting the plight of the Wah Luck House residents when the last Chinese fresh vegetable grocery store closed in DC Chinatown under pressure from the new "development" of Chinatown. Since 2009, the residents have been petitioning these developers for a grocery store.

In attendance at the presentation was a diverse, mostly Chinese-American, audience representing first and second generations who are actively engaged in the development of DC Chinatown, including a young lawyer in the DC Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs who is related to Tony Cheung (of the eponymous restaurant), the elderly residents of Wah Luck House, and young professionals who live in the new condominiums of Penn Quarter. Although I did not fit comfortably in any of these categories (older Third Generation), my interest is in the metamorphosis of Chinatowns in general.

The post-screening conversation started in earnest. I was at first awed by the emotionally-charged outpour from the audience as people expressed deep personal feelings regarding the current development of DC's Chinatown. Their comments/opinions included the fact that DC Chinatown started as a "ghetto" inhabited only by Cantonese-speaking immigrants who are not represented in the vignette; Wah Luck House is only a small part of Chinatown; the filmmaker should interview merchants on H Street; there are many younger generations who now live outside Chinatown but still return often to participate in activities such as the Wong People (Lion dancers); the film should address the larger more complex issues of the commercialization of DC Chinatown and the lack of small businesses now; and the storyline should be how DC Chinatown has changed, where it is going, and what needs to be done. The audience expressed overall concern that once DC Chinatown loses its function, then it is gone (except for the fact that the metro stop is called "Chinatown").

The second part of the Chinatown conversation series was held on June 27 at the Chinese Community Church in DC Chinatown. To kick-start the conversation, we listened to a tape of the National Public Radio (NPR) interview with Bonnie Tsui, the author of American Chinatown. In her book, Bonnie Tsui discusses five of our country's Chinatowns: New York City, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Honolulu, and Las Vegas, which has one of the newer Chinatowns that seemingly developed overnight when large numbers of visiting Chinese increasingly sought out Chinese restaurants. Historically, new generations continue to change the face of Chinatowns, as exemplified by San Francisco's Chinatown.

As Ms. Tsui discussed, San Francisco is our oldest Chinatown, which served as a portal for new arrivals. In the 1800s, Chinese laborers congregated in the area of San Francisco that became known as Chinatown. Dining facilities were established to primarily feed the many Chinese bachelors who lived there. After the 1906 earthquake destroyed the Chinatown area, the local authorities wanted to raze the buildings and make room for new development. However, the Chinese residents decided to rebuild Chinatown as a tourist destination. Buildings resembling pagodas and ballroom restaurants decorated with Chinese symbols sprang up. Thus, San Francisco's Chinatown was reinvented. Ms. Tsui noted that New York's Chinatown has also developed and expanded over the years, while other Chinatowns have dwindled in size as new urban development gradually consumed the older buildings.

During the group discussion, when asked why we come to Chinatowns, myriad responses included: where our family could be Chinese; and where we could shop for groceries before returning to our white [Caucasian] neighborhoods. Overall, the group consensus was that we wanted to keep our Chinatowns, if for no other reason than to be the touchstone to our heritage and identity.

My take-away from both parts of this ongoing conversation is what the attendees generally acknowledged: Chinatowns across not only this country, but also the world, serve as a "touchstone" for all Chinese-Americans. At some time in our busy lives, we all want to "touch" or "re-touch" Chinatown. Wherever we may travel, we instinctively seek out Chinatowns for their familiarity and, ultimately, as a key to our identity as Chinese-Americans. So, what is the impact on us when those Chinatowns cease to exist? That question and many others will be discussed in future conversations even as our Chinatowns continue to evolve.

More about the filmmaker, Yi Chen:
Ms. Yi Chen studied film at American University in Washington, DC. She is the recipient of TIVA-DC Peer Awards. Her short film "FL 324" has been screened at Our City Film Festival, the DC Independent Film Festival, the Heritage Film Festival, and the Falls Church Film Festival. Ms. Chen has worked on projects for PBS, National Geographic, the History Channel, Hillwood Museum, Link TV, and China Central Television. More information can be found on its official Facebook page: www.facebook.com/ChinatownProject.

Her "DC Chinatown Documentary Project" looks at the past, present, and future from the point of view of its residents. Ms. Chen asks that if OCAW e-newsletter readers would like to support the project, we can:

- "Like" the Facebook or updates;
- Watch additional interviews on YouTube; and
- Make a tax-deductible donation.

Taiwanese Aboriginal Dance presented at Camden Yards

(from Camilla Ng)

On Saturday, June 23, 2012, OCAW members Christina Chang and Camilla Ng, and Christina's daughter Kathie, participated with others in a Taiwanese Aboriginal Dance at Camden Yards, the home of the Baltimore Orioles baseball team. It was to celebrate the Washington Nationals vs. Baltimore Orioles baseball game, which was attended by special guests, Taiwanese Ambassador Jason C. Yuan and his wife Maggie Yuan. The dance was choreographed by the Fairfax Chinese Dance Troupe director Mrs. Chin-Siu Lee Choi and her daughter Stella Choi, and was performed before the game.

Ambassador Yuan and Baltimore Orioles Manager Buck Showalter then exchanged gifts on the field in front of all the attendees, and Ambassador Yuan threw out the traditional ceremonial "first pitch."

Camilla Ng (center) and dancers

Christina Chang and daughter Kathie

The occasion was related to the tradition of the Dragon Boat Festival. The following is a link to the event: http://mlb.mlb.com/cutfour/article.jsp?content_id=33845694

The Baltimore Orioles roster includes pitcher Wei-Yin Chen, and the Washington Nationals roster includes pitcher Chien-Ming Wang. Both pitchers are from Taiwan.

Dragon Boat Sticky Rice Gathering (Zongzi Wrap)

(from Camilla Ng)

The Maryland and Virginia Chapters' joint Dragon Boat Sticky Rice Gathering, or Zongzi Wrap, had a great turnout on Sunday, July 28, 2012, at Cathy and Dick Roberts' elegant and spacious home in Oakton, Virginia. Many hands helped to make this event a success.

Special thanks to Kit Poy and Kit Lee for not only leading the demo, but also for making home-brined salted egg yolks (see the recipe below). Maria Yang trimmed the fresh pork, and Patricia Fenn and her guest Angela helped to clean up.

We all had a fun time figuring out how to wrap zongzi in different styles – 4-corners or 5-corners, Taiwanese style or Cantonese style or Toisanese style. Lots of other delicious food was brought by attendees also, further adding to the convivial gathering.

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*C*athy Roberts surprised us with modeling an original creation, a designer sweater she had knitted. We were all very impressed by the craftsmanship and creativity. For those who would like to learn to knit or develop knitting skill, Cathy will be leading a monthly knitting group this fall. Many thanks to Cathy for hosting this enjoyable occasion!

Zongzi Wrap at the home of Cathy and Dick Roberts

(Editor's Note: Event and recipe photos were taken by Noreen Hom, Christina Wong Poy, Audrey Lee, Camilla Ng, and Dick Roberts.)

RECIPES

The following are recipes for Cantonese Zongzi, salted egg yolks, and coconut jello which were greatly enjoyed by the attendees at the Zongzi Wrap.

Recipe for Cantonese Zongzi

(from Camilla Ng)

Ingredients:

Glutinous rice, washed and soaked overnight; salt; oil
Salted pork, cut into 1-inch pieces (salt pork overnight, marinate with cooking wine and pepper; before wrapping, coat pork pieces in five-spice powder)
Split mung beans, cleaned and soaked overnight (may use black-eyed peas if preferred)
Chinese chestnuts (ready to eat), halved
Salted egg yolk, halved
Dried Shiitake mushrooms, soaked, stems removed; depending on size, may cut into halves or quarters; lightly stir-fried, seasoned with oyster sauce and oil
Shelled raw peanuts, soaked overnight, boiled 30 minutes
Chinese sausage, cut into 1-inch pieces
Dried baby shrimp, soaked an hour before wrapping
Optional country ham, cut into 1-inch pieces
Optional dried scallops, soaked and finely shredded
2 bundles bamboo leaves, soak and keep changing water for 3 days; scrub leaves to remove impurities and boil leaves in batches in large stock pot, 20 minutes each batch; then soak leaves again in cold water until water is clear. Keep leaves in water until ready to wrap.
Twine or raffia to tie

Directions:

1. Drain glutinous rice and place in a colander. Season with pinch of salt and tablespoon of oil, then mix.
2. Make a cone with two bamboo leaves, smooth sides in, then add a spoonful of rice. Make a depression in the middle of rice, then add a piece of pork, Chinese sausage, dried shrimp, ham, dried scallop shreds, chestnut, egg yolk, mushroom, peanuts, and a spoonful of split mung beans.
3. Cover mixture with more glutinous rice.
4. Fold over bamboo leaves to make a pyramid and secure with a piece of twine.
5. Add zongzi to boiling water and cook for at least 2-1/2 hours.

Rice will soak up water in pot. Keep adding boiling water to pot to keep the heat constant.
The number of bamboo leaves used depends on wrapping method and size of leaves. Minimum 2 leaves per zongzi, may use as much as 6 leaves.

Recipe for Salted Egg Yolks

(from Kit Poy)

Ingredients:

1-1/2 cups rock salt
4 cups water – fresh
12 large eggs – fresh, preferably duck eggs

Directions:

Bring water and rock salt to a boil then let it cool.
Place eggs in a crock or glass jar.
Pour the cooled salt-water over eggs to cover. Do not use brine that is still warm.
Cover crock and let stand in a cool place (not refrigerator) for three weeks.
Remove eggs from salt bath and store them in the refrigerator if not ready to use immediately.
Yolks should be a bright yellow-orange color and quite firm.
The white should be slightly cloudy and still runny.
Eggs without a firm yolk should be discarded.
To hard cook, cover with fresh cold water and simmer for 20 minutes.
Shell and quarter.
Serve with hot rice or congee.
Makes 12 salted eggs.

Recipe for Coconut Jello

(from Binh Flaherty)

Ingredients:

6 cups of water, or 1 or 2 percent milk
1 cup of sugar, more if you like a sweeter taste
1 package of 10g Jelly powder
2 packages of Chao Thai brand coconut cream powder (I prefer the CHAOKOH coconut milk powder, if you can find it)

(Note: This jello can also be made with agar agar if you can find it in the store.)

Directions:

Mix the Jelly powder and coconut cream/milk powder together in a dried bowl.
Bring the water or milk to a boil, add in the sugar, and stir well; taste and adjust to the desired sweetness.
Lower the heat to simmer.
Sprinkle the powder mixture in the simmering water (or milk) and stir well and thoroughly for 5 to 10 minutes to make sure there are no lumps.
Remove from heat and pour into a container.
Wait for the jello to cool down and then refrigerate.

Hong Kong Film Fest

(from Camilla Ng)

OCAW Chapter members attended the Hong Kong film fest at the Smithsonian Institution's Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, three Friday evenings in July and August. For some of us who hailed from Hong Kong, it was a rare treat to watch these Hong Kong classics from the 1970s and 1980s: "Rouge," "An Autumn Tale," and "Killer Clan." Hong Kong film had reached global fame and had had great influence on the Hollywood film industry for many years.

After the movies, the group went for a late dinner, trying out new restaurants nearby. Thus far, our favorites are Ming's in Chinatown and Banana Leaves in Dupont Circle.

Lucia di Lammermoor

(from Camilla Ng)

On Sunday, August 12, 2012, many Virginia and Maryland Chapter members and friends attended Opera International's program, Gaetano Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, at The Music Center at Strathmore. Congratulations and thank you to Muriel (Mimi) Hom, the opera producer-director, for bringing us another great opera experience. Mimi has been tirelessly bringing us great music every year since 1994.

The opera was well attended. The famous mad scene aria in the third act was exquisitely performed by Jessica Stecklein, the lyric coloratura soprano, not only in her singing but also in her beautiful acting as the tragic Lucia.

The Maryland Chapter donated 11 opera tickets to area Asian American nonprofit groups as community outreach. Youths and their mentors from AALEAD, the Chinese Community Church, and LIFE & Discovery (of Frederick, Maryland) participated in this grassroots program. The youths' spontaneous response to the opera and their appreciation was delightful and gratifying.

(Editor's Note: Writings by the youths appear above under the "Opera International" section. Please also see a group photo there.)

Upcoming Event

(from Camilla Ng)

Coming in November, the joint chapters will sponsor a fengshui lecture by fengshui master Khadro Crystal Chu of the Yun Lin Temple. Maria Yang is instrumental in bringing us this enlightened spiritual leader who will be visiting Washington, DC for the first time. We plan to offer this lecture as a community program that is open to the public.

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Editor's Note: Many of you had commented on the adorable pictures of Freddie (in the blue jacket) and Scamper (red jacket) which appeared in the November 2010 OCAW e-newsletter. Their owners were Christina Wong Poy, past President and current Treasurer of the Maryland Chapter, and Pam Wong, active member of the Maryland Chapter. Freddie was OCAW-MD's model for the blue Mandarin dog jacket which was for sale at the Reston (Virginia) Pet Fiesta in 2010, the proceeds of which went in part to a local pet rescue organization. Scamper was an OCAW-MD model on the OCAW website.

Regrettably, both Freddie and Scamper recently passed away, and we would like to extend our condolences to Christina and Pam.

News from the New Orleans Chapter

(from Betty Butz, President)

Chinese School 35th Anniversary Celebration

The New Orleans Academy of Chinese Studies celebrated its 35th anniversary on the last weekend of August 2012 at Lakeside Mall, a popular shopping center in the suburb of Metairie, Louisiana.

Students and members of the Academy performed on center stage in the mall. There was dancing, music, singing, and speeches to celebrate the joyous occasion. Booths were set up for students to interact with visitors by explaining traditional Chinese crafts and calligraphy. Classroom activities and student compositions from each grade were also on display.

Betty Butz, Nancy Chung, Yvonne Louie, Guiqin Xiong, Tina Soong, Lingyan Shu, and Taichen Ho

The enclosed pictures show members of OCAW enjoying the day at the event. At least six members volunteer to teach and work at the Academy, which is housed on the campus of Tulane University. Members were thankful to Principal Jing Hu for her efforts in staging the celebration, as well as her untiring dedication to the operation of the school.

Mangjee Yeh, Li Lee Chen, Betty Butz, and Nancy Chung

Guiqin Xiong leading a taiji dance performance with members of the New Orleans Academy of Chinese Studies

(left side) Tina Soong, Lingyan Shu, and Taiji dance performers with Guiqin Xiong
(right side) Betty Butz, Mangjee Yeh, Jing Hu (Principal), Li Li, and Nancy Chung

Eye of Isaac

(Editor's Note: The following essay was written by Betty on August 31, 2012, about Hurricane Isaac. It gives insight into the views of residents of New Orleans and other affected areas. Our thoughts are with these communities.)

On Tuesday, August 28, 2012, seven years after Hurricane Katrina visited upon the City of New Orleans, Hurricane Isaac bore down on Houma, a bayou town about 50 miles west of New Orleans. Several days earlier, the New Orleans Academy of Chinese Studies had celebrated its 35th anniversary with song, dance, music, and an exhibit at Lakeside Mall in Metairie. The city was calm, for Isaac was not expected to pass anywhere nearby. Then, the weather changed. Isaac stalled in the Gulf of Mexico, took on a huge amount of moisture, and strengthened into a lumbering, monstrous system stretching from Miami to well west of New Orleans.

After seven years of recovery work, the City of New Orleans was protected by $10 billion worth of improved levees, flood gates, powerful pumps, experienced personnel, and better crisis management. The mayor recommended that citizens shelter in place, but buses were provided to help folks who wanted to leave town

as well. My family decided to stay put. We were ready for several days of rain, 100 mile per hour winds, candlelight dinners, strolls in the squall, finding our way in the dark... It was also a good time to clean out the refrigerator.

Power has been restored to my neighborhood, although most of the city is not so fortunate yet. The two strong men in my life cleaned up the gardens and then helped the neighbors to pick up sticks and pile up debris. The cleanup crew from the neighborhood association started working at the crack of dawn to make this place neat. When my keyboard finally dries out from excessive humidity in the house, it will be a pleasure to write again.

There are terrible images being broadcast on television repeatedly. I think it is less scary to just read about the bad news once. There is flooding to the south, about 15 miles away, because a back levee was built improperly. Part of the levee is being undone to let water out of the flooded areas. There is flooding on the far shores of Lake Pontchartrain due to heavy rainfall and strong winds that pushed the water up on land. Several thousand people were evacuated by the military because they did not heed a mandatory evacuation order in time.

Some of my friends have evacuated to the north. They may need to extend their Labor Day holiday because some returning routes are blocked with mud from flooding and fallen tree limbs. A dam in Mississippi near the Louisiana state line is being opened so that water can be released in a controlled manner to limit damage.

I am grateful for the serenity of this island-like place behind the levees and floodgates, the walls of the community, the freedom within my own little place of tranquility. I wonder if it is a similar feeling shared by my ancestors who found solace behind the Great Wall, the village walls, the family compound walls, and doors resting on elevated doorjambs. I have the added comfort of the support of my far-away friends. It is a blessing to be able to let you know that I have accumulated another season of wisdom. Tonight, I shall check on my night-blooming cereus plant and contemplate the relationship between the fullness of the moon and the opening of the flowers.

Cereus Plant

Betty submitted this photo of a night-blooming cereus which she took on September 1, 2012, one night after a full moon. She harvests the flowers after they bloom at about 10 p.m., then she uses matches to sear the ends of the stems to seal in the juice. The flowers emit a very sweet scent that perfumes the room all night.

She keeps the flowers chilled until she wants to use one for a beverage. She rinses off the pollen, slices up the rest, and pours boiling water over it and drinks it as tea. Its smoothie texture lubricates her throat.

News from the Silicon Valley Chapter

(from Alice Chiou, President)

Annual Officers Installation, Scholarship Award Presentation, and Fashion and Talent Show

The Silicon Valley Chapter held its 26th Annual Officers Installation, Scholarship Award Presentation, and Fashion and Talent Show on Sunday, July 22, 2012 at the Quinlan Center in Cupertino, California. This year the theme was "Going Tropical."

The program started with the Officers Installation and Scholarship Award Presentation, and it ended with the Fashion and Talent Show.

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Talent Show

The Talent Show included a drum performance, a kung-fu fan dance, a saxophone duet, an a cappella singing group, a string quartet, and the Hawaiian dance “Hukilau.”

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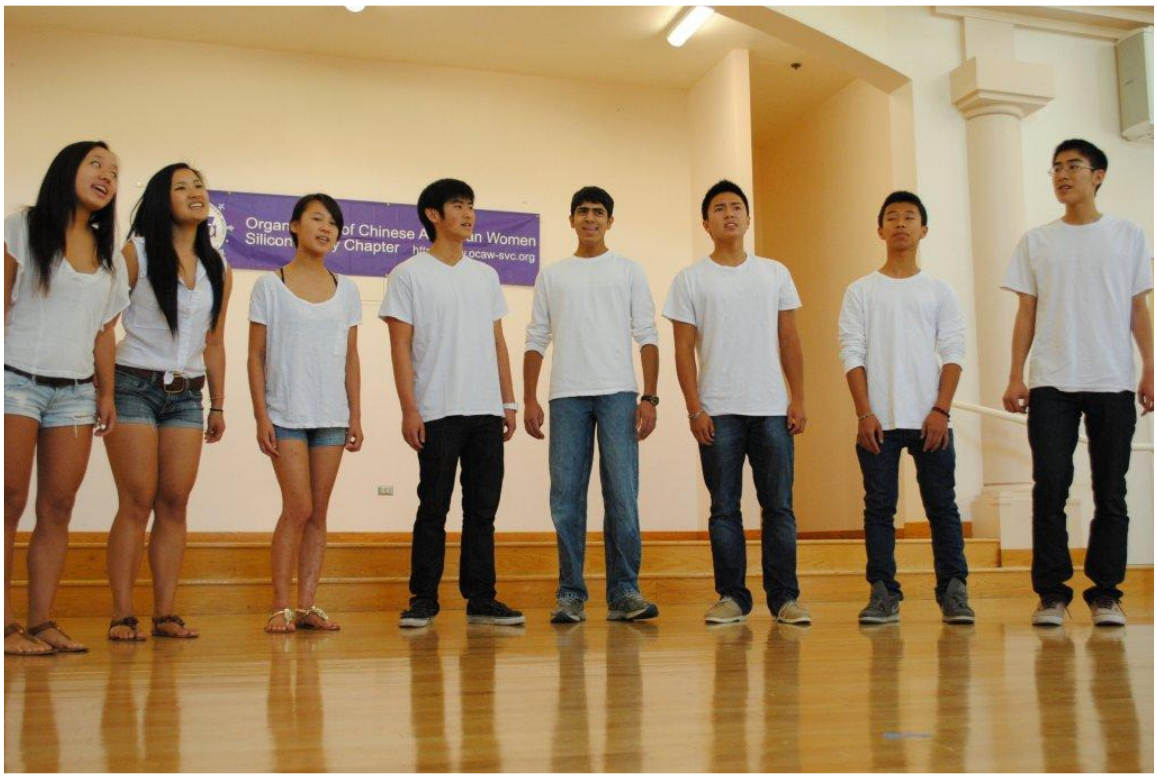

Organization of Chinese American Women
Silicon Valley Chapter http://www.ocaw-svc.org

One special feature of this year's Fashion Show was that four of the adult models were past OCAW-SVC presidents. They were Cynthia Chang (1991-1993, 2005-2007), Katy Wang (1994-1995), Ai-Chu Wang (2002-2003), and Monica Hsiao (2009-2011). We were also pleased that five other former presidents attended the event: Chia-Huei Chen (1990-1991), Jean Chen (1993-1994), Moli Lee (1996-1997), Tracy Lee (2004-2005), and Yura Shieu (2007-2009). With Alice Chiou, current president of 2011-2013, we had ten OCAW-SVC presidents at the event. It was evidence of the continuous support for this wonderful organization.

News from the Hawaii Chapter

(from Sandy Young, President)

Chinese Model Mother and Father of the Year Banquet

The Chinese Model Mother and Father of the Year Banquet held at the Empress Restaurant in Chinatown was a huge success. The food was outstanding, the entertainment was excellent, and about a thousand people attended. We were especially proud that one of our members, Mrs. Kathleen Wong, was the 2012 recipient of this honor. *(Editor's Note: See the June 2012 OCAW e-newsletter.)* Local press and television covered the banquet as well as a national television group.

Upcoming Event

We are in the final planning stages of our annual Christmas Brunch at the Oahu Country Club on December 2, 2012. Our new OCAW officers for 2013 will be installed at this classy affair, and we will have a scrumptious brunch and enjoyable entertainment.

General Articles and Items of Potential Interest to Members

(from Faith Breen)

Faith thought that this *New York Times* article might be of interest to OCAW members. She feels it addresses many of the issues we will need to confront.

As China Ages, Beijing Turns to Morality Tales to Spur Filial Devotion

by Andrew Jacobs and Adam Century
The New York Times
September 5, 2012

BEIJING – Reading it now, six centuries after Guo Jujing wrote this paean to parental devotion, "The 24 Paragons of Filial Piety" comes off as a collection of scary bedtime stories. There is the woman who cut out her own liver to feed her sick mother, the boy who sat awake shirtless all night to draw mosquitoes away from his slumbering parents, and the man who sold himself into servitude to pay for a father's funeral.

While the parables are even more familiar to most Chinese than Grimms' Fairy Tales are to Americans – the text remains a mainstay of educational curriculum here – they have understandably lost much of their motivational punch.

But when the government, in an effort to address the book's glaring obsolescence, issued an updated version last month in the hope that the book would encourage more Chinese to turn away from their increasingly self-centered ways and perhaps phone home once in a while, it wasn't quite prepared for the backlash.

Compared with its predecessor, the new book brims with down-to-earth suggestions for keeping parents happy in their golden years. Readers are urged to teach them how to surf the Internet, take Mom to a classic film, and buy health insurance for retired parents.

"Family is the nucleus of society," intoned Cui Shuhui, the director of the All-China Women's Federation, which, along with the China National Committee on Aging, published the new guidelines after two years of interviews with older Chinese. "We need family in order to advance Chinese society and improve our economic situation."

So far, those good intentions appear to have prompted mostly ridicule. But they have also unintentionally kicked up a debate on whether the government, not overextended children, should be looking after China's ballooning population of retirees.

In a fast-aging nation where hundreds of millions of people have left their former homes in the countryside in search of jobs, "The New 24 Paragons of Filial Piety" strikes many as nearly as out of touch with the problems of modern China as the old parables.

Take, for example, the responsibility to "take one's parents traveling frequently." While feasible for successful professionals, the obligation is all but impossible for working people, especially the nation's roughly 252 million migrant workers, few of whom have ever experienced the joys of leisure travel.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics, their numbers are rising 4.4 percent annually, meaning that nearly 11 million rural migrants arrived in Chinese cities last year alone – and most likely left their aging parents behind.

Zhang Yang, a fruit vendor in Beijing, scoffed at the suggestion that he should take his parents on vacation, noting that he rarely stops working or has time to visit them in their hometown in Henan Province, roughly 400 miles south of the capital.

"One time I didn't get to go home for four years," he said sheepishly. "Business here is good, but I feel guilty for not being with my parents."

Li Ji, a popular columnist at the state-run Legal Daily newspaper, lashed out at the new guidelines, arguing that they would not be necessary if the government provided better care for its citizens. "If the national health insurance was up to par, children wouldn't have to worry so much about their parents' health, and if companies were required to provide a certain number of vacation days, children would be able to go home more often," he wrote.

Despite the demands of an increasingly fast-paced society, the Confucian idea of filial devotion is deeply embedded in Chinese society. Tradition dictates that children live with their parents and care for them in their old age, a convention that historically provided a safety net.

But the custom is rapidly fraying as children struggle with the logistical and financial burdens of caring for their aged parents.

This has proved particularly challenging in recent years to the huge numbers of only children born after the introduction of strict family-planning rules in the late 1970s. One result, demographers say, is a skyrocketing number of so-called empty nests filled by older people who live alone while their children build their own roosts in distant cities.

According to the Ministry of Civil Affairs, empty nests now account for more than 50 percent of all Chinese households; in some urban areas the figure has reached 70 percent. A 2011 report by the official Xinhua news agency said that nearly half of the 185 million people age 60 and older live apart from their children – a phenomenon unheard of a generation ago.

Like many young Chinese, Chen Xuena, who works for a public relations company in Beijing, said she was torn between chasing a career and tending to her parents in far-off Zhejiang Province.

"Every time I visit home I see signs that my parents are getting older, and it really brings me down," said Ms. Chen, sitting at one of the capital's coffee bars. "But once you get used to the opportunities and culture of Beijing, it's hard to leave."

Such angst will only continue to grow, and not just because China still lacks a meaningful social safety net for the elderly. Demographers estimate that the population of those over 60 will triple before 2050; around the same time, projections show the median age of Chinese will be higher than that of Americans, but with perhaps one-third of the average income, adjusted for the cost of living.

Such figures help explain the sense of urgency that is beginning to grip the governing Communist Party. Last year, in an attempt to ease the impact from so much atomized living, the National People's Congress, China's legislature, proposed a law that obliges sons and daughters to "return home to visit their parents frequently."

The legislation would enable neglected parents to sue their children for infractions, though the vagueness of the law – it does not spell out the frequency of visits – has raised some doubts about its enforceability.

"The New 24 Paragons of Filial Piety," despite its ham-handedness, tries to address the root causes of loneliness.

It urges children to throw their parents a birthday party each year and listen attentively to their stories from the past. It even asks that children help widowed parents remarry, a task that some parents found objectionable.

"I would be really embarrassed if my son tried to help me remarry," said Xu Zhihao, a retiree who was sunning himself with friends in a Beijing park on Wednesday. "That's not part of Chinese tradition."