My appreciation is extended once again to all who submitted material for this issue. I would also like to give thanks, as usual, to my husband Ed for the photo preparation work.

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

I would like to wish everyone a wonderful summer break. If you are traveling or are just staying home and relaxing, enjoy and be safe!

**Opera International**

*from Muriel Hom*

Plans are underway for The Macau Youth Orchestra to come to the United States to perform at the Terrace Theater of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. The concert is scheduled for Thursday, August 29, 2013, the week before the Labor Day weekend.

Admission is free and tickets are available through OCAW, Opera International. OCAW has been asked to sponsor this program as a Cultural Exchange. The Macau Foundation will be responsible for all expenses. Contact person: Wing-chi Chan.

For further information, email: operainternational@gmail.com, or call Muriel Hom at 301/365-3479.

**Closing on the OCAW History Book and Moving Forward**

*from Puanani Woo*

June 12, 2013

Dear OCAW Sisters:

I have several messages to share.

**First**, launching of the book, *HISTORY of the ORGANIZATION of CHINESE AMERICAN WOMEN, 1977-2009*, held at the beautiful historic home of *Stuart and Ambassador Julia Chang Bloch*, on Thursday, May 30, 2013 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., was a magnificent affair.

**Rosetta Lai** and the **interns of the US-China Education Trust (USCET)** helped put it all together with grace and beauty. *Corinna Shen*, owner of the Seven Seas Restaurant in Rockville, Maryland, catered the food, which was a scrumptious buffet dinner of Asian-European-American fare for about 80-90 mostly female attendees.
Pauline Tsui was busy autographing books and greeting people. Lokelani Parker of Redmond, Washington, assisted with sales of the books and other spur-of-the-moment requests. Yeu-Tsu Margaret Lee, M.D. of Hawaii and Lily Lee Chen of Los Angeles, were on hand to help.

Serendipity: To launch OCAW’s beginnings, Stuart and Ambassador Bloch had rooted the organization by holding a successful and fun auction in their beautiful home. In closing OCAW’s first era, they opened their home for the book launch. And in the intervening years, they provided retail office space when needed. Can one beat this sequential uplift?

Besides Stuart, I’d like to acknowledge the support of T.L. Tsui for Pauline, Bob Jew for Jeanie, and Chip Breen for Faith. These couples are neighbors. I don’t know the spouses or significant others of the other National leaders, but I am certain they supported the woman in their life – Lily Lee Chen, Lily K. Lai, Nancy Linn Patton, Katherine Chang Dress, Ruby G. Moy, and Rosetta Lai.

Secondly, calligraphy. Oops! I’ve been perpetuating the wrong Chinese writing that represents ‘when drinking water remember the Source,’ since the September 2011 e-newsletter.

Cynthia Chang, of SVC, graciously called this error to my attention in an email to me dated Wednesday, September 25, 2012. I willy-nilly ignored her because I was engrossed with developing the book. I knew that I would, in time, correct myself with her.
Cynthia is a keystone in SVC from its beginnings in the 1980s to the present, a past Chapter president, and multi-talented, and she is studying and learning to write Chinese writing we commonly call ‘calligraphy.’

In mid-April 2013 when the book was at the printer and thus out of my hands, I started to think about thanking Cynthia belatedly, 7 months late, for the first time.

Then in a late April 2013 email, Dr. Lungching Chiao graciously emailed me to call that same error to my attention. As one of the writers for the book, she had only just received the e-newsletter. She is a scholar of note and a top administrator in the Education and Science Society/Support Education in Rural China (ESS/SERC) organization. Read about her and ESS/SERC starting on page 81 of the book.

I humbly thanked both of them for correcting me, and we entered into frequent emails on how great ideas to live by, generic to most human cultures, are expressed by the Chinese in beautiful, artistic writing.

Cynthia and Lungching sent me samples of the correct way to write ‘when drinking water remember the Source.’

Lungching said, “Use Cynthia’s calligraphy sample to show the correct way.” When I looked at all the samples, handwritten and computer-generated horizontals and verticals, I lacked the confidence to present Cynthia’s correct sample, so I’ve decided to leave it as is.

Lungching and Cynthia will try to find time to write about Chinese writing in future e-newsletters. Lungching will also try to write more about the ESS/SERC programs and how the OCAW National Board of Directors and/or Chapters can support the organization and effect positive outcomes.

Thirdly, calligraphy, yes, but we did not use it in the book.

- Jeanie Jew submitted her FOREWORD with the Chinese writing written by a calligrapher for Lao-tzu’s “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step” and also wrote the Chinese writing for her name.
• In her story starting on page 15 of the book, Josephine Lo, Esq. submitted the calligraphy for the ‘three Chinese canons’ that propelled her forward:
  Diligence compensates for defects.
  Set the bar one notch beyond your reach.
  It’s not all about me.

• Dr. Lily K. Lai, who wrote the longest story starting on page 42, submitted a short news release in Chinese from a Taiwan newspaper that was interpreted in English.

Pauline and I agonized over having calligraphy in the book or not. After careful consideration and with sorrow, we decided on the latter, and that any calligraphy in the book would be for the name of OCAW. The exception is that we were not able to edit out the Chinese writing of the 15 provinces/municipalities in Table 1 on page 81 of Lungching’s story.

Sincerely yours,

Puanani Woo
Project Director

(Editor’s Note: Warmest congratulations to Pauline and Puanani! Kudos to Pauline for her persistence in advocating for her dream of a history book, and for her hard work in effecting that dream. And huge props to Puanani for stepping up and taking the helm as Project Director for this very challenging task. Her efforts and dedication have been tremendous, and without her, there simply would *be* no book!)

News from the Maryland Chapter

(Editor’s Note: I would like to acknowledge that in the April issue of the e-newsletter, the photos that appeared in the article, “Celebrating the Year of the Snake with a Lantern Festival Dumpling Party,” were taken by Hong-yee Chiu. Thank you, Hong-yee!)
Chinese and Western Poetry

(from the OCAW Maryland Board and Dr. Hong-yee Chiu)

On Sunday, April 21, 2013, the OCAW Maryland Chapter held a program on “Chinese and Western Poetry” at the home of Lu Ming and Wesley Wang in Potomac, Maryland. The speaker was Hong-Yee Chiu, Ph.D. Cornell University, the world renowned Goddard Space Flight Center space scientist who is credited with the coinage of the word “quasar.” In addition to over 130 scientific papers and books, Dr. Chiu had written many popular science articles and literary works. In his retirement, he is now a free-lance writer, and has authored several books. The most recent ones are The Real China, War Among Gods and Men, Literature and Science (a collection of essays), and Bilingual Introduction to Chinese and Western Poetry.

Dr. Chiu began the program speaking about the universality of poetry. He pointed out that even in primitive societies, people have music, and the lyrics of the songs they sing are their poetry. The Chinese language has two unique characteristics: the use of individual characters (pictographs) instead of alphabets, and the abundance of homophones. The use of pictographs gives a sense of beauty of symmetry; many ancient poems were composed of verses using pairs of four- to seven-character phrases. Predominantly, though, the lines were usually arranged in pairs of four characters or six characters, and often four-six pairs were used. (A “four-six” pair is a line of poetry consisting of a phrase of 4 characters followed by a phrase of 6 characters.) The abundance of homophones gives rise to a rich mine of rhymes not matched by Western languages.
However, poetry is not an assembly of rhymed verses; poetry is an art form of speech or expression. Poetry condenses complex human thoughts, emotions, and feelings into a combination of verses. These characteristics are shared by both Chinese and Western poetries.

The first Chinese poetry was the Book of Poetry. It was compiled from folklore between 1000 BCE and probably 500 BCE during the Zhou Dynasty (1046-225 BCE). Unfortunately only the lyrics were preserved and the music, presumably preserved in a classic Book of Music, was irrevocably lost. The poems in Book of Poetry are largely composed in four-character formats. Many poems describe the hard lives during the Zhou Dynasty. Here is a poem about the hardship of an old seamstress (English translation):

In a pair of straw sandals tied with linen string, she treads on frosted ground.  
Though her hands are withered, she can still sew fancy dresses  
The sleeves and the collar fitted, she delivers to the mistress  
The mistress complains and frowns, that the new dress does not fit, she turns her body around, flashing to the side,  
She then takes an ivory hair clasp and puts it on her hair. She is so bigoted, that I compose this song to satirize her.

Dr. Chiu presented a parallel poem, “The Shirt Song,” by Thomas Hood (1799-1845). It reflects a period of similar conditions.

_The Shirt Song_
by Thomas Hood

With fingers weary and worn,  
With eyelids heavy and red,  
A woman sat, in unwomanly rags,  
Plying her needle and thread –  
Stitch! Stitch! Stitch!  
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,  
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch  
She sang the “Song of the Shirt.”

Dr. Chiu used numerous examples to demonstrate the beauty of poetry in both Western and Chinese forms, although the main focus of the talk was on Chinese poetry. The presentation was bilingual, with English translations to demonstrate the evolution of Chinese poetry. Chinese poetry often becomes lyrics of popular songs. Poetry and songs are almost inseparable. In ancient China, poems used to be sung, called “yin shi.” In the earliest Western tradition, the ancient Greeks sang poems accompanied by four-stringed Greek lutes. Ancient Chinese used chimes (bian zhong) or 7-stringed harps. To illustrate this, Dr. Chiu selected a song, “Sorrow of the Red Beans,” from one of the greatest Chinese novels, The Dreams of the Red Chamber (a Qing Dynasty novel by Tsao Xueqin). Tenor Hong-fa Chu sang the song, accompanied on the piano by Muriel (Mimi) Hom, the Producer-Director of Opera International. This powerful piece of music is so popular that it is sung by Jose Carreras in Chinese with remarkably accurate enunciation and pronunciation.

The “Sorrow of the Red Beans” is based on a folklore story of a grieving young woman whose husband was drafted into the army. In his absence, the young woman went to a hill, longed for him, and wept. Her sorrow was so great that she cried tears and blood. When her red tears dropped to the ground, they became the seeds of the tree that bears the beautiful red beans. Ever since, the red beans have become symbols of love or lovesickness. This red bean, botanical name *ormosia, ormosia hosiei*, grows in the subtropical climate of Fujian and Guangdong. Common name: love pea; love token.
Tenor Hong-fa Chu singing “Sorrow of the Red Beans,” accompanied by pianist Muriel Hom

The program continued with our gracious host Wesley Wang reciting two poems. Wesley is a poet who is an IT specialist at the National Institutes of Health and a tennis coach. The first poem, “The Amazing Beauty of Autumn Fan,” captures the longing of a distant homeland. The second poem, “An Elegy to Dead Hogs in Yangtze River,” is a satire of the recent dumping of dead hogs in the Yangtze River. The recitation was accompanied on the yeh-hu by the famous composer Dr. Chien-Tai Chen.

**The Amazing Beauty of Autumn Fan**
by Wesley Wang

Imagine if we can,
Yesteryear's autumn fan,
Morphed to the singing of cicadas?
With moments in grasping span,
Out it came, the nature sang.
Gallantly it sprinkles the coda of Summer Finale.
Free to compose, free to arrange,
I waved the fan, and waved the fan.
In a trance, my spirit seemed to return to my homeland,
Where I've never been then.
Timidly I have nostalgia of my homeland,
And the longing of mother really caused pain...
Can't hide the ink painting on the back of the fan,
Upon it, yet the chill autumn wind blowing hard –
Sprinkling the ground, the withering golden leaves pan.

I am amazed at the beauty of your *ad lib* poetry, my friend –
a serenade.
Like the drizzling in rural Southern China, my homeland,
Quietly they fell, in tiny drops, they danced,
Onto the pale blue porcelain plate of the late ancient Ming, as it ends.

Poet Wesley Wang reciting “The Amazing Beauty of Autumn Fan,”
accompanied on the yeh-hu by Dr. Chien-Tai Chen
An Elegy to Dead Hogs in Yangtze River
by Wesley Wang  (recited by Camilla Ng)

Papa Hog made me, Mama Hog raised me; born in JiaXing, serene and happy.
Conditions worsened, environments polluted; with many diseases, life turned deadly.
Fixes not easy, law not obeyed; too expensive to bury, just dump the heck of it.
Reckless farmers have no constraints; incompetent officials pay no heed.
Innocent Huang Pu (1) carries the blame; 70,000 dead hogs flow down the stream.
Not too late to fix, yet nothing has been completed.
Fetching dead hogs from the River has nothing redeemed.
Old ways prevailed, but worsen this year.
Money making comes first, competition is keen.
Inflation getting worse, the profit margin lean.
Hard to keep up the 8%, only remedy is to defy the law.
Congeners harm each other, my heart grows dim.
Watching it across the Ocean, more and more I grieve.

How can I cast off my sorrow?  Booze is my relief.
Offering my deep concerns, but unable offering help for keep.
Laying down my spiritual spear, I compose this elegy.
The Elegy I'm singing, my grief deepens more; it seems.
Born on the year of hog (2), I pity my brethren indeed.
An old hog as I am, born humbly a mountain pig.
Rising early and sleeping late, I learned and studied hard,
From books and any knowledge sit,
Poetry and literature are all my expertise.
Three thousand miles away from sea,
Dead hogs abounding float down the stream.
My conscience suffers, I cannot eat nor sleep.
What a sad feeling!  What a deadly scene!
“Bright Moon, Fewer stars; Crows fly South.”
These are verses from Cao Cao (3), my favorite ancient poet.
“Dark Night, High Wind; Hogs float East.”
These are my verses, I’m trying to compete.

EPA claims:  The water quality is safe indeed.
Even that’s what they said, do you really believe?
The lives of people are worth the straws in waste,
How could the hogs fare better here?
Shanghai, “The Pearl of the Orient,” a well known slogan.
Now comes the homophone – “The Hog of the Orient.”
Hog and Pearl are homophone in Chinese.
So pardon me please, shall we call the contaminated water “spare rib soup?”

Ancient proverb says,
“Hang dead cats on trees, dump dead hogs into sea.”
The dictum they followed, wise or stupid?

Blind obedience is pitiful,
The misbehavior a deplorable sin;
Stupidity is laughable,
Yet mindset to be killed!
Born a JiaXing hog, die a Yangtze ghost.
Unable to secure residence permit alive,
I obtain it as a soul. (4)

Win some and lose some; God is truly fair.
Alas! Sadness is on me! Woe as well be!
With such severe sadness, into the River I plunge!

NOTES
1. Huang Pu, which flows through Shanghai, is a tributary of the Yangtze River.
2. The Chinese zodiac of the writer Wesley is the hog.
3. Cao Cao (155 AD-220 AD) was a major warlord during the Three Kingdoms era (end of the Han Dynasty), and his posthumous title was Emperor Wei-Wu. He was a great politician as well as a great literatus.
4. In current China, people have limited freedom to change residency. Once someone is born in a rural area, he/she is a rural resident for life. If the individual moves to the city, he/she will be a “Black household” without papers.

The added bonus was a short music appreciation discussion of contemporary Chinese music by Dr. Chen. He demonstrated the adaptation of the Western violin to Chinese music by adjusting the violin pegs. Dr. Chen also demonstrated the difference in sound quality of two traditional Chinese two-stringed instruments, the er-hu and the yeh-hu.
From poetry to music, it was an afternoon of cultural education, one that we seldom have an opportunity to indulge in – one that brings us to rediscover the rich heritage of both Chinese and Western culture.

Hong-fa Chu, Camilla Ng, Muriel Hom, Wesley Wang, Hong-yee Chiu, and Chien-Tai Chen

(Editor’s Note: Photos were taken by Camilla Ng and Lu Ming.)

(Editor’s Note: Camilla wishes to credit both Henriette Levy and Hong-yee Chiu for working on English and Chinese translations of this article.)
The annual Dragon Boat Festival Race is held in Washington, D.C. in May. An article about Maryland Chapter members’ participation in the 2013 race will appear in the next e-newsletter.

In the meantime, as a preview, the following is a photo of Team APEX, which included chapter members.
Families with Children from China Picnic
(from Rosemary Hsu-Brooks)

On Sunday, May 5, 2013 at noon, the OCAW Virginia and Maryland Chapters held the annual Families with Children from China picnic at Nottaway Park in Vienna, Virginia. We all contributed to the food, but dedicated OCAW members and spouses came early to start up the grill for barbecued chicken, pork ribs, hot dogs, and hamburgers. I'm sure the aroma from our barbecue was the envy of everyone at the park!

Side dishes included noodles and dumplings of all kinds, Chinese and American vegetables, and an array of desserts, including hot red bean “porridge.” The more adventurous of us played horseshoe/bean bag toss among our cheering fans.

I met an FCC couple with their 8-year-old daughter whom they adopted a few years ago. They explained that
they were “older” parents and were barely keeping up with their very active child. They were glad to have her learn some Chinese customs and experience authentic food.

Though it was a bit chilly, the sun shone, and everyone enjoyed catching up with others’ lives, while meeting friends and relatives of OCAW members.

**Hepatitis B Gala Dinner**

*(from Veronica Li, Secretary)*

The OCAW Virginia Chapter sponsored a table at the Hepatitis B gala dinner, held on Friday, May 17, 2013, at the China Garden restaurant in Northern Virginia. Chapter President Connie Wong sponsored another table. More than 300 people attended. The event was to raise funds and honor dedicated individuals who have contributed to the cause of eradicating hepatitis B. The disease is a silent epidemic among the Asian American and Pacific Islander community. Although AAPIs make up only 5 percent of the U.S. population, they account for 50 percent of hepatitis B infections. If untreated, the disease can cause liver cancer.

Thanks to the hard work of activists, the disease has finally caught the attention of high-level officials. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has declared May National Awareness Month. In Virginia, Delegate Mark Keam recently introduced a bill that designates May 19th as Hepatitis B Awareness Day in Virginia. The Virginia House of Delegates unanimously passed the bill. Mr. Keam was a guest speaker at the dinner.

Jane Pan, Executive Director of Hepatitis B Initiative of Washington, D.C., presented awards to ten doctors who have volunteered their time to help screen 2,100 individuals and administer 550 vaccines over the past two years. Jane was also honored for her passion and commitment. Her tireless efforts at writing grant proposals and organizing projects and outreach have advanced the cause to its present state. The OCAW tables clapped and cheered for Jane, a longtime member and former chapter president.

Tribute was also paid to Max Wong, the late spouse of Connie Wong. He was a dedicated volunteer who passed away from hepatitis B last year.

The keynote speaker was Dr. J. Nadine Gracia, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Minority Health and the Director of Minority Health at the Department of Health and Human Services. She talked about the need to eliminate inequities in health care for minority groups and diseases that affect them, such as hepatitis B.

**News from the New Orleans Chapter**

*(from Betty Butz, President)*

**Nanchang University Performance**

Twenty students and teachers from the Nanchang University of Jiangxi Province, China, visited our city in April and gave a spectacular performance of dance, song, and music at Xavier University of Louisiana on the evening of Friday, April 19, 2013 in the student center ballroom. They brought with them youthful vigor, vitality, and goodwill in a lively spirit of cultural exchange in a concert titled “Joy, Fun and Inspiration: Chinese Folk Performance and New Orleans Music.”
Chinese folk music and dance alternated with New Orleans music performed by the Xavier band.

A group of OCAW members attended the event at the invitation of the Confucius Institute. It was a blessed Friday well spent.

(Editor’s Note: Photos were provided by Dr. Si Chung.)
Corks ’N Canvas Painting Class

On Saturday, May 4, 2013, New Orleans Chapter Vice President Li Li arranged for a group of members to take a painting class at Corks ’N Canvas studio on Focis Street in Metairie. All materials were provided by the studio. An art instructor presented a lesson on space arrangement, color application on canvas, and painting techniques.

Amid chatter, food, and drink, everyone merrily completed a lovely work of art within two hours. Betty Butz was a lucky winner of an acrylic painting composed by a staff artist of the studio. Since a painting party is such a great idea, the business has become a franchise with several studios in the city.
Top row: Chiping Qian. Second row: Li Li, Rainbow Gu, Mangjee Yeh, Betty Butz, Maria Auzenne, and Maria’s grandmother.

Betty Butz won a Corks ‘N Canvas staff painting.
On Saturday, May 25, 2013, OCAW New Orleans Chapter members participated in the APAS annual Asian Heritage Festival held at the Audubon Zoo. OCAW shared a tent with the Lions Club and provided information to visitors.

The theme for the festival this year was “Flowers of Asia.” Local Asian communities were well represented with traditional arts and crafts, food, and guided hands-on activities in brightly decorated tents. Performers danced, played music, did choreographed martial arts, and showed their talent on stage to the amusement of a large crowd. The festival provided a wonderful opportunity for people to gather and celebrate the presence of each other.

The weather was typically hot and humid, even in the shade of giant oak trees. A little breeze and a lot of smiles made the day another sweet one to remember.
Li Li, Kim Sun, Tina Owen, Maria Auzenne, Leda Fan, Mangjee Yeh, Nancy Chung, Yvonne Louie, and Betty Butz

Asian Pacific American Society tent
Dancers at the festival
The Silicon Valley Chapter held a special presentation at Sunny View Manor in Cupertino on Sunday, May 19, 2013. The topic was “Lingerie 101: Bra Fitting and Sleepwear Terminology.” The speaker, Anne Hu, who was also OCAW-SVC’s 2003-2004 president, shared her knowledge and experiences about bra fitting and lingerie terminology.

Anne taught the audience how to find their correct bra size and discussed measurement tips. She also taught the audience how to find out what type of bra is good for different breast shapes and sizes. There was also discussion about the different types of bras, such as underwired, unlined, lightly lined, push-up, and padded ones.
Anne also explained some common lingerie terminology, so the audience could understand product descriptions in a Victoria’s Secret catalog or in store ads in Sunday’s newspaper. It was a very informative session.
News from the Hawaii Chapter

(from Rena Young Ochse, President)

Time really flies... Members and friends are attending graduations and having farewell parties, and high school graduates are attending college for the first time.

We really had a great time at our last meeting at Hee Hing Restaurant. Our speaker, Fawn Shang, spoke about her experiences when she came to America, and how when she came to Hawaii she discovered how many Chinese were living here in Paradise.

This year we earmark our community service and fundraiser for Reverend Lai’s Canaan Community Gospel Center. We encourage everyone to participate and help raise funds for a worthy cause.

Plans are being formed by Kimi Oliveira who is organizing an outing for our members and friends to
“Shangri La.” We will be having a luncheon and visiting the famous Doris Duke property at Diamond Head. If members from our sister organizations are interested, please email us for tickets, etc.

Soon we will have an election for new officers for 2014. Then we will celebrate the Christmas holidays together with the installation of our new officers. We will update everyone before the year is up.

I’m so happy to announce that our membership has increased by 11 since the beginning of the year. Thanks to you, we have a wonderful group of Asian American women with so many talented and great achievers in our organization.

Congratulations to Sybil Kyi and former member and president, Puanani Woo, for contributing towards the book on the history of OCAW just launched in Washington, D.C.

Our May meeting featured our new member, Fawn Shang. Pictured (from left): Blossom Tyau, Fawn Shang, Rena Young Ochse, and Christine Ling.

**A Touch of Aloha – an OCAW fundraiser**

For a second year, OCAW’s Hawaii Chapter will sponsor a fundraiser to benefit the Canaan Community Gospel Center. The center is located in the Chinatown Cultural Plaza. For many immigrant Chinese and others, it is a resource for obtaining educational and social support, such as assistance in adjusting to life in a new environment, and interpretation of local and American customs and laws. In addition, the center provides care and nutrition for children in the neighborhood, as well as after-school tutoring, lessons in computer technology, music, etc.
The theme of the fundraiser will be “A Touch of Aloha,” and the event will take place on Saturday, October 19, 2013, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Tree Tops Restaurant at Paradise Park in Manoa. With a Hawaiian food buffet, the highlight will be a Hula Halau (group) from Ohio under the direction of Isabella Rose Monzon, a member of our chapter. The cost will be $40.00 per person. Planners for this event are co-chairs Gladys K. Lee and Jane Au. Committee members are Geraldine (Gigi) Ko, Isabella Rose Monzon, and Rena Young Ochse.

---

**General Articles and Items of Potential Interest to Members**

*(from Faith Breen)*

*(Editor’s Note: Faith submitted this highly interesting article which was published in “The Wall Street Journal.” I’ve printed excerpts below, but to read the complete article, go to the link at the end.)*

**Tiger Babies Bite Back**

by Jeff Yang

*The Wall Street Journal*

May 14, 2013

This past Sunday was Mother’s Day. But for Asians everywhere, yesterday was *Tiger* Mother’s Day, when kids whose handmade cards have been rejected as half-assed traditionally turn in second drafts, desperately hoping that this time, their craftsmanship will meet muster. (Think you’ll earn tigro-maternal approval with anything less than decoupage and letterpress embossing? Fat chance. And speaking of fat, you’ve put on a few pounds, haven’t you? Less dining hall, more study hall, chubbo!)

If reading the paragraph above triggers lingering TPSD – Tiger-Parenting Survivor Distress – well, you’re not alone.

In her just-published memoir-slash-primal scream *Tiger Babies Strike Back*, novelist Kim Wong Keltner (*The Dim Sum of All Things*) takes a hilarious and occasionally scandalous look back at her life as the littlest cub of authoritarian immigrants Larry and Irene Wong, using her personal experiences as ammo to take aim at both the reality and stereotype of “perfectionist parenting.”

I spoke to Keltner on Sunday afternoon – a time she good-naturedly offered, saying she wasn’t huge on “any holiday where you’re told this is the one day you get to be special” – and she admitted that her parents weren’t overjoyed at hearing the topic of her first nonfiction book.

“I talked to my mom on Friday, and the conversation was pretty dicey,” she says. “I mean, I’ve been saying to her for months, ‘I’m working on this book about my childhood, and it’s not going to be very pretty,’ but she was still upset when it came out. ‘You’re airing the family’s dirty laundry! No sane Asian person would do this!’”

That dirty laundry includes repeated shaming about body image: “What kind of Chinese kid was I? The overweight, American kind,” Keltner writes. “No one would hug me, but pinching my blubber was a family pastime.” It includes her mother calling her “disgusting” when she struck a comical kissy-face pose waiting for her good-night kiss – and never kissing her good night again. It includes being told she was “no better than a prostitute” for dating a white guy, “a tall redhead with skin so pale he practically glows in the dark;” that man, Rolf Keltner, is now her husband, and the father of their nine-year-old daughter Lucy.
And of course, it includes Constant Pressure. To. Succeed. Academically. Do better than your siblings. Do better than your classmates. If no one else is around to serve as a handy rival, do better than you did the week before. And when you’ve reached the theoretical maxima of 100%...do extra work in hopes of encouraging the teacher to add underscores and an exclamation point to the 100%!

“All this chasing of straight As, this pushing, pushing, pushing for academic excellence, in a lot of cases, it makes kids start to think their parents only care about who they are on paper,” says Keltner. “And ultimately, they may just decide, ‘If nothing is ever going to please you, why should I even try?’”

That result seems to have been borne out by a groundbreaking study launched eight years ago by University of Texas at Austin professor Su Yeong Kim.

“When I was an undergrad at USC, taking my first developmental psychology class, I realized that the way they were characterizing different types of parents just didn’t seem to fit Asian American models,” says Kim. “They talked about authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and negligent parenting, and none of them seemed to really match the families I saw around me. And then I learned about the ‘achievement-adjustment paradox.’ Among European American kids, you see that social and mental health goes hand in hand with academic success, but that’s not the case with Asian American kids. And I thought, there must be some kind of linkage with Asian parenting styles.”

As a doctoral student at the University of California at Davis, Kim decided to focus her research on parenting techniques of Asian American immigrants, and recruited over 400 Bay Area Chinese American households into a longitudinal research program – assessing the parenting of mothers and fathers on eight different dimensions, four positive and four negative, and tracking how these profiles evolved over the course of eight years, while also measuring the academic success and emotional health of their children...

“As we reviewed the data, we were really surprised at what we found,” says Kim. “When we looked at mean GPA, the Supportive parents had kids that were substantially higher than any other group – including Tiger parents. In fact, by the end of our study, with the kids in high school, kids with Supportive parents had mean GPAs of 3.4, and kids with Tiger parents had 3.0. That’s a huge gap.”

Even Easygoing parents had offspring who, on average, did better than Tiger cubs. And the children of Harsh parents did worst of all. Kids raised by Tiger and Harsh ‘rents also had much greater incidence of depression and lower overall emotional health. “When I told parents in the study about the results, a lot of them refused to believe me,” says Kim. “They were so shocked! So many of them had been convinced by Amy Chua [author of Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother published in 2011] that being a Tiger Mom was the way to go.”...

“The big secret is that the reason why a lot of these kids were doing well isn’t that their parents were Harsh or Tiger – it’s that most of them were Supportive,” says Kim. “That’s really why this study is so important. It dispels the myth of what Asian parenting is all about.”

That said, there was one negative dimension that the parents in her study seemed to consistently score high on, regardless of parenting style: “Shaming,” says Kim. “Shaming still emerges as something even Supportive parents seem to do regularly. Because they’re Asian.”

And that finding actually maps out to both Keltner and Chua’s visions of parenting (albeit coming from different directions). The primary pressure Keltner’s parents place on her isn’t physical abuse or even verbal harassment: It’s the constant, overbearing sense of shame – making her feel like she’s letting them down, letting the family down, not thin enough, not smart enough, not good enough. In her book, Chua also uses shame as her weapon of choice on daughters Sophia and Lulu. (For example, the infamous rejected handmade card anecdote.)
“That actually may be the key to why some of these kids are doing well scholastically,” says Kim. “They may not be close to their parents, but they’re being constantly reminded of the sacrifices they’ve made, and of their filial obligations to bring honor to the family.”

As a result, they may end up succeeding academically. But for some, like Keltner, that can come at the price of self-esteem and psychological well-being.

“I got good grades just to get my parents off my back,” she says. “I got top test scores, but I was never encouraged to make connections with other people. And I never felt like I could separate myself from them: They would always say, you’re a part of me, what you do reflects on me.”

http://blogs.wsj.com/speakeasy/2013/05/14/tiger-babies-bite-back/

**********

(from Audrey Lee)

Asian Americans Face Significant Housing Discrimination
According to a Study by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

by the National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (National CAPACD)
June 14, 2013

Asian American homebuyers and renters face discrimination and adverse treatment as or more often than other communities of color when seeking a home, according to findings from a newly released study from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and The Urban Institute. The study, titled “Housing Discrimination against Racial and Ethnic Minorities 2012,” shows that discrimination is still widely prevalent in major metropolitan real estate markets across the country. Most alarmingly, the types and methods of discrimination uncovered by this study are generally undetectable by the home seekers themselves.

“This report clearly shows that discrimination continues to be a systemic problem in the housing industry, especially for communities of color,” remarked Lisa Hasegawa, Executive Director of the National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (National CAPACD). “The implications here are extensive, as housing discrimination significantly impacts educational and economic opportunities. The findings reveal that we still have further to go as a nation to safeguard the civil liberties guaranteed to all Americans under the Fair Housing Act.”

Researchers coordinated more than 8,000 paired tests in 28 metropolitan areas where two individuals (one white and the other Asian, Black, or Hispanic) were matched on gender, age, and family composition. The testers, posing as equally qualified home seekers, inquired about available homes or apartments and catalogued how many homes they were told about as well as how many homes they were actually shown. While the findings were not disaggregated by Asian American subgroups, the methodology selected a mix of testers that reflected the diversity of AAPIs in each testing area.

Key highlights from the report include:
On average, Asian American homebuyers are told about 15.5% less homes and are shown 18.8% less homes than non-Hispanic White buyers. Similarly, prospective Asian American renters are told about 9.8% less homes and are shown 6.6% less units.

For every two in-person visits, Asians are told about one fewer unit, with Whites 9.2 points more likely to be favored.

For every two in-person visits, Asians are shown 1 fewer home, with Whites 13.9 points more likely to be favored.

These rates are comparable or higher than the rates of discrimination faced by Hispanic and African American home seekers.

Researchers also specifically noted that “minority home seekers whose ethnicity is more readily identifiable” (according to name, physical appearance, or accent, for example) are significantly more likely to be denied an appointment than minorities perceived to be white.

With regard to trends over time, Asian renters are more likely than a decade ago to be shown fewer units, while trends for black and Hispanic renters seem to be improving.

The unique methodology of this study brings to light many damaging, yet commonly unnoticed and unreported problems. One anecdote shared by researchers included an Asian American woman who was shown only one apartment and a white borrower of comparable qualifications who was shown that same apartment as well as three additional units. While victims of this type of discrimination are often unaware of the unequal treatment, it clearly increases the length and cost of a home search, constrains opportunities, and limits choices. The report concludes that fair housing enforcement alone is insufficient and calls for a multipronged strategy to encourage diverse neighborhoods and to equalize the quality of services, resources, and amenities in minority neighborhoods.

“National CAPACD applauds HUD and The Urban Institute for bringing systemic housing discrimination against communities of color to light and strongly supports their recommendation that local fair housing organizations expand and strengthen their relationships with Asian American communities,” noted Hasegawa. “We will continue to work with HUD and policymakers to implement their recommendations, particularly increased support for culturally and linguistically capable housing counselors and strategies that include housing development that preserves affordable options in gentrifying neighborhoods and neighborhood reinvestment.”

To download the full report, please visit HUD's website:
<http://org2.salsalabs.com/dia/track.jsp?v=2&c=p7QE0%2BsIMlMb8Vx2fSpIvUWrZBaUyZI>

National CAPACD is a national advocacy organization dedicated to addressing the community development needs of diverse and rapidly growing Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHP) communities throughout the country.