

E-Newsletter of the Organization of Chinese American Women

February 2024



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501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization

(from Linda Devine, Editor)

Happy New Year, and Happy Chinese New Year! I hope that 2023 was a good year for you, but that 2024 will be an even better one.

This is our first e-newsletter of the year, and as always, my thanks to those who contributed material for the issue. I also appreciate my husband Ed's work on preparing the large number of photos.

I continue to encourage OCAW members to write articles or submit information if there is something you think would be of interest to the membership.

Please also feel free to send me any suggestions that you might have for the e-newsletter at:
devinefive@comcast.net

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January 2024 National Board Meeting

(from Maria Yang, National President)

(Editor's Note: The OCAW National Board consists of the national officers and the Presidents of the five chapters. We hold a quarterly board meeting via Zoom in January, April, July, and October of each year. Below, Maria has provided a summary of last month's meeting.)

The January national board quarterly meeting was held on Sunday, January 21, 2024. It began with a discussion on technical support and audio settings, with participants troubleshooting issues and offering step-by-step guidance. Attendees also discussed the potential of AI for meeting minutes and welcomed new board members.

The meeting then moved onto updates and reports from the different chapters, covering a range of topics such as Mimi Hom's (Vice President for Programs) new living situation, membership responsibilities, and travel experiences.

The report from the President of the **Hawaii Chapter** highlighted the significant increase in membership and the success of recent events.

The **Silicon Valley Chapter** presented a comprehensive overview of their recent activities, including lectures and cultural events, and discussed plans for future events.

In regard to *Remembering Shanghai*, a memoir written by a Hawaii Chapter member and her mother, the President of the **New Orleans Chapter** suggested launching a book club to educate members about World War II and its effects. The initiative would aim to provide a platform for individuals with family connections to the war to share their family experiences and create an inclusive environment. Also discussed was engaging younger members through cultural activities and scholarships.

The President of the **Virginia Chapter** reported the success of its past events and plans for upcoming events, including their celebration of the Lunar New Year on February 17.

The **Maryland Chapter** informed the board that it will be hosting an event on February 25 at the Q by Peter Chang restaurant in Bethesda, MD. Since not all members know one another, those in attendance will take turns presenting very short remarks about themselves and, if they like, may talk about a charity that is important to them and that they would like others to be aware of, in case they wish to support it as well. *(Editor's Note: Due to problems with upcoming restaurant logistics, this event will now be rescheduled at a later time.)*

Overall, the meeting showcased a collaborative and supportive atmosphere among all board members, with participants working together to find solutions and share updates on their respective chapters.

News from the Virginia Chapter

(from Barbara York, President)

Distribution of *Remembering Shanghai* gift

The Virginia Chapter was very grateful to receive a box of 24 complimentary copies of *Remembering Shanghai*, a memoir written by Isabel Sun Chao together with her daughter Claire Chao. (Claire is a member of the OCAW Hawaii Chapter.) It is a stunning story of a family upended by the Japanese occupation and then the Cultural Revolution.

Several members of our chapter have asked for and have read the book. They have in turn given it to their friends and colleagues, and have also put it in their apartment building lending libraries. We are very appreciative of this generous gift.

2024 Kick-Off Lunch

Special thanks to our Treasurer Cathy Roberts for her recommendation of lunch at Chef Yan (9600G Main Street in Fairfax, VA). On Monday, January 15, thirteen members and several husbands enjoyed a wonderful meal of the house specialties, including soup dumplings, steamed fish, Sichuan dry pot, Lions Head meatballs, and some beautiful vegetarian dishes. Chef Yan is the newly renovated China Star. The chef worked at the Mama Chang restaurant before branching out on his own.



(Standing) Wendy Cai, Jessica Shen, Alice Yee Way, her husband Norman Way, Cathy Roberts, Amy Lee, Noreen Hom, Veronica Li, Chi Hua Yang, her husband Glen Schwartz, Christina Chang, her husband Steve Chang, Becky Huang, and Maria Yang

(Seated) Pu-Chin Waide and Barbara York

Upcoming Events

Planning is underway for several events, including:

- **OCAW-VA Chapter Chinese New Year Potluck Lunch on Saturday, February 17**

It will be held in Amy Lee's condo's Penthouse party room on the 23rd Floor, 400 Madison Street in Alexandria, VA, beginning at 11:30 a.m. All members (including our sisters in the Maryland Chapter) and their family members and friends are invited to attend.

Please RSVP to Barbara York (york.barbara2023@gmail.com) with the number in your party and what you would like to bring.

- **Field trip to see MGM National Harbor's Chinese New Year Decorations on Monday, February 26**

Meet at noon in the Conservatory of the Hotel/Casino. MGM Grand's annual Lunar New Year decorations are famous. This year they are featuring a 70-foot jade water dragon and a bamboo forest. Here is a link to the website: <https://www.nationalharbor.com/media/press-releases/mgm-national-harbor-celebrates-year-of-the-dragon-with-magnificent-conservatory-display-and-lion-dance/>

Again, please let Barbara know if you plan to attend. After enjoying the exhibit, we plan to have lunch in the food court that features a wide variety of choices from sushi to crab cakes to pizza to Vietnamese.

- **Field trip to see 350 orchids at the Smithsonian Portrait Gallery – date TBD but before April 28**

The following is the link to the exhibit: <https://americanart.si.edu/exhibitions/orchids>
And here is the link to the artist; she is Taiwanese: <https://www.phaan.com/bio>

- **Field trip to see the Anyang Ancient City of Kings exhibit at the National Museum of Asian Art – date TBD but before April 28**

Longtime OCAW member of both the Maryland and Virginia Chapters Camilla Ng brought to our attention a very special exhibit at the National Museum of Asian Art. This is the link to the exhibit: <https://asia.si.edu/whats-on/exhibitions/anyang-chinas-ancient-city-of-kings/>

Camilla is a docent at this museum, and we are working with her on a joint group tour with the Maryland Chapter.

News from the New Orleans Chapter

(from Patricia Ellzey, President)

The OCAW New Orleans Chapter membership was challenged because of the loss of several members over the past few years, due primarily to the COVID phenomena as well as members moving away because of the problems that originated from the recent hurricanes. So, this past year, a recruiting effort was made to increase our membership, including organizing a special lunch meeting celebrating women (*see the September OCAW E-Newsletter*). We currently have 22 members, with 6 being lifetime members.

Asian Pacific American Society Gala

Our chapter is a corporate member of the Asian Pacific American Society (APAS), and together with other local Asian Ethnic individuals and associations, we help our local Asian American community celebrate our Asian American heritage and assist in connecting our various communities through mutual and individual events.

APAS is self-funded via individual and corporate dues and an annual fundraising event called the Gala, where funds are raised through ticket sales, a raffle, a silent auction, and a fundraising competition by each Ethnic group's Ambassador. Attendees dress in ethnic costumes and enjoy a dinner during which each Asian Ethnic group recognizes its most outstanding community service-minded person for the year, and all the Asian

Ethnic Ambassadors who serve as the major fundraiser for their Ethnic group. The winners of student scholarships are named, and Asian Ethnic entertainment is performed.

The OCAW New Orleans Chapter participated in the most recent Gala which was held on Saturday, November 11, 2023 at the Chateau Golf and Country Club in Kenner, LA. One of our new chapter members was named our Chinese Ambassador – Dr. Lily Qingli Wu, M.D.

Dr. Qingli (Lily) Wu was born and raised in China. In 2003, she came to the United States to pursue her doctoral degree in Pathology. Currently, she is a staff Clinical Pathologist at Ochsner Medical Center in New Orleans.

She takes immense pride in her Chinese heritage and harbors a deep passion for fostering cultural understanding and enhancing relationships within the broader community. Her interests in music and traditional Chinese dance have driven her active participation in local performance groups, where she dedicates her time to introducing Chinese art and culture to our local community.

Beyond her contributions to the medical field, Lily's experiences in caring for children with special needs have spurred her involvement in education and development initiatives for individuals with developmental differences.



China Ambassador Dr. Lily Wu and Dr. Jeffrey Kuo



Sokheun Chau; Grace Chan, 2023 APAS Chair; Nellie Underwood, OCAW New Orleans Chapter Secretary; and Wendy Jung, 2022 APAS Chair



Pat Ellzey, Linda Li, Weilie Zhou, Lily Yang, Nicole Landry, Lily Wu, Nancy Liu, and Jingling Xiong

Lunch Meeting

On Saturday, November 18, 2023, we had a lunch meeting at the Imperial Garden Restaurant in Kenner, LA. One of our new members, Lily Yang Saitta, presented a lecture with video and live models who demonstrated the history and evolution of Chinese Qipao.

APAS Annual Children's Christmas Party

Our chapter participated in this event which was held at the Chinese Presbyterian Church in Kenner, LA, on Saturday, December 2, 2023. Children 12 and under are invited to come and play games, do individual fun activities, hear Christmas stories, listen to a local band play seasonal music, have lunch and meet with Santa Claus, and take a photo with him. Secretary Nellie Underwood's husband David played Santa Claus at the party.



Nellie Underwood, and David Underwood who played Santa Claus. Nellie and David are holding their grandchildren.

Annual Christmas Dinner Party

Our annual Christmas dinner party was held on Saturday, December 9, 2023 in the private party room of the internationally famous Trey Yuen Restaurant in Mandeville, LA. Frank Wong (the husband of one of our founding members and a past President, Sandy Wong) along with his four brothers own this beautiful Chinese mansion restaurant.

Frank created our delicious menu and personally researched our local markets to find the best and freshest seafood, meats, vegetables, etc. for our special celebratory dinner. The menu included a choice of soup: their



Sandy Wong and Pat Ellzey

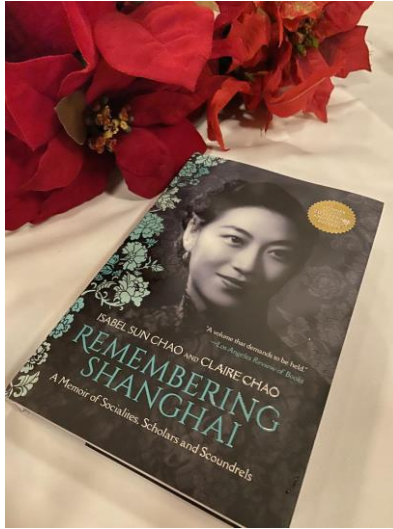
Super Bowl award-winning Gumbo, Hot and Sour Soup, or War Won Ton soup. The dishes included their famous smoked tea duck, Steak Kew with vegetables, Chicken and pork chow mein, and their own famous seafood-created dishes – Honey Pecan shrimp, Crawfish in lobster sauce, Alligator and vegetables, steamed fresh drum fish, Shrimp and lump crab in a cloud, and Soft shell crab in their own created sauce. Needless to say, everyone enjoyed the delicious dinner!



Shrimp and lump crab in a cloud dish

The “cloud” is scrambled egg whites –
tasty and yummy! ☺

During the dinner, President Pat Ellzey introduced the award-winning book, *Remembering Shanghai: A Memoir of Socialites, Scholars and Scoundrels*. One of the authors, Claire Chao, is an OCAW Hawaii member, and she sent us books to read and perhaps sell as a fundraiser to create a scholarship or make a donation to a charity. Researching online, Pat found that these books sell from \$10 to \$75. So five books were sold at \$15 each, and some of us bought the books to learn about a first-person flight for survival by a young, rich girl from a privileged family fleeing from Shanghai at the start of the war in the 1930s. This could provide a basis for a meaningful discussion as well. We intend to prioritize selling the rest of the books.



Thank you!

I would like to thank the Chinese Presbyterian Church for allowing us to use their facilities to be able to accomplish our goals of good will and to help our community develop and grow. I also want to thank again our generous and thoughtful individual OCAW members and the Hawaii Chapter in particular, for their donations in helping the church repair the building following the last disastrous hurricane. The church and our chapter are most grateful for their generosity.

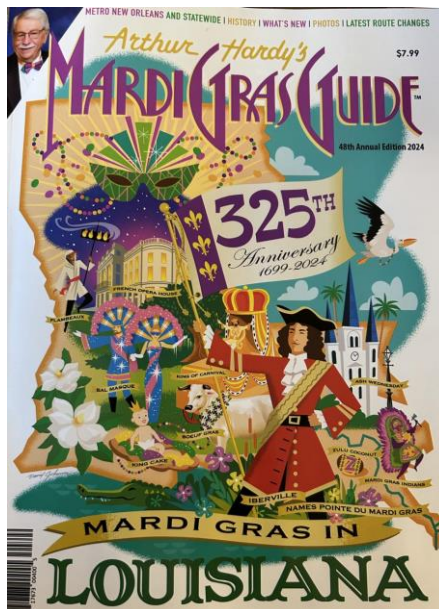
Upcoming Event

Our next event will be our Chinese New Year's Party which is projected to be held on Saturday, March 2, 2024.

Presently, our biggest holiday here is Mardi Gras which is Tuesday, February 13. Parades and parties started Friday, February 2, and there is an increase in parades, balls, and parties until Mardi Gras Day, when people party all day and night, especially starting on the Friday before Tuesday. This involves a lot of traffic and filled restaurants, etc. so we are thinking of celebrating Chinese New Year later this year since Chinese New Year is the Saturday before Mardi Gras, and traffic will be heavy and restaurants will be full and rowdy.

Mardi Gras

In our next e-newsletter, I will compose an article so our OCAW “sisters” in the other chapters can learn about our Mardi Gras celebration in New Orleans. We are celebrating our 325th anniversary this year since it started in 1699.



Till then – “HAPPY MARDI GRAS!”

“LAISSEZ LES BONS TEMPS ROULER!” (“LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL!”) (Cajun French – “PASS A GOOD TIME”)

If you wish to respond, say “OUI, CHER!” (meaning, “YEA, YOU RIGHT!”)

News from the Silicon Valley Chapter

(Jen Tsao, President)

Unlocking the Mysteries of Sports Injuries with Dr. Wendy Chuang – Part 2 Recap

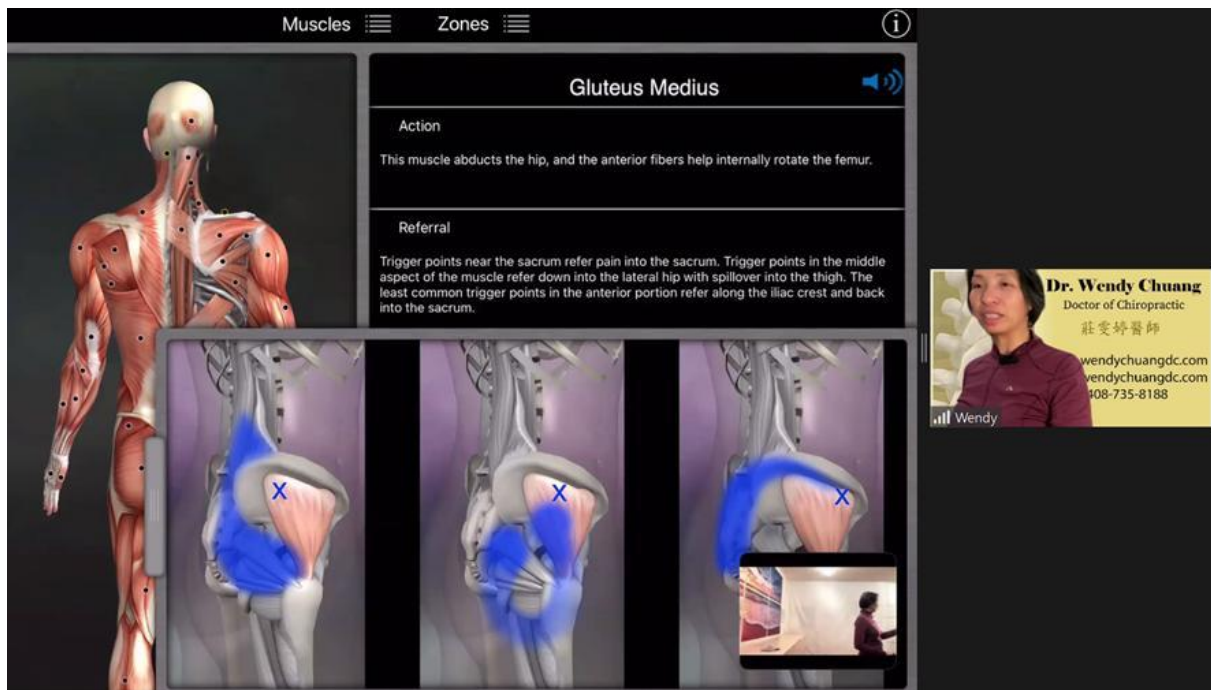
(from Anne Hu, Communications)

How Much Do We Know About Sports Injuries? A Conversation with Doctor of Chiropractic, Wendy Chuang

On Saturday, January 20, 2024, from 2 to 4 p.m., the esteemed chiropractic practitioner, Dr. Wendy Chuang, offered an enlightening exploration into the often misunderstood domain of sports injuries, including those stemming from activities perceived as low impact. Presented in Mandarin, this insightful online session served as a cornerstone in a series dedicated to illuminating common myths and outlining preventative measures against sports injuries.

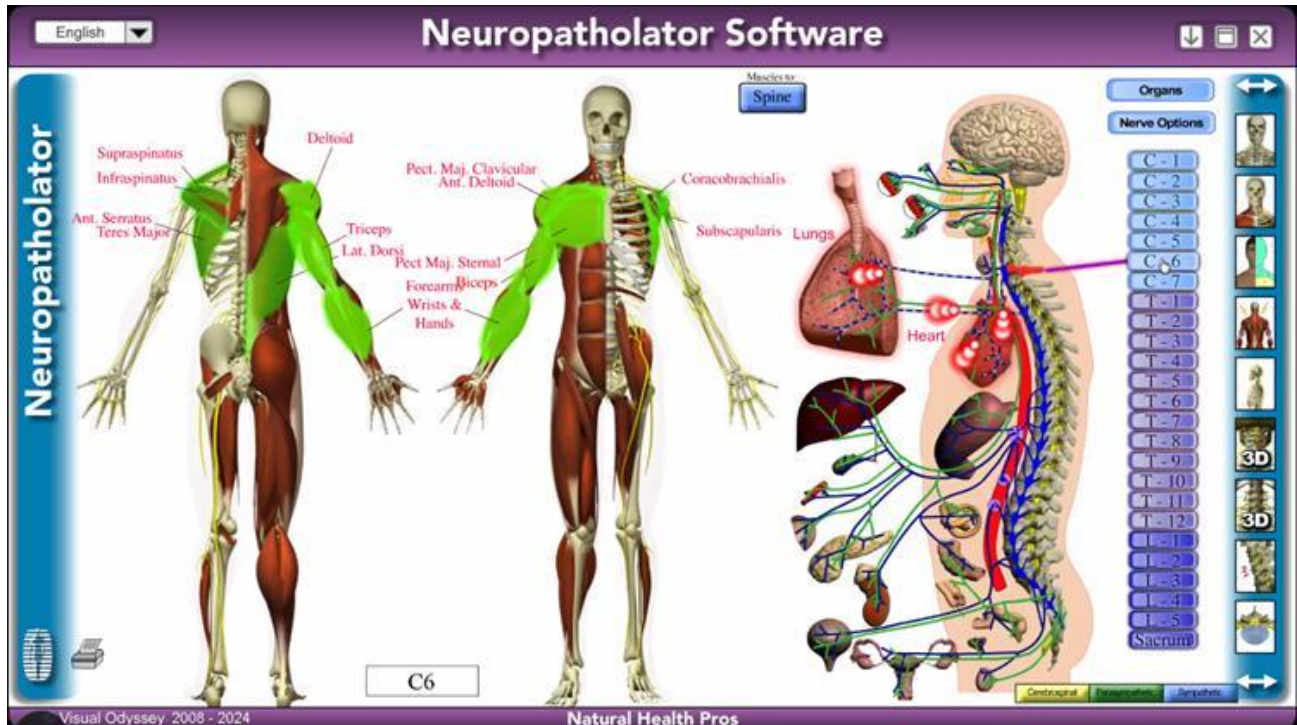
About Dr. Wendy Chuang: A Legacy of Healing

Rooted in a rich heritage of traditional Chinese medicine, Dr. Chuang's foray into chiropractic science was inspired by her father, Weiren Chuang, a revered master who devoted his life to TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine), specializing in Bone and Spine treatment. Her academic journey led her to the University of California, San Diego, where she secured a B.S. in Neuroscience and Physiology, culminating in a Doctor of Chiropractic degree from Palmer College of Chiropractic West. With a professional tenure spanning over twenty years, Dr. Chuang's dedication extends beyond her clinic to community service and public education on spinal health and the criticality of stretching, notably through her appearances on Chinese media outlets like the "Tonight's Talk" show on Channel 26 and her informative YouTube channel, DrWendyChuang.



Key Insights from the Session

Dr. Chuang's comprehensive presentation ventured into the intricacies of sports injuries, underscoring the importance of sufficient warm-up exercises and proper posture in averting injuries to the spine or soft tissues. Utilizing a human spine model alongside anatomy software, she vividly demonstrated the genesis of injuries and imparted effective prevention strategies, including essential stretching and warm-up exercises prior to any physical activity. Her holistic approach further revealed the symbiotic relationship between spinal health and the vitality of internal organs and the central nervous system.



Engagement and Impact

The webinar attracted close to 80 enthusiastic participants, with a lively Q&A session reflecting the audience's eagerness to learn more about safeguarding their health through preventative practices. The knowledge imparted by Dr. Chuang empowered attendees with a deeper understanding of the significance of integrating stretching into their daily routines.

Community Collaboration and Support

This crucial Part 2 event was made possible through the collaborative efforts of the OCAW Silicon Valley Chapter and the Chuang Foundation, with additional support from the First Taipei Girls' High School Alumni of Northern California. This partnership highlights a collective dedication to fostering health and wellness within the community, underpinning the event's success and impact.

This recap not only celebrates the valuable insights shared by Dr. Chuang, but also emphasizes the community's ongoing commitment to health education and the promotion of preventive measures against sports injuries.

News from the Hawaii Chapter

(Sharlene Chun, President)

OCAW Hawaii members meet OCAW Virginia and Maryland members

(from Queenie Chee, Event Chair)

OCAW Hawaii members were thrilled to meet and greet our OCAW sisters from the East Coast!

Our first round was on Saturday, November 18, 2023, when Cathy Roberts, National Vice President for Membership, and her husband Dick were passing through Hawaii on their cruise to the South Seas (think Tahiti and Bora Bora!).

Edwina Lee and Sharon Chun met them at the Honolulu Harbor and shuttled them.

We met at Panya Bistro near Ala Moana, not far from their cruise ship terminal, for snacks in the afternoon. It was a reunion for most of the Hawaii girls who attended the last OCAW National Convention in Virginia. The ship was docked for only a few hours. Oh, but we had a nice visit and got to know each other a little better.



Edwina Lee, Dick Roberts, Cathy Roberts, Queenie Chee, Sharon Chun, and Sharlene Chun
at Panya Bistro



Cathy Roberts and Wendie Liu, who also made it to meet and greet

Came December and Camilla Ng, former OCAW Maryland Chapter President, flew in to stay for about a month with her sister in Hawaii Kai. She reveled in the balmy weather and did her daily walks to the beach while her counterparts in Maryland and Virginia were snowed in.

Camilla was a guest and attended the last Hawaii Chapter Joint Board Meeting, with lunch, at the local Maple Garden Chinese restaurant on Sunday, December 17, 2023. This was the transition meeting where the 2023 outgoing officers and board members jointly met with the 2024 incoming ones, to ensure a smooth transition, and the former passed on their notes and records to the latter. The group stayed on their best behavior!

We look forward to Camilla's next winter stay and hope to do more with her then!



Roberta Leung, Camilla Ng with her silk Hawaiian lei, Edwina Lee, Dr. Sandy Young, Serena Kyi-Yim, Kimberly Hoi, Sharlene Chun, Susan Wong, Jerilyn Jeffryes, Sharon Chun, Queenie Chee, Matthew Wolfe, and Lisa Lau

(Photo courtesy of Serena Kyi-Yim)

Note from Camilla Ng to the Hawaii Chapter members:

“It was such a delight to meet you all. I want to thank you for your hospitality and gifts.

I was especially impressed with the professionalism of your chapter’s board members in conducting the board meeting. It says ‘great leadership and experience.’ ”

We look forward to any of our OCAW sisters who may be in our state in the future. Just let us know in advance so we can plan for it. Aloha!

Officers Installation and 35th Anniversary Celebration

by Queenie Chee

Established in 1989, the OCAW Hawaii Chapter was founded with the encouragement of the OCAW National Founder, Pauline Tsui; the U.S. Ambassador to Nepal, Julia Chang Bloch; and the wife of U.S. Senator Hiram Fong, Ellen Lo Fong. They came to Honolulu from Washington, D.C. and met with a gathering of Chinese American women who were leaders in the community. Success!

On Sunday, January 14, 2024, just under 150 members and guests gathered at the Nu’uanu Ballroom of the Oahu Country Club, to celebrate the Hawaii Chapter’s 35th founding anniversary and their installation of the chapter’s 2024 officers in grand Hawaiian-Chinese style.

Reception Table and
Hostesses

*(Photo taken by
Serena Kyi-Yim)*



It began with the popping sounds of a string of electronic firecrackers, as lively Chinese lion dancers came prancing in to offer congratulations and blessings.



Two Chinese Lions opened the Event of the Day.

Councilman Calvin Say; State of Hawaii Lt. Gov. Sylvia Luke;
OCAW Hawaii Past President Edwina Lee; and 2024 OCAW Hawaii President Sharlene Chun

(Photo taken by Serena Kyi-Yim)



Lions danced around the room, accepting “greens”!



There was a baby Lion, too!

(Photos taken by Wayson Lee)

There were so many “VIPs” that most were not properly recognized by the Mistress of Ceremonies, Queenie Chee.

The Lieutenant Governor of the State of Hawaii, Sylvia Luke, installed the new officers for 2024: Sharlene Yee Chun, as President; Susan Chong Wong, as Vice President; Kimberly Chun Hoi, as Secretary; and Serena Kyi-Yim, as Treasurer.



(Photo taken by Wayson Lee)

The Lieutenant Governor reminded the audience that at the very first convention of OCAW in Washington D.C., Hawaii’s Congresswoman Patsy Mink, the passionate and fierce supporter of equality for women, was the keynote speaker.

OCAW Hawaii’s immediate past president, Edwina Lee, was presented with delectable Japanese cookies by the new president Sharlene Chun. Edwina recognized and thanked her entire board who had served with her for two consecutive years. She presented them with recyclable and usable shopping bags filled with goodies.



Sharon Chun, Communications Chair, and Sharlene Chun, Membership Chair, with Edwina

(Photo taken by Wayson Lee)

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Dr. Dan Peterson, whose wife, “Keto Queen” Kelly Peterson, is an OCAW member. They lived part time in Jackson, Wyoming, and are now full-time residents of Hawaii.

A young lady, age 13, Jamie Chun, delivered a clear and sincere invocation for this occasion. Recognition of the potentials of our young Asian females, as well as appreciation of our senior ladies, were part of the theme of the day.

Oahu Country Club’s lunch buffet was bountiful and delicious, and included tender pork tenderloin slices smothered in mushroom gravy and slow-roasted generous chunks of marinated chicken. These were the main course selections.

For a change, the tables farthest back in the room were the first to get their lunches. A small cheer and clapping were heard when that was announced!

OCAW friend, Viene Lam, graciously and expertly shared an eight-minute video that captured some of the highlights of OCAW Hawaii over the past 35 years. Kudos to Viene who produced a quality show when she was provided with material just a week before the event. (A link to it will be provided on the Hawaii Chapter website.)

Many past presidents were in attendance and past speakers were also represented. Some of the past speakers over the last two years included the founder of The Legal Clinic and its executive director, the Mun Lun School president of the board of trustees, and the head of the Center for Chinese Studies at the University of Hawaii, among others. Of note, one former speaker, Narcissus Queen Laura Ho, and Princess Kelly Yee joined OCAW and as members turned out with their mothers to support the occasion.

Special thanks to the team of Miss Chinatowns, who escorted guests to their tables and presented VIPs with fresh orchid leis. To the many volunteers, family, and friends, who helped make the occasion so smooth and joyous, the Chapter is grateful for their participation.



Miss Chinatowns and Princesses

(Photo taken by Ross Lee)

Proclamations from the Hawaii State House of Representatives and the Honolulu City Council were presented to President Sharlene Chun.

Sharlene's son, Cory Chun, Representative for District 35, sponsored the House Proclamation with a list of Representatives from other islands and around Oahu, congratulating OCAW Hawaii on its anniversary, and recognizing the new officers. Because he fell ill that morning, it was presented by the Lieutenant Governor, a former House member.

The Honolulu City Council Proclamation was signed by the entire Council, and was presented by Councilman Calvin Say, also former Speaker of the House.

(Photo taken by Wayson Lee)



The Hawaii Chapter chose to honor its members who reached the age of 90 and who continue to support the chapter in various ways, by creating a Super Senior Membership category. Their dues are waived for life after the age of 90. Pauline Young was able to attend to accept her recognition. The other super seniors are Helen Char, Gladys Lee, Jane Pang, and Mildred Fong Wong.



Pauline Young (*left*) receiving a gift from Edwina Lee on behalf of the chapter. Chinese Women's Club President Hilda Thomas (*right*) is another Nonagenarian.

(Photo taken by Ross Lee)

There were three special individuals dubbed “the Three Musketeers“ who were also recognized for their many years of faithful and generous support of OCAW. They always had each others’ backs and were an unspoken team. Their mothers were sisters, and these first cousins are all civic-minded, and have contributed their talents, energy, and more to the entire community. Dr. Lei Ahu Isa, a former Hawaii legislator and trustee for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA), along with her cousins, Jerilyn Jeffryes and Gretchen Jong, received leis of appreciation and were presented with personally-signed and “Chinese-chopped” hardcover books of OCAW member Claire Chao, co-author of *Remembering Shanghai: A Memoir of Socialites, Scholars and Scoundrels*. (Jerilyn, at the last moment, was unable to attend.)

Gretchen Jong and Dr. Lei Ahu Isa



Entertainment included hula by Ellyanna and Emily Hong, the little nieces of the daughter of past president Edwina Lee. They performed three numbers: two Hawaiian and one Tahitian dance. Below was their split bamboo dance “Pua Iliahi.”



(Photo taken by Wayson Lee)



There were opera solos by Caroline “Ellie” Feng, and a Chinese love song by Amily Tam.

Caroline sang “On My Own” and “God Help the Outcasts.”

(Photo taken by Wayson Lee)

The day concluded with a surprise appearance of an 80-foot dragon performed by 12 players to an unusual rhythm from a huge Chinese drum.



(Photo taken by Bettina Mok)

It was preceded by a cute, white human-size rabbit (Sharlene Chun was the one who was game to do this!). So out hopped the bunny, representing the exit of the Year of the Rabbit, and in came the dragon. Enter the Dragon!



Enter the Dragon with 2024 President Sharlene Chun

(Photo taken by Bettina Mok)

Most of our attendees had never witnessed a dragon dance before. What a treat and a way to anticipate and welcome in the Lunar New Year of the Dragon!

Gong Xi Fa Cai!
Kung Hay Fat Choy

For a complete listing of OCAW Hawaii Chapter Past Presidents and more, go to the website:
<https://ocawhawaii.org>

* * * * *

Editor's Note: Oftentimes there is a lot of hard work that goes on behind the scenes, that inadvertently is not acknowledged. Queenie really wanted to take a picture of the chapter's diligent volunteer audio-visual support team. They rarely have their photo taken, always being behind the camera. E-newsletter readers have undoubtedly appreciated the photos of Ross Lee, whose work has been featured in many issues.

Ross and his colleagues were finally caught in front of Queenie’s camera, and she wanted to thank them for their ongoing efforts!



Ross Lee (*right*) and his colleagues

(Photo taken by Queenie Chee)

Editor’s Note: And **kudos to Queenie Chee** for all of her efforts as Event Chair and, in general, for her comprehensive work for the chapter. OCAW Hawaii members appreciate her years of dedication!

From and About Our Members

Opera Performance Debut

(from Jen Tsao, Silicon Valley Chapter President)

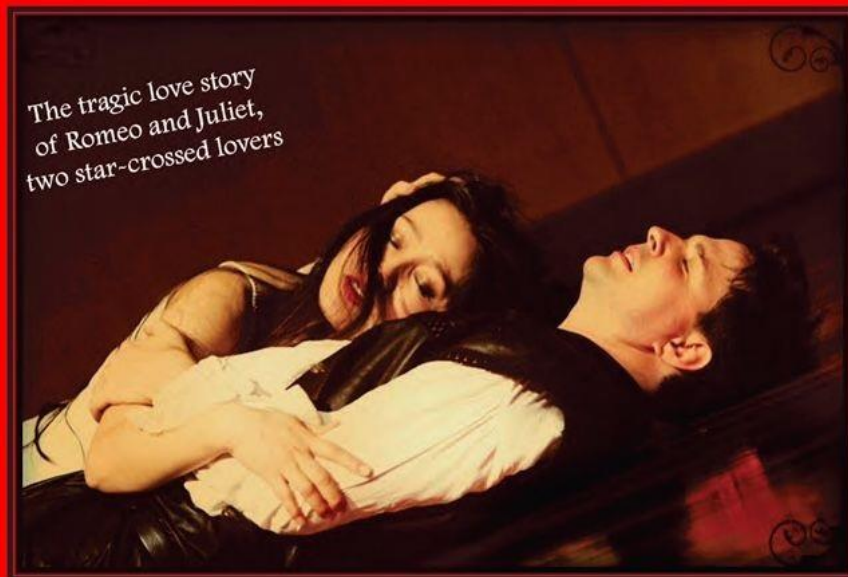
“Grandma, which one are you?” A few years ago just before the pandemic, Cady, my oldest granddaughter who was 7 at that time, and I walked out of the studio of her music teacher and also my choir director, after her piano lesson. She pointed to a poster on the wall when she asked me. It was a poster of a group picture of an opera performance by my choir director and her opera team.

Singing and performing in an opera? It was never in my dreams. But Cady's question planted a seed in my mind.

On October 22, 2023, that dream came true. After months of practices and rehearsals with enthusiasm, excitement, and anxiety, I was on the stage, singing and performing as a member of the opera chorus in Silicon Valley Opera's production of *Romeo and Juliet* by Charles Gounod. My 97-year-old mom, two sisters, three sons, their families, and friends were all there, watching my debut performance.

Sopianos.com & Silicon Valley Opera present
CHARLES GOUNOD'S

ROMEO AND JULIET



Sunday, October 22, 2023 – 3:00 pm

Historic Hoover Theatre (near Rose Garden)

1635 Park Avenue, San Jose, CA

Tickets: \$25 (\$30 at door)



Jen Tsao







Apparently, the opera was a success and the audience enjoyed it so much that our opera team is now invited to San Francisco to perform in a charity fundraising event in February of this year.

My brother asked me how I managed to sing in French since I never learned the language. I replied, “Using Pinyin.” He then said, “You need to be more careful next time, because there will be more people in the audience who know French in San Francisco.”

I just turned 70 last year. To be part of an opera performance at this age is a memorable moment that I am very happy and proud of, and very glad to share.

Jen Tsao flanked by former OCAW-SVC Presidents Cynthia Chang and Sophia Yang

(All photos taken by Unice Chang)

(Editor’s Note: Congratulations, Jen! A remarkable achievement indeed! ☺)



Thoughts and Concern for an Innocent Victim in Honolulu

(from Queenie Chee, Hawaii Chapter Event Chair)

Sharing horrific news from Hawaii about the senseless attack on a 25-year-old exchange teacher from China which happened in mid-January 2024.

Zhang Danying was walking near the Ala Moana Shopping Center when a man came up and threw acid in her face and front before running off. He was a stranger. Because of the surveillance cameras and tips, he was arrested the following day. A homeless person from South Dakota, he was also given a bike near the crime scene and was seen riding away. This act is still under investigation.

The gym near where it happened had people who tried to wash the victim down while the ambulance was called.

The acid melted away flesh and it will probably take a long time for her to recover.

Dr. Cyndy Ning, retired from the University of Hawaii Center for Chinese Studies, wrote in part:

“The good news is that Danying has regained consciousness and impressed her medical team with her courage. She can’t talk around her breathing tube, but writes that she knows she will recover. She asks that her parents, who are workers in rural Shandong, please receive assurances that they are not to worry.

I am attaching a photo of her in happier times. May she come to experience that joy again in the future. Perhaps, with our help, she will.”



The local community and organizations as well as the Chinese Consulate in Los Angeles are providing support for her care. The OCAW Hawaii Chapter Board will review and discuss this matter at their next meeting.

This is something we hoped would never happen in our state, and yet it has. We all must be ever mindful and vigilant in so many ways. Count blessings and never take things for granted.

May Teacher Zhang make the best recovery possible and be strong and resilient.

Wo Hing Museum Couplet

by Camilla Ng

(Editor's Note: Camilla is a former President of the OCAW Maryland Chapter.)

In 2017, during my Christmas vacation with my family on Maui, I made an unplanned visit while walking down Front Street in Lahaina. Something caught my peripheral vision and curiosity stopped me. Chinese words in gold on red wooden plaques that framed the entry of a building! What place is this? Then I noticed the sign in the front court of the building: Wo Hing Chinese Museum and Gift Shop. I felt an instant affinity and the desire to find out more.



Wo Hing Museum in 2017

(Photo taken by Camilla Ng)

When I walked through the door, the museum curator, Busaba Yip, greeted me and alerted me that closing time was in 15 minutes. She kindly allowed me to explore, encouraged me to see the hall on the second floor, and reminded me to see the cookhouse next to the museum building. I quickly took photos of the historical artifacts and displays, and lingered as long as I could but not to cause inconvenience. Little did I know that images I captured quickly in those brief minutes would become a time capsule, a page of the history of the Chinese in Maui, preserved in my consciousness and on my cell phone.

Again, by chance, I ran into Busaba Yip a second time at a program at the Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA) in New York's Chinatown in 2018. Who knew? Busaba came literally halfway around the globe to attend this conference. She talked passionately about the Wo Hing Museum preservation.

On August 8, 2023, wildfires driven by 80-90 mph winds destroyed the town of Lahaina. The devastation was total. It took several months before news of survivors was posted when communications were reestablished. I received news that Busaba had escaped the fire. In November, I contacted her. Like all the survivors of Lahaina, she lost all her personal belongings and a place to live. She narrowly escaped the fire, as there was no siren warning. This lady's toughness came through as I listened to her story, just as impressive as the advocate I had met at MOCA.

The Wo Hing Museum historic documents fortuitously were recorded in digital files stored in iCloud just before the fire occurred. Busaba asked me to review parts of the documents and several Chinese couplets. During my Christmas vacation in Honolulu this past winter, I helped with editing the documents and interpretation of the Chinese couplets.

The Chinese couplet (duilian) is a form of poetry expressed as a pair of lines. They are usually found on the sides of doors or in the interior halls, in homes, palaces, or gateways. Couplets can be carved in peach wood or stones or written on red paper. Couplets have a history of more than a thousand years, originating in the Five Dynasties period (900-997). Of the Wo Hing Museum couplets I reviewed, one in particular I find poignant, for it expresses the universal sentiment of longing for the motherland and the quandary of the overseas Chinese in those days. See photos of the beautifully carved calligraphy.

Many of us who are not from the state of Hawaii may not know that a year after the initial passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 by the U.S. Congress, the Hawaiian Cabinet Council likewise began to restrict Chinese immigration. In 1885, harsher regulations limited passports to Chinese and no return passports were to be issued to departing laborers. A year after the Annexation of Hawaii in 1898, the Chinese Exclusion Act was enforced in Hawaii.

The Chinese in Hawaii, as their brethren on the Mainland, had to weigh the consequence of not being able to return if they visited their motherland. The choice: to be able to provide for the family back home or to leave Hawaii to go home. If to stay, that longing to return to the place of birth, to be with kinfolks, to be buried with their ancestors, would be a regret till the end. This sentiment, captured in the couplet concisely in simply 32 words, demonstrates the power and elegance of the Chinese language.

The couplet is also imbued with Daoist teachings. Daoism (Taoism) is the indigenous philosophy and religion of the ancient Chinese that teaches how to exist in harmony with nature. The pair of couplets was placed on either side of a set of black lacquer landscape panels depicting mountainous scenery of the immortals, dated to 1858. The following is my translation and interpretation of the couplet. The couplets have cultural expressions that are not easily understood. I humbly invite others to share their interpretations.



(Photos taken by Camilla Ng)

Right couplet:

The ancestors yearn to return to the motherland, like leaves returning to the roots; yet reminisce the situations they stayed in those years.

Left couplet:

Descendants do not laugh, for you would do the same like drawing the gourd; when this day comes, it is natural.

In my research of the fourth and fifth words of the right couplet “zi yi,” I discovered that the words are in the teaching of Laozi (6th Century BC) Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching) Chapter 9.

House full of gold and jade cannot be secured. Arrogant display of wealth and status would bring on one's downfall. To retreat once the goal is achieved is heaven's way.

The modesty and moderation suggested in Chapter 9 are at the core of Laozi's teaching. He concludes from observing the discreet and yet omnipotent workings of Tao, the Way, as the ruling law of nature. Mankind should behave in the same manner. That means moderation in all.

In the left couplet, what is the meaning of drawing the gourd? This is an idiom derived from a true story.

In the early Northern Song period, a Hanlin (Court Academy and Administration) scholar Tao Gu (902-970)

worked in the court as a scribe drafting official documents. After some years, he decided that he had made lots of contributions and should be given a promotion. When he asked the Song Emperor Song Tai Zu for a promotion, the Emperor said, “You have only been copying your predecessor’s manuscripts, changing a word here and there. Like drawing a gourd mechanically, this can’t be considered any great contribution.” Tao Gu was very disappointed and wrote a poem to mock himself. Two lines of his poem became famous: “How ridiculous this Hanlin Tao scholar, every year he draws the same gourd.” From then on, the saying “drawing the same gourd” became an expression to describe copying mechanically from a model, without originality or creativity.



The calabash gourd is used as a container for liquid or medicine.

I would like to thank Busaba Yip for allowing me the privilege of taking a deep dive into the early Chinese experience in Maui, encapsulated in the archive of the Wo Hing Museum documents. Although the material artifacts are no more, the message to us from the trailblazers is vibrantly preserved, as meaningful to us as it was then.

Breaking Down the Great Wall between Adult Child and Immigrant

by Veronica Li

(Editor’s Note: Veronica is a former Acting President of the Virginia Chapter and a published author.)

Do you resent your parents’ demands on you? Do you feel guilty that you don’t meet their expectations? Do you feel you will never escape their control, no matter how old you are? If so, you may want to read *Unfinished Business: Breaking Down the Great Wall between Adult Child and Immigrant*.

<https://www.amazon.com/Unfinished-Business-Breaking-Between-Immigrant-ebook/dp/B0CJC5LCH7>

The authors are Amy Yip and her husband Greg Mueller. They presented their book at a Talk Story event hosted by the 1882 Foundation. Talk Story is a place to share stories of our lives, particularly issues that affect the Asian American community. The session on Sunday, November 5, 2023 was about intergenerational conflicts.

Amy's parents immigrated to the U.S. from Hong Kong to establish themselves so they could later bring their two children over. One of them had a hole in the heart and needed advanced health care in the U.S. Unable to speak English, Amy's parents could do only menial jobs. The family was eventually reunited in the U.S., and Amy was born.

The girls grew up in a traditional Chinese household that gave great value to education, a successful career, financial stability, and marrying their own kind. Amy fulfilled her parents' wishes, establishing a career in the corporate world. But no matter how hard she tried, a culpable feeling of not meeting her parents' expectations always haunted her. Then she married Greg.

On her wedding day, the burden of guilt was so great that she went to her mother in tears and apologized for not marrying a Chinese. The reply she received surprised her. "You don't need me to understand you," her mother said. "Only you know your dreams. We love you. We don't understand you, but as long as you're happy..."

Amy left the corporate world after sixteen years. She and Greg bought one-way tickets to Ghana to work for a breast cancer nonprofit and travel the world. She is now a Somatic Life Transformation and Mental Fitness coach and self-confidence trainer. She works with women of color to strengthen their mental fitness and heal their intergenerational wounds often caused by the challenges of straddling two cultures.

As for her own unfinished business, she started a conversation with her parents, who were appalled at her career change. Over three years of communicating regularly by phone, she told them her stories and asked them for theirs. Her goal was not to make them understand her but to understand them. Her aim was not to try to change them, but to give them space to be heard. In the end, she understood their perspective, which was influenced by the lack of security that had plagued most of their lives. The burden of resentment and guilt was finally off her shoulders.

She encourages others to start this connection with their parents. Her book contains guides on self-reflection, questions to ask the older generation, and other practical tips.

The Talk Story events are both in person and on Zoom. Anyone interested can contact the 1882 Foundation (<https://1882foundation.org/>) to join their Talk Story mailing list. The foundation is a nonprofit organization that seeks to broaden public awareness of the history and continuing significance of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

Culture Corner

European Christmas Markets Cruise **Part III: Germany**

by Cathy Roberts

(Editor's Note: Cathy is National Vice President for Membership. The following is Part III of her comprehensive article on her and husband Dick's European Christmas Markets Cruise. Parts I and II appeared in the OCAW e-newsletters of June 2023 and September 2023.)

After spending two days in Vienna, Austria, the cruise continued to Melk (the last stop in Austria). The next day, Friday, December 8, 2023, we reached Passau, Germany, and the temperature started to drop. We visited the baroque St. Stephen's Cathedral and went back to the ship to keep warm. The next port was Regensburg, where we took the walking tour to visit St. Peter's Cathedral, the prime example of Gothic architecture in Bavaria.

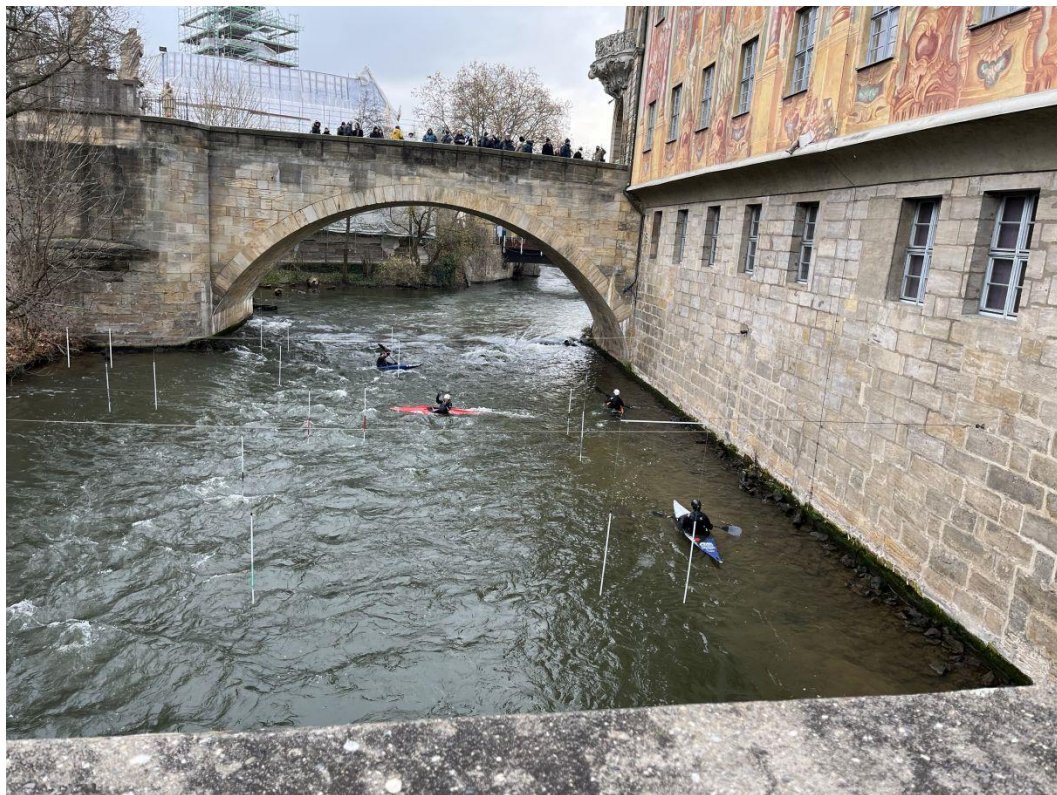
Our next stop was Nuremberg.

Schoner Brunen 14th century fountain



Nuremberg is one of the largest Christmas Markets in Germany. After breakfast, we rushed to catch the transfer coach to the city center. The Christmas Market is located at the Hauptmarkt, in front of the Frauenkirche (Our Lady's Church). There were many rows of vendors with various Christmas crafts on display. Even in the morning, there were many shoppers in front of the numerous vendors. We purchased the beloved Christmas cookies (Lebkuchen) and ate the famous bratwurst. By mid-afternoon, the place was overly crowded with visitors. Before going back to the ship, we decided to visit the remaining medieval city walls which stretch some three miles and feature original gateways and 80 original watchtowers.

The next day, we reached Bamberg, one of the loveliest towns. It is scenically situated on seven hills, each crowned by a beautiful church. We took a cute streetcar to town. Unfortunately, it started to snow and temperatures dropped to 24 degrees, so we decided to turn around and go back to the ship.



Bridge over the Regnitz River

The following day, we arrived at Wurzburg, which was heavily damaged during World War II, but has since been completely restored. We took a scenic route, the “Romantic Road” from Wurzburg to our favorite Christmas town Rothenburg. We visited the Christmas Market and strolled through the narrow cobblestone streets to visit the Christmas ornaments shops.

Photos of Christmas markets:



Year-round Christmas gift shop



Unfortunately, many of the locally made Christmas handicrafts had been replaced by imports. With sadness, we said *Auf Wiedersehen* to our favorite town.



The famous clock tower of Rothenburg

The conclusion of our trip (from Wertheim, Germany to Kinderdijk, The Netherlands) will be in the next issue.

(Photos taken by Dick Roberts)