

# **E-Newsletter of the Organization of Chinese American Women**

**June 2015**

*(from Linda Devine, Editor)*

I extend my appreciation as always to those who submitted material for this issue, and to my husband Ed for his work in preparing the photos.

I continue to encourage OCAW members to write articles for the publication if there is something you think would be of interest to the membership. Even small items of information would be welcome.

Please feel free to send me any suggestions or recommendations you might have for any aspects of the e-newsletter, and I will be glad to consider them and see if they work for our particular publication. I have received suggestions in the past which I have implemented, and I believe they have made the e-newsletter better. My email address is: [devinefive@comcast.net](mailto:devinefive@comcast.net).

Have a wonderful summer break!

## **News from the Virginia and Maryland Chapters**

### **Cathy Roberts' Surprise Retirement Party**

*(from Maria Yang, Virginia Chapter President and Acting Maryland Chapter President)*

Cathy Roberts, a longtime member of OCAW-VA as well as OCAW National Vice President for Membership, retired from the U.S. Department of Commerce in April. Cathy has been so nice hosting some of our programs and teaching knitting over the years. In addition, she has always been generous with preparing food for our parties.

OCAW-MD members Camilla Ng and Susan Young arranged a surprise party to celebrate her retirement. It was held on Sunday, April 19, 2015, at Café Asia in Arlington, Virginia. OCAW-VA and OCAW-MD members were in attendance.

After the party, Cathy expressed her appreciation through email: "Thank you for the wonderful retirement party. I was truly surprised, touched, and speechless. It is so nice to know that I have such good friends who care." She also mentioned that she especially appreciated that OCAW member Dianna Gorin and her husband Henry drove from Charlotte, North Carolina, where they now live, to attend the event.



Cathy's husband Dick Roberts, son Stephen, and Cathy



### **Veronica Li's Book Launch**

*(from Veronica Li, OCAW-VA member)*

My new book, *Confucius Says*, was officially released on Saturday, May 23, 2015. The book launch took place at the Patrick Henry Library in Vienna, Virginia, where I live. Thanks to members from OCAW National and the Virginia and Maryland Chapters, the event was a huge success. They helped me plan, promote, and set up the event, and also “manage” the crowd, as eighty people showed up instead of the forty I’d expected. I’m most grateful to my OCAW sisters.



OCAW Executive Director Donna Byler introducing the author

*Confucius Says* is a novel about caring for aging parents and is based on my own experience. When my parents became too weak to live independently, I moved them from California into my home. My four siblings in California had done their share of caregiving. I thought it was my turn to pay back.

My parents were with me for ten years. It was a difficult period, full of tension and outright conflicts among family members, not to speak of the task of caring for two increasingly feeble elders. No matter what, I gritted my teeth and soldiered on. I believed I had to shed blood for my parents in order to fulfill my duties of “filial piety.” Whether we like it or not, this concept of devotion to our parents, even at the expense of our own well-being, is imprinted in the DNA of all Chinese.

After my parents passed away, I decided to write about the experience as a kind of catharsis. But instead of a memoir, I chose to write it as a novel, actually a comedy. If I didn’t laugh, I would cry. This format also gave me the freedom to tell the story from everyone’s perspective and not just my own. I needed to give my parents their say. Caregiving is a two-way street. Today I’m the caregiver, but tomorrow I’ll be the care receiver.

I presented my book proposal to my publisher, who thought it was a good idea. He also suggested bringing out the Chinese angle to make it different from all the other caregiving books on the market. He told me to read up on Confucius, the inventor of filial piety. One of the books I found is called *Classic of Filial Piety*. It contains the original Confucian sayings on the subject.

I opened to the first chapter. A disciple asked Confucius, “What is filial piety?” Confucius’ answer was: “Our body, skin, and hair are all received from our parents; we dare not injure them. This is the first priority in filial duty.” I was shocked. All these years I thought I was supposed to shed blood for my parents. And now Confucius tells me I can’t even sacrifice my hair for my parents?!

I read on and found more surprises. Aside from not hurting ourselves, Confucius mentioned other ways to serve our parents: be a good person and establish a good name for oneself. My glory is my parents' glory. In other words, every good deed I do, every achievement I make, is an act of filial piety.

Confucius also says loving and serving our parents is just the beginning. We have to extend this love and service to society. That's how we establish our moral character. All this time, I'd thought filial piety was hovering over my parents, waiting on them hand and foot. Now Confucius tells me filial piety is to build a better world and to become a better person?!

I'd been misled by other people's misinterpretations of Confucius. If I'd read his original teachings before I took in my parents, it would have saved me a lot of grief. But now that I've fulfilled my duties, I feel very good about it. Life is a cycle, and it feels good to complete the circle with my parents. I also feel that my heart is a little bigger and stronger for having exercised it. Confucius is right: practicing filial piety does make you a better person. It requires all the love and courage you can muster, but make sure you don't hurt yourself – not even a hair!



Book Signing

A *New World Journal* editor present at my book launch has asked me to translate my presentation for publication in his paper. The *Journal* is a popular local Chinese weekly. He felt my message would resonate with the community. At the same time, a Caucasian American wrote a review of *Confucius Says* on Amazon: "Confucius is often dismissed in American culture, but a thoughtful reader will find in this book relevance and usefulness of Confucian guidelines for family care." So maybe filial piety isn't just for Chinese. It's for anyone who has parents, which is everyone.

A video of my book launch presentation is on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/x0tav2apr2s>. *Confucius Says* is on special sale at my website: [www.veronicali.com](http://www.veronicali.com), or you can simply email me at: [veronicali@aol.com](mailto:veronicali@aol.com). If you're an ebook reader, it's available at: <http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00WOU6QVG>

*(from Rosemary Hsu-Brooks, OCAW-VA member)*

Many OCAW members assisted and enjoyed our faithful member and author, Veronica Li, at the launch of her book, *Confucius Says*, on Saturday, May 23, 2015, at the Patrick Henry Library in Vienna, Virginia. The

event saw a packed crowd who was treated to an informal, humorous presentation by Veronica. It also looked like a bustling sale of Veronica's books – not only this one, but also her previous two, *Journey Across the Four Seas* and *Nightfall in Mogadishu*. Veronica describes her newest book as follows:

“My book is called *Confucius Says*, and it's a novel about caring for aging parents. It's a comedy about family members struggling to follow Confucius' teachings on filial piety without really understanding what Confucius said. They eventually figure it out, but only after much fumbling and bumbling.”

Veronica shared with her fans that she cared for her own parents during their last years, and she is now able to describe those years in this novel with love, compassion, and humor. A fan asked if she were willing to discuss the book further after we have had a chance to read it, and she cheerfully agreed. We look forward to that event.



Veronica Li giving her presentation at the Patrick Henry Library

### **News from the New Orleans Chapter**

*(from Betty Butz, President)*

#### **April Chapter Meeting**

A luncheon meeting was held on Saturday, April 25, 2015, at Hoshun Restaurant on St. Charles Avenue near downtown New Orleans. Betty reaffirmed the mission of OCAW as “to support members who wish to participate more fully in mainstream activities through service and education.” The members present shared insights on their recent involvement in various activities organized by local community groups.

After the meeting was adjourned, Betty introduced a health-related food topic from *The Autoimmune Solution*, a book written by Dr. Amy Myers, published in 2015. Betty had chosen a Squash Sweet Potato Soup recipe from the book and had modified it slightly to share with everyone.

The food at Hoshun (meaning “very fragrant” in characters) was absolutely delicious and sumptuous. We had hand-rolled sushi followed by steamed fish in ginger and soy sauce with broccoli and rice. Despite rain and a gloomy sky, the outing was very enjoyable.

St. Charles Avenue runs through the heart of uptown and downtown New Orleans, with a streetcar running the length of it. Small crowds gathered at each tram stop, waiting to go to the Jazz Fest and other attractions. On both sides of the avenue are stately homes framed by graceful, mature live oak trees, and fragrant flowering trees. Giant southern magnolias were in bloom; a specimen I had collected had opened up to over 12” across with pure white petals that were almost the size of my hand.

### **RECIPE for Squash Sweet Potato Soup**

(Use organic ingredients whenever practical.)

3 garlic cloves

1 large celery stalk, sliced

1 large sweet onion, sliced

3 tablespoons olive oil

1 medium squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into chunks

2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg

4 cups chicken broth

1 13.5-ounce can coconut milk

Dash sea salt and ground black pepper

Saute garlic, celery, and onion in olive oil until soft. Add squash, sweet potato, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Saute for 3-5 minutes. Add broth and bring to boil, then simmer for about 20 minutes. Turn off heat and let mixture rest for 10-15 minutes. Use an immersion blender to mix all ingredients until smooth. Add coconut milk. Reheat the soup on low flame. Add salt and pepper for taste.

### **News from the Silicon Valley Chapter**

*(from Sophia Yang, President)*

#### **Health Seminar**

On Sunday, May 31, 2015, the Silicon Valley Chapter held a health seminar at 2 p.m. at the San Jose Public Library, Calabazas Branch, in San Jose, California. Our speaker was Dr. Victor Cheng, and his topic was “Using Modern Anatomy and Chinese Traditional Movements to Understand Posture.” Dr. Cheng graduated with a B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley and went to China to study Traditional Chinese Medicine. He received a B.M. from Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine and is a licensed TCM Doctor in China. He has clinics in San Jose and Ukiah, California.

Dr. Cheng pointed out some postures we do a lot in our daily life which hurt our bones and muscles, by

showing the structures and types of the joints. He also demonstrated some of the Chinese TaiChi and GongFu postures which can benefit our health.





From this seminar, we really learned how to maintain proper postures, work efficiently, and prevent injuries. The event was very successful, and audience members showed strong interest and interacted with Dr. Cheng a lot. This lecture really benefits everyone.

FYI – if anyone is interested in this topic, you may go to the following links and find out more in detail.

<http://www.victorchengtcm.com/>

From the second link below, you can view almost the same lecture Dr. Cheng presented to us; the lecture in this link, though, is presented in Mandarin.

<http://www.victorchengtcm.com/el-camino-lecture-posture/>





### **Upcoming Event**

Our next event will be the Annual Officers Installation on Sunday, July 19. We will have a lunch gathering at China Stix Restaurant in Santa Clara, California.

### **News from the Hawaii Chapter**

#### **Mardi Gras in May**

*(from Rena Young Ochse, Communications Committee Co-Chair and Newsletter Editor)*

Our Fundraiser this year was a Mardi Gras in May, held on Saturday, May 30, 2015. Gigi Ko and Gladys Lee both agreed that Mardi Gras would be fun. With the concurrence of the membership, proceeds would go to support Lanakila Meals on Wheels. There is a growing number of seniors who are unable to cook for themselves, and Meals on Wheels delivers nourishing food to these homebound elders.



Sharon Chun with purple hair and yellow mask!

Gigi's sister, Isabella Rose Monzon, formerly of Ohio and who now makes Honolulu her home, lent her talent by teaching a group of our members a special illusion dance. This was a riot and generated much fun and laughter.

She needed 9 volunteers; members were curious and didn't know what to expect. They met often to practice, and the result was fantastic. Thanks to Isabella who is a "kumu" for her hula group and dance instructor.

Isabella Rose Monzon





WICKED WAHINE DANCERS: Vicky Ho, Susan Lee, Gladys Lee, Angela Chang, Betty Chang, Brenda Matsui, Isabella Rose Monzon, Susan Chong Wong, and Marilyn Wong  
Seated in front: Rena Young Ochse and Chu Lan Shubert-Kwoc

The Pagoda Hotel in Honolulu was very accommodating for us to have this event in their International Ballroom. They provided a delicious buffet which featured Crusted Baked Salmon and Garlic Hawaiian Salt Steak which sated the appetites of all in attendance, more than 130 people.



Our entertainment was by a nationally and internationally known juggler, Greg Gabaylo, who kept the audience in stitches. Greg performed magic and also had audience participation.

Sharon Chun with entertainer Greg Gabaylo

A costume contest was fun as ten members who were inspired by the theme of the event, entered the contest.



Gigi Ko and Isabella Rose Monzon with contestants Sharon Chun, Brenda Matsui, Zandra Yamamoto, Rena Young Ochse, Betty Chang, and Marilyn Wong



President Queenie Chee enjoying the entertainment with her friends



Frances Goo with Angela Chang enjoying the event

**And more about Mardi Gras in May...**

*(from Geraldine (Gigi) Ko)*

Fun does not begin to describe OCAW-Hawaii's blockbuster production, "Mardi Gras in May," at the Pagoda International Ballroom in Honolulu, on Saturday, May 30, 2015.

On this joyous holiday, background music of continuous Jazz and blues, started the mood for rip-roaring gaiety and merriment. A profusion of the Mardi Gras colors purple, green, and gold, flourished over the white tablecloths, floral centerpieces, resplendent fountain sprays, and golden bows, all the artistic handiwork of Isabella Rose Monzon.

After the welcome remarks by Mistress of Ceremonies Geraldine Ko, she introduced the very personable President Queenie Chee, and then presented event chair Gladys Lee, our large piece of dynamite in a small package.

Then it rained beads, tossed towards the attendees who caught them and wore them, just as they do on Bourbon Street in New Orleans, but without the flashing, scrambling, and flying leaps.

The invocation that preceded lunch was not recited, but Hula-danced by Isabella, to Celine Dion's "The Prayer."



Isabella Rose Monzon dancing the invocation

The buffet was fit for a Rex, apropos for the symbolic eve before the start of 40 days of fasting and abstinence from Ash Wednesday to Easter.

The costume contest showed a riot of colors and patterns, with feathers, masks, tiaras, and other elaborate headgear. Each of the 10 contestants modeled like models, at the same time showing their personalities and styles as they strutted their stuff. Two winners were chosen by audience applause, and were awarded prizes donated by Gigi Ko.



Gigi Ko announces the contest winner of the best dressed Mardi Gras outfit.  
And... the winner is Brenda Matsui!



The rest of the attendees also got into the spirit by wearing accessories in Mardi Gras colors. There were Jades, Emeralds, Amethysts, and gold chains everywhere. Even Jane Pang's nails were all decked out in glittery levels of gold, purple, and green, and her hand was accentuated with a large Amethyst ring.

Jane Pang shows off her special painted Mardi Gras manicure to Gigi Ko, Mistress of Ceremonies and coordinator.





Pauline Young dresses in her Mardi Gras colors.



Everyone adored the juggler/magician Greg Gabaylo and his 45-minute act. There were thrills all around with his skillful juggling, sleight-of-hand magic, and table levitation, the entire time wisecracking all the way.



Marilyn Gabaylo assists her husband Greg with the music.



Greg is juggling with a sword, an apple, and a bowling ball all at once!  
Wow! What a feat!!

There was audience participation as well. Queenie Chee and Chu Lan Shubert-Kwock were the brave ones, chosen by Greg to assist him during the table levitation, and peer under the tablecloth and table for hidden gadgets and tricks.

Greg's juggling lesson was a real treat. The audience cheered as a young woman from the audience successfully juggled three slow-moving, tied-up plastic grocery bags.



Isabella then did another hula number to “These Islands,” a song that celebrates everything that is beautiful in Hawaii.

The grand finale was the “Optical Illusion Dance,” so named for its intent to produce a visual trick, and taught to the “Wicked Wahine Dancers” by dance instructor Isabella Rose Monzon. The dancers were nine pretty maids all in a row, who wore half-black and half-white suits that had the black half of one dancer attached to the black half of the dancer beside her. Ditto with the white half, which was likewise attached to the white half of the dancer beside her.



The Wicked Wahine Dancers

Now our eyes could only see one black figure dancing, when in actuality it was two black halves from two women, and one white figure dancing, when in actuality it was two white halves from two women. Of course it was anybody's guess whose leg belonged to which dancer!

The result was mind-boggling and hilarious. There was massive cheering and applause for this deliciously wicked dance that was both rare and well-done.

We all knew that this was going to be a great party. We had God the ultimate party-maker from Heaven, an outstanding committee, fantastic entertainment, sumptuous food, and an audience well-versed in *joie de vivre*.

Now after the fact, we are basking in the glow of a hugely successful festival. This feeling of accomplishment is the best thing ever!



*(All photos and captions for this event provided by Rena Young Ochse)*

### **From and About Our Members**

#### **From Betty Butz, New Orleans Chapter President**

NEW ORLEANS BY DESIGN was the theme for the 2015 annual fundraiser flower show “Art in Bloom” at the New Orleans Museum of Art, held during the third week of March this year. As a member of Ikebana International, Betty Butz had the honor of displaying a floral composition in the style of the Sogetsu School, in the Asian Gallery. Betty named the design TO THE WIND.

The following materials were used to interpret the theme:

- Perforated brown wrapping paper
- Spanish moss
- Metal container in the shape of a crescent moon
- Pin holder cup
- Bamboo

Night-blooming cereus stalks  
Magnolia piccata  
Ranunculus  
Golden euonymous  
Sweet olive (osmanthus)

The scroll in Chinese calligraphy behind the arrangement reads: “ren feng si hai yang.” It means “Benevolent winds spread over the four seas.” It can be interpreted as kind winds have already spread all over the world, or are in the process of spreading. It can also be interpreted as a wish to be realized. The Chinese sentiment embraces the time continuum of past, present, and future. The idea is to let goodwill ride the winds to disperse far and wide.



*(Photo taken by Mary Balyeat)*

The ikebana was arranged in accord with the natural attributes of each of the materials. Design principles observed were form, proportion, line placement, pleasing negative space, repeating patterns, rhythm and movement, color harmony, design unity, texture, depth, and visual appeal. The art of floral design is a spiritually rewarding hobby for anyone who likes to play with plants.

## **Chinese-Americans' Battle for Civil Rights in the U.S. Supreme Court**

**by Audrey Lee**

*(Editor's Note: Audrey is a member of the OCAW Maryland Chapter.)*

Before *Plessy v Ferguson* (1896) and *Brown v Board of Education* (1954), there was *Yick Wo v Hopkins* (1886) and *Lum v Rice* (1927), respectively.

In recognition of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month in May, I am paying tribute in this article to two Chinese immigrants who fought tough legal battles in the highest court of the land, the U.S. Supreme Court, to end discrimination against Asian-Americans: Yick Wo and Gong Lum. Neither one sat quietly in acceptance of discriminatory actions against them; instead, they pushed their fight through the legal system.

Yick Wo, as the plaintiff is known in this legal case, believed that his laundry business in California should not have to conform to strict fire regulations that resulted in the shutting down of hundreds of Chinese-owned laundry businesses and the imprisonment of their Chinese owners. The San Francisco fire regulations disproportionately affected Chinese businesses compared to those laundry facilities owned by non-Chinese. When Yick Wo's case finally reached the U.S. Supreme Court, Justice Stanley Matthews delivered the opinion finding that the fire regulations were blatantly discriminatory in excluding Chinese from the laundry business, and he ordered the dismissal of all charges against owners who had been jailed. Justice Matthews further found that although most of the owners were not U.S. citizens (at that time Chinese were being denied citizenship), the Fourteenth Amendment still entitled them to equal protection under the law.

*Yick Wo v Hopkins* was the first U.S. Supreme Court case finding that even if a law is race-neutral on its face, if the law is administered in a discriminatory manner, then that law infringes on our rights under the Equal Protection Clause. Notably, by the 1950s, Yick Wo's case had been cited several times to strike down attempts by southern states and municipalities to limit the political rights of African-Americans.

The other U.S. Supreme Court case that exemplifies the Chinese immigrants' struggle is *Lum v Rice*. Twenty-seven years before *Brown v Board of Education*, a Chinese father wanted his U.S. citizen daughter, Martha Lum, to attend a good public school in their Mississippi neighborhood. That school was exclusively for white children. Martha Lum did attend the first day of school; however, during the noon recess, the superintendent told her she would not be allowed to return. The school's board of trustees excluded Martha from attending solely because she was of Chinese descent and, therefore, not a member of the white or Caucasian race. In response, Martha's father, Gong Lum, argued in court that (1) he was a taxpayer supporting and maintaining the school; (2) the school was the only one in their district; and (3) Martha was not a member of the "colored" race, nor of mixed blood, but was, instead, pure Chinese. Mr. Lum further argued that Martha was being directly discriminated against when she was denied her right to attend the public school in her neighborhood.

Despite Mr. Lum's efforts, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against him. The Court declared that the state of Mississippi had classed Martha as being among the "colored" races and, therefore, she was not being denied equal protection under the law. The Court noted that if there are equal educational facilities available to both races, then students of the "colored" races would be assigned to public schools separate from those provided for the white students. The Court further noted that Martha could attend the colored public schools in her district, or she could go to a private school, but she was not entitled to attend a white public school. Thus, the Court found that states had discretion in regulating their public schools, and the school's decision did not conflict with the Fourteenth Amendment.

Subsequently, as we know, in the 1954 case of *Brown v the Board of Education*, the Court overturned *Plessy v Ferguson* and found that racial segregation in public schools violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Through *Yick Wo* and *Gong Lum*, we made our collective voices heard in the highest court in the United States. Since first arriving on these shores, Chinese-Americans have pursued their civil rights through the difficult and onerous court system, and in their efforts, we have much to be proud.

Note: For a very moving account of the Chinese immigrants' struggle, please read the Spring 2012 article commemorating the 125th Anniversary of *Yick Wo v Hopkins* published in the Michigan Journal of Race & Law (Vol. 17, Issue 2). See: Marie A. Failing, *Yick Wo at 125: Four Simple Lessons for the Contemporary Supreme Court*, 17 Mich. J. Race & L. 217 (2012). Available at: <http://repository.law.umich.edu/mjrl/vol17/iss2/1>