

# E-Newsletter of the Organization of Chinese American Women

June 2018



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*(from Linda Devine, Editor)*

As always, thank you to those who submitted material for this issue of the e-newsletter. A special thanks to my husband Ed, as there were an unusually large number of photos that he had to prepare this time.

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

Please feel free to send me any suggestions or recommendations that you might have for any aspects of the e-newsletter. My email address is: [devinefive@comcast.net](mailto:devinefive@comcast.net)

As we embark on summer, safe travels to those who are going on trips. I wish everyone a restful and enjoyable break and will see you in the fall!

## **Table of Contents**

	Page
OCAW Webinar.....	1
News from the Virginia Chapter.....	2
News from the New Orleans Chapter.....	4
News from the Silicon Valley Chapter.....	10
News from the Hawaii Chapter.....	15
From and About Our Members.....	15
Enjoying Ikebana.....	25
Scholarship.....	37
The Diaspora of Chinese Women in the Americas.....	39
Spring.....	40

## **OCAW Webinar**

*(from Baiming Liu, National Vice President for Finance)*

To increase awareness of opportunities and choices through the introduction of people, places, and things, OCAW held an online interview with Ms. Lily Qi on Wednesday, May 9, 2018.

Ms. Qi is Assistant Chief Administrative Officer of Montgomery County, Maryland. Currently, she is also a candidate for District 15 of the Maryland House of Delegates. The purpose of this webinar was to introduce Ms. Qi and to hear about her challenges and choices that brought her from the People's Republic of China to where she is now.

National President Christina Chang opened the meeting and introduced Baiming Liu, Vice President for Finance, who was host for the evening and moderated the webinar. Executive Director Donna Byler made closing remarks. The interview was well received among the participants.

The webinar played an important role in giving exposure to OCAW, as well as encouraging Chinese American women to join the mainstream. As a result of the event, Ms. Qi is interested in joining OCAW and currently is in the application process.

Last summer, Baiming successfully led OCAW's first online meeting. Dr. Lihua Zhang, current President of the New Orleans Chapter, gave a presentation entitled "We Are What We Eat." Its focus was on nutrition and healthy eating. It was very successful and imparted a lot of useful information to participants.

OCAW hopes to plan more webinars in the future. If there is a topic which you think would be of interest to members and friends, please feel free to send your suggestions to: [ocawwomen@aol.com](mailto:ocawwomen@aol.com)

### **News from the Virginia Chapter**

#### **Dim Sum/Lunch**

In April, Pat Ellzey, former OCAW New Orleans Chapter President and current Vice President, and husband Will traveled from their home in New Orleans to their home in Connecticut. Passing near the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region, they were the guests of OCAW Executive Director Donna Byler and husband Tony at their home in Virginia.

While the Ellzeys were briefly in the DC area, National President Christina Chang and husband Steve graciously hosted a dim sum/lunch for Pat and Will on Thursday, April 26, 2018. It was held at Sino's Inn in Centreville, Virginia. Christina graciously extended an open invitation to any OCAW-MD and OCAW-VA members who wished to join them.

The food was plentiful and delicious; the courses kept coming and coming! It was a wonderful time for all to gather together and catch up on news, and we had a lovely afternoon. Many thanks to Christina and Steve for their generosity!



Executive Director Donna Byler, National President Christina Chang, Virginia Chapter Vice President Alice Way, National Vice President for Membership Cathy Roberts, New Orleans Chapter Vice President Pat Ellzey, and National Vice President for Communications Linda Devine

*(Photo taken by Dick Roberts)*



Norman Way, Tony Byler, Steve Chang, Will Ellzey, and Dick Roberts

*(Photo taken by Pat Ellzey)*

## News from the New Orleans Chapter

### APAS Asian Heritage Festival

*(from Pat Ellzey, Vice President, and Betty Butz, Past President)*

The OCAW New Orleans Chapter participated in the annual Asian Heritage Festival sponsored by the Asian Pacific American Society (APAS). The event took place on Saturday, April 7, 2018, at its usual venue, the Audubon Zoo in New Orleans. Food, arts and crafts, and entertainment were featured.

At OCAW's table, activities included translating and writing names in Chinese Calligraphy on bookmarks, and making and playing the Chinese puzzle game Tangram. Fortune cookies were given away. Newly created OCAW brochures for membership recruitment and publicity were available for distribution.



Nancy Chung, Pat Ellzey, Yvonne Louie, and Yuling Khorsandi



(Standing) Nancy Chung, Yvonne Louie, and Jeanette Hew  
(Seated) Jeanette Hew's daughter Jennifer, and Le Pin He



Frank Wong, Winston Ho, and Thuy Vu Vo

Frank Wong, member Sandy Wong's husband, has invited OCAW members to enjoy a free bowl of gumbo should you visit their restaurant in New Orleans. Winston Ho is a doctoral student who has given OCAW local Chinese history seminars and had a research display at the next table. Thuy Vu Vo is Chair of the Asian Pacific American Society and an OCAW member.



Mangjee and Jimmy Yeh

*(Photo taken by Betty Butz)*



Chinese participation in the Fashion Show where various Asians modeled a diversity of ethnic clothes. Pat Ellzey (6th from the left) and Yuling Khorsandi (7th from the left) joined The Confucius Institute group to model Chinese clothes. The show was the finale of the Festival.

*(Photos taken by Si Chung except where noted)*

## Flower Arranging Demonstration and Seminar

*(from Pat Ellzey)*



On Sunday, April 22, 2018, Past President Betty Butz gave an interesting and beautiful flower arranging demonstration and seminar. The event was held at the Chinese Presbyterian Church in Kenner, Louisiana. It was well presented, and attendees learned a lot.

We appreciated Betty sharing her knowledge and time with us.











President Lihua Zhang, Vice President Pat Ellzey, Past President Betty Butz, Secretary Jeanette Hew, member Yvonne Louie, a prospective member, new member Nadine Wu, and member Mayling Hew

*(Photos courtesy of Pat Ellzey)*

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

*(from Sophia Yang, President)*

#### **Annual Spring Outing**

OCAW Silicon Valley Chapter's annual spring outing took place on Saturday, April 21, 2018. We hiked on the Los Gatos Creek Trail. The hike started from Los Gatos Old Town and ended at Lexington Reservoir. It was about 4 miles in length, and took about 2-1/2 hours.

Following our hike, we had a lunch social at Blue Line Pizza in Los Gatos Downtown.

It was so nice to have a light walk on a beautiful sunny day!





### Chinese Alzheimer's Forum

The Silicon Valley Chapter sponsored the 12th Annual Chinese Alzheimer's Forum on Saturday, May 19, 2018, at Intel Auditorium in Santa Clara, California. Our volunteers formed a group as the ambassadors to help with seating, collecting questionnaires, and handing the microphones to attendees in the Q&A session.

The program contained four sessions:

Caregivers Panel Discussion

Updates on Alzheimer's Research by Dr. Geoffrey Kerchner, a specialist on Memory Disorder

Dementia Conversation

Home Safety and Fall Prevention



The Alzheimer's Association is the world's leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support, and research. Ms. Peining Chang, the Community Outreach Manager of the Alzheimer's Association of Northern California and Northern Nevada, provides a lot of information and support to Chinese families with Alzheimer's patients.

The event attracted over 400 people to participate, and it successfully delivered its message and brought awareness of Alzheimer's Disease to the Chinese community.



### **Upcoming Event**

Our upcoming event will be the sponsorship of “Dance for Life,” an Alzheimer’s fundraising event hosted by our former president, Aichu Wang, on Saturday, June 9, 2018.

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

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

### **Upcoming General Membership Meeting #3**

The OCAW Hawaii Chapter is holding its third General Membership Meeting on Sunday, July 22, 2018 at Maple Garden Restaurant in Honolulu. Our speaker will be Mr. Bow Mun Chin. He is a veteran attorney at the Hawaii Immigrant Justice Center of the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii. He will talk about the harsh effects of current immigration law and policies on immigrants in Hawaii.



As one knows, Hawaii is a melting pot of people and cultures from all over the world. Needless to say, there are many issues here. Our membership looks forward to listening to what our speaker has to say.

*(Editor’s Note: For more news about Hawaii Chapter members’ individual activities and accomplishments, see “From and About Our Members.”)*

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

#### **From Grace Sams, former Virginia Chapter President**

Grace is proud of her daughter, an accomplished architect, who was interviewed by the American Institute of Architects. The following is an excerpt from an article which appeared in the organization’s March 2018 *Journal*.

“Pamela Sams, AIA, is the southeast design realization leader at Gensler Architecture Firm in Washington, D.C. She has her hands in several major projects, such as expansion to Washington Dulles International Airport and a forensic laboratory campus for the U.S. Department of Justice. That’s a big departure from her theory-heavy Masters program at Princeton University. Her building designs focus on performance and sustainability.”



Pamela Sams and husband Denis Gray

### **The Aloha Spirit of Hawaii...**

*(from Dr. Lei Ahu Isa, Hawaii Chapter President)*

*(Editor’s Note: The following are excerpts from an article Lei wrote for “Ka Wai Ola,” the Office of Hawaiian Affairs Newsletter. As Trustee-at-Large, she is an elected official for the Native Hawaiian indigenous Trust fund. As such, she is involved with all matters that affect its beneficiaries, such as the recent Volcano victims on the Big Island. They have been working with Hawaiian families with children, providing gas masks, micro loans, shelter for their Charter schools, etc.*

*Daniel Akaka was an American educator and politician who was a United States Senator from Hawaii from 1990 to 2013. A member of the Democratic Party, Akaka was the first U.S. Senator of Native Hawaiian ancestry.)*



Lei Ahu Isa



U.S. Senator Daniel Kahikina Akaka  
September 11, 1924 – April 6, 2018

*Mahalo nui loa, Senator Daniel Kahikina Akaka! Regarded as a champion of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders during his time in Washington D.C, he was known as the “Ambassador of Aloha.”* As son Dr. Gerard Akaka describes his Dad, “...he was ‘wired’ to see the best in others and to offer kindness, caring, and hugs...everywhere he went.” ...

In Hawai’i, the “Aloha Spirit” is not just something made up for the tourism industry...it is a way of life and part of the State Laws of Hawai’i:

**HRS 5-7.5 “Aloha Spirit.** (a) *Aloha Spirit* is the coordination of mind and heart within each person. It brings each person to the self. Each person must think and emote good feelings to others. In the contemplation and presence of the life force, “*Aloha*,” the following unuhi laula loa may be used: *Akahai, Lokahi, ‘Olu’olu, Ha’aha’a, and Ahonui...*”

So the traits of charm, warmth, and sincerity of Hawaii’s people can be expressed by this word *Aloha*. It is the philosophy of native Hawaiians and was presented as a gift to the people of Hawai’i. The word “Akahai” means kindness to be expressed with tenderness; “Lokahi” means unity and expressed with harmony; “‘Olu’olu” means agreeable or to be expressed with pleasantness; “Ha’aha’a” means humility or to be expressed with modesty; and “Ahonui” means patience and to be expressed with perseverance. Our lawmakers were wise in including the “Aloha Spirit” in our State laws.

*Aloha* also means ‘mutual regard and affection which extends warmth and caring with NO obligation in return.’ *Aloha* is the essence of relationships in which each person is very important to all persons to be able to live in collective existences...It means to hear what is not said, to see what cannot be seen, and to know the unknowable.

*(Photo courtesy of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs)*

### **From Chu Lan Shubert-Kwock, Hawaii Chapter Immediate Past President**

Chu Lan Shubert-Kwock is now serving as the CEO and President of **Associated Chinese University Women (ACUW)**, founded by ten Chinese University women to promote our Chinese Heritage and university education for Chinese women by offering first-year college student scholarships. Recently 9 scholarships of \$4,000 each were awarded to local students attending colleges in Hawaii and on the mainland. The organization holds a bi-annual gala fundraiser to raise scholarship monies. It also receives monies through donations.

On another topic, Chu Lan wrote a *Letter to the Editor* which was published in April 2018 in the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, the main newspaper of Hawaii, concerning sexual harassment of a Chinese American, Rachael Wong, former Director of the State Department of Human Services. The perpetrator was a very senior and powerful Speaker of the Hawaii House of Representatives, Joseph Souki, an icon of the Hawaii Democratic Party and 36 years in elective office. He was forced to resign and paid a \$5,000 fine.

Chu Lan hopes OCAW continues to champion women’s issues, particularly sexual harassment, workplace bullying, and domestic violence. She hopes to contribute to these causes.

**Finding KUKAN**

*(from Rena Young Ochse, Hawaii Chapter Communications Chair)*

OCAW Hawaii Chapter member Robin Lung's documentary, *Finding KUKAN*, was aired on PBS in May, and Hawaii will be able to view her film on June 28 in Honolulu. Congratulations to Robin!

**U.S. Department of Transportation Celebration of National Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month**

*(from Maria Yang, Virginia Chapter Immediate Past President)*

Some members and friends of OCAW, including Christina Chang (OCAW National President), Chi-Hua Yang (OCAW-VA President), Ping Zhu (OCAW-MD President), Maria Yang (OCAW-VA Immediate Past President), and Maria's friends Becky Huang and Jocelyn Loh participated in the U.S. Department of Transportation's event to celebrate National Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month on Wednesday, May 16, 2018.

The event was hosted by Secretary Elaine Chao and SBA Administrator Linda McMahon at the headquarters of the Department of Transportation in Washington, D.C. The audience numbered about 500 people.



Secretary Chao and Administrator McMahon

Derek Kan, DOT's Under Secretary for Policy, made welcome remarks to start the program at 2 p.m., and this was followed by the Presentation of Colors, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the National Anthem. Ajit Pai, Chair of the Federal Communications Commission, and Arjun Garg, Chief Counsel of DOT's Federal Transit Administration, also made remarks about the meaning and future of celebrating Asian American Heritage Month.

The highlight of the program was the "Fireside Chat" with Elaine Chao and Linda McMahon in front of all the attendees. The chat was very inspiring and informative.

Secretary Chao is the 18th U.S. Secretary of Transportation. This is her second cabinet position. She served as U.S. Secretary of Labor from 2001 to January 2009, and is the first Asian American woman to be appointed to the President's cabinet in American history.

Linda McMahon serves as the 25th Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). As a member of the President's cabinet, she advocates on behalf of the 30 million small businesses in America. She leads a team of professionals dedicated to ensuring that entrepreneurs have the support and tools they need to start, grow, and succeed in business, specifically through access to capital and federal contracting opportunities, counseling and mentorship, and financial assistance following declared disasters.

The program concluded with panel presentations about government assistance to small business in the United States. A reception with many varieties of delicious Asian food was enjoyed by attendees.





Becky Huang, Jocelyn Loh, and Maria Yang

**Federal Asian Pacific American Council Civilian Awards Banquet**

*(from Maria Yang)*

The Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) conducted its 33rd National Leadership Training Program May 14-17, 2018.

The Civilian Awards Banquet was held on Thursday, May 17, 2018, at the Sheraton Hotel in Pentagon City, Virginia. U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao was the keynote speaker and presented Civilian Awards and the Distinguished Public Service Scholarship Award.

Maria Yang, Secretary Chao,  
and other attendees



**About Cynthia Chang, Silicon Valley Chapter Past President**

*(from Sophia Yang, Silicon Valley Chapter President)*



Cynthia Chang with California State Assembly members Kansen Chu, Evan Low, and Ash Kalra

The members of the Silicon Valley Chapter are pleased to congratulate Cynthia Chang who was recently honored as the Remarkable Leader in Public Service. Many OCAW members were there to celebrate with her.

The Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month Reception and Celebration, hosted by California State Assembly members Evan Low, Ash Kalra, and Kansen Chu, took place on Thursday, May 17, 2018 at M Asian Fusion Restaurant, 98 South Second Street in San Jose, California.

Cynthia, our former President, was recognized as one of the ten outstanding Asian Pacific Americans for their dedicated work and commitment to the greater Silicon Valley Community.

Cynthia has served as a school board member for almost 24 years, currently in her 20th year with the Los Gatos-Saratoga High School District and 4 years with the Saratoga Union School District. She is also former president of the Asian Pacific Islander School Board Members Association. She was Boy Scouts of America Troop 508 Committee Chair for 6 years (both sons are Eagle Scouts), and Saratoga Memorial Day Observance event Co-Chair for 3 years. In addition, she was the Founding Board Member of the Chinese Historical and Cultural Project, a nonprofit organization which, along with History San Jose, fundraised for, built, and gifted the Chinese American Historical Museum to the City of San Jose. The museum is located at History Park at Kelley Park.

Awards she has received include the Saratoga High School PTSA Golden Oak Service Award (highest award for long-term service to the school community) in 2006, and she was named "Woman of the Year" for the California State Assembly-24th District in 2010.





Cynthia Chang speaking as part of the Silicon Valley Chapter's presentation at OCAW's 40th Anniversary National Conference on April 1, 2017

*(Photo taken by Dick Roberts)*

*(Editor's Note: Cynthia has been an integral part of the Silicon Valley Chapter since its founding over 30 years ago. Her contributions to the chapter have been invaluable, and she is active to this day.*

*She was among the SVC members who traveled to the Washington, D.C. area to attend OCAW's 40th Anniversary Celebration/National Conference and Reunion last spring. After having heard so much about her through the years, we all had the pleasure of finally meeting her.*

*Our warmest congratulations to Cynthia on this much-deserved honor!)*

### **About Roberta Wong Leung, Hawaii Chapter member**

*(from Rena Young Ochse)*

Hawaii member Roberta Wong Leung will be honored as "Mother of the Year" by United Chinese Society on Saturday, June 16, 2018 at Jade Dynasty Restaurant in Honolulu. Her many accomplishments earned her this honor.

Her husband Aldrin was the Chief Executive Officer for the Salisbury Hotel in Hong Kong and recently

retired. They both travel extensively, and Roberta has joined numerous organizations including Associated Chinese University Women, the Chinese Women's Club of Honolulu, and the Hawaii Chinese Civic Association. Congratulations!



Roberta Wong Leung with husband Aldrin and daughters Aldrinana and Robbieana

**From Rena Young Ochse, Hawaii Chapter Communications Chair and Past President**

**Rena Young Ochse** will be installed as President of Business Professional Women for a second term, 2018-2019. At the convention held in Kona, Hawaii, she chaired the “BPW Woman of the Year” and “Employer of the Year” search.

Hawaii Chapter member **Pauline Tseu Young** won the “Woman of the Year” award and will be presented a certificate honoring her for her many years of participation with BPW. Pauline will celebrate her birthday on June 23 when she will turn 93 years young!

**From Donna Byler, Executive Director**

On the occasion of Mother's Day, Donna Byler was struck by these lovely words to mothers, written by Frances Goo. She wanted to share these words with all.

“Continue to be the sunshine that nourishes and nurtures your children for years to come. No matter how old a child is, he/she will always look at you with adoring eyes and a grateful heart for all your love and for just being you!!”



## Enjoying Ikebana

by Linda Devine

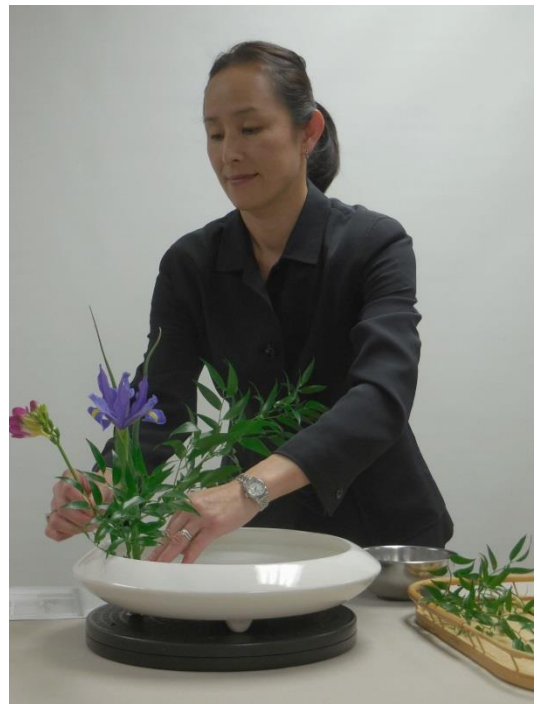
### Sunday, April 15, 2018

It was a cool and rainy day, hardly ideal 'garden' weather, but that did not dampen the spirits of OCAW Maryland and Virginia members, spouses, and friends who enjoyed an Ikebana outing at the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. The D.C. Chapter of Ikebana International had returned to the venue to host its annual exhibition. For a week and a half, two different displays were planned, as well as four Ikebana demonstrations representing different Ikebana schools.

Arriving early, Camilla Ng was able to do a short hike and see some of her favorite Arboretum sites, and Maria Yang and her friend Becky Huang viewed the first Ikebana display of 32 arrangements. Then our group watched the first of four demonstrations by Ikebana master Alice Buch, assisted by Yuko Wain. The demonstration featured the **Ohara School**, one of the major Ikebana schools. Alice imparted much knowledge to her attentive listeners as she created three arrangements, discussing some history as well as the basic principles of Ikebana. There were a great many questions from the audience, including several from our group, and we all learned a lot.



Alice Buch, Ohara master



Yuko Wain

*(Photos taken by Linda Devine)*



Ohara School demonstration arrangements

*(Photos taken by Camilla Ng)*

Afterward, those of us who had not yet viewed the first of the exhibits did so. The arrangements mainly encompassed four major schools – Saga Goryu, Ohara, Sogetsu, and Ikenobo, but there also were examples of the Chiko and Sangetsu schools. It was fun to compare our favorites.



*(Photos taken by Camilla Ng)*

We all had a lovely afternoon together, and we looked forward to more exhibits and demonstrations the following week.



Steve Chang, Christina Chang, Camilla Ng, Maria Yang, Becky Huang, Ruby Fanchiang, Eva Fanchiang, Susan Young, and Ben Soumekh

*(Photo taken by Linda Devine)*



Arrangement by members of the Embassy of Japan

Christina Chang, National President; Linda Devine, National Vice President for Communications; Camilla Ng, former Maryland Chapter President; and Maria Yang, Virginia Chapter Immediate Past President

*(Photo taken by Becky Huang)*

### **Saturday, April 21**

This time in better weather – sunny and 60 degrees, OCAW-MD members Camilla Ng and Linda Devine returned to the Arboretum for more Ikebana events. Linda attended a morning talk by Elizabeth Biddle, President of the Washington, D.C. Chapter of Ikebana International. Elizabeth informed the audience that there were 161 Ikebana International chapters in 38 countries around the world. The Washington, D.C. Chapter was Chapter No. 1, of which they were very proud. They were founded in 1956 and have been an active organization since that time.

Although Elizabeth is of the Ikenobo School, one of the oldest schools, her presentation was a basic talk on what Ikebana is. Their motto is “Friendship through Flowers.” She explained the general principles of the art, described how an Ikebana teacher would teach his or her student, showed the audience some instructional materials used in teaching, and explained some of the methods and tools used to create arrangements. It was highly informative.



Elizabeth Biddle, President of the Washington, D.C. Chapter of Ikebana International

*(Photo taken by Linda Devine)*

Camilla then joined Linda to view the second exhibit of Ikebana arrangements installed this week. The 34 new arrangements represented the Ichiyo, Ohara, Sogetsu, and Ikenobo Schools. Pictured below are a few of the arrangements that Camilla particularly liked.



*(Photo taken by Camilla Ng)*



*(Photos taken by Camilla Ng)*

One particularly fascinating Ikebana was a large arrangement by Valerie Eccleston, a master of the Ichiyo School. The piece demonstrated her proficiency with artistically splitting large bamboo and using it to structure her works.



*(Photo taken by Camilla Ng)*

Camilla and Linda were also able to learn more at the exhibit by asking additional questions of Ms. Biddle who graciously made herself available to attendees there.

After a relaxing ‘picnic’ lunch on the Arboretum grounds, Camilla and Linda attended an afternoon Ikebana demonstration given by Tone Olsen, a master of the **Sogetsu School**. This popular school is considered modern. Tone is the Director of Sogetsu D.C. and gave a wonderful presentation to a packed house of interested participants.





Tone Olsen, Sogetsu master and Director of Sogetsu D.C.



*(Photos taken by Linda Devine)*

We concluded the afternoon by taking advantage of the beautiful day to revisit the Penjing and Bonsai exhibits and view other Arboretum offerings.

Sunday, April 22



*(Photo taken by Linda Devine)*

Another lovely day brought large crowds to the Arboretum. OCAW-VA's Maria Yang invited several friends to join her, Camilla, and Linda. Among them were prospective new OCAW members, and they learned a lot of information about the organization.

The group viewed the current exhibit, and then attended the fourth and final demonstration. This time it was given by Bruce Wilson, a professor at St. Mary's College of Maryland, and a teacher of the **Saga Goryu School**. There was standing-room only for his presentation.

Bruce informed the audience that this year was the 1200th (!) anniversary of the Saga Goryu School, arguably the oldest Ikebana school. Special events are planned for this year to celebrate the historic anniversary/milestone.

Bruce created several arrangements, demonstrating a different Saga style each time. Audience members asked many questions of him, and his answers were very detailed and replete with historical and interesting information.



Bruce Wilson, Saga Goryu master

*(Photo taken by Linda Devine)*



*(Photos taken by Camilla Ng)*





(Standing) Doug Kinsella, Becky Huang, and Maria Yang  
(Seated) Jocelyn Lo, Eva Ngai, Avie Schneider, and Camilla Ng

*(Photo taken by Linda Devine)*



On the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum plaza

*(Photo taken by Avie Schneider)*

Afterward, Maria arranged a late lunch for our group at the nearby Panda Gourmet restaurant. Everyone got to know one another better, as we dined on a variety of dishes.

All in all, three days at the Arboretum had been very educational and enjoyable.



*(Photo taken by Linda Devine)*

## **Scholarship**

**by Betty Butz**

*(Editor's Note: Betty is a former long-time President of the New Orleans Chapter.)*

*The scholar ranks above all occupations. Wealth and fame will fade, but one's scholarship will not perish. If there is only one desire in one's life, it should be the pursuit of knowledge, which is the fountain of wisdom.*

These were the words my mother gave me when I was old enough to go to school in Hong Kong. Ma was a fine example herself. She married as a teenager, graduated from nursing school in midwifery, raised four boys and three girls, and operated a clinic in my home village in China. Then she emigrated to Hong Kong,

where she worked for the government as a public health nurse until retirement in her sixties. She continued to volunteer to help her community part time. At age ninety, she learned to use a computer so that she could register the several hundred folks that visited the senior center in her neighborhood each day. In her time, education for girls was not taken for granted. It was rather discouraged because an educated woman might not benefit her parents at all. Ma felt that since she had had the privilege, she ought to make use of the gift.

As the youngest of seven children, I learned a great deal from my siblings. My father said that the last in the pack should be the brightest, for she would be less likely to repeat mistakes made by her seniors. Life lessons are precious. It also happened that due to my father's illness, I learned to carry on at an early age on my own. The best decisions I made were related to education. I worked to pay my own tuition, and took extra tests whenever possible. I scored well enough on one of those tests to win a full scholarship, funded by American donors, to study at a university in Japan. That crucial turn brought many unexpected rewards the rest of my life.

With full support from my husband, I retired early and learned to engage in community life in meaningful ways. My hobby in floral design led me into the fold of the New Orleans Chapter of Ikebana International. After two years as president, I was ready to connect to the local Chinese American society when I asked to join OCAW. In 2009, I had the good fortune of meeting Faith Breen who explained the mission and purpose of the organization. Among the great opportunities that OCAW offered was the almost one thousand scholarships given to rural Chinese girls so that they could go to school; everyone agreed that it was money well spent. Stories of New Orleans Chapter founder Ms. Temple were also quite inspiring. As a result, I volunteered for office and had the pleasure of serving for eight years as president of the local chapter. I am happy that we are going strong today.

There are many ways to pursue knowledge: from books, media, school, church, teachers, friends, interest groups, and hands-on experience. I find that interacting with people allows me to gain insight into different ways to perceive, to interpret, and to do things. Years of teaching various levels of foreign language acquisition allowed me to learn to appreciate perspective and individual background. Seemingly random events can be the result of choices made based on educational, social, and economic structure, and one's past experience within those confines. Intelligent people can be expected to make the best choices based on circumstances surrounding them.

In the multicultural, multi-ethnic society that we try to maintain in peaceful ways, groups and individuals, especially newcomers, are challenged constantly to give meaning to their ways of engagement or the lack thereof. Through my social encounters, I realize that it is important for Chinese Americans to define themselves politically as Americans who have unique knowledge of desirable Chinese cultural traits. OCAW helped me gain insight into two topics: traditional Chinese remedies, and tangram puzzles (a puzzle game composed of seven pieces made from a square of cardboard).

When I taught high school in the Midwest, students asked me if I knew much about acupuncture because they were keenly interested in it. I was not in a position to offer much because, at that time, information on the subject was sketchy and unscientific. It was not even considered alternative medicine. Furthermore, I did not want teenagers to be even thinking about applying "voodoo" treatments to anyone. Circumstances have changed greatly. In 2018, there are thousands of registered acupuncture practitioners, licensed by the medical profession in the U.S. Thus, I consider this topic having gone mainstream.

Tangram puzzles are simple to present, to teach, and to engage anyone who might be interested in Chinese culture. According to Baidu documents, the idea dates back to the Song Dynasty. Google led me to an image curated at Indiana University of "Chinese Enigmas Perfected," showing tangram cards that were dated 1818. A German friend told me that the puzzles are quite popular in her home country, where there are endless

designs created locally by children, technicians, engineers, mathematicians, and interested parties in general. Anyone who wishes to volunteer to work with children should be encouraged to play with tangram. These puzzles are fun to use and the experience truly rewarding.

Recently, I attended a forum sponsored by the US-China Strong Foundation. One of their stated goals is to send American students to study in China. This is a wonderful initiative for cultural exchange, for young people to see things from a Chinese perspective. I hope that these culture ambassadors will bring back tangible user-friendly games, puzzles, knowledge, and ideas that can be used to help bridge the way for Chinese immigrants to integrate into mainstream life in the U.S.

### **The Diaspora of Chinese Women in the Americas**

**by Queenie Mow Chee**

*(Editor's Note: Queenie is a two-time former President of the Hawaii Chapter.)*

Records of Chinese women coming to the Americas begin in the mid- to late 19th century in western history books. The United States and Canada seem to have more written about their movements, their stories, and emigration than the countries of South America and Mexico.

Being a member of OCAW and a concerned citizen of the U.S. as to the general well-being of the Asian American woman of today and the future, I was also curious to know how well our counterparts fair in South America – especially because I have relatives specifically in Peru.

Based on a very limited observation of my cousin in Lima, whom I visited in the early part of 2018, the women of Chinese ethnicity there are doing well. There is a range of new immigrant as well as second- and third-generation Chinese women. Similar to the North American laws of the 19th and even 20th centuries, Chinese male laborers were imported with no or limited numbers of Chinese females permitted. Thus, in the early years, many Chinese men took wives from the native population.

My cousin's mother and grandmother both arrived in Lima after World War II, to join their husbands who had established themselves in South America. Born in Lima, this cousin was raised in a household with Chinese traditions but speaking primarily Spanish and Chinese (Cantonese and Hakka dialects). Her circle of friends was not limited to Chinese but the natives of various ethnicity.

She was sent to Hawaii to live with our aunt and attended the University of Hawaii for four years. Her English was much improved, and upon graduation, she returned to Peru, married a native Peruvian Japanese engineer, and together they had one son. She opened a jewelry store and later, a Christian travel agency, catering to church-goers interested in going on missions.

She views herself as Peruvian. Her friends are a mixed group, and although she can speak Chinese, teaches TaiChi at a hospital in retirement, and can cook a few Chinese dishes, she is Peruvian. The culture of respect and care for her parents, which is inherently Chinese, and following a few of the New Year traditions from the 'old country,' are what may be the few ties that still bind her to being Chinese.

She is not aware of any "Chinese women's clubs" in Lima, and really has no interest in joining them.

Here in the U.S., the women of Chinese ethnicity often cling to their old culture more closely, and perhaps tend to mingle more with other Chinese. Perhaps it is because we are greater in numbers than in South America?

The sisters of OCAW have a variety of members – from new immigrant citizens, to fourth- or even fifth-generation of mostly Chinese ancestry. Some of us are products of interracial marriages, or have intermarried. Caucasian, other Asian, or Polynesian mix can be found currently among our members.

Some of us may still view ourselves as “Chinese” but are very much Americans. Some of us wish to recapture some of our ‘roots’ but may not be able to speak Chinese, although we enjoy the food, the celebrations, the art, the dress, and the jewelry!

There are those among us who may seek assimilation into mainstream America, however each may define it. Yet want to not forget our origins. Some of us continue to speak a dialect of Chinese in our homes and can communicate comfortably in either Chinese or English.

It is a beautiful thing to observe. We learn to ‘shift gears’ in our style of thinking and speaking. The traditional ways dictated modesty and self-deprecation, while in the U.S., it may be viewed as false modesty or being introverted.

But there are commonalities that bind us all: simple things like warm greetings whether coming or going, respect for each other through sharing, being considerate and waiting your turn, making others feel comfortable, and being tolerant of some of our differences.

It is important to be able to look in the mirror and accept our self in what is reflected. And then realizing that we are first and foremost, human beings. Thus begins the rudimentary respect for self, and respect for others.

Even now, the ‘old country’ is evolving. The new generations are also changing. With the world so connected electronically – internet, movies, music, and so on, we are seeing more homogenizing of cultures.

Yet, we still see pockets of those who would divide and deprecate by skin color, national origins perceived, or religious beliefs. In the U.S., we would like to think that all have equal rights and all should have a chance to better themselves, and all should be accorded respect. But we are not a perfect world. We are still, human.

Thus, we still need a group called the Organization of Chinese American Women. And to continue to be mindful of improving the lives of those sisters in need. We indeed, are also what makes America great!

## Spring

by Betty Butz

May 2018 New Orleans, Louisiana

Few things remind me more intensely of the true arrival of spring than the ubiquitous swarms of winged termites that inspect every light source after sunset. Most residents of south Louisiana yield to nature’s rhythm by turning off all lights after dinner. Instead of braving the clouds of bugs outdoors, one can catch a reflection of the moon over a **cup of tea** while keeping a low profile in a dark spot. Despite the best effort to be invisible to the termites, these tireless insects manage to seek moisture in the bathtubs and drains in the



house, and the creeks and woods yonder. A cold winter had delayed their visit, and spring has been pleasantly cool and fairly dry. For several weeks, I lulled myself into dreaming that we could skip the application around the house of unpronounceable chemicals concocted to thwart off the invasion of termites. Much to my relief, the termite controllers were ready when I called.



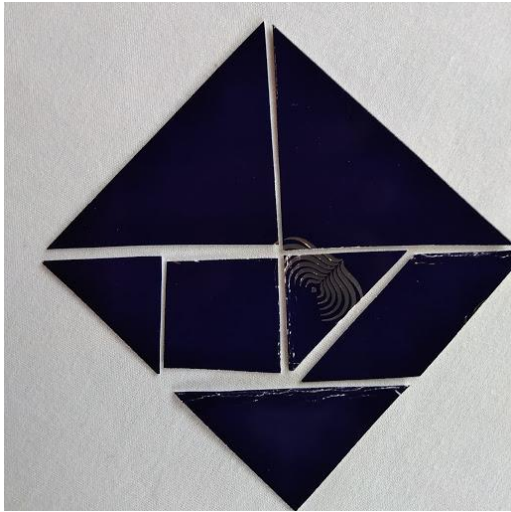
Besides having fewer noxious insects, the cooler temperatures brought forth brilliant colors from a blooming parade of **azaleas** that dazzled everyone with a glimpse of heaven. Neighbors were in a good mood as they dealt with the ravages of the previous season. While the city vacuumed up tons of Mardi Gras beads from city sewers, homeowners cleaned out debris of fallen twigs and leaves in the gutters, and looked for possible leaks on the roof and around windows. To the ever-subsiding garden, we dutifully added stones, sand, mulch, and grass.



A year's plan begins in the **spring**. One also reaps from what one has planted. Over the years, OCAW has provided me with a model on ways to engage in my community through education and service. I have



learned to enjoy volunteering my presence in community functions that have become more meaningful and familiar to me over time. At the annual Asian Heritage Festival sponsored by the Asian Pacific American Society at the Audubon Zoo, OCAW hosted a booth to showcase a few Chinese cultural traditions. I offered to do **tangram** again. It is a puzzle game composed of seven pieces made from a square of cardboard. I learned about the puzzle as a child growing up in Hong Kong, and revisited it with my students when I taught Chinese in Minnesota twenty years ago. In Chinese, it is called *qiqiaoban*, meaning ‘seven clever slabs.’ According to the Chinese search engine Baidu, diagrams called *qiqiaotu* were documented as early as the Song Dynasty. It is an engaging game that quiets the mind since the player is required to concentrate fully on spatial relationships among the pieces. When I researched tangram recently, I was pleasantly surprised that there are endless configurations of the arrangement of the seven geometric pieces, producing fascinating shapes. I made some puzzles and challenged visitors to the booth to repeat each composition. Creative arranging of the shapes exerted a calming effect on children even in the clamor of a sound stage of music and dance nearby.



Tangram pieces

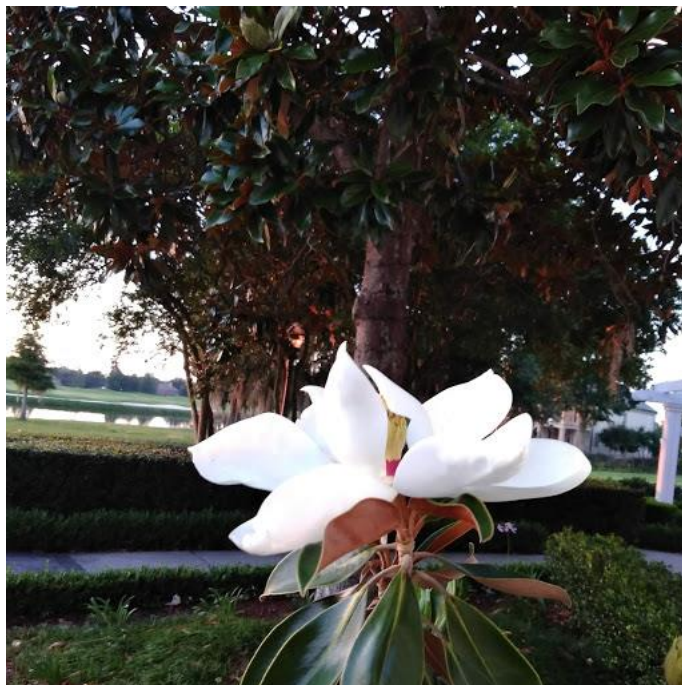


Tangram dog

In **early spring**, Pat Ellzey asked me to give a presentation on floral design at the Chinese Presbyterian Church in Kenner. I was inspired to compose several pieces under the theme of “Harmony”: (1) Ribbons for a girl; (2) Springy, clever ideas for a boy; (3) Loving embrace for mom; (4) Wealth of energy for dad; and (5) Rain that nourishes the family. I was rewarded with a wonderful audience, and everyone enjoyed a lovely, blessed time at the church.



The season is now in full glory, anchored by towering, blooming saucer magnolias. **Magnolia grandiflora** is one of my favorite trees, with its glossy leaves and enormous, intoxicating, fragrant **flowers**. The foliage stays strong and green year round. Armfuls of sturdy leaves can be collected, spray-painted, and used in decoration.



Besides the enchanting whiffs broadcast by saucer-sized flowers, the scent of **sweet olive** is everywhere as the tree is quite hardy in this climate. An acquaintance from Beijing mentioned to me that the flowers can be used in infusing perfume in desserts. In Cantonese, it is called *gweifa*. I have come across the name in translation as ‘osmanthus,’ a rather cumbersome-sounding word in contrast to the delicate, lacelike blossoms that fall at the slightest hint of a caress.



My father taught me to be humble in life, for there are many things to learn from others: “In the company of three people, a teacher could be found.” I am grateful that during this season, I reconnected with three schoolmates after years of our having gone our separate ways. The Chinese character for spring is made up of three parts: ‘three,’ ‘person(s),’ and ‘sun.’ I like to think that spring encourages people to go outside and enjoy each other’s company in the sun. It is a gift to be able to learn from one another, especially friends from long ago. It is a triple blessing because now I have three more teachers.

Years ago in Hong Kong, sidewalk peddlers were a common sight. Many different kinds of handy merchandise were available at each and every pavement, especially at cinemas where there was a lot of pedestrian traffic. Each time I walked by a theater, I was charmed by the sweet aroma of a variety of flowers called *humsiu* in Cantonese. An apt English equivalent is “budding smile.” Middle-aged women wore the blossoms in their hair. I detected a similar scent in my neighborhood, identified it, and persuaded hubby to plant such a tree for me in the backyard. It is a **magnolia fuscata**, also known as banana shrub because the flowers have a smell like ripe bananas. Since the heat and humidity favor the growth of this plant, it is sometimes buzzcut into a shrub in a tropical garden.



I hope the pictures included on these pages bring you smiles.

*(Photos taken by Betty Butz)*