

E-Newsletter of the Organization of Chinese American Women

February 2022



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(from Linda Devine, Editor)

Happy New Year and Happy Chinese New Year! I hope that you enjoyed the winter holidays and are now ready to embark on the Year of the Tiger!

Thank you to those who submitted material for this issue. I am also grateful to my husband Ed for his efforts in preparing all of the photos.

As always, I encourage OCAW members to write articles or submit information for the e-newsletter if there is something you think would be of interest to the membership. Publishing a wide variety of material continues to be my goal.

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

Table of Contents

	Page
2021 Year-End Message from the President.....	1
New Year's Greetings from the President.....	2
OCAW 45th Anniversary.....	3
News from the Maryland Chapter.....	3
News from the Virginia Chapter.....	8
News from the Silicon Valley Chapter.....	9
News from the Hawaii Chapter.....	12
From and About Our Members.....	16
Culture Corner.....	17
Skyline Drive.....	22
Viking Voyager Book Launch.....	25

2021 Year-End Message from the President

Dear Board Members, Chapter Presidents, and Officers:

I want to devote my year-end message to expressing my sincere gratitude to our Board, chapter presidents, and officers who contribute your precious time and efforts to support and guide OCAW in a good direction.

Thank you, Linda Devine and Sharon Chun, for the many hours spent creating our e-newsletter and website, and to Carol Yuan and the Silicon Valley Chapter for sharing Zoom with us.

2022 will mark the 45th year since the founding of OCAW. I am looking forward to establishing and completing new goals. Wishing all members of the OCAW community a wonderful New Year!

Sincerely,

Christina Chang
OCAW National President

New Year's Greetings from the President

Happy Chinese New Year as we celebrate the Year of the Tiger!

Congratulations to the Chapter Presidents for 2022:

Hawaii Chapter – Edwina Lee
Silicon Valley Chapter – Anne Hu
New Orleans Chapter – Patricia Hew Ellzey
Virginia Chapter – Maria Yang
Maryland Chapter – Karina Hou

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Presidents Roberta Wong Leung of the Hawaii Chapter, Carol Yuan of the Silicon Valley Chapter, and Veronica Li of the Virginia Chapter who served during the year 2021.

We are also fortunate to have members who serve as National Officers and are on the National Board:

Past President – Faith Breen
Executive Director – Donna Byler
Secretary – Susan Chong Wong
Treasurer – Joanne Wang
Webmaster – Sharon Chun
Vice President for Programs – Muriel (Mimi) Hom
Vice President for Membership – Cathy Roberts
Vice President for Communications – Linda Devine
Counsel – Jeanie Jew
Advisor – Frances Hom

Thank you very much for taking the lead to serve the organization.

Sincerely,

Christina Chang
OCAW National President

*(Editor's Note: And our *profound* thanks, as always, to Christina Chang for her excellent leadership as President!)*

OCAW 45th Anniversary Celebration

(from Donna Byler, Executive Director)

In 1977 Pauline Tsui and Julia Chang Bloch founded OCAW.

We will be celebrating OCAW's 45th Anniversary and Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month beginning the first week of May. Plans are currently underway.

Please contact your local chapter for details.

News from the Maryland Chapter

(Karina Hou, President)

The Chinese American Museum DC: Tour and Reception

(from Linda Devine)

On Friday, November 12, 2021, OCAW Maryland and Virginia Chapter members and their guests were treated to a wonderful special event at the Chinese American Museum DC (CAMDC) in Washington, D.C. Jenny Liu, CAMDC Vice President, had graciously extended the invitation through OCAW-MD President Karina Hou.

Auspiciously on this day, the rain had stopped and clouds had given way to clear skies and lovely fall weather as Maryland and Virginia members made their way to downtown D.C. from disparate locations in the two states, some coming a long distance to join in the occasion.

CAMDC is a new museum, and the first and only one in the nation's capital dedicated to the Chinese American story – its history, culture, and impact. Its mission is “to advance the understanding, knowledge, and appreciation of the Chinese American experience, by highlighting the history, culture, spirit, and contributions of Chinese Americans to our nation and beyond.”

When we arrived at the museum, we were greeted by Louisa Sorkness, the museum's Program Coordinator. As attendees gathered, some of us who were early were invited to explore the various floors, including an exhibition by Chinese American and longtime Washington area artist Dora Fugh Lee, whose exquisite paintings graced the walls of the third floor.

Once guests were assembled, Karina welcomed the group, and on behalf of OCAW, she extended our gratitude to the museum for organizing and hosting this event. In particular, she thanked Jenny Liu; David Uy, Executive Director; David Yao, Advisor, Outreach and Community Relations; and Penny Yao, Senior Advisor. She also acknowledged Louisa Huang in advance for her presentation to come.

Following Karina, David Uy made remarks on behalf of the museum. He informed us that the idea of a museum was first conceived in 2017, and it has been in development since 2018. He then gave us some history of the project. He also talked about the many exhibitions and programs that they have been able to host, including several virtual ones. Uy concluded by saying, however, that they “still have a long way to go” in future programming, and his pride in the museum was evident.

We then had the privilege of hearing a presentation by Louisa Huang about the current exhibition, “Golden Threads: Chinese Opera in America.” Louisa is Co-founder and President of DC Beauty of Beijing Opera. She began by briefly talking about the elaborate makeup used on the performers. Understandably, it requires a considerable amount of time to apply.



Presentation by Louisa Huang

She then moved into a detailed discussion of the costuming for the performances, and how this aspect played a critical role in opera. On display in the exhibition were numerous garments, spanning a large variety. Louisa methodically went from one costume to another, pointing out various characteristics of each piece. Costumes are replete with symbols – particular pictures in their design which indicate the gender of the wearer, and also his/her status and character. The different necklines of the costumes also have meaning. Beside one costume was a pair of shoes, and Louisa explained that the higher the soles, the more elevated the status of the wearer.





The Peking opera costumes in the exhibition were from the extensive collection of Victoria Chen Lee. She was born in Shanghai, China in 1917. A fan of Peking opera, she studied the art in Beijing and performed professionally in Taiwan. Her collection comprises 200 costumes and accessories, most of which were custom-made for her in China and Taiwan.

Louisa's presentation was very informative and interesting, and we were grateful for the time she spent with us.

Afterward, we were given a nice reception. Tea and a variety of desserts were served, and we appreciated the offerings. We also embraced the opportunity to have wonderful social time with museum personnel and one another. The COVID pandemic had taken its toll on many of us, and we had spent a lot of time sequestered in our homes, so it was liberating to be able to finally enjoy a nice outing in a great setting. We were able to meet new people, and reunite with those whom we hadn't seen in person for quite a while.

We again extend our thanks to the Chinese American Museum DC and all who made this enjoyable event possible.

To learn more about the museum, visit: www.ChineseAmericanMuseum.org



Christina Chang, OCAW National President; Jenny Liu, CAMDC Vice President;
and David Yao, CAMDC Advisor, Outreach and Community Relations



Several of the attendees: *(from left)* Olivia Zhang, Amy Lee, Cathy Roberts, Anny Lai, Jean Lorentzen, Noreen Hom, Karina Hou, presenter Louisa Huang, Christina Poy, Christina Chang, Wang Chih-Ming (Lily), Linda Devine, and Joyce Lee

(Photo taken by Tom Yee)

(Photos taken by Linda Devine, except where noted otherwise)

News from the Virginia Chapter

New Chapter President

(from Veronica Li, former Acting President)

I have great news. Maria Yang, former Virginia Chapter President (2014-2017), has agreed to take up the position again. The chapter has been without a president since ChiHua Yang stepped down last year. As “Acting,” I took up the responsibility of passing information to Virginia members.

But now we have an actual president! She was a wonderful president back then, and I'm sure will be in the future.

Let's warmly welcome our new president, Maria Yang!

(Editor's Note: After Veronica's announcement was made to Virginia members, she added this short addendum.)

Thanks for all the positive feedback on our new president. Maria is wonderful to step up in our time of need. Let's stay active and support her any way we can.

(Editor's Note: Thank you to ChiHua Yang, former President, and Veronica Li, Acting President, for their service to the Virginia Chapter.

*Maria not only served as Virginia President a few years ago, but she concurrently served as Maryland Chapter Acting President when Maryland was without a President during that time period. Both chapters appreciated her service and the *outstanding* job she did, and OCAW is very fortunate to have her back in a leadership role once again.)*

News from the Silicon Valley Chapter

(from Anne Hu, President)

Holiday Cooking Class

This inspiring class was hosted by Wendy Chang, former Silicon Valley Chapter President, on Sunday, November 14, 2021. Anne considers Wendy to be the 'Asian Rachel Ray' of cooking. Her family was in the restaurant business. Thus, she always enjoys hosting a party, cooking for friends and family. Before the pandemic hit, she organized an OCAW Community Outreach program, preparing dinners at a shelter home (JW House) for hospital patients' family members who live at least 200 miles away from Kaiser Permanente Santa Clara Medical Center. The JW House provided meals for these family members so that they could focus on caring for their loved ones in the hospital. *(Editor's Note: OCAW e-newsletters featured many of SVC's dinner events at the JW House.)*

OCAW Holiday Cooking Recipe

Provided by Wendy Chang

November 14, 2021

For this cooking class, Wendy demonstrated creating a full course prime rib dinner in two hours! Even though it was through a Zoom meeting format, it was the most attended activity, as all of us were interested in obtaining holiday cooking ideas. We can only wish that the pandemic will be over soon, so that we can organize an in-person cooking demonstration as a fundraiser event so that we can cook more often at the JW House.



Prime Rib



Salad



Gruyere and Black Pepper Popovers (*left*) and Corn Bread (*right*)

Wendy also prepared Banana with Turbinado Sugar.

All were amazed at how she could prepare this dinner so efficiently!

Monthly East Meets West Dancercise

Please note that OCAW-SVC monthly Dancercise has a **new date and time** going forward. It will be the first Sunday of each month from 3 to 4 p.m. Pacific Time (6-7 p.m. Eastern Time or 1-2 p.m. Hawaii Time). SVC member Yufan Lu will lead and demonstrate curated videos from Chinese folk dance and Western dance routines. It is good for all levels (high impact or low impact), and provides a great cardio workout. Come and experience the positive energy from Yufan, whose talents are more than just dancing.

Below is the Zoom meeting URL link. You can either copy and paste the link in a browser to get in, or enter the meeting ID and passcode from the Zoom website. We extend our invitation to other OCAW Chapter sisters!

The next dancercise date will be Sunday, March 6, 2022. It is the same meeting ID and passcode every month.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/2139814089?pwd=M0h2SFhHckU4Q05ka1EzR3VMVHVVCZz09>

Passcode 351981

Another way to access this Zoom meeting room:

Go to: www.zoom.com and select “join a meeting.”
Type in meeting ID 213-9814-089, passcode 351981.

News from the Hawaii Chapter

(Edwina Lee, President)

Some Closing Remarks from the 2021 President

(from Dr. Roberta Wong Leung, Immediate Past President)

It was truly an honor to have served as your President in 2021, and I thank you for your support during the Pandemic.

I am very fortunate to have had such a wonderful board that made this year such a success! Much mahalo to them!

Congratulations to the duly elected officers for the Year 2022! I am sure they will make a fantastic team.

We received positive feedback from the community and other organizations for inviting them to participate in our interesting Zoom General Membership Meetings throughout the year. Our speakers were excellent, and it was not surprising that they generated a lot of interest.

We donated \$3450 to various charities this year, and are pleased that many will benefit from our generosity.

We are pleased to see that Michelle Wu was the first Chinese and first woman to be elected the Mayor of Boston.

It has been interesting and rewarding to serve you on the National OCAW Board. Our Chapter had articles and coverage in every national e-newsletter this year. Thank you to our members who wrote such great articles, and please continue to write more.

We look forward to meeting face to face in February 2022 for our first meeting.

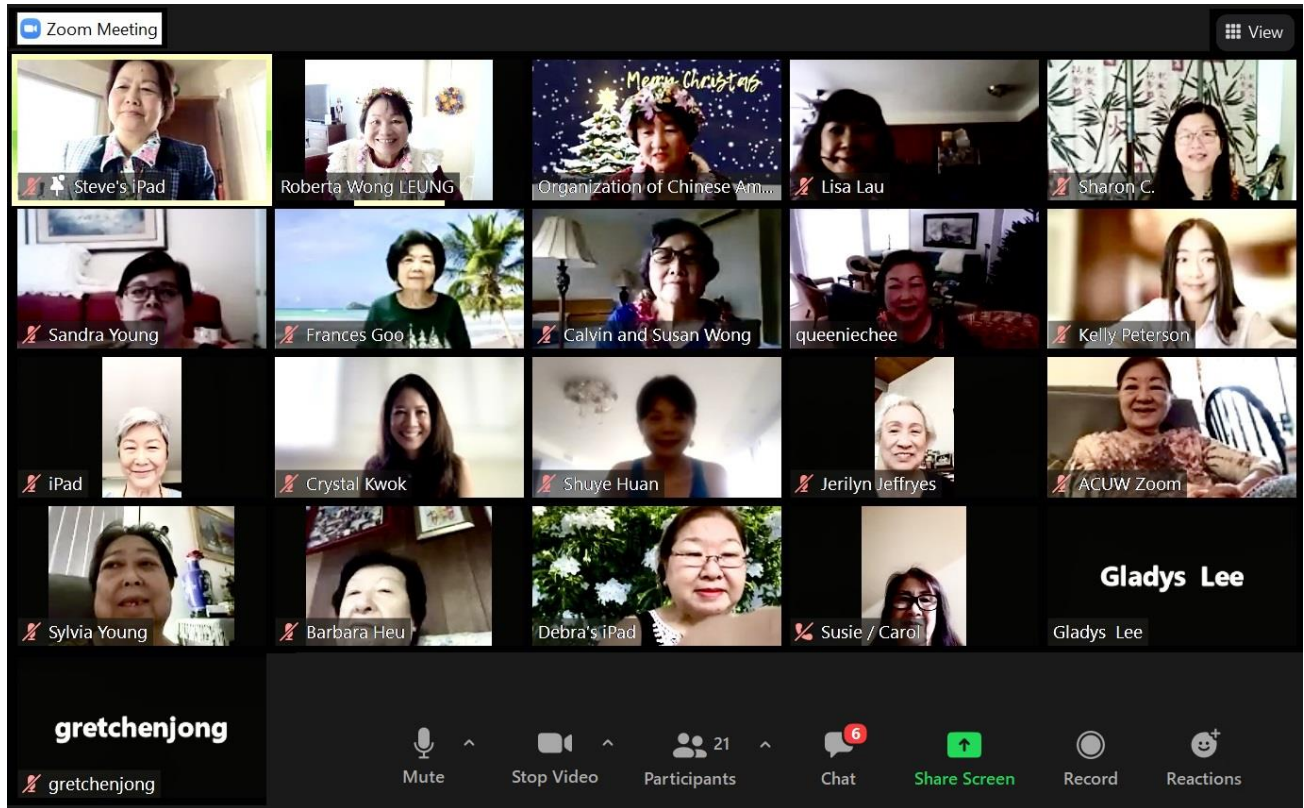
I thank all of our members who have contributed so much to OCAW. May the new year be a healthy, happy, and prosperous one for you and your loved ones. All the best wishes for a wonderful 2022 ahead!

Christmas Installation of Officers

(from Queenie Mow Chee, Secretary and Special Event Chair)

For the installation of OCAW Hawaii Chapter's 2022 Officers, we were honored to have National President Christina Chang “virtually” administer the Oath of Office on Sunday, December 19, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. Hawaii time (3:00 p.m. East Coast time). With the increasing number of daily new COVID infections in the Islands, the Board prudently decided to suspend the customary festive Christmas installation luncheon.

Instead, it was an Officer Installation online.



(Photo taken by Roberta Wong Leung)

This was the first time our Chapter had our National President install our new officers, and it was made easily possible by the miracle of “Zoom.” Christina beamed in from Indianapolis, Indiana, to administer the Oath of Office to the newly-elected Officers:

President – Edwina Lee
Vice President – Susan Chong Wong
Secretary – Queenie Mow Chee
Treasurer – Lisa Lau

Appointed Chairs by the new President for:

Communications/Website Management – Sharon Chun
Membership – Victoria (Vicky) Ho
Budget and Finance – Queenie Mow Chee
Special Event – Queenie Mow Chee



Christina Chang giving her Hawaiian “Shaka” hand sign

Ex-Officio Roberta Wong Leung served as Mistress of Ceremonies for this unique event. She gave a glowing introduction for Christina Chang, whom many of us have yet to meet. We now have learned a bit more about our leader, and of her list of achievements, including her important work for the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and her receipt of Letters of Commendation from four serving United States Presidents. Christina remains gracious and has done much to help OCAW. She even delayed her family road trip back a day to ensure a stable internet signal from her hotel for our installation. An added bonus surprise – our box lunches were enhanced by an unexpected Almond Float dessert, which Christina arranged.

Roberta summarized her year as President and listed her achievements, and waived receiving the traditional outgoing president’s gift. She asked that the value of that gift be donated to a favorite charity of hers, The Friends of the Iolani Palace, which she has supported and worked with for many years. (Iolani Palace is the only royal palace in the United States. And that is another story!)

The 2022 President Edwina Lee gave her first official message. Her first goal is to increase our club’s membership. She will find a project for us addressing immigrant needs, and continue to recognize Chinese American Women who have achieved and made a difference in our society. Our Chapter By-Laws and a Standard Procedures Manual will be addressed and reviewed. Edwina introduced the new chapter members who were online for the installation: Kelly Tan Peterson, a part-time resident ‘snowbird’ from Colorado, who will be our first guest speaker for 2022 on her KETO Diet Blog, and Shuye Huan who hails from China and continues to work for entities there. Not to be left out, our new Treasurer, Lisa Lau who just joined last year, but is looking forward to her retirement from her Audit work for Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard.

Queenie Chee replayed the commemorative photos of years past of the OCAW Hawaii Chapter, accompanied by the song “Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas” recorded by the late Judy Garland. The lyrics seemed so appropriate during these times... “Next year all our troubles will be out of sight...”

“Once again as in olden days, Happy golden days of yore
Faithful friends who are dear to us, gather near to us once more.
Someday soon, we all will be together if the Fates allow
Until then, we’ll muddle through somehow...”

Our Zoom program was then followed by the distribution of free Chinese box lunches for members who drove by the Maple Garden Restaurant in Honolulu. There they met their new officers who handed out the lunches in the parking lot.



Hot Sour Soup, Crispy GauGee, Fried Chicken Wings, Beef and Broccoli Stirfry, ChowFun, and Almond Float Dessert



Sharon Chun, Edwina Lee, Roberta Wong Leung, and Lisa Lau (*seated*) passed out lunches.

The tradition of members paying their dues and donating a gift for the women sheltered at the Institute of Human Services (IHS) continued. Susan Chong Wong had a trunk-load of gifts for IHS from our generous members which she promptly delivered.



New Treasurer Lisa Lau, dressed in holiday red, took in membership renewal checks.

Not forgotten, our stalwart member extraordinaire, Rena Young Ochse will be dearly missed. She did so much and most of us took it all for granted. The leis that our new officers wore for installation were from her collection, many of which she wove and made herself. She and her husband, Heinz-Georg Ochse, passed away within a couple of months of each other. Their joint service was held in December, and they are now resting in the National Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl.

It is with great hope and optimism with an energetic group at the helm, that we will leap into the 2022 New Year of the Tiger!

(Photos taken by Queenie Chee, except where noted otherwise)

From and About Our Members

About Rena Young Ochse

(from Roberta Wong Leung, Hawaii Chapter Immediate Past President, and Queenie Chee, Hawaii Chapter Secretary)

In the September 2021 issue of the *OCAW E-Newsletter*, we sadly reported the news that Rena Young Ochse, longtime OCAW Hawaii Chapter member and past president, passed away. Her husband followed her not long after. Following is the joint obituary that appeared in the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser* on January 22, 2022.

Heinz-Georg and Rowena Ochse

George was born on September 1, 1932 in Germany to Heinrich and Ann Hasse Ochse. He had a love of swimming and the peaceful, green windward side of Hawaii. He served in the army where he was stationed at the U.S. Army hospital in Bremerhaven, Germany. Later he made a career with British Airways where he met Rena. They were wonderfully married for over 46 years, traveling the world together and making life-long friendships.

Rena was born March 16, 1938 in Honolulu to Jun Lum and Dora Young. She was a graduate of Roosevelt High School and the University of Hawaii. She relocated to Los Angeles in pursuit of an airline career and later as a travel agent. Her creative talents led to many hobbies, including jewelry-making and cooking. Rena's energetic personality and compassion led to years of philanthropic work, deep networks, and friendships in the community. She served as a vital member and officer in numerous Chinese societies. She was a proud recipient of the American Business Women's Association 1997 Woman of the Year award and a candidate for the Top Ten award.

Rena went to be with the Lord on August 2, 2021 and George joined his loving wife on November 2, 2021. Both of them will be dearly missed by family and friends. Rena is survived by sister Elaine Ching, and many nephews and nieces. Their celebration of life will be held at a private viewing at Punchbowl Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, please make donations to St. Jude's Cancer Society in their memory.

Generous Donation

Puanani Woo, former OCAW Hawaii Chapter President and former Advisor for the OCAW Kohala Hawaii Chapter, recently donated \$1000 to OCAW, to use in any way that the organization felt appropriate.

Thank you, Puanani, for your hard work for the organization over the years, and for your very generous gesture. It is much appreciated, and your thoughtful contribution will be used wisely!

Culture Corner

Celebrating Chinese Lunar New Year in Hawaii – Spring Festival 2022

by Queenie Mow Chee

(Editor's Note: Queenie is Hawaii Chapter Secretary and Special Event Chair.)

On Tuesday, February 1, 2022, the Year of the Tiger leaped in for the Chinese community in Hawaii. Chinese the world over celebrate the Lunar New Year, and so do those who just love celebrations and festivals. Did you? And how?

Many of the Hawaii Chinese families continue the traditions brought over to the Islands from mostly southern China at the turn of the 20th century. Some of these practices still are carried out today, both in China as well as among Chinese communities in the United States.

Even before the actual New Year Day, preparations are made by each family. Call it "spring cleaning," where

this is the chance to take down that Christmas tree and do a thorough sweeping, mopping, dusting, and general housecleaning. Old calendars are tossed, and the new lunar calendar depicting the new Chinese Zodiac animal of the year is prominently displayed.

New slips of red paper with an assortment of golden verses asking for blessings are posted above doorways and in the family kitchen: a wish for peace and harmony; to have the spirit of the dragon and the horse; good health and good fortune; long life; and the five traditional blessings come through your door! Written in Chinese characters, of course.

Citrus fruit such as the pomelo, or tangerines, or oranges are placed in every room to welcome good fortune. By this time, many have a “Nien Gao” to also display with their fruit. A glutinous rice flour mixed with brown sugar and water, steamed in a round container lined with bamboo leaves for about seven hours, it is a symbol of elevating the sweet and cohesive family life, with the sesame seeds sprinkled on top to show the desire for posterity (be fertile and have many children).



Display of citrus, “Nien Gao,” red lucky money envelope, and narcissus flowers in bloom

On the eve of the Lunar New Year, a special lavish dinner is held with family and close friends, called “Tin Ngin” in Cantonese – literally translated, “to end the year.”

The next morning, New Year Day, everyone wakes up to dine on Jai, a vegetarian dish filled with symbolic foods that are a play on words, homonyms for good things in life.



“Jai.” It takes three days of preparation and cooking if you do it properly.

No living creature is hurt or killed on the first day of the year. No arguments or disparaging words are to be spoken. Firecrackers are lit to scare off evil spirits. Tea sweetened with a bit of sugared candied vegetables, “Tong Go,” is served by children to their elders, and they receive in turn, little red envelopes with money in them (“Lisee” or “Hong Bao”).



The “Tong Go Hup” – candied vegetable/fruit



Another favorite food – crispy dumplings called “Jin Dui.” Some are filled with a salty mix, some have a coconut filling, and some, the red bean paste.

An additional popular treat is “Dao Lao,” a mochi ball rolled in crushed peanuts and served with a syrup. Also “Jiaozi” dumplings.

Some folks are lucky to find their narcissus plants blossoming on that day – a sure sign of blessings to come for the year. These delicate white flowers with a rich yellow center have a delicate and elusive fragrance, and cling onto long green stalks, rising from a bulb, growing in fresh water – no soil. Do not confuse it with its cousins, the daffodil or paper-white.



Hawaii's Chinese Chamber of Commerce started a Chinese New Year Festival in 1950 and named it after this special flower, and so it continues annually as the Narcissus Festival.

Quince and plum blossoms on stalks are also popular to have in the house at Lunar New Year.



The New Year Day is usually spent with family and at home, and the following days are for visiting with other relatives and friends. The “Nien Gao” or New Year Pudding is usually opened and served the day after the first day of the year.



Chinese are so into homonyms and the play on words and their meanings. Even the candied fruit and vegetables mean different things because of the way they sound or look: the carrots cut into rounds resemble gold coins; the squash or winter melon look like fine jade; coconut strips emulate unity; water chestnuts are good health and joy; lotus nuts sound like little sons or fertility; the lotus root is richness and abundance always with marital harmony; ginger is for long life; and the pineapple is a symbol for great achievements.

The Lunar New Year is traditionally celebrated not just by the Chinese, but also by the Vietnamese, the Japanese, and Koreans. Some of these places call it their Spring Festival, and everyone is on holiday for about two weeks! Don't try to do any business during those times. This is often the one time that people are able to travel back to their hometowns to spend time with their grandparents, parents, siblings, and cousins. It is a very special and sweet time that is still treasured – with or without the firecrackers.

So, even if it is a bit past the date, the wish is still a popular tradition and right to say “Kung Hay Fat Choy” if in Cantonese, or “Gong Xi Fa Tsai” in Mandarin. The wish is not merely for “Happy New Year” but “Wishing You Wealth and Good Fortune!”

(Photos taken by Queenie Chee)

Skyline Drive

by Cathy Roberts

(Editor's Note: Cathy is National Vice President for Membership.)



The Skyline Drive is approximately one hundred miles west of Washington, D.C. It is located in Shenandoah National Park, and is one of the most scenic drives in the world. With 75 overlooks, miles of trails,

outstanding opportunities to see wildlife, and beautiful colors during the four seasons, it's a fantastic place to experience the outdoors in the Blue Ridge Mountains.



In 1924 the search for a national park site in the east brought the Southern Appalachian National Park Committee to the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. Their job was to find a site accessible to the 40 million Americans living in eastern cities including Washington, D.C.



The committee recommended the site that is today visited by millions of Americans each year, Shenandoah National Park. As part of that recommendation, the committee, recognizing the proliferation of the automobile, suggested that the “greatest single feature” of the proposed park should be a “sky-line drive along the mountain top, following a continuous ridge and looking down westerly on the Shenandoah Valley...and also commanding a view of the Piedmont Plain stretching easterly to the Washington Monument.”

Construction of such a roadway was a pioneering work of landscape architecture and engineering, as well as a famous work-relief project. Work was begun before the park was even established using emergency employment relief funds, and continued by the boys of the Civilian Conservation Corps who spent thousands of hours building beautiful rock walls and landscaping sweeping overlooks to make Skyline Drive the experience it has been for many decades. Official groundbreaking was July 18, 1931, although the actual field survey began in January of that year.



Skyline Drive runs 105 miles from north (Front Royal, VA) to south (Waynesboro, VA) along the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains and is the only public road through Shenandoah National Park. It takes about three hours to travel its entire length on a clear day. The entire drive is 2 lanes and speed limits are set at 35 mph in most places, so feel free to roll down your windows, feel the breeze, and experience every curve and turn of this beautiful drive. There are nearly 70 overlooks that offer stunning views of the Shenandoah Valley to the west or the rolling Piedmont to the east. So this is not a place that can be covered quickly. However, if you

are in a hurry, you can see some nice views from Interstate 81 that runs in the valley to the west of Skyline.

Skyline Drive is generally open 24 hours a day/7 days a week (although at rare times it is necessary to be closed due to inclement weather). As you travel along the Drive you will notice mileposts on the west side of the road (right side if you are traveling south, left if you are heading north). These posts help you find your way through the Park and help you locate areas of interest. The miles begin at 0 in Front Royal and continue to 105 at the southern end of the Park. The largest developed area, Big Meadows, is near the center of the Park, at mile 51. All Park maps and information use these mileposts as a reference.

Deer, black bear, wild turkey, and a host of other woodland animals call Shenandoah home and regularly cross Skyline Drive in their daily travels. Watch carefully for these animals which might dart across your path without warning. At 35 mph, you'll stand the best chance of a fun and exciting wildlife encounter rather than an unpleasant wildlife experience. If you want a closer look, be sure to pull completely off the road and stay in your vehicle.

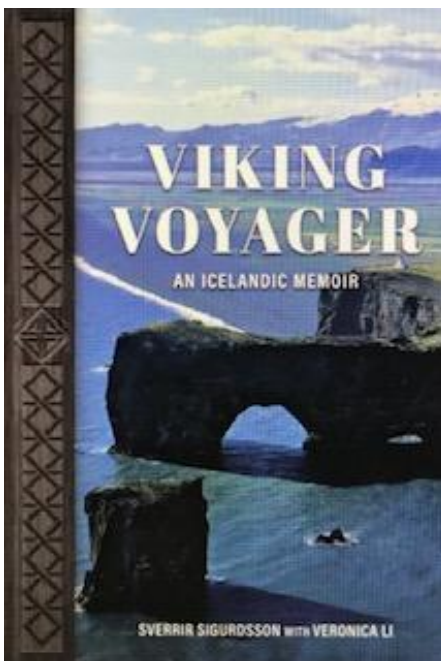
(Photos taken by Dick Roberts)

Viking Voyager Book Launch

by Veronica Li

(Editor's Note: Veronica is a former Virginia Chapter Secretary and former Acting President. Professionally, she is an accomplished author.)

I held a book launch for my latest publication, *Viking Voyager: An Icelandic Memoir*, which was jointly written with my husband, Sverrir Sigurdsson.



This was a belated celebration of a book that was released at the height of the pandemic in 2020. So, let's say this was a first anniversary party. It took place at the public library in Vienna, Virginia, on Saturday, November 13, 2021. The library had reopened for events, but the delta variant was on the rise. Safety rules were strict: a maximum of 30 people allowed in a room with a 70-person capacity, and masks required at all times.

That day, I couldn't help grinning in my mask when I looked out at the eyes in the audience. Although the masks hid the lower half of their faces, their eyes crinkled, showing they were smiling back at me. Several pairs belonged to OCAW members. Because of the restrictions, I could only invite a few members who had expressed interest in Iceland. Their presence warmed my heart.

Sverrir and I started by giving a tour of his country of Iceland. Our slide show began from the beginning, back to the time when Iceland was born. From the crack where two tectonic plates meet in the middle of the North Atlantic, volcanic rocks spewed out from the bottom of the ocean. The pile grew bigger and bigger and became what is now known as Iceland.

We then took the audience around the island, starting from the western fjords, where Sverrir's mother was from. The spectacular land and seascape are an illustration of Iceland's nickname – land of fire and ice. Ancient volcanic eruptions formed mountains that look like layered cakes, and glaciers carved channels called fjords.

Icelandic scenery is literally out of this world. In fact, before walking on the moon, American astronauts practiced in Iceland and Hawaii. The jagged volcanic terrain of these places is as challenging as that of the moon.

We also talked about the modern history of Iceland, which was intertwined with Sverrir's personal story. As a child, he watched British troops invade his country in order to stop Hitler from advancing toward North America. Because of its strategic position, his dirt-poor, obscure country became a linchpin in the Second World War. Cavorting with foreign soldiers (who taught him his first English word, 'chocolate'), made Sverrir very much aware of a bigger world out there. Reading the sagas about his Viking forefathers' exploits reinforced his curiosity about the world. At the first chance, he took off to Finland to study architecture at age 19. Since then, he's traveled all over the globe, working as an architect for both private companies and international development agencies, including the World Bank headquartered in Washington, D.C. This was where an Icelander met and married a Chinese from Hong Kong.



Someone in the audience asked how two people as culturally different as Sverrir and I could collaborate in this intimate project. My answer is, our differences are precisely our strength. As an outsider, I can recognize and highlight unique characteristics of Icelandic traditions, which Sverrir takes for granted. And as a woman, my insight into human emotions and relationships make up for my husband's blind spots. We appreciate each other's strengths and understand each other's weaknesses. Thus, after all the arguments, we can tell anyone who asks – yes, we're still married, and happily so.

For more information on *Viking Voyager*, please visit: www.veronicali.com. Here is an article in the *Sun Gazette* of Northern Virginia: <https://sungazette.news/memoirist-goes-back-to-his-roots-with-icelandic-tales/>