

E-Newsletter of the Organization of Chinese American Women

April 2023



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(from Linda Devine, Editor)

I hope everyone is enjoying the onset of spring!

As always, thanks to those who contributed material for this issue. My gratitude also to my husband Ed for his work on the many photos.

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

And please feel free to send me any suggestions that you might have for the e-newsletter at:
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New National President

OCAW has a new National President! Maria Yang, Virginia Chapter President, has consented to assume this position, after many calls for volunteers to undertake this important role.

Once again, OCAW wishes to thank Christina Chang, who has faithfully served in this office for the past twelve-plus years. We appreciate her conscientiousness and dedication throughout her tenure. Christina has promised to provide assistance and support to Maria, and national board members have pledged to do the same.

We heartily thank Maria for being willing to serve. She has provided the following statement for OCAW members.

INAUGURATION STATEMENT

Dear Members of OCAW:

I have been an active member of OCAW for more than 10 years, and previously served as the President of the Virginia Chapter from 2014 to 2017. In 2017, OCAW celebrated its 40th Anniversary, and I was pleased to contribute my time and efforts to make this event very successful and memorable. Five years later, in 2022, the National President, Christina Chang, asked me to serve again as the President of the Virginia Chapter and to help with the 45th Anniversary celebration, which I was happy to do. In late 2022, Christina announced her retirement after 12 years of leading OCAW and asked if I would consider taking the reins as National President. I humbly accepted this volunteer position and hope I can follow Christina's example and make a strong contribution to OCAW.

As a women's organization, we have come a long way in our 45 years of the journey toward equality and empowerment. Yet there is still so much work to be done. I believe that this organization has the potential to make a real impact on the lives of women in the community and the world, and I am committed to continuing to achieve our goals.

Together, we will strive to break down the barriers that hold us back, empower women of all ages and backgrounds, and create a world where every woman has the opportunity to reach her full potential.

It is with great honor and humility that I am here today as your new National President. I am deeply grateful for your trust and confidence in me to lead this organization toward greater heights.

Let us move forward with hope and determination, knowing that we have the power to make a difference in the world. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to learn and serve OCAW!

Sincerely,

Maria Yang
National President

News from the Virginia Chapter

(from Maria Yang, Acting President)

International Women's Day Lunch

International Women's Day (IWD) is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women, and it is celebrated every year on March 8. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity. Significant activity is witnessed worldwide as groups come together to celebrate women's achievements or rally for women's equality.

On March 7, 2023, 21 members and spouses of the Virginia Chapter came together to have a Dim Sum lunch at Vinh Kee Chinese Seafood Restaurant in Falls Church, Virginia, to celebrate and witness our accomplishments in the family and in the community.

Some members brought small memorable items to share their inspiration and achievements in life during the lunch.

The following are some of the presentations of OCAW-VA members' achievements and contributions to the community and country.

Presentation about Chi-Hua Yang, former Virginia Chapter President

Dr. Chi-Hua Yang presented two lifetime achievement awards, representing accomplishments from her more than 30 years in research and development in semiconductor industries. The first one was received on August 26, 1995, for her role as part of the international Triad team, which was composed of engineers and scientists from three companies: IBM (U.S.), Toshiba (Japan), and Siemens (Germany). The Triad team's research and development program created the first successful 256Mb DRAMs, which was a technology breakthrough. Chi-Hua's technical contribution and teamwork were recognized. The collaboration among many scientists from different technical backgrounds, countries, and cultures were crucial for the success of this accomplishment.

In addition, Chi-Hua has extensive experience in a wide variety of technical work to make advanced electronics devices. While at BAE Systems, she received an award for her dedication and hard work supporting "Enhanced Ultraviolet Sensor Electron Bombarded Readout Integrated Circuit (EUV EBROIC)" on December 19, 2012. She has been working as a technology pioneer in areas such as the U.S. Deep Space Program, Satellite Program, Defense Weapons Systems, and infrared night vision scopes.

She feels that it is important that she, as an Asian woman, has been able to contribute in this highly technological and scientific field.



Chi-Hua Yang (*standing*)

Presentation about Christina Chang, Immediate Past National President

Christina Chang has been the OCAW National President for over 12 years. After a long career working for the Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service, she retired in 2017. Her hard work, dedication, and contributions to the country were recognized in four letters from Presidents Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton, George Bush, and Barack Obama.

We are very proud of her achievements working for the federal government and most grateful for her 12-plus years of leadership of the Organization of Chinese American Women.



Christina Chang (*standing*)



JIMMY CARTER

February 28, 2014

To Christina Chang

Congratulations on your well deserved retirement! Rosalynn and I are pleased to join your family, friends, and colleagues in celebrating this important milestone in your life. You can take great pride in the 25 years you have dedicated to the Internal Revenue Service.

Please accept our warm best wishes for happiness on this special day and in the years ahead.

Sincerely,



GEORGE W. BUSH

February 28, 2014

Ms. Christina Chang
Fairfax, Virginia

Dear Christina:

Congratulations on your retirement from the Internal Revenue Service.

Our Nation is deeply indebted to the men and women who devote themselves to public service. I appreciate your hard work and dedication, and I know how proud your family, friends, and colleagues must be of your accomplishments.

Laura and I send our best wishes for many years of happiness. May God bless you.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush



WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON

March 25, 2014

Christina Chang
Washington, D.C.

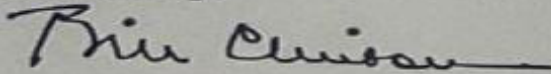
Dear Christina:

Congratulations on your retirement from the Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service.

America's tradition of hard work has made our country strong, and you can be proud of your contribution to that legacy. Your dedication to the public is an inspiration to others. On behalf of all those who have benefited from your service, I thank you for a job well done.

I wish you good health and every future happiness.

Sincerely,

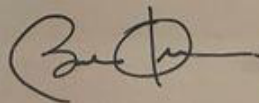


THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

It is a pleasure to join your family, friends, and colleagues in congratulating you on your retirement. As you celebrate this milestone, I hope you take pride in the many contributions you have made over the course of your career.

I send my warmest wishes for a rewarding retirement and the best of luck as you set off on the next stage of your life.

Sincerely,



Presentation about Alice Yee Way, Virginia Chapter Vice President

Alice worked for over three decades for the Department of Defense, during which time she received many outstanding achievement awards. She was grateful for their recognition and acknowledgment of her professional responsibilities.

However, reflecting on her lifelong achievements, she would consider that her most significant and certainly her most satisfying achievements would be raising three great children. When they were young, she instilled virtues in them such as loving, caring, fairness, and compassion to others. They are now on their own and continue to demonstrate these traits. Alice sincerely believes that she has accomplished a major life goal in seeing that all her children have become the best individuals they can be. Her best “awards” for this accomplishment are the acknowledgments from people stating “you raised great children.”



Alice Yee Way and husband Norman Way

Presentation about Barbara Yorke, Virginia Chapter member

Barbara retired at the end of 2017 after 36 years with NCTA – The Internet and Television Association. NCTA represents the spectrum of the broadband and cable industry from service providers like Comcast and Cox, through television programmers like HBO, Discovery, CNN, and Disney. As Senior Vice President of Industry Affairs, Barbara’s primary responsibility was the production and management of NCTA’s annual convention which was the largest in the cable television industry. Through her career at NCTA, she also managed the executive conferences and seminars and the NCTA Board Meetings.

In the late 1990s, she also served as Executive Director of the National Academy for Cable Programming which produced the CableACE Awards prior to cable programming being allowed to compete in the Emmy Awards. For her work, she was inducted into the Cable Hall of Fame which includes men and women whose names are legendary in the world of cable television and programming.

Barbara Yorke



Presentation about Amy Lee, Virginia Chapter member, and host of the OCAW 45th Anniversary Celebration's Conference



Amy Lee

After many years of happily volunteering, Amy was honored to receive, on behalf of all the other dedicated volunteers, Washington, D.C. Mayor Vincent Gray's Community Service Award to Chinatown Service Center Volunteers for teaching ESL (English as a Second Language) and citizen preparation. This program was directed by Walter Woo and his wife, Shirley.

The ESL Award Ceremony was held on May 30, 2014, at the Lincoln Theatre in Washington, D.C. Afterward, Amy continued her volunteering up until the onset of the pandemic, so was happy to serve the community for nearly 20 years.

It was a most enriching experience for the volunteers and the countless number of students over the decades.



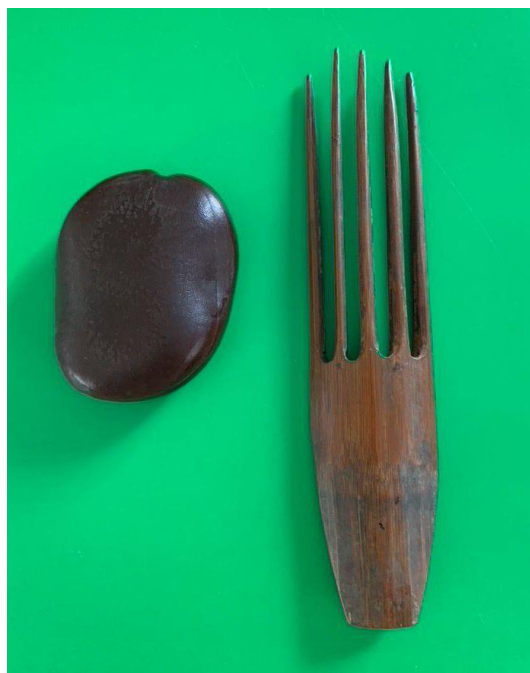
Amy Lee (*third from the left*). To Amy's left, Walter Woo and his wife Shirley, directors of the program, and Dean Lee, another ESL teacher.







“Guess – What Are These Two Items?” by Maria Yang, Acting Virginia Chapter President



During my childhood, I would often witness my mother tending to her hair with a bamboo comb, a tool that held important cultural significance in our family. In addition, I would observe her using a large tree seed to press the straws she wove into intricate straw hats, a skill she had honed as a means of generating income for our family. Despite her undeniable talent and tireless work ethic, my mother was unable to pursue education due to the gender-unequal ideas of our grandmother and the societal norms of the time.

As the only daughter in a family of four children, I grew acutely aware of my mother's struggles and the immense barriers she faced as a woman without a formal education. Witnessing her break down in tears one day, murmuring about the challenges and bitterness of her life, was a pivotal moment for me. It was then that I developed a deep sense of empathy and a strong commitment to becoming an educator, determined to make a difference in the lives of others through the power of education.

My mother, despite her own limitations, was steadfast in her belief in the importance of education and treated me and my three brothers equally in terms of providing financial support for our studies. It was with her unwavering encouragement that I pursued higher education in the United States, carrying with me the bamboo comb and tree seed as cherished mementos of my mother's sacrifice and resilience.

Over the past three decades, I have dedicated my career to teaching Chinese language and literature, serving in a variety of educational settings including Chinese schools, colleges, adult community programs, and government agencies. The bamboo comb and tree seed serve as symbols of inspiration for me, fueling my passion to help others in their own learning journeys and serving as a reminder of the transformative power of education.

* * * * *

(from Chi-Hua Yang)

Also at the lunch, Maria Yang was announced as the new National President of OCAW!

We are all indebted to Christina Chang's hard work and dedication to our organization for the past twelve years. Maria is kind to take over the tough task of continuing as OCAW's new national president.

Outgoing President Christina Chang
and Incoming President Maria Yang

(Photo taken by Chi-Hua Yang)





(Above photo courtesy of Chi-Hua Yang)

(Other lunch photos taken by Maria Yang)

News from the Silicon Valley Chapter

(Jen Tsao, President)

Annual Member Social

(from Anne Hu, Immediate Past President)

The OCAW Silicon Valley Chapter hosted its annual Member Social on Sunday, February 12, 2023 from 2 to 4 p.m. in the Community Room of the Saratoga Library. This was the first in-person event held at the library after the pandemic. Nearly 40 people attended this event, coordinated by Ai-Chu Wang, former SVC President. Anne Hu, a longtime member and Immediate Past President, gave two presentations: “My Quest for Tea Searching” and “Becoming an Expat in Mexico.” There was quite a lot of interest in tea drinking and traveling to Mexico!

Anne started drinking tea when she was in kindergarten, influenced by her grandparents. She discussed the 6 different types of tea from China and the Taiwan region; their characteristics; the best way to brew a cup of tea based on how the water temperature correlates to the tea type; and how to store the teas. Toward the end, Anne also demonstrated cold brew tea using loose tea leaves. The benefits of cold brew tea is that no caffeine nor tannins are released in that temperature. You have a few days to enjoy the tea stored in a refrigerator, after you filter out the loose leaves. It’s also a healthy summer beverage without the sugar.



(Photo taken by Jen Tsao)



(Photo taken by Alice Chiou)

Anne's middle school friend Stacy and her husband Chris introduced Mexico to Anne nearly 20 years ago. From the Mayan region near Cancun to the west coast along Cabo, Mazatlán, and Puerto Vallarta, Anne is comfortable driving a rental car in Mexico. Before the pandemic, Anne used to travel to Mexico annually. She has seen the latest real estate development and healthcare infrastructure built in Puerto Vallarta and neighboring regions. Condos to luxury villas are available for Canadians and Americans. Many of them have declared Mexico as their home. The expats enjoy the warm weather, fresh seafood, and lower cost of living there. However, certain regions are not safe to travel and it is wise to avoid them now.



Refreshments

(Photo taken by Ai-Chu Wang)



Event Coordinator Ai-Chu Wang
and Speaker Anne Hu

(Photo taken by Jen Tsao)

The event was very successful, and it was good to see everyone face to face instead of at a meeting via Zoom. We are ready to put the pandemic behind us and look forward to many more festivities in the coming months!



OCAW-SVC Officers: Candice Huang, Alice Chiou, Ai-Chu Wang, Jen Tsao, Yufan Lu, Anne Hu, Cynthia Chang, and Monica Hsiao

(Photo courtesy of Yufan Lu)

News from the Hawaii Chapter

(Edwina Lee, President)

First General Membership Meeting of 2023: Reach Out to the New Generation!

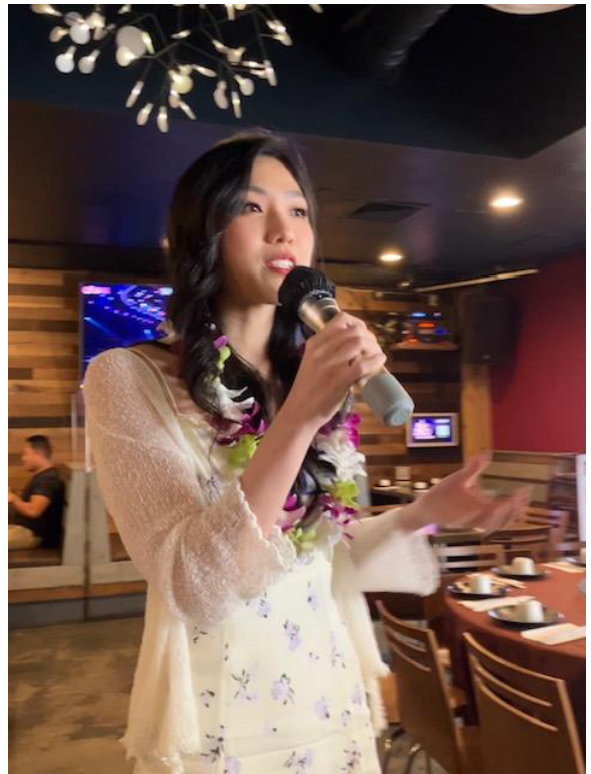
(from Queenie Mow Chee, Secretary)

The OCAW Hawaii Chapter held its first general membership meeting for 2023 on Sunday, March 19, at the King Restaurant and Bar in Honolulu.

Two of the most recent winners of the titles, Miss Chinatown Hawaii, Star Dahl-Thurston, and Narcissus Festival Queen Laura Ho, were invited to speak to us on how they perceived the relevance of Chinese societies today, and specifically the Chinese women's clubs, to themselves and to those individuals in their age bracket.



Star Dahl-Thurston, 2023 Miss Chinatown Hawaii



Laura Ho, 73rd Narcissus Festival Queen

(Photos taken by Queenie Chee)

We included members of their court to attend as personal guests of President Edwina Lee and Secretary Queenie Chee.

Before this invitation, these young ladies did not even know of our club's existence, or what we did or stood for. They were now impressed by what we do and are trying to achieve.

Miss Chinatown Hawaii gave a great suggestion on how to reach the younger generation: social media communication! Most of us oldies don't use Twitter, LinkedIn, or Facebook. Maybe it is time to rethink.

They also expressed not wanting to be a junior Chapter but be part of the main group – thus be “Inclusive rather than Excluded.” Star mentioned doing something similar to speed dating which caused many attendees to sit up! The idea is to couple a young newbie with a senior member and allow them to get acquainted with quick exchange of thoughts and ideas. Wow!



(above) Agnes Santiano, Miss Chinese Jaycees 2023. She hails from New York and is a Hawaii transplant!

(Photo taken by Ross Lee, a supporter of the Miss Chinatown Pageants)



The 38 people who attended thoroughly enjoyed the sharing, and relished the bountiful servings of food from steamed fish fillet, roast duck, beef broccoli, and crispy noodles topped with bean sprouts and mushrooms, to Yang Chow fried rice and long beans with ground pork.





By the time all were done eating, the formal part of the general membership meeting was an afterthought.



Sharon Chun, Communications
Chair and National Webmaster,
and Edwina Lee, President

(Photo taken by Ross Lee)

The most important announcement was that Maria Yang had accepted becoming our new OCAW National President. This was greeted with cheers and claps. We also expressed gratitude to Christina Chang for her faithful years of service extraordinaire, which prompted another round of applause.

At the end of the day, the Hawaii Chapter gained six new members: Serena Yim Kyi, Matthew Wolfe, Susie Wang, and the Narcissus Festival Court members Laura Ho, Jessica Lin, and Kelly Yee. Members sponsored the last three memberships; thanks to Susie Wang and Kelly Peterson. (Incidentally, Matthew is not the first male member we have had. Our first one was Herbert Luke, husband of member Dorothy Luke. Matthew is the son of our Treasurer, Lisa Lau.)

All in all, it was a wonderful and successful meeting! The next one will be held on May 21st.

(Photos taken by Sharlene Chun, except where specifically noted otherwise)

Giving Back and Paying Forward Through Supporting Immigrant Services

(from Queenie Mow Chee, Secretary)

As members of the Organization of Chinese American Women, a part of our mission is to reach out to help Asian and Pacific Island women less fortunate, and encourage the success of new generations to acclimate, assimilate, and yet retain individualism here in the U.S.

The path can be fraught with challenges that many of us never had to face: discrimination on the job, access to legal help, the end to or escape from abusive relationships, or even knowing to whom to turn for help. Or how to obtain a green card and be on the clear path to U.S. citizenship. After the Trump Administration, the forms required for citizenship became costly, complicated, and unforgiving. The path for immigrants had become an even greater challenge.

Many individual members of OCAW who crossed over and “made it” have contributed greatly and positively to our society and country. (Need I say, “just look in the mirror!”)

We, in turn, should continue to support those who are now trying to “make it” – if not directly, then through a scrappy entity that has taken on this challenge.

So it is for the Hawaii Chapter. Our member and current Vice President, Susan Chong Wong, first called our attention to a group over twenty years ago, called Na Loio no Na Kanaka, a small band of attorneys who were attached to the Legal Aid Society. The work they did included helping Chinese immigrant women who were caught in bad situations in Hawaii. There were passports taken away, threats and physical and mental violence, mistreatment by spouses or employers, and not knowing where to turn for help. This was when the Hawaii Chapter stepped in to contribute support.

Na Loio no Na Kanaka eventually became the Hawaii Immigrant Justice Center. But the former founder, Esther Kim Arinaga, an immigration attorney, recognized that there were restrictions because of federal funding as to what type of clients they could assist. So she and others helped to found The Legal Clinic in 2017. In large part, they assist undocumented residents in Hawaii who have no access to immigration lawyers. These are the immigrant justice advocates, helping those who fall through the cracks, providing legal immigration services to those who fall at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guideline.

There were a number of unsung heroes – volunteers over the years, and I only mention a couple of them because I knew them personally. These ladies dedicated their lives to help new Chinese immigrants gain citizenship and a decent life in Hawaii, long before there was any organization providing such services. Yuk Pung Law and Annie Chang provided one-on-one help to interpret in Chinese, and assist in preparation for citizenship processes, from paperwork to interviews. No charge!

The Legal Clinic (TLC) proceeds with many of these aspects and helps all those who come their way who are the marginalized in our society, and the undocumented. Their efforts must continue. Their first office was housed on the grounds of the First Methodist Church of Honolulu near Chinatown.

TLC is non-partisan, non-faith-based, and an independent nonprofit.

The OCAW Hawaii Chapter believes in their work and wishes to laud and support them.

From and About Our Members

Mardi Gras 2023

(from Pat Ellzey, New Orleans Chapter President)



“Laissez les bons temps roulez!”

I was born on Mardi Gras day in the Year of the Rabbit, 84 years ago! (That’s 7 Chinese Zodiac cycles ago!) Mardi Gras has fallen only once on my birthday, when I was 11 years old, but it wasn’t a Rabbit year. This year, 2023, was special because finally the holiday once again fell on my birthday, February 21. I was wondering if this might be an especially lucky year for me.

Mardi Gras colors are purple, green, and gold, so I dressed up in the traditional colors. Purple is for justice, green is for faith, and gold represents power.

It was a nice “birthday” day. The weather was great – mostly sunny with a few occasional clouds, and the temperature was primarily in the upper 70s but rose even to 80. Crowds were out in full force. People mark off their space with tarps lying on the ground, and I had never before seen so many colorful pop-up tents lining the parade routes. It was so colorful!

There are many parades that wind down these routes. The main one is along the major streets in New Orleans, and there are about three or four other routes. Luckily there are several parades, because the crowds would swell to perhaps 20 feet deep, and traffic and parking are already a nightmare, especially for the largest and most popular parades.

All the costumed and masked riders in the parades throw lots of colorful long beads to the crowds, along with cups, stuffed animals, various toys, and other items. It's kind of a sport to catch all sorts of stuff and bring your "loot" home!

People picnic all along the routes all day. There are barbeque racks cooking chicken and ribs, stoves cooking hamburgers, and so on. I even saw large pots to boil seafood – mostly crawfish and shrimp. It must have been a big chore to bring out all of the necessary water, propane tanks, and burners – lots of heavy stuff!

Such a great day! The world here was at peace, and life was grand! I love Mardi Gras because it's such a happy time! (I must admit, though, that there are some who live here who don't like all the noise, crowds, etc. They usually just stay inside their homes. But what a fun time they are missing!)

I couldn't have wished for a more beautiful day for my birthday. My daughter from California and her daughter who is on spring break from Brandeis University in Boston surprised me by coming to New Orleans, so all three of my children and three of my four grandchildren were here to celebrate my big day! Life was good, and I felt so blessed! I wished that life everywhere was like this!

* * * * *

My kids gave me a seafood boil at my daughter's house and invited all the family. It took a few hours to make the seasonings for the water and cook all the seafood. They boiled up 40 lbs. of crawfish and 40 lbs. of shrimp, along with boudin sausage, corn, artichokes, and so on.



Here were the crawfish boiling. The oranges, lemons, onions, and garlic seeds floating around were for the seasonings, along with what is called "crab boil" – a lot of various spices, hot peppers, and other peppers.

The shrimp, corn, artichokes, and peanuts were boiled in this large pot of seasoning water.

It was a lot of work to do this, but it was great fun and more family friendly than a big restaurant dinner. Great memories, too!

Michelle Yeoh

(from Linda Devine)



Congratulations to Michelle Yeoh, who on Sunday, March 12, 2023, made history by becoming the first Asian to receive an Academy Award for Best Actress. She won the honor for her performance as an overwhelmed Chinese American laundromat owner and mother, navigating the multiverse in *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (2022), a film which in a landslide garnered all of the top Academy awards.

A Malaysian actress, she is of Hokkien and Cantonese ancestry. She rose to fame in the 1990s after starring in a series of Hong Kong action films where she performed her own stunts. After moving to the United States, Yeoh gained international recognition for starring in the James Bond film, *Tomorrow Never Dies* (1997) and in Ang Lee's martial arts film, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000), the latter for which she was nominated for the BAFTA Award for Best Actress in a Leading Role. Among many other films, she appeared in *Memoirs of a Geisha* (2005) and *Crazy Rich Asians* (2018), and recently in the hit Marvel Cinematic Universe film, *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* (2021).

Everything Everywhere All at Once received the most Academy Award nominations in 2023. The film won for Best Motion Picture, Best Director (shared with Daniel Kwan), Best Actress, Best Supporting Actor (Ke Huy Quan), Best Supporting Actress, Best Original Screenplay (shared with Daniel Kwan), and Best Film Editing. Stephanie Hsu (of Chinese ancestry) was also nominated for Best Supporting Actress.

Yeoh also won the prestigious Golden Globe award and Screen Actors Guild award for Best Actress.

Culture Corner

Chinese New Year Celebration

by Cathy Roberts

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



Lunar New Year is the most important and celebrated holiday of the Chinese traditional calendar. This year, a celebration was hosted by the Hai-Hua Community Center at the Fair Oaks Mall in Fairfax, Virginia on February 4th and 5th.

The two-day celebration included arts and crafts activities; performances of cultural dances, martial arts, and musical instruments; and a Chinese Chi-Pao fashion show. The famous Lion Dances and Dragon dances are believed to ward off evil spirits by the loud drumbeats and cymbals, along with the aggressive dancing of the lion or dragon. Arts and crafts activities included Chinese knotting, paper cutting, lantern making, origami, Chinese calligraphy, and face painting. Multiple Asian cultures were represented, including China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

Camilla Ng of the OCAW Maryland Chapter performed a graceful Chinese Ribbon Dance. She also joined Christina Chang of the Virginia Chapter and others performing in the group dance and in the Chi-Pao show. Maria Yang, our National President, was there taking pictures.



Camilla Ng (*1st from the left*), Christina Chang (*3rd from the left*), and Cathy Roberts (*4th from the left*)



Maria Yang



Camilla Ng





Stephen Roberts (*3rd from the right*), son of Cathy and Dick Roberts

(Photos taken by Maria Yang)