

E-Newsletter of the Organization of Chinese American Women

February 2015

(from Linda Devine, Editor)

Happy New Year and Happy Chinese New Year! I hope 2015 has begun well for all of you, and I wish you a wonderful celebration for the Year of the Sheep!

Thank you to those who submitted articles and pictures for this issue. I also would like to thank my husband Ed for his continuing work to prepare photos for the e-newsletter.

I continue to encourage OCAW members to write articles for the e-newsletter if there is something you think would be of interest to the membership. It does not have to be lengthy; even some tidbits of information would be welcome.

Suggestions or recommendations for any aspects of the e-newsletter are always welcome. Please feel free to contact me at: devinefive@att.net.

Nominations for OCAW National Officers and Members at Large

(from Donna Byler, Executive Director)

Nominations are now open for OCAW National Officers and Members at Large. These individuals, along with the Presidents of the five OCAW chapters and the Executive Director, constitute the National Board of Directors.

Officers are:

- President
- Vice President for Programs
- Vice President for Finance
- Vice President for Membership
- Vice President for Communications and Public Relations
- Secretary
- Treasurer

Ideally, there should be at least one Member at Large per chapter.

Duties of Officers and Members at Large

The President presides over meetings and represents OCAW at community events and meetings.

Vice Presidents perform specific duties in accordance with their title, act in the absence of the President, and perform other duties as requested by the President.

The Secretary takes and keeps minutes of meetings and performs other duties as requested by the President.

The Treasurer handles the funds of the organization, collects dues, pays bills, etc., and performs other duties as requested by the President.

A Member at Large represents the general membership on issues of interest or concern, particularly those that arise outside of the standing committee structure.

Members at Large (MALs) conduct projects to further the goals of the organization or to develop services for the membership. MALs could serve as chair of any ad hoc committee formed to develop these projects.

MALs listen to the membership and communicate members' issues, needs, and interests to the Board of Directors. They:

- Identify potential opportunities and problems
- Work effectively toward common goals as team members
- Set objectives and develop action plans for selected and/or assigned projects

Traditionally, national officers have resided in the Washington, D.C. area. However, in today's times, with electronic communications an integral part of our everyday life, there is no longer any need for officers to be located in the same geographic area, be it Washington or any other location. **Thus, please do not feel any geographic constraints in nominating OCAW members who you think would make good members of the board.**

Please feel free to nominate yourself or any member in good standing, and send nominations for any or all of the above positions to:

ocawwomen@aol.com
donnabyler@aol.com
joannewang88@gmail.com

The deadline for receipt of nominations is **April 1, 2015**.

News from the Maryland Chapter

OCAW-MD 2014 Recap

(from Christina Poy, Treasurer)

We want to thank Maria Yang for serving as the 2014 Acting President of the OCAW Maryland Chapter while simultaneously serving as President of the OCAW Virginia Chapter. Her leadership provided joint participation from both chapters in the lecture "Longevity: How to Live Longer" in April, and the lecture "Chi Uplifting and Its Impact on the Healing of Body, Mind, and Spirit" in August.

Other 2014 OCAW-MD activity highlights included:

1) co-sponsoring the "Dialogue with China: Wildlife Conservation" presentation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, followed by dim sum at the Oriental East restaurant in March;

2) representation in the annual D.C. Dragon Boat Festival in June (Christina Poy and Camilla Ng recruited more than half of Verizon's APEX team which placed 1st in the 250-meter and 2nd in the 500-meter races in

the community division);

- 3) attending Opera International's Operatic Vocal Gala Concert produced by lifetime OCAW-MD member Muriel "Mimi" Hom and honoring lifetime OCAW-MD member Amy Chuang Lee at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in August; and
- 4) celebrating in November at the OCA-Greater Washington DC Chapter's 41st Annual Honor Awards Gala in which Mimi Hom, OCAW National Vice President for Programs, was honored as the 2014 Trailblazer Awardee for founding Opera International as well as directing and producing numerous operas and concerts.

Kudos to all who were involved with the planning, development, organization, and implementation of these events and activities, and congratulations to all who have been so deservedly honored.

Reducing Wildlife Trade in China

(from Linda Devine)

OCAW-MD members and friends Camilla Ng, Roberta Chew, Linda Devine, and Ed Devine were among many attendees who learned a lot at a presentation entitled "Reducing Wildlife Trade in China – A Holistic Approach," which was presented by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – International Affairs office on Tuesday, February 3, 2015. Held in the impressive Conference Room of the USFWS Headquarters in Falls Church, Virginia, the talk was given by Grace Ge Gabriel, Asia Regional Director for the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW).

OCAW members were invited to the event by Peter Ward of the USFWS, who had presented a lecture in March 2014 entitled "Dialogue with China: Wildlife Conservation," which was co-sponsored by the USFWS and the OCAW Maryland Chapter (Camilla Ng, organizer). (*Editor's Note: See the April 2014 issue of the OCAW E-Newsletter for Camilla's article on this event.*) Both presentations focused primarily on the extremely serious problem of illegal ivory trade and how the quest for ivory was causing the decimation of the wild elephant population worldwide – a crisis that has been receiving international attention.

Grace discussed the killing of elephants, rhinos, and tigers for their tusks, horns, and bones, respectively. From poaching to trafficking to demand for endangered wildlife products, every link in the trade chain is causing horrific suffering to individual animals and tragically driving these endangered species closer to extinction.

Grace explained how IFAW is taking a comprehensive approach to reduce wildlife trade in China by influencing market supply as well as consumer demand. Combining (1) public outreach, (2) community mobilization, and (3) policy advocacy, which are the three pillars of IFAW's communications campaign to promote change in China, IFAW has been able to influence policies to shut down specific marketplaces for wildlife trade, enhancing law enforcement effectiveness, and motivating consumers to reject wildlife consumption. A massive effort to reduce demand is underway to change consumer behavior through socially-motivating messages stigmatizing wildlife product consumption. Research shows that IFAW's advertising campaign has successfully reduced the segment of the Chinese population most likely to purchase ivory from 54% to 26%.

There was much information in Grace's presentation. In light of the sad situation with regard to the hunting of wildlife, there have been encouraging signs that perhaps there can be significant change:

--- In a survey conducted on the subject, 70% of the people in China surveyed didn't know that ivory comes from *dead* elephants. They thought that the elephant's "teeth" can just naturally fall out, like human teeth.

--- The survey also found that 82% would reject ivory if they knew it was linked to elephant death.

--- Based on these results, IFAW has launched an advertising campaign, with the theme, "**Buying equals Killing. Say "No" to Elephant Ivory.**" The hope is that enlightened consumers will make an animal-friendly choice.

--- The campaign has reached hundreds of millions of people, thanks to many Chinese corporations such as the prominent advertising agency JCDecaux, which has placed billboards in airports, railway stations, subway stations, and department stores across China.



(Photo courtesy of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

--- IFAW has been using Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) to help them in their ad campaigns. Grace showed the audience four Public Service Announcements, one each by a well-known Chinese pop star, business leader, actress, and artist. They were powerful PSAs, emphasizing that ivory comes from dead elephants.

--- An educational program for school children (Animal Action Education) has taught students about this issue, and has encouraged them to talk to their families and have their families take a pledge not to use ivory.

--- The Chinese government's ban on auctioning elephant ivory, rhino horn, and tiger bone has reduced mainland China auction sales volume by 40% since 2012. This represents \$322 million in U.S. dollars.

--- In China, polls indicate overwhelming public support for the government ban on ivory trade altogether to help stop elephant poaching in Africa.

--- The current President of China Xi Jinping instituted a comprehensive anti-corruption campaign, which has included the prohibition of lavish banquets. This has spurred on the ban prohibiting official banquets from serving shark fin soup and thus has significantly reduced shark fin consumption. This will help imperiled shark populations around the globe.

Grace's talk was very well received, and was uplifting in giving hope that there are indeed positive actions being taken to discourage wildlife trafficking. It is also very encouraging that there are numerous other organizations partnering with IFAW to assist in these positive efforts.

News from the Virginia Chapter

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

Christmas Party

The Virginia and Maryland Chapters of OCAW held a joint Christmas party with the Chinese Liren Chorus in the Auditorium of the Arlington Central Library in Arlington, Virginia, on Sunday, December 21, 2014. Members and friends, numbering about 70 participants, had a potluck dinner to share everyone's favorite dish and enjoyed music and songs during the evening.

The Executive Director of OCAW, Donna Byler, made opening remarks at the party.



The National President of OCAW, Christina Chang, made welcoming remarks, including a presentation of a brief history of OCAW, and she introduced the officers of the Virginia Chapter.



The National President and the Executive Director of OCAW expressed appreciation to the members and friends of the Chinese Liren Chorus for their participation, and announced the start of the party.



Below are some examples of the many homemade dishes at the party.







After the splendid dinner, the Chinese Liren Chorus performed Christmas songs for everyone.



Little Apple

Mr. Yimin Zhuang, from the Liren Chorus, performed on the accordion.



Little Apple

Didi Park, daughter of Wan-ying Chang from the Liren Chorus, played the cello. Jackie Ling, daughter of Butterfly Chang from the Liren Chorus, played the violin.



Little Apple



The party was held from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., and the performance from the Chinese Liren Chorus lasted about one hour.

Everyone had a great time celebrating the holiday and sharing the joy and warmth at the party!!

Thanks to Chi-hua Yang, Vice President of OCAW-VA; Noreen Hom, Secretary of OCAW-VA; and Amber Yen, Treasurer of OCAW-VA, for all their efforts which contributed to the success of the event.

(Photos taken by the President of the Chinese Liren Chorus)



News from the New Orleans Chapter

(from Betty Butz, President)

OCAW New Orleans Chapter 25th Anniversary Celebration

The OCAW New Orleans Chapter celebrated its 25th anniversary on Saturday, December 13, 2014, with a luncheon at English Turn Golf and Country Club in Lower Coast Algiers on the West Bank of New Orleans. Members and guests were honored by the presence of chapter founder Patricia Hew, who was instrumental in connecting the local chapter with OCAW national leaders.

As a special tribute to the continuing success of OCAW in the city, Pat installed officers for 2015 as follows:

President – Betty Butz
Vice President – Leda Fan
Secretary – Maria Auzenne
Treasurer – Mangjee Yeh

We were also thankful for the acknowledgment and OCAW cookbooks sent to us from the national board.

It was a cool, sunny day, the perfect weather adding to feelings of fellowship and good cheer. The children played outside and had a great time. On the menu were soft fish tacos, salad, shrimp etoufee, and birthday cake. Betty created table decorations with cypress seedpods and kumquats in champagne flutes, ornamental balls made of patterned wood shavings, camellia petals, rosemary, scented candles, and painted silk fans.



Nancy Chung, Yvonne Louie, Tiffany Lee, Baby Lee, Leda Fan, and Jiao Wang



Li Seghers and daughter



Nancy Chung, Li Seghers, Leda Fan, Betty Butz, and Pat Hew



Betty Butz lighting a candle presented by Pat Hew



Jiao Wang, Guiqin Xiong, Betty Butz, Leda Fan, Pat Hew, Sun Kim, Nancy Chung, Li Seghers, and Tiffany Lee and baby

(Photos taken by Dr. Si Chung)

News from the Silicon Valley Chapter

(from Sophia Yang, President)

Annual Members Holiday Social

We had our first event in 2015, our annual Members Holiday Social, on Sunday, January 11 in the Community Room of the Saratoga Library in Saratoga, California. More than 40 members joined us on a sunny afternoon. Our chapter had not held an event since last October, so everyone was very excited to meet up and chat with friends.

Jewelry-Do It Yourself, Recipe Sharing, and Line Dance Teaching were the highlights of this event.

The first activity was Jewelry-Do It Yourself (Jewelry DIY). We were lucky to have Ms. Bella Chang demonstrate the art of making necklaces and bracelets. She instructed us on how to begin, and then showed us the basic technique for the endings and applying the finishing touches.





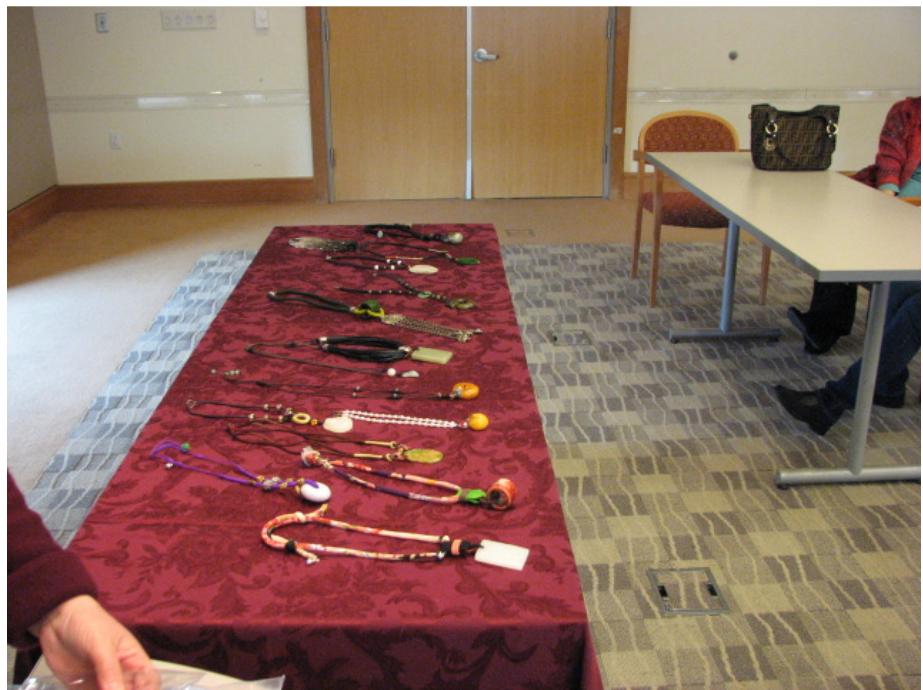
She was very kind in providing some materials such as stringing wire and clasps for our practice. Some of the members even brought their own stones and beads to make a new necklace.





Ms. Chang also brought some of her works for display. We found some unique and interesting materials like "Ban Zhi" and Stings from Kimono Robe in her jewelry making.





The second activity was Food Tasting and Recipe Sharing. One of our former presidents, Yura Shieu, is a talented artist. She is not only very good in watercoloring, but she is also very creative in making delicious dishes. At every year's members social, we all really look forward to tasting the food she brings.

This time, Yura brought us a "Dates filled Chocolate Cake," and she created the recipe herself. With the combination of western and eastern ingredients, the cake tasted so good! She is very happy to share nice things with friends, so we received her permission to post the recipe on our website.



Toward the end, Alice Chiou, also a former president, took the lead and taught us three line dances. Line Dance is very popular nowadays. Many of our members are associated with some different Line Dance groups in the Bay Area. It is not only a social activity, but it is also good exercise. To stay healthy should be one of everyone's top priorities today.





We ended up with quite an abundant gathering, and everyone had a wonderful time.

Upcoming Event

Our next event will be our Spring Outing on Saturday, March 28.

News from the Hawaii Chapter

October 2014 General Membership Election Meeting

(from Geraldine "Gigi" Ko, 2014 Secretary)

Sunshine was not in the cards for our election meeting on October 19, 2014, and neither was Hurricane Ana, the female terror expected to pummel our islands that day. Thus we postponed our meeting to Sunday,

October 26, a most gorgeous day when nature went back to business as usual, with butterflies, rainbows, and flowers up and about, made even more brilliant by the rains the week before.

At the Maple Garden Restaurant in Honolulu, President Rena Ochse welcomed the attendees to the final meeting of the 25th year of OCAW-Hawaii. After acknowledging guests of members and inviting them to join our club, the slate of officers was presented for election: for President, Queenie Chee; for Vice President, Linda Young; for Secretary, Jerilyn Jeffryes; and for Treasurer, Susan Lee.

There were no nominations from the floor, so the slate presented became the incoming officers for 2015. After a beautiful invocation by Queenie Chee, a Chinese buffet lunch was served to nourish our bodies, with happy friends all around to nourish our souls.

Gigi Ko then introduced the guest speaker, new member Sharon Pang, who spoke about aging, a subject everyone could relate to, for in the blink of an eye, we have become those seniors we used to see, and never dreamed we'd be.

It really wasn't that long ago when old people were decrepit, miserable, and just waiting to go. Today, with gigantic strides in medical technology and health care, the elderly are looking better than ever, have their own money, live independently, and are totally enjoying the privilege of living longer and giving their families the love of a lifetime.

However, being filled with the wisdom of the ages is not enough these days, especially because it is easy to procrastinate, for we get so spoiled into thinking that we have all the time in the world. Now with lots of options and choices, aging needs meticulous planning and preparation.

It was our speaker Sharon Pang's intent to point us in the right direction as we look towards our medical, financial, and legal decisions, in case we become caregivers, or receivers of care.

After the attendees listened to advice on how to age 'smart,' Gigi and her sister, member Isabella Rose Monzon, conducted a game called "Name that Tune," a group effort with each table of 10 competing against each other. The tunes were oldies from the 50s, which had everyone harkening back to a more carefree time of proms and old boyfriends, when no one worried about cellulite, gluten, or cholesterol. Some even said that they knew exactly what they were doing when some of the tunes were played. After much giggling and swooning by the attendees, the 10 occupants of the winning table were given prizes donated by Gigi Ko.

Everyone agreed that it was an afternoon well spent.

* * * * *

In conjunction with the meeting above, the following material was provided by Sharon L. Pang.

**Aging...Are you ready?
What you need to know about aging**

Our world is changing.

Key facts:

- The number of people today aged 60 and over has doubled since 1980.
- The number of people aged 80 years will almost quadruple to 395 million between now and 2050.

- Within the next five years, the number of adults aged 65 and over will outnumber children under the age of 5.
- By 2050, these older adults will outnumber all children under the age of 14.
- The majority of older people live in low- or middle-income countries. By 2050, this number will have increased to 80%.
- In Hawaii we have the largest group of seniors in this state in comparison to the rest of the nation. Over 60% of our population is 55 years and older.

I am finding more and more people are not prepared for the unexpected illness that may lead to hospitalization or a fall that may lead to rehabilitation at a nursing home. It is important that you have all of your legal documents in order so that you have a good picture of your state of affairs.

Are you prepared to handle difficult decisions on behalf of yourself or an aging parent? Do you know what legal planning you should have in place? You cannot predict when something might happen, so preparation will help in making legal and medical decisions for your loved one.

Here are 10 questions to ask yourself or to ask your senior parent to make sure your family is prepared for the unexpected.

1. Do you have a Durable Power of Attorney?
2. What are your end of life wishes?
3. Do you have a Will or Living Trust?
4. Do you have Long Term Care Insurance or another plan in case long term care is required?
5. Have you made sure that these documents are current?
6. Do you know where can you find these documents if you ever need them?
7. Is someone advising you on financial matters?
8. If you can no longer take care of yourself, have you thought about where you would prefer to live?
9. Do you visit the doctor regularly?
10. Do you feel you understand why you are taking the medicines you have been prescribed?

OCAW-Hawaii's New President, Ms. Queenie Mow Chee

(from Geraldine "Gigi" Ko)

The alpha female is one who has done well in every aspect of her life. As the alpha female, our incoming President, Ms. Queenie Chee, first of all is in good health, is well educated, is happily married to husband Wilbert, and is a wonderful mother to son Peter. She is successful in her work, dynamic in leadership, and beautiful.

Queenie started working in her family's Mow Grocery Store in Kalihi as soon as she could walk. Starting from grade school, she learned Chinese folk dances at the Sun Yat Sen School.

While in college, she studied the Hawaiian language and Hula. She then helped to establish the Hawaiian language radio show on KCCN, "Ka Leo O Hawaii."

Queenie graduated from the University of Hawaii with a Bachelor's degree in Speech and Communication, and later obtained a graduate degree in Education.

She served as Director for the Hawaii Chinese History Center, and also for the Hawaii Multi-Cultural Center.

In 1971, Queenie won the title, "Narcissus Festival Queen." She was OCAW-Hawaii President in the year 2000.

Queenie's career is in Insurance. She is a Life Underwriting Council Fellow (LUTCF) and Chartered Life Underwriter. She started in the insurance industry as a life insurance agent in 1988, after being prodded by her dad, also an insurance agent, for about 20 years. Finally, after years at the airport and then at the bank, Queenie was persuaded to follow in her dad's footsteps, and has been in this line of work ever since.

Along the way, she was honored to serve as Chapter, and later State President of the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors. These positions gave her the opportunity to visit our legislators at the State Capital as well as Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., representing the life insurance professionals of Hawaii. One of the highlights of that visit was having breakfast with the late Congresswoman Patsy Mink, who was key in sponsoring and creating Title IX, which gave young women increased equal access to support in sports at the college level.

Queenie's best assets, however, are her kind heart and beautiful soul. We congratulate her and wish her the best.

2015 Hawaii Chapter Officers and Committee Chairs

(from Queenie Chee, President)

President: Queenie Chee

Vice President: Linda Young

Secretary: Jerilyn Jeffryes

Treasurer: Susan Lee

Membership: Marilyn Wong

Communications: Rena Young Ochse and Alicia Sakamoto

Courtesy: Shirley Chung and Juliette Ling

Budget and Finance: Phyllis Shea

Fundraising and Public Relations: Gladys Lee and Geraldine Ko

Historian: Josette Murai

Webmaster: Ann Matsumoto

Parliamentarian: Blossom Tyau

Nominations: (to be filled)

2015 Schedule of Meetings

(from Queenie Chee)

The following is a list of the Hawaii Chapter's Board of Directors Meetings and General Membership Meetings scheduled for 2015, as well as the Fundraiser and Year-End Installation Brunch:

Tuesday, February 3, 4 p.m. – BOARD MEETING – Oahu Country Club Orchid Lanai

Sunday, February 22 – GENERAL MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON MEETING – Maple Garden Restaurant

Tuesday, April 7, 4 p.m. – BOARD MEETING

Sunday, April 26 – GENERAL MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON MEETING

Saturday, May 30 – OCAW FUNDRAISER LUNCHEON – Pagoda Hotel

Tuesday, July 7, 4 p.m. – BOARD MEETING

Sunday, July 26 – GENERAL MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON MEETING

Tuesday, October 6, 4 p.m. – BOARD MEETING

Sunday, October 25 – GENERAL MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON MEETING AND ELECTIONS

Sunday, December 6 – CHRISTMAS INSTALLATION BRUNCH BUFFET – Oahu Country Club

Note: All Board Meetings will be held at Oahu Country Club at 4 p.m. unless otherwise stated. All General Membership Meetings will be held at the Maple Garden Restaurant unless announced otherwise.

Theme for 2015

(from Queenie Chee)

The Hawaii Chapter will have a theme this year: “Remember the Past, Check Point the Present, and Look to the Future – The Contributions of Chinese/Asian American Women.”

At each General Membership Meeting, Queenie hopes that they will be able to find speakers or have activities that will address this theme.

The final meeting of the year may be one of determination of future action.

OCAW Members Visiting Honolulu

(from Queenie Chee)

If any OCAW member from any of the chapters has plans to be in Honolulu, Queenie hopes that you will give her a “heads up” and let her know in advance. That way, they can do their best to include you in their activities.

If your trip is during the time of their meetings, she would like to invite you to be her guest. If they are not having meetings then, she would still love to meet you personally.

Teaching English to Girls and Novice Monks in Lao People's Democratic Republic

by Audrey Lee

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

“Sa bai dee!” I responded to my students’ greeting. I was in Luang Prabang, Lao PDR in mid-December in front of my classroom of Lao high school girls and novice monks. Five months ago, pondering where I could spend my birthday and greet the 2015 New Year in a warm locale, my online research resulted in several global volunteer programs. After completing the interview, application, and criminal background check, I was soon en route via Tokyo and Bangkok to arrive 30 hours later in Luang Prabang (LP), the “hidden jewel of Southeast Asia” and a UNESCO World Heritage Site with numerous wats (temples) and French colonial architecture.

While LP’s daily night market brings young women from the surrounding villages to sell various handicrafts, the obvious encroachment of the modern world brings ubiquitous cellphones, loud blaring pop music, and plastic bags and bottles, and WiFi is widely available in the many restaurants, guesthouses, hotels, and coffee shops. While local transport is mostly tuk-tuks, motorbikes, and bicycles, the roads are also congested with trucks, vans, and SUVs. Fortunately, influenced by the many monks and novices residing in the wats, residents are largely gentle, tolerant, and welcoming towards the hordes of tourists, backpackers, and expats.



In my classroom and around town, as a volunteer teacher, I wore the sinh (local skirt) and followed local etiquette of respectfulness towards novice monks; I did not hand them anything directly, hover above their

heads, or touch them. One could conclude because the novices are not allowed to clap, sing, or dance that classrooms were quiet and rigid, which was far from actuality. Instead, my students were like any other U.S. adolescents: rowdy, outspoken, with bursts of laughter, and with lots of joking and teasing. I was pleased that there were an equal number of girls in my class and many were just as outspoken as the boys. Trying to keep classes fun while instructing grammar and vocabulary usage, I utilized many word games that had the students excitedly and loudly competing in teams.



Unsurprisingly, many students are from very poor subsistence farming families. They leave their remote rural villages to live in LP in the hopes of improving their education as a means towards earning a larger income to assist their parents. Although most Lao males serve once in their lifetime as a novice monk for an average of three months, many to earn merits for their family, those from poor families join between the ages of 9 and 12 and stay until the ages of 20 to 25. At that point, they either become a monk or leave to pursue a career. As a novice, these boys follow a disciplined lifestyle that allows them to study various subjects, including foreign languages, but also gives them some free time to enjoy being a modern teenager; many carry cellphones decorated with stickers, have Facebook and email accounts, use digital cameras, and watch HBO channel movies on the TV in the wat's monk room.

I was humbled and frankly awed by the young novices I encountered in the local library on a weekend practicing their computer typing skills, and self-studying Korean, Mandarin, and English. Initially, after they realized I was not Lao, these novices were eager to practice their English and learn more about the U.S. I learned that some do get sponsored for English classes but most have to go it alone and practice speaking with the tourists thronging around the wats.

Keeping bright eager students engaged is no small task. During my albeit short stint as a volunteer teacher, I was happily exhausted after teaching three classes, preparing lesson plans, and reviewing the next day's lessons. Mostly, though, I had renewed respect for teachers who devote their time to imparting knowledge through creative and resourceful means! Engaging with Lao students was such a worthwhile experience, and I can only hope I provided at least a modicum of impact on their education.

Chinese New Year and Going Home

by Christina Chang

(Editor's Note: Christina is OCAW National President.)

Chinese New Year is February 19. This year I will go back to my hometown and celebrate Chinese New Year with my 92-year-old mother in Kaohsiung, which is south of Taiwan.

I remember our family giving our house a thorough cleaning before the Chinese New Year so that the new year would start out fresh and leave behind unpleasant things.



A young Christina Chang (left) with her brother and older sister

My mother and grandma cooked lots of delicious food for the Chinese New Year Eve dinner. Some of those dishes we could not afford during the year.

At the big feast, my grandma always reminded us to save some fish for the next day, and we could not turn the fish upside down either. The Chinese word for fish, “Yeu,” is like the word meaning ‘to always have extra.’ We also didn’t want to see the fish upside down, because we wanted to have ‘smooth sailing’ from a navy family’s perspective which is where I came from.

A special food that I liked was Toru (“Yu Tou” in Chinese). It symbolizes a good start. We ate it as a snack by peeling the skin off. Now we can have any food we want. I have tried to buy these special foods a few times while in the U.S., but they never tasted the same. They are not as enjoyable as I had remembered.

Year after year, after a big feast, we gathered with neighborhood kids to play cards. These neighborhood kids became like brothers and sisters, and we still have a good connection. I barely know my current neighbors now. Even though we have a community association, we don’t associate with each other.



Christina with the neighborhood kids

In addition to my grandma and parents, we had my aunt, my sister, my brother, and me living in a two-bedroom house. My parents slept in an open area next to our living room. During the holidays, other relatives stayed with us. We felt comfortable living together. By current standards, it would be too small to have seven people in such a small house.

I miss the old times. I look forward to going home and to seeing the neighborhood. Hopefully this year we will re-experience some of my childhood fun before returning to our home in the U.S.

Happy Chinese New Year to everyone!

Greetings from Puanani Woo

(Editor's Note: Puanani served as Hawaii Chapter President and was the Project Director for the book, History of the Organization of Chinese American Women, published in 2013.)

January 30, 2015

Happy New Year, OCAW sisters:

I am a rooster person and so was my late husband, Francis. I love to celebrate Chinese New Year with my children and their families. Even growing up poor, my Chinese mother always found the means to do something special for us at this time. We raised a pig and several ducks that ate our leftovers and chickens that really did scratch the ground to find food to eat. So we had salted duck eggs and boiled chicken eggs as occasional treats. My mother built a rabbit hutch where we raised about 10 rabbits at a time. Young, tender sweet potato leaves from her garden was a staple stir-fry green for us. I was the oldest and the only girl, with four brothers below me, so I was my mother's best student. I heard her last breath, like her clearing her throat. I dearly miss her.

I just completed my year-long voluntary work to achieve my goal of heading a fundraising activity to benefit Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikolani College of Hawaiian Language at the University of Hawaii located in Hilo city on Hawaii island, which is one of the 8 major islands of the state of Hawaii. It was wonderful to work with the Hawaiian language scholars whom I knew in the 1970s when they were high school students.

Making plans to live purposely is important. My most important plan now is to stay healthy as I age into my 90s. My mother died at 92 and my father at 90, so I know I have longevity genes. I have been attending free senior citizen community programs on staying healthy. I love to do yard work, clean house, and swim in the ocean, so I get my share of exercise. My soursop and green fig trees are good bearers of fruit. In all seriousness, my mother and husband told me that Chinese only eat green figs, so we've always had a green fig tree in our yards. A Chinese women's club in Honolulu (one has to be a college graduate to be accepted as a member) just came out with another of their fabulous cookbooks, and there is a Green Fig Soup recipe in it.

I don't care to travel so my home is full of books and magazines, and going on the web is the easiest thing to do to learn about everything that interests me.

Our national president, Christina Chang, asked me to write for this issue and I humbly accepted. Over the past few months in 2014, we had time to renew our friendship and respect for each other on a woman/wife/mother/grandmother basis. Being the old lady that I am (I say this lovingly of myself) – I'll be 81 this April 2015, I asked her permission to *hanai* her, and she accepted. So Christina is my *hanai* younger sister. *Hanai* is the Hawaiian word that means to include a non-blood person to be part of one's family.

OCAW is a premier organization that emphasizes community service in harmony with personal development. That's a great combination as a lifestyle. "Live healthy. Live happy. Live long."

Sincerely yours,

Puanani Woo

Request for Suggestions

(from Christina Chang, National President)

If you have suggestions for the OCAW National Board, please complete the following form and either mail it, fax it, or email it to the contact information listed below. We would like to hear from you!

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Organization of Chinese American Women, Inc.

Post Office Box 815, Great Falls, VA 22066

OCAW Member Suggestions

The National Board is very interested in hearing from our members. If you have an idea or would like to volunteer to do something that is of particular interest to you, or if you feel you have identified an area of need, please share it with us. We would love to hear from you.

OCAW Contact Information

If you would like to receive feedback to your suggestion, please provide your email address:

Your address will only be used by OCAW. It will not be sold.

Telephone: 301-907-3898 Fax: 301-907-3899

Email: OCAWWOMEN@aol.com

Website: www.ocawwomen.org