

E-Newsletter of the Organization of Chinese American Women

November 2019



P. O. Box 3443, Oakton, VA 22124
Telephone: 301-907-3898
Email: ocawwomen@aol.com
Website: www.ocawwomen.org
501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization

(from Linda Devine, Editor)

This is our final e-newsletter for 2019. Thank you, as always, to those of you who submitted material for this issue. I also would like to thank my husband Ed for his work on preparing the photos.

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

I would like to wish everyone and their families a Happy Thanksgiving, and wonderful winter holidays. See you in 2020!

Table of Contents

	Page
News from the Virginia and Maryland Chapters.....	1
News from the New Orleans Chapter.....	3
News from the Silicon Valley Chapter.....	5
News from the Hawaii Chapter.....	11
From and About Our Members.....	11
Las Cruces Museum of Art Ceramics Exhibition.....	18
Chrysanthemums in Chinese Culture.....	23
Panama Canal Cruise (Part II).....	32

News from the Virginia and Maryland Chapters

Volunteer Respite Care Training

(from Donna Byler, National Executive Director)

OCAW-VA and MD Chapter members Christina Chang, Donna Byler, Cathy Roberts, Camilla Ng, Chi-Hua Yang, and Linda Devine attended an information meeting in August about Fairfax County, Virginia's

Volunteer Respite Care Program. The purpose of the program is for volunteers to provide breaks to family caregivers. (*Editor's Note: See September OCAW E-Newsletter.*)

As Respite Volunteers, we were invited to receive additional training, and this was conducted on Tuesday, October 29, 2019. The training was excellent, and some of the highlights are provided below.

Christina spoke with the trainer who graciously agreed to give a presentation for OCAW in the coming year. A date has not been set. ***Let us know if you are interested and when you will be in the area. This will help us schedule a time.***

We will be better able to “Do what we can, from where we are with what we have” – a recurring theme of our 40th anniversary conference.

Understanding Dementia

In the past month:

1. Have you walked into a room and forgotten what you went in there for?
2. Have you lost your keys or glasses?
3. Have you forgotten to go to an appointment?
4. Have you not planned well and/or made a bad decision?

If you have, you are probably experiencing common mishaps that plague us all at one time or another. It is the frequency and extent to which they affect your daily life that determines whether it is dementia.

Dementia is an umbrella term for cognitive loss. Alzheimer's Disease, Vascular Dementia, Lewy Body Dementia, Frontotemporal Degeneration, and mixed dementia are forms of dementia that are progressive and irreversible. Reversible cognitive loss can be attributed to depression, infection, tumors, medication, vitamin deficiency, and more, for which there are remedies and which should be addressed by a professional.

Warning signs include:

1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks
4. Confusion with time or place
5. Trouble with visual images and spatial relationships
6. New problems with words in speaking or writing
7. Inability to retrace steps if something is misplaced
8. Decreased or poor judgment
9. Decreased motivation and withdrawal
10. Changes in mood and personality

When something is happening out of the ordinary, it should be reported to a primary care physician to address what may be reversible issues such as depression, vitamin deficiency, infection, or side effects of medications, and/or to rule out a tumor.

There are medications that may be helpful and slow the progression of dementia. Also helpful is a healthy lifestyle, including:

1. Physical activity
2. Healthy eating
3. Not smoking
4. Drinking less alcohol
5. Exercising your mind
6. Social contact which doesn't have to be talking with and may be just doing with

When interacting with someone with dementia, approach them from the front and don't correct or quiz them or ask if they remember. It would make them feel bad or worse for not remembering. Join them in their reality by acknowledging that you heard them by gently reframing what they said.

Dementia is not normal but it is very common. Almost everyone knows someone with dementia or someone who is caring for someone with dementia. It has been reported that 1 in 4 persons over 65 have some cognitive decline, and this ratio seems to double every five years, so that after 85, it is 1 in 2 persons.

News from the New Orleans Chapter

(from Patricia Ellzey, President)

Recent Activities

OCAW New Orleans Chapter members have been involved in the following activities:

1. Helped elect Cynthia Lee Sheng to be the Jefferson Parish (County) Council President on Saturday, October 12, 2019. She is the first woman and Asian American to be elected to this position.
2. Supported and attended the New Orleans Asian Pacific American Society 40th Anniversary Gala on Saturday, October 19, 2019 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. Among other activities, APAS hosts an annual Asian Heritage Festival every spring, and OCAW New Orleans Chapter members set up a booth and conduct activities for attendees.



Pictured in the above photo are: Lai Beet Woo Lee, widow of the late beloved Chinese American Jefferson Parish Sheriff Harry Lee; Nellie Underwood, OCAW New Orleans Chapter member; Nancy Chung, OCAW New Orleans Chapter Treasurer; Cynthia Lee Sheng, newly elected, first woman and Chinese American Jefferson Parish Council President (and daughter of Sheriff Lee and Lai Lee); and Gavin Lee, Cynthia's son

(Photo taken by Si Chung)

3. Assisted in identifying Chinese American World War II military veterans and helped to inform them or their relatives about how to receive a Congressional Gold medal for their military participation.

Proposed Activities and Seminars

We would like to focus on plans for the following activities and seminars over the next six months.

Proposed Activities

1. Visit the local Acadian Folk Village in Lafayette, LA.
2. Develop our sense of balance as we get older to prevent falling and hurting ourselves. Our chapter will set up and sponsor a weekly Tai Chi class as recommended by the National Institutes of Health.
3. Help coordinate the local Asian American community in the local 2020 census.
4. Support a new membership and fundraising drive.

Proposed Seminars

The following are proposed topics for future seminars:

1. The history and development of opera
2. The history and development of American Folk music – country/western, blue grass, spiritual gospel, negro gospel, jazz, zydeco, etc.
3. The history and development of Chinese opera and dance
4. Alzheimer's and dementia

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on Saturday, December 7, 2019. It will be our annual Christmas celebration and the installation of officers for 2020.

News from the Silicon Valley Chapter

(from Wendy Chang, President)

JW House Dinner is Served

On Thursday, June 6, 2019, Wendy Chang, Alice Chiou, Jamie Tsai, Angela Yang, and Lily Yang served dinner at the JW House. JW House is located on the campus of Kaiser Permanente Santa Clara Medical Center. It welcomes families and individuals from area hospitals into their family for rest and self-care during the day or overnight while their loved one is in the hospital.

“Dinner is Served” is a program where the JW House community provides home-cooked meals to their guests every night. OCAW-SVC reserved 6 dates to serve dinner at JW House this year. This was the 3rd dinner that we had prepared in 2019.

We started cooking around 3 p.m. We heated up the Pulled Pork, and made Macaroni and Cheese, Green Salad, Garlic Bread, and baked Chocolate Chip Cookies. With everyone’s help, we finished preparing dinner well before 6 p.m.

We stayed and had dinner with JW House guests. It is our way to help the community and also bond with our members.



Lily Yang, Angela Yang, Wendy Chang, and Alice Chiou. Jamie Tsai was busy taking pictures.



Dinner is served!

JW House Dinner is Served Again

On Thursday, August 8, 2019, Cynthia Chang, Wendy Chang, Grace Lin, Jennifer Short, Jamie Tsai, and Ling Yang served dinner again at the JW House. This was the 4th dinner that OCAW-SVC had served this year.

We made an Asian-inspired BBQ dinner this time. We divided up into 3 teams. Cynthia and Jennifer worked on the egg rolls. Wendy and Ling grilled Char-Chou pork and Chicken, while Jamie and Grace worked on the stir fry vegetables. With everyone working together, we finished early.

We stayed for dinner and chatted with JW House guests. It is great to be able to offer a little comfort to people who are going through difficult times.



Cynthia wrapping egg rolls



Cynthia Chang, Jennifer Short, Grace Lin, Wendy Chang, Jamie Tsai, and Ling Yang

(Editor's Note: As reported in the June OCAW E-Newsletter, the chapter held a fundraiser for the JW House "Dinner is Served" program on Sunday, March 17, 2019, at SVC member Nai Hsueh's home in Saratoga, CA. Nai's husband, Sungchi Huang, is a superb chef, and prepared a sumptuous meal for the attendees which all thoroughly enjoyed. The event's purpose was to earn funds for the food costs for the 6 2019 JW House dinners.

I was very impressed to learn that a most generous \$2000 was raised at this event! OCAW-SVC members should be commended not only for their generosity in contributing money for these meals, but for giving unselfishly of their time to prepare them.)

Lunch with Chapter Founder Dorothy Lee

We had a great gathering with our chapter founder, Dorothy Lee, at the Italian Restaurant, Florentine, in Saratoga Downtown on Wednesday, October 16, 2019.

Dorothy resides in Chicago now. She came to Northern California to visit her family. Originally, her plan

was to meet with some old friends, whom she had known for over 30 years from the time she had founded the Silicon Valley Chapter. However, we thought it would be a good opportunity to have Dorothy share her experiences with our organization, so we extended the invitation to all OCAW members and friends.

A total of 25 people joined this special luncheon. This number included 8 past Presidents, 7 current officers, and 4 new guests (Cynthia Chang met these guests at a high school parents social, and was hoping to recruit them as new chapter members).



Dorothy Lee

Before Dorothy's talk, we introduced ourselves to each other. We learned how 6 of the past Presidents had followed her footsteps and had made contributions to the Chapter and community.

Dorothy was inspired by her older sister, Esther Lee, to establish this chapter in the Bay Area. Esther used to be the Vice President of OCAW National. She often cooked food, served meals, and invited people to her home for meetings and planning activities.

Dorothy took the lead on many occasions and encouraged other Chinese women to care for things that happened around their communities.

Although she left Silicon Valley in 1989, she carried OCAW's spirit and vision to the Chicago area. She continued spreading seeds and extending service in many Chinese organizations there.

After retiring, she was invited to many cities in China to share her experiences and vision with college students.



Nowadays, she is still full of energy. She is busy with her grandchildren and with coordinating events and gatherings for Chinese organizations in the Midwest area.

Dorothy touched everyone; she is a great model for all of us.



News from the Hawaii Chapter

(from Rena Young Ochse, Treasurer and Newsletter Editor)

General Membership / Election Meeting

The OCAW Hawaii Chapter held its general membership and election meeting on Sunday, October 20, 2019 at Maple Garden Restaurant in Honolulu. The speaker was Master Clarence Lau who spoke on the subject of Feng Shui. He has a trail of great designs at many places in Hawaii, including the Valley of the Temples Memorial Park. He also was involved in the feng shui designs of the Skylawn Memorial Park garden in San Mateo, California.

Queenie Chee, Nominations Chair, presented the slate of officers for 2020. It was as follows:

Tina Au – President
Lena Young – Vice President and President-Elect
Charlene Chang – Secretary
Rena Young Ochse – Treasurer

Nominations from the floor were opened, and nominations were then closed.

The officers will be installed at the annual **Christmas / Installation Luncheon at Oahu Country Club on Sunday, December 1, 2019**. The Chair for this event is Queenie Mow Chee.

From and About Our Members

From Rena Young Ochse, Hawaii Chapter Treasurer

Janet Fujii, Hawaii Chapter member, is an instructor with the Koko Head Martial Arts Academy. She recently did a presentation at **Palolo Chinese Home** on “Living Gracefully...and Safely.” Some chapter members, including Rena, also take classes privately with Janet, and Rena says she thoroughly enjoys these weekly.

Palolo Chinese Home also has an Auxiliary of which Hawaii member **Gladys Lee** is President. Each month the auxiliary members volunteer to entertain the elderly patients and residents or do a project for them. Some of the members of the auxiliary are **Elaine Lee, Lanny Washiya, Alicia Sakamoto, Barbara Heu, Roberta Wong Leung, Rena Young Ochse, and Janet Fujii**.

Kennedy Center REACH Opening Festival

(from Chi-Hua Yang, Virginia and Maryland Chapter President)

On Saturday, September 7, 2019, OCAW Virginia and Maryland President Chi-Hua Yang and her husband Glen Schwartz participated in the REACH Opening Festival of the John F. Kennedy Center for the

Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. As this was the time of the **Full Moon Festival** as well, Chi-Hua wanted to reach out to others and share the joy of the Lunar holiday.

On the Lower Lawn of the Kennedy Center, the REACH Festival featured a Tai Chi event, as well as a Dance Fitness program. Chi-Hua and Glen were very happy to meet several Chinese groups at these activities. Chi-Hua also met members of a nonprofit Asian women's music organization.

Chi-Hua told those she met of the Full Moon holiday, and she brought moon cake to share.



Chi-Hua Yang



Glen Schwartz

From Chi-Hua Yang, Virginia and Maryland Chapter President

Chi-Hua Yang and former Virginia Chapter Secretary Noreen Hom participated in an event about “empowering minority women in high technology.” It was held at the Microsoft innovation center on Tuesday, September 10, 2019.



Chi-Hua Yang (on far right)



Noreen Hom

Both Chi-Hua and Noreen found the event very informative.

The Virginia Chapter meets the New Orleans Chapter in New England

(from Pat Ellzey, New Orleans Chapter President)

OCAW Executive Director and Virginia Chapter member Donna Byler and her husband Tony, and New Orleans Chapter President Pat Ellzey and her husband Will, enjoyed a wonderfully tasty New England lobster dinner while visiting Mystic, Connecticut, and seeing the early autumn colors in late September.



Tony Byler, Donna Byler, Pat Ellzey, and Will Ellzey

About Veronica Li, former Virginia Chapter Secretary

(from Susan Young, former Maryland Chapter Secretary)

On Sunday, October 27, 2019, OCAW Maryland members Susan Young (former MD Chapter Secretary), Camilla Ng (former MD Chapter President), and Rose Li (lifetime MD Chapter member) attended OCA-DC's 46th Annual Honor Awards Gala. It was held at the New Fortune Restaurant in Gaithersburg, Maryland.

At the Gala, OCA-DC's prestigious 2019 Trailblazer Award was presented to Veronica Li, OCAW Virginia member and former Secretary, for her contributions on authoring books about Asian Americans. The inscription on Veronica's award reads: "In recognition of your outstanding work in APA literature that includes a spy thriller, memoir of your mother's life, and a novel about caregiving to the elderly."

Two other awards were presented: the Leadership Award to Dr. Wallace D. Loh, President of the University of Maryland, College Park; and the Community Service Award to Mrs. Betty M. Lam, Chief, Office of Community Affairs, Department of Health and Human Services, Montgomery County, MD. Each year, OCA-DC honors the High Achievements of Asian Americans in their own fields which benefit our communities. This year's theme was "Honoring Asian Pacific Americans (APA) Visionaries."

Over 120 guests from the local communities in Washington, D.C, Maryland, and Virginia plus high-level State, Federal, and private sector leaders attended the Gala dinner. The Gala also extended scholarship awards to local high school students.

Congratulations to Veronica!



Veronica Li (second from left)

Bayou Lacadee

(from Betty Butz, former New Orleans Chapter President)

(Editor's Note: Betty started a project which she calls "Bayou Lacadee." She plans to assemble an album consisting of 10 poems which she has written, accompanied by some illustrating photos which she has taken. Below are her initial efforts thus far.)

Gutsy Gecko

Gutsy Gecko, parks at a window,
Blowing pinkish bubbles at its throat,
Watching the grass and sweet roses grow,
While it dreams of a craggy meadow.
A tweet startles a shadow below.
Gutsy Gecko flips and then stumbles.
May be it will stay out of trouble.



Wobbly Orbie

Clever orb weaver smiles like a crab.
It spins lattices between branches to match
The sun's rays in the shade upon which to snatch
No-see-'ems, skeeters, and unsuspecting gnats.
When it is fed till its belly's rather fat,
Countless hatchlings emerge to stretch, and then latch
Onto shiny, silky threads, swinging this way and that.



Blissful Ibis

Ibis, the blessed bird of Egypt
Also thrives in Lower Coast Algiers,
In the sunny, steamy, evergreen swampy
Delta of the great Mississippi.

Busier than the tall, showy snow egret,
As gregarious as shore birds get,
Ibises appear to travel like a movie set
Of alluring, quirky silhouettes.

A prominent beak, two skinny ruby legs
Anchor its body high above-ground perilously,
While the bird surveys the earth inch by inch gingerly,
Searching for bugs, centipedes, worms, and larvae.

Ibises flock together to poke and peck smartly,
To fill up with lots of energy in calories,
And to share their unique personality.
Then they fly to another field to party.



Las Cruces Museum of Art Ceramics Exhibition

by Susan Young

(Editor's Note: Susan is a former longtime Maryland Chapter Secretary.)

In mid-October 2019, my husband Ben Soumekh and I attended a wedding in Las Cruces, New Mexico, which is about a 50-minute drive from El Paso, Texas. During our visit, we visited downtown Las Cruces

and came upon a ceramics exhibition by local artists at the Museum of Art.

Following are some pictures that I took of some of the exhibition pieces. I hope that our members might be interested in these works of art.

**FROM THE GROUND UP XXIX
REGIONAL JURIED CERAMICS EXHIBITION 2019**



Dichotomy of Me
by Brian A. Holt



The Fossil Record
by Ariel Bowman



Eating My Way Out of the Cabbage Patch
by Patricia Grace



Flower Tower
by Jan Preston Archey



Cactus Bottle
by Glenn Schwaiger



Three Sided Jar, A
by Adam LeFebvre

Three Sided Jar, B

Three Sided Jar, B
Adam LeFebvre
(Ogden, UT)
Stoneware, white
fired to cone 6
2019



“Honu” Guardian Spirit of the Sea
by Erica Nicole Cordero



Checkers
by Sarah McArthur



Desert Dance
by Suzanne Kane
Best of Show
Cindy Waddell Excellence in Ceramics

Chrysanthemums in Chinese Culture

by Camilla Ng

(Editor's Note: Camilla is a former Maryland Chapter President. One of her many hobbies is growing chrysanthemums, which requires a lot of time and effort.)

Seeing the article "Mums the Word," which was published in the *February 2019 OCAW E-Newsletter*, the Old Dominion Chrysanthemum Society president invited me to give a talk to the club. The following is a summary of the presentation given at the annual Old Dominion Society Chrysanthemum Show on Saturday, October 26, 2019, at the Merrifield Garden Center in Fairfax, Virginia.

Flower, poet, and paintings

An important flower of China, the chrysanthemum is the flower of the ninth moon and a symbol of autumn, which blooms when most flowers wither by frost and cold winds. The chrysanthemum is closely associated with the famous Eastern Jin poet and recluse Tao Yuanming (365-427 AD), who wrote poetry in its honor.

Drinking Wine (#5), by Tao Yuanming

*I've built my house where others dwell
And yet there is no clamor of carriages and horses
You ask me how this is possible – (And so I say):
When the heart is far, one is transported
Gathering chrysanthemums under the eastern fence
Serenely I gaze at the southern mountains
At dusk, the mountain air is good
Flocks of flying birds are returning home
In this, there is a great truth
But wanting to explain it, I forget the words*

Throughout the centuries and even to the present time, Chinese painters have strived to capture the theme of this poem and the spirit of Tao Yuanming, in addition to capturing the flower of autumn. Some representative examples follow.



Portrait of Tao Huanming
by Chen Hongshou
Ming Dynasty
Honolulu Museum of Art



Tao Yuanming
by Chen Hongshou
Late Ming Dynasty



Drunken Tao Huanming with Chrysanthemum
by Su Liupeng
Qing Dynasty



Tao Yuanming, Pine and Chrysanthemums
by Wang Zhen
2013

Chrysanthemum Stone

In Chinese viewing stones, the chrysanthemum stone (Permian age, 299-251 million years ago), is a dark limestone with naturally formed flower petals of celestite, calcite, and feldspar crystals. This stone is found in Liuyang, Hunan Province, first discovered during the reign of Qianlong (1735-1796) of the Qing Dynasty. Ancient literati scholars loved and appreciated the chrysanthemum, the “gentleman in flowers,” symbolizing noble character, tenacity, and indifference to adversity. This influence of culture gives the chrysanthemum stone a special meaning in addition to its natural uniqueness, aesthetic, and scarcity. Called the “Stone of Wealth and Honor,” it has become a sought-after collector’s item amongst successful people.



From the U.S. National Arboretum, National Bonsai & Penjing Museum Collection

Chrysanthemums as foods

Chrysanthemum greens, tongho, is rich in chlorogenic acid, carotene, flavonoids, vitamins, and potassium. Some of the beneficial effects associated with eating chrysanthemum greens are weight loss, antioxidant protection, and a reduced risk of lung cancer, as well as protection against cardiovascular problems, kidney stones, cellulite, bloating, and bone loss. Chrysanthemum greens can be blanched and served with salad dressing, stir fried, or served in hot pot.

Hot pot was a favorite winter dish of Empress Dowager Cixi (Qing), and her attendants would pick fresh chrysanthemums daily to sprinkle the petals into a boiling pot of consommé. According to traditional Chinese medicine, consumption of chrysanthemums helps to release toxins, cools the body, and nourishes the skin.

The white or yellow Chrysanthemum Morifolium flowers or buds are used in tea infusions. The health benefits of chrysanthemum tea:

1. Potassium (a vasodilator) in chrysanthemum tea helps to lower blood pressure.
2. An anti-inflammatory agent in chrysanthemum tea helps to clear sore throats.
3. Used topically, it helps to clear redness and itchiness of the eyes, and it clears skin irritation.
4. A high amount of beta-carotene (Vitamin A) in chrysanthemum tea improves eye health.

Chongyang festival

The traditional Chinese holiday Chongyang, the Double Ninth Festival, on the ninth day of the ninth lunar month (October 7, 2019), traces back to the period of the Warring States (475-221 BC). Chongyang is traditionally a day of ancestral worship, graves visits and cleaning, and/or visiting elderly relatives. People also hike the mountains, drink chrysanthemum wine, and admire chrysanthemum blossoms, following the suit of Tao Yuanming. It is believed that drinking chrysanthemum wine would ward off any disease or disasters.

Chrysanthemum wine is made with fresh picked chrysanthemum flowers and leaves, and brewed with grains to make the wine which would not be drunk until the next Chongyang festival. Chrysanthemum wine is said to have wholesome effects on sharpness of the eye, alleviation of headache, reducing hypertension, weight, and stomach trouble, thus contributing to longevity.

Chrysanthemum Wine on Double Nine
by Qi Baishi
Smithsonian Freer/Sackler Gallery of Art



In popular culture

The Chinese title of the movie “Curse of the Golden Flower” (2006, directed by Zhang Yimou) is taken from the last line of the poem by Huang Chao (Late Tang, 874-884).

Chrysanthemum, by Huang Chao (Late Tang)

*Waiting for autumn to come, the eighth of the ninth month,
Once my flowers bloom, hundred flowers perish.
Fragrance soars the sky, permeates Chang'an,
The entire city is coated in golden armors.*



The eighth of the ninth month is the day before the Chongyang festival.

Huang Chao signaled his men to rebel on that day.

Once the chrysanthemums bloomed, which represented his rebels, the Tang government soldiers would be killed. The scent of chrysanthemums, representing his men, would infiltrate the capital Chang'an. The entire city would be filled with rebels in golden armors.

Calligraphy of the Chrysanthemum in different script, by Calligraphy Master Ding Fang Xian



(Photo taken by Todd Brethauer)

As a second-year chrysanthemum grower, I entered my mums in this year's Old Dominion Chrysanthemum Society Show as a Novice. Nine out of ten of my entries received blue ribbons, to my surprise. The following are some of my blue ribbon winners.



Hatsune Bonsai



Kotoi No Kaori Bonsai



Kiwi Magic



Seventh Heaven

(All photos of blue ribbon winners taken by Todd Brethauer)

(Editor's Note: Congratulations to Camilla!)



Panama Canal Cruise (Part II)

by Cathy Roberts

(Editor's Note: Cathy is the National Vice President for Membership, and is also Treasurer of the Virginia Chapter.

She and her husband Dick enjoyed a wonderful Panama Canal Cruise in April 2019. Part I of her article about their trip appeared in the September OCAW E-Newsletter. Part II appears below. And the conclusion of their adventure will appear in the next issue in Part III.)

As in the last e-newsletter, all photos in this article were taken by Dick Roberts.)

Puntarenas, Costa Rica and San Juan Del Sur, Nicaragua

After a day at sea, the ship docked at Puntarenas, Costa Rica (the Third Port of Call). Puntarenas is the gateway to Costa Rica's wonders and to the capital city of San Jose. Beyond the city's immediate borders is a world of lush rainforests, endangered species, and exciting outdoor adventures for the young and energetic.



Cathy Roberts and the *Island Princess*
at Puntarenas

Puntarenas was discovered by Hernan Ponce de Leon in 1519. It sits off the Pacific Ocean in the Gulf of Nicoya.



Puntarenas remained a sleepy village until coffee production in the late 18th century transformed the Costa Rican economy. By the 1850s, coffee had surpassed cacao, tobacco, and sugar as the country's number one export, and Puntarenas' port became a thriving business. There were some points of interest in this port area, but we decided to stay near the ship.

We debarked and walked to a seashore market and did some shopping. We talked to a local artist and purchased two pieces of his artworks made from volcanic rocks. There were many street vendors, and we bought bags of famous Costa Rican coffee and beautiful, embroidered handbags for gifts.



A local restaurant

After enjoying fresh tropical fruit smoothies, we went back to the ship.

The next morning, we reached San Juan Del Sur, Nicaragua (the Fourth Port of Call). The city was founded in 1522 by Spanish explorer Andres Nino who was searching for a sea link between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. San Juan Del Sur is on the Pacific side of Nicaragua, which is the largest country in Central America. About 300 years after the Spanish established the port, San Juan Del Sur served as the easiest transit route between the east and west coasts of the United States.

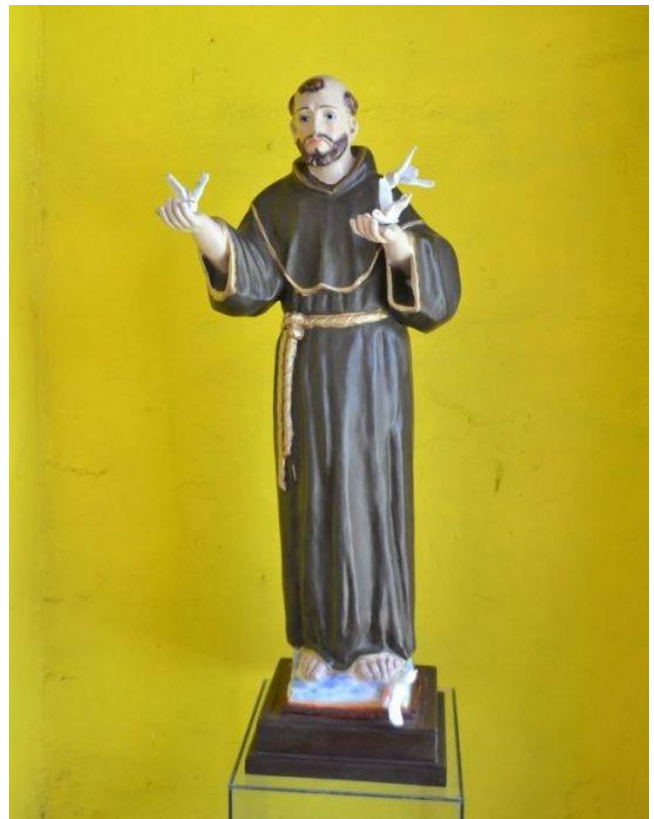
There were many points of interest in the port. We joined the land tour to the picturesque colonial city of Granada, nestled in the shadow of the Mombacho Volcano on the shore of Lake Nicaragua. The 500-year-old city is a stunning mosaic of ornate churches, narrow streets, and colorful Moorish and Andalusian-style homes.



Granada Main Plaza



Granada Church





In church courtyard

We visited the ornate cathedral, the Convent of San Francisco, that houses pre-Columbian statues, an extensive library, and priceless artworks.

There was a large shopping square before entry into the docking area. We could not resist temptation and added five more T-shirts to our souvenirs!



Tender returning to ship

To be continued...