

E-Newsletter of the Organization of Chinese American Women

September 2019



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501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization

(from Linda Devine, Editor)

I hope that you and your families had a wonderful summer break!

Thank you 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. My goal continues to be publishing a wide variety of material.

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

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News from the Virginia and Maryland Chapters

Volunteer Respite Care Meeting

(from Cathy Roberts, National Vice President for Membership, and Virginia Chapter Treasurer)

Six Virginia and Maryland Chapter members attended a meeting on Volunteer Respite Care on Tuesday, August 20, 2019 at the Fairfax County (VA) Government Building. We met with Ms. Kristin Martin, Elderlink Case Manager, and her colleague, Lauren, to learn about the respite care program. The purpose of the program is for volunteers to provide breaks to family caregivers so that they may run errands, attend appointments, and have relaxation time away from their continuous caregiver duties.

A very informative Respite Volunteer Manual was provided to each attendee at the beginning of the meeting.

Ms. Martin discussed the volunteer respite processes, responsibilities of volunteers and case managers, and the dos and don'ts for reducing risks on volunteer assignments. The meeting was focused on Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. We learned some warning signs of Alzheimer's:

- Memory loss that disrupts daily life
- Challenges in planning or solving problems
- Difficulty completing tasks at home, at work, or at leisure
- Confusion with time or place
- Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships
- New problems with words in speaking or writing
- Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps
- Decreased or poor judgment
- Withdrawal from work or social activities
- Changes in mood and personality

It was a beneficial meeting. Before it adjourned, four members completed volunteer application forms. We understood that as volunteers, we will only provide companionship to the recipient and give the regular caregiver a few hours' break.

(from Donna Byler, Executive Director)

Six chapter members were happy to hear from Kristin and Lauren about the wonderful program in Fairfax County that provides respite to caregivers of elderly loved ones. The commitment for volunteers is six hours a month. There may be similar programs in your county.

As volunteers, we will not be providing hands-on care. Rather, we will be providing companionship to the recipient while the caregiver takes a little break. Any needed assistance will be just a phone call away.

By participating in this community service, we have learned what assistance is available, and how to respond to confused statements made by those whose mental faculties might be starting to decline. By volunteering, we are helping to ensure that this service will be available in the future.

(Editor's Note: This meeting was initiated by Christina Chang, OCAW National President, working with Kristin Martin. After the meeting, the attendees were welcomed to the lovely home of Cathy Roberts, where she hosted a wonderful tea. In addition to Cathy's tasty offerings, Christina and Donna also contributed delicious desserts to share. We all enjoyed being together for a nice, social afternoon.)

News from the New Orleans Chapter

(from Patricia Ellzey, President)

Asian Heritage Festival

On Saturday, April 20, 2019, the Annual Asian Heritage Festival sponsored by the Asian Pacific American

Society in New Orleans was held in the Audubon Park Zoological Garden from 10 a.m. till 4 p.m. Local NBC-TV news anchor, Sula Kim, served as the Mistress of Ceremonies.

The New Orleans Chapter of OCAW participated in the events again by having a booth of activities. Several volunteers (among whom were Le Pin He, Jim Yeh, Yuling Khorsandi, and Lingyan Shu) wrote visitors' names in Chinese calligraphy on Asian bookmarks. Mangjee Yeh and Betty Butz helped to teach children to play Chinese games. And fortune cookies were given to all.

Pat Ellzey and Lingyan Shu setting up the OCAW booth

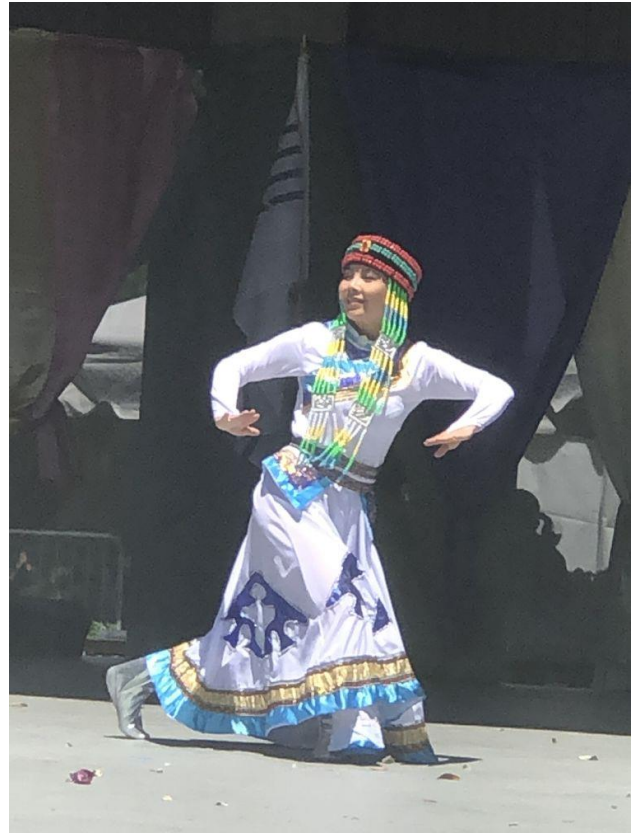


Debbie Howe, Mr. Easter Bunny, and Pat Ellzey, with Ruby Verhoeven (*seated*)

Cuilan Lee participated in the entertainment by dancing several Chinese and Mongolian dances.

Debbie Howe and Lingyan Shu also danced during the festival.

Cuilan Lee



As usual, all had a good time celebrating our cultural heritage.

Memorial Service for Lorraine Lee Allen

Lorraine Lee Allen was one of the first Presidents of the OCAW New Orleans Chapter. As reported in the *June OCAW E-Newsletter*, she sadly passed away on Mother's Day. A friendly, warm, and dynamic personality, she also was an ambitious, entrepreneurial success.

A memorial service was held for Lorraine on Wednesday, June 5, 2019. In attendance were OCAW New Orleans Vice President Yuling Khorsandi, Treasurer Nancy Chung, and members Mayling Hew and Yvonne Louie.



Lorraine Lee Allen's daughter Victoria, and Yvonne Louie





OCAW New Orleans Chapter members Nancy Chung, Yuling Khorsandi, Mayling Hew, and Yvonne Louie

Future Plans

As President Pat Ellzey is currently living at her summer home away from New Orleans, the chapter has not been meeting at the present time.

However, plans for the future include visiting some local sightseeing places such as the Acadian Village to learn more about local history and culture.

They are also planning to have their annual election of officers in November, as well as their annual Christmas celebration and installation of officers in December.

News from the Silicon Valley Chapter

(from Wendy Chang, President)

Mental Health Workshop

On Sunday, June 2, 2019, our Vice President WenMei Tai coordinated an important Mental Health Workshop at the San Jose Public Library, Calabazas Branch. The speaker, Elaine Peng, is the President and Founder of Mental Health Association for Chinese Communities.

Following is a letter from Ms. Peng regarding the awareness of Mental Health in the Chinese communities.

Letter from Elaine Peng, President, Mental Health Association for Chinese Communities

“Mom, if I had gotten sick earlier, the doctor would have found out that Dad had bipolar disorder too, then Dad would not have had to die!” The words of my daughter, who was hospitalized for bipolar disorder 6 years ago, had been ringing in my mind all these years.

One in five adults in the United States has a mental illness, and I often ask myself: Why can’t people talk about mental illness like they talk about cancer or heart disease?

Data from 2013 show 45 million people across the U.S. are suffering from various mental illnesses. At the same time, however, social prejudices against mental illness persist. Fortunately, mental illness can be treated effectively, but people always tend to treat mental illness differently from other diseases. The stigma of mental illness is particularly acute in Asian communities, where research has shown that that stigma is the single biggest obstacle to seeking help and sustained treatment!

In Alameda County, for example, Asians make up 29 percent of the population, but in the public mental health system there are only 2% Asians. **Does that mean Asians are 15 times healthier mentally than other ethnicities? Of course not! It is because too many Asians or Chinese-Americans who are struggling with mental illness are not seeking help, just like my husband who died due to mental illness, rather than courageously asking for help, like my daughter who received treatment in time.**

It is my sincere hope that one day, people will be as familiar with the symptoms and onset of mental diseases as with stomach disease or flu. More importantly, when they see the symptoms, they will seek help from professionals, just as they do with stomach disease or flu.

Yes, today we must break the stigma of mental illness and speak out!

Welcome to the first Chinese American Mental Health Day. Your participation is of great significance to us! I offer my sincere thanks to you.

Hope you have a great time!



SVC President Wendy Chang, and Speaker Elaine Peng

Christina Chang's Bay Area Visit

We were very excited to have OCAW National President Christina Chang and her husband Steve visiting the Bay Area. Sophia Yang and Carol Yuan started planning a Napa Valley day trip for them months ahead.

On Wednesday, July 3, 2019, Sophia Yang, Carol Yuan, Cynthia Chang, and Ai-chu Wang picked up Christina and Steve early in the morning and headed to the wine country. Rose Cheng and her husband and daughter joined them there.

The first stop was lunch at The CIA at Copia in Napa downtown.



At The CIA at Copia



After lunch, they visited the Castello di Amorosa Winery and had afternoon tea at Bouchon Bakery in Yountville.



At the Castello di Amorosa Winery



They made it back to Fremont on schedule at 7 p.m. to have dinner with Chia-Hui Chen and her husband, Alice Chiou, Monica Hsiao, and Wendy Chang at Asian Pearl Seafood Restaurant.



It was a wonderful day, and Christina and Steve appreciated all of the planning and the warm hospitality shown by OCAW-SVC sisters.

Annual Luncheon

Our OCAW-SVC annual luncheon was held on Sunday, July 21, 2019 at Florentine Trattoria in Saratoga. At the luncheon, we had our officers installation, and we were also delighted to have Professor Tien-Wen (TW) Wiedmann as our honored guest and keynote speaker. The topic was “On women’s health – Understand your personal health information, your physical checkups, and your blood test results.”

Dr. Wiedmann’s talk was extremely beneficial. She shared her medical knowledge as well as her personal experience with us. Many people asked questions at the Q&A session. She provided answers in a straightforward manner which was easy to understand. For your reference, her bio follows.



Dr. TD Wiedmann

Dr. Wiedmann joined Stanford University in 1980 and served on the faculty in the Medical School. She was a founder of a nonprofit organization, H.E.L.P. for Kids, dedicated to youth education and development. Together with Mark Talbott, the Director of Squash at Stanford, she co-founded another nonprofit

organization, Xtreme Squash, which offers academic enrichment in conjunction with squash instruction to middle school children from economically challenged communities.

Her professional career spanning more than 40 years was dedicated to education and medical research. Her research areas covered a wide variety of disciplines including endocrinology, immunology, cancer biology, and neurology. Much of her career was in a university setting, including Harvard University, the University of Basel (Switzerland), and Stanford University. She spent her last years of research in a pharmaceutical company in charge of research and drug discovery in addition to serving as a consultant to a number of biotech companies.

Dr. Wiedmann has been advising and mentoring undergraduates, graduate students, and medical students at Stanford for more than 30 years. She also serves as the faculty advisor to a number of student organizations at Stanford, including the Stanford Premedical Association and the Association for Chinese Students and Scholars at Stanford.

Her passion is education, especially that of young people. She is also a big enthusiast about sports, especially playing tennis, squash, and ping pong. She coached college varsity tennis teams for a number of years and continues to coach individuals, especially on strategy and mental attitude.

She has twin sons and three grandchildren (a girl and two boys). She earned her Ph.D. in pathology and biochemistry from Harvard University in 1963.



Dr. Wiedmann was accompanied by her friend Joyce Hsu, who is a well-known playwright in the Bay Area. Both of them became OCAW-SVC members that day.







OCAW-SVC Officers for 2019-2020

President: Wendy Chang

Vice President: WenMei Tai

Secretary: Carol Yuan / Jen Tsao

Treasurer: Sophia Yang

Public Relations: Cynthia Chang / Nai Hsueh

Membership: Hong Tai

Historian: Alice Chiou / Lisa Lu

Hospitality: Annie Chang / Cynthia Ho

Photographer: Michelle Huang / Yufan Lu

Event Committee: Ai-chu Wang / Monica Hsiao / Sherry Hsu /
Anne Hu / Candice Huang



Officers who attended the Luncheon: Jen Tsao, Sophia Yang, Monica Hsiao, Nai Hsueh, Ai-chu Wang, Hong Tai, Annie Chang, Cynthia Chang, Wendy Chang, Michelle Huang, Alice Chiou, Carol Yuan, Candice Huang, Sherry Hsu, and Lisa Lu



News from the Hawaii Chapter

(from Rena Young Ochse, Treasurer and Newsletter Editor)

July General Membership Meeting

Our July membership meeting was held on Sunday, July 14, 2019, at Maple Garden Restaurant in Honolulu. We were privileged to welcome two wonderful speakers.

Robbieana Leung returned from her 27 months in the Philippines with the Peace Corps. She told us what she has done for the children in Cebu, The Philippines, and about the Philippine/English children's book she wrote which was published and given to the children.

She is planning to have a fundraiser to build enough funds to do a 2nd printing of her book so that others can enjoy it. She also was the person who created the first library for the children.



Presentation by Robbieana Leung

(Photo taken by Queenie Chee)

Our other speaker was Jennifer Wong, and below is an article written by former OCAW Hawaii President Queenie Chee, with a focus on Jennifer.

A Gift to America

by Queenie M. Chee

“As each new wave of immigration has reached America, it has been faced with problems... Somehow, the difficult adjustments are made and people get down to the tasks of earning a living, raising a family, living with their neighbors, and in the process, building a nation.”

---Nation of Immigrants (1964), by John F. Kennedy, 35th President of the United States

At the last OCAW Hawaii Chapter Members Meeting, held on July 14, 2019, we welcomed two amazing young ladies as our guest speakers.

Robbieana Leung, the embodiment of *Noblesse Oblige*, is the granddaughter of a successful local Chinese businessman and restaurateur, and the daughter of a well-known local mother who continued that legacy, a frequent world traveler to UNESCO World Heritage sites and a philanthropist. Robbieana shared her experiences of being a recent Peace Corps Volunteer in Cebu, The Philippines. She stayed the course and achieved small but impressive victories for the community there, in the world of literacy and education for the little ones. She learned to live a completely foreign lifestyle without the conveniences of what we accept as the everyday norm.

But for this article, I wish to focus on our other guest speaker, who is the child of first-generation immigrants from China, who has made difficult adjustments, and in spite of the challenges, has gotten down to the task of making a life for herself, and not forgetting family and her community.

Jennifer Manyu Wong is the Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii Narcissus Festival First Princess this year. For a youngster who never wore makeup or dressed up in high heels, or spoke before an audience, this was a good achievement. It is one more arrow in her quiver. She is already an artist, a musician, and a scholar. She chose to present her artistic talent at speed painting a galloping horse, rendering it in a minute, on stage, with the picture painted upside down. Now she is gaining more confidence in addressing the public as well as talking to strangers.

You see, she grew up speaking Cantonese at home as a child. When she started attending public elementary school, she was placed in a “slow” class, and had to learn English as her second language. Ashamed and shy, she worked to overcome this, and now is fluent and comfortable in English and Cantonese, and has picked up the Mandarin dialect as well. When Jennifer graduated from Kapolei High School, she was Valedictorian of her class of over 400 seniors.

Tragedy struck when she was only 11 years old. She saw her father die of terminal cancer, and a year later, her older brother was killed in a car accident. Her mother supported them and worked at three jobs as a waitress. But her mother insisted that Jennifer not lose her first language, Chinese. And so, every day after school, Jennifer dutifully caught the bus to and from Kapolei to Honolulu to attend Mun Lun Chinese School. Coming home on the bus after 5 p.m. was a two-hour ride in rush-hour traffic. Jennifer used these times to do her homework. She graduated from Mun Lun School, who invited her back this year to address the 2019 Graduating Class as Commencement Speaker.



Presentation by Jennifer Manyu Wong

(Photo taken by Queenie Chee)

Education has always been highly regarded and prized in the Chinese culture, and Jennifer was encouraged to pursue higher learning. She began at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and found enjoyment in being in the school's Chess Club as a diversion. She transferred to the University of Washington in Seattle where she also worked as a lab research assistant, first with the Seattle Children's Research Institute, then with the University of Washington Medical Center. Jennifer earned her degrees in Biology and Physiology in 2017.

Today, she is a medical student at the John A. Burns School of Medicine in Honolulu, and is on her way to becoming a physician. With her ability to communicate in Chinese and English, she hopes to help those from “the old country” have a better experience with their health care.

Jennifer serves as a reminder to us of the value of working hard to achieve to improve one’s lot, and is an inspiration to not despair or give up when life serves you a “curve ball.” She embodies the best of what immigrant families can offer to continue to enrich the cultural and moral fabric of our nation.

We wish her well and continued success and good health. And hope that soon, her mother can relax and begin to enjoy some leisure time – with good friends and family.



Jennifer Manyu Wong’s mother and Jennifer



(above) Rena Young Ochse, former OCAW Hawaii President and longtime member. Currently she is Treasurer and Newsletter Editor.



(left) Phyllis Shea, CPA, also a former OCAW Hawaii President and longtime member. She was responsible for signing up Queenie as a member over 20 years ago. Pictured also is Diane Wong.

(Photos taken by Queenie Chee)

Upcoming General Membership / Election Meeting

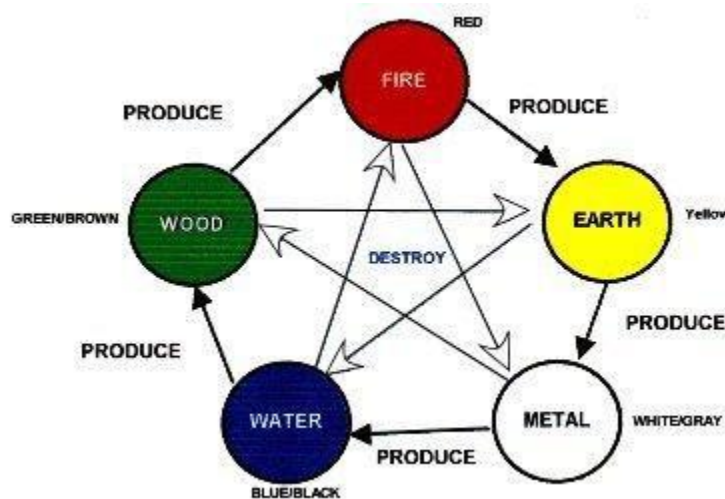
Date: Sunday, October 20, 2019

Time: 11:30 a.m.

Place: Maple Garden Chinese Restaurant

Cost: \$17.00 per person Members and Guests

Program: Speaker Clarence Lau on Feng Shui



Born and raised in Hong Kong, Clarence Lau studied traditional Feng Shui with Master Yeung for many years. Master Yeung, a widely respected Feng Shui consultant, has done work for the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, Citicorp, and many other businesses throughout Asia.



Lau earned his college degree in mathematics, which helped his feng shui calculations. As a student of logic, he explained feng shui in a scientific way.

When he was certified to practice the traditional readings, he moved to the United States and has practiced full time. He provides service to all kinds of locations, from existing homes and businesses to new sites and renovations. Lau has been asked to approve the floor plans of residences such as Washington Place for the Governor of Hawaii. His clients are among celebrities, politicians, and well-known companies, such as Meadow Gold Dairies, Island Insurance, Roy's Hawaii Restaurants, and Kirin Restaurant.

At the Valley of the Temples memorial park in Hawaii, Ocean View Terrace was a first of its kind in feng shui design. He also was involved in the feng shui designs of the Skylawn Memorial Park garden in San Mateo, California.

He has taught feng shui classes, seminars, and workshops at Kaimuki Community School for Adults, and has appeared in many newspaper articles and on television.

Current OCAW Hawaii Chapter Officers:

President: Susan Chong Wong
Vice President: Tina Y.T. Wong Au
Secretary: Lena Young
Treasurer: Rena Young Ochse
Communications / Newsletter: Rena Young Ochse
Finance: Phyllis N.T. Shea
Website: Sharon Chun and Rena Young Ochse

Nominations for 2020 Chapter Officers – as provided by Queenie Chee, Nominations Committee Chair

President: Tina Y.T. Wong Au
President-Elect and Vice President: Lena Young
Treasurer: Rena Young Ochse

The position of Secretary is still open.

(Editor's Note: Extensive biographies of the nominated officers appeared in the November 2018 OCAW E-Newsletter.)

2019 Christmas Brunch Buffet

Date: Sunday, December 1, 2019

Location: Oahu Country Club
150 Country Club Road
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

It is the season of giving, so in keeping with tradition, in lieu of grab bags and favors, please bring canned food or a gift for a woman or child (unwrapped) which will be contributed to the Institute for Human Services.

Celebrate the Season exquisitely, and Support your 2020 Officers at their awesome Installation, with Fellowship, Fun, and Food!

(Editor's Note: The cost for attendees is generously being subsidized by the OCAW Hawaii Chapter.)

From and About Our Members

About Lei Ahu Isa, Hawaii Chapter Immediate Past President

(from Rena Young Ochse, Hawaii Chapter Treasurer)

(Editor's Note: Lei was recently featured in an article in the China Daily. The following are some excerpts.)

Her Hawaiian name is Leina'ala Ahu Isa, but in the Chinese community, she is known as Xiuping Chen or Dr. Chen.

Dr. Chen is a local Hawaiian with a Chinese heritage...

...She attended Graceland University in Missouri and was married before finishing her diploma. What was expected to be a happy marriage soon turned out to be a nightmare. However, Dr. Chen was not one to give up; in fact, she was a warrior who was determined to create her own future. She received her Masters degree from the University of Hawaii in 1983 in education, and her Ph.D. in 1992 in educational psychology.

She manages the timeshare sales for Hilton Grand Vacations in Hawaii, with over 200 staff members. She's also a professor at Hawaii Pacific University, and was Vice Chairman of the Board of Education, Chairman of the Economic and Commercial Committee of the House of Representatives of the State of Hawaii, and Executive Director of the SME Management Committee of the University of Hawaii. These titles are only a small part of her career's success. One of her most important duties is that she is a director of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs Board of Trustees.

About one-third of Hawaii's land is hosted by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs Board of Trustees. Most of the hotel and commercial land in Waikiki Beach in Honolulu is also owned and hosted by the same Trustee. In other words, the value of Hawaiian land managed by Dr. Chen is an astronomical figure.

Dr. Chen is a member of the Democratic Party. She is anti-war and a scholar full of compassion and love. When a reporter interviewed her about the United States' participation in the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria, she said: "Billions are spent on the battlefield, while people in Hawaii are starving, and children are living on the streets. Why aren't we fighting a war against poverty and to save ourselves?"

Even though the feminist movement in the 21st century has attracted much more attention than ever, there are still countless women who are living in the shadow of domestic violence. Dr. Chen is their hope. She stepped out of those chains and created her own legacy. Nominating Dr. Chen as a Hawaiian *China Daily* featured character is not only a tribute to her, but is also to inspire others facing domestic violence, to bravely stand up and create their own bright future.

(translation from Chinese to English by Victor Zhang)

From Betty Butz, former New Orleans Chapter President

(Editor's Note: Betty created the following summer ikebana compositions.)



Ceramic dish (*suiban*, meaning 'water basin') with materials from Betty's garden: lemongrass, garlic flowers, curcumin ginger flowers, camellia foliage, and liriopse



Bamboo container with baby's breath, alstroemeria, spider lily, and dried peony

(Photos taken by Betty Butz)

99-year-old Chinese American Woman is an inspiration

(from Queenie Chee, former Hawaii Chapter President)

*(Editor's Note: Queenie wanted to share with readers a wonderful article that appeared in The Sacramento Bee eEdition on June 15, 2019, written by Jaimie Ding. Entitled **'If you keep busy, you enjoy life': California state worker still on the job after 76 years**, it was about May Lee, a 99-year-old Chinese American woman. The following are highlights from the piece.)*

May Lee started work at the California Department of Finance in 1943, and was the first Chinese American to be hired by the Department. In 1963 she was one of the first employees at the newly-created Department of General Services. Although she officially retired in 1990, **she continues to work as a retired annuitant and unpaid volunteer to this day!**

She stays healthy by eating the right foods – vegetables, grains, and protein – and she works at her job always standing up. Before she got her walker, she traveled to 150 countries.

Back when Lee was a student, Article 19 of the California Constitution barred Chinese Americans from being employed by any corporations in the state or on any state, county, municipal, or other public work, and gave cities the power to remove people of Chinese descent as they saw fit. Lee wrote a paper and sent it to the California Senate, arguing that Article 19 was in violation of the 14th, 9th, and 4th Amendments to the United States Constitution. Shortly after, she was invited to present her paper on the Senate floor. That section of the state constitution was repealed years later.

Lee's institutional memory at the Department of General Services is invaluable to her officemates, and she is well-respected and greatly admired by them. As a testament to her thoughtfulness, she clips out articles on various topics that are tailored to the specific interests of her coworkers and gives these to them. They much appreciate her.

The full article can be accessed via this link:

<https://digital.olivesoftware.com/Olive/ODN/sacbee/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=MSB%2F2019%2F06%2F15&entity=Ar00602&sk=60D5320E&mode=text>

As we all get older, it is inspiring to read about a woman who lives her life to the fullest!

Panama Canal Cruise (Part I)

by Cathy Roberts

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

She and her husband Dick enjoyed a wonderful Panama Canal Cruise in April 2019, and the article below discusses Part I of their adventure. Parts II and III will appear in subsequent issues of the OCAW e-newsletter.

All photos in this article were taken by Dick Roberts.)

With great excitement, we packed our suitcases and flew to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida to start our new adventure, a Panama Canal cruise. The cruise started at Ft. Lauderdale on Tuesday, April 9, 2019, and ended at Los Angeles, California on Wednesday, April 24, sailing 4535 nautical miles with six Ports of Call (Cartagena, Colombia; Puerto Amador, Panama; Puntarenas, Costa Rica; San Juan Del Sur, Nicaragua; Huatulco, Mexico; and Puerto Vallarta, Mexico).

After spending a night in Ft. Lauderdale, we embarked on our ship in late morning. We enjoyed a lunch, wandered around the various areas of the ship, and located our stateroom. In late afternoon, the ship departed from Port Everglades and the adventure began.



Island Princess

There were many activities on the ship. In the morning, we attended a Tai Chi stretching session, and I joined a Knitters and Natters Get-Together group. After lunch, we walked around the deck enjoying the ocean breeze, watched movies in our room, and participated in various seminars. In the evening, we listened to wonderful classical and contemporary melodies played by the Polania Duo (Violinists). After dinner, we would go to movies or shows before retiring to our stateroom. It was nice to watch the dark sky and look at the stars from the balcony.

After two days at sea, we reached Cartagena, Colombia.



Cartagena Skyline

This vibrant city harbors a fascinating and colorful past, which can be seen along its cobblestone streets with Spanish colonial homes with their wood-beamed balconies and stone towers.



We joined a city excursion tour and were very fortunate to have a retired history teacher as our tour guide. We visited the following points of interest:

- Old City: The walled historic center of Cartagena is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Its winding streets are lined with colorfully painted Spanish Colonial buildings.
- Las Murallas: They are considered by many to be the most impressive city walls in the world. They were constructed after an attack by Sir Francis Drake at the end of the 16th century.
- Castillo de San Felipe de Barajas: This fortress was built by the Spanish for protection against pirates while shipping gold out to Europe. It majestically stands guard on a hillside overlooking the city and harbor.



- Historical Museum of Cartagena: The former home of the Inquisition displays instruments of torture from the Spanish Inquisition and pre-Columbian, colonial, and Independence era art.



Museum actor

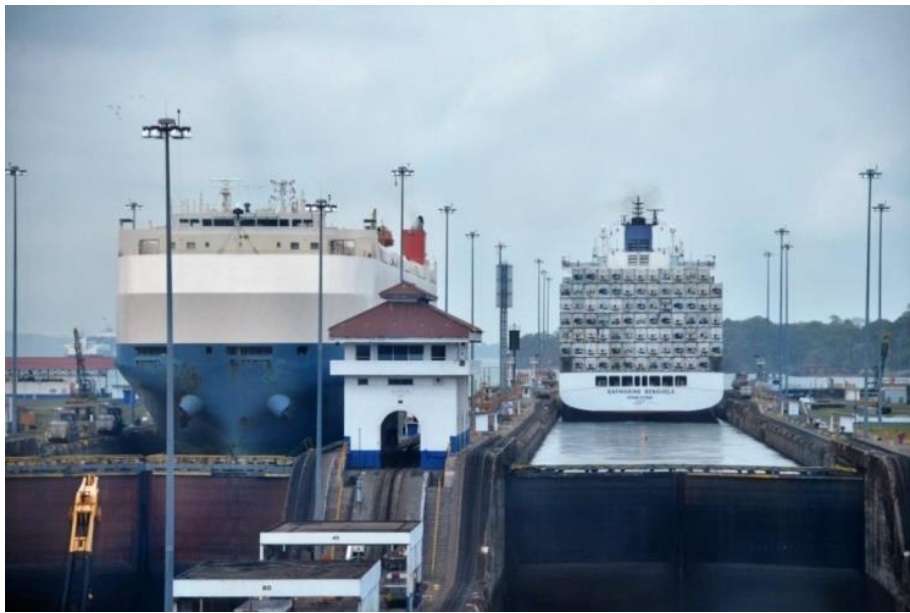
- Cartagena's Cathedral: One of the city's most notable landmarks with a beautiful garden, it was partially demolished by Sir Francis Drake's cannons. It was completed in 1602.



- Museo de Oro y Arqueología: Gold and pottery collections of the Tayrona, Calima, and Sinu people were on display, as well as panel exhibitions about the Atlantic coast cultures.
- La Popa Monastery: This 17th-century monastery features a chapel, a colonial museum, and a spectacular view of the city, and it remains inhabited by monks today.

We enjoyed our historical and educational tour. After hours in hot and humid weather, we were happy to get back to the air-conditioned ship. We were very excited about the next morning's canal crossing. The Panama Canal is called the eighth wonder of the world. The 82 km waterway connects the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, and was the main attraction of our trip.

Before 6:30 a.m., we rushed to the Deck 14 Horizon Court (cafeteria) and fortunately found a center window table to watch the ship crossing the Panama Canal. There was a ship ahead of us which enabled us to watch the water level go up and down, gates open and close, and the ship entering and leaving the lock. Our ship proceeded toward the first set of old locks (Gatun Locks) and continued slowly into the first lock, sailing toward Gatun Lake. After crossing the Pedro Miguel Locks and the Miraflores Locks, the ship sailed toward Puerto Amador. It took approximately ten hours from entering the Gatun Locks to leaving the Miraflores Locks.



East-West traffic in the old locks

A cargo ship leaving the last lock on the Pacific side





Island Princess entering the last set of locks before the Pacific

While cruising the canal, we saw many large cargo ships and oil tankers using a new lock for crossing. We learned that the Canal system needed new locks which have a greater cargo capacity than the original locks could accommodate. The Panama Canal expansion project started construction in 2007 and began commercial operations in June 2016. We spent more than 12 hours at the Horizon Court where, luckily, the cafeteria was located. We had food and drinks any time we wanted.

The next morning, the ship reached Puerto Amador, Panama (the Second Port of Call). We took a tender to shore.



There were many points of interest for sightseeing, but after wandering around the very hot and humid docking area, we went back to the ship. We relaxed in the stateroom and watched a movie.

(Editor's Note: Cathy and Dick's adventure to be continued...)