

E-Newsletter of the Organization of Chinese American Women

September 2026



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501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization

(from Linda Devine, Editor)

I hope that everyone had a good summer. As always, I would like to thank those who contributed material for this e-newsletter. A special thanks to those photographers who submitted their pictures for consideration for inclusion in the issue. I received ***over 250 photos,*** which I believe is a record. I wish that I could have used the majority of them, but unfortunately space precluded that. I appreciate my husband Ed's work on preparing the numerous pictures. This also might now be our second longest issue at 74 pages.

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

Please also feel free to send me any suggestions that you might have for the e-newsletter at:
devinefive@comcast.net

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Opera International's Charitable Giving

(from Linda Devine)

OCAW and Opera International continue to disburse Opera International's remaining funds, making donations to charities and worthy nonprofit organizations that benefit the communities of our five OCAW

chapters. As noted in the June *OCAW E-Newsletter*, this spring we made 2026 contributions to both the **Feiyang Dance Team** and the **New Orleans Skylark Performing Arts Troupe**, to assist them in furthering the wonderful work that they have been doing to bring joy to residents of the Greater New Orleans area.

Following is a much appreciated **thank-you letter** from New Orleans President Yong Yi. She also gave special thanks to longtime Programs Vice President Mimi Hom, who made these grants possible.

Dear Opera International Fund Team,

On behalf of the OCAW New Orleans Chapter, the Feiyang Dance Team, and the Skylark Arts Troupe, we would like to express our sincere gratitude for your generous donation of \$500 to each of our dance troupes. Following your support last year, we are deeply thankful that you have once again chosen to support our organizations.

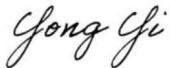
Over the past year, our two dance teams have participated in numerous performances throughout the local community, including events at schools, community centers, and senior living facilities. Through these performances, we have actively served our community while helping to introduce and promote Chinese culture to the broader American public. We are proud to play a positive role in fostering cultural understanding and friendship among people of different cultural backgrounds.

Your generous contribution will be used to help cover rehearsal venue rental fees and costume expenses, which are essential to maintaining the quality of our performances and community outreach programs.

We greatly appreciate your continued confidence in our mission. With your support, we will continue working hard to promote cultural exchange and strengthen mutual understanding between the Chinese and American communities. Though Ms. Mimi has left us, her kindness, generosity, and enthusiasm passed on through us.

Thank you again for your kindness and generosity.

Sincerely,



Yong Yi
President, OCAW New Orleans Chapter
Captain, Feiyang Dance Team

(Editor's Note: I would also like to acknowledge that in addition to the excellent dance performances of the Skylark Performing Arts Troupe, they also present wonderful vocal and instrumental performances and fashion shows.)

Editor's Note: Lily Wu, OCAW New Orleans Vice President, has submitted an article related to the celebration of Opera International's support. It can be found under "News from the New Orleans Chapter."

Lily commented: “We greatly appreciate the continued support from both OCAW and Opera International. The generosity helps our cultural groups continue their community outreach, performances, and efforts to promote cultural awareness throughout the Greater New Orleans area. Thank you for your support.

Ms. Mimi may no longer be physically with us, but she remains in our hearts and continues to inspire us through her legacy of service and dedication.

Thank you again for all that you do.”



Feiyang Dance Team



New Orleans Skylark Performing Arts Troupe

During this summer period, Opera International made two contributions to worthy organizations based in Honolulu, Hawaii. The first was to the **Hawai'i Youth Symphony**.



In the recommendation of this organization by OCAW Hawaii President Sharlene Chun, she said that among other programs:

“The Hawai'i Youth Symphony teaches young children of Hawaii violin, viola, cello, and bass. At a minimal cost to parents, instruments are lent out. The youth are taught the basics and perform publicly. It is a very rewarding experience to children who don't have the means and funds to be able to play a string instrument. These budding artists go on to join their school orchestras with confidence.”

In response to our donation, we have already received a lovely **thank-you note** from Erica Mau-Schank, Chair of the Board of Directors:

Mahalo nui for your generous donation to the Hawai'i Youth Symphony on behalf of the Organization of Chinese American Women. It was such a joyous surprise to receive, and we are truly grateful for your support of our work and our vision.

Thank you for lifting me in my current leadership position as board chair, and for your support of many future Chinese American leaders in Hawai'i and beyond.

Sincerely,

Erica Mau-Schank

The second contribution was made to **YWCA O'ahu**



Of this recommendation, Sharlene wrote that among other efforts:

“The YWCA program collects slightly used clothing to help women transition into the workplace by providing them suitable clothing for interviews, boosting their confidence.”

Sharlene wrote that she received a **thank-you email** from the YWCA that included an offer to meet up with them and learn more about what they do.

She was grateful for Opera International’s focus to benefit communities in Hawaii with their contributions. She wrote:

The OCAW Hawaii Chapter appreciates the generous donation from Opera International in helping the Women and Children in Hawaii to pursue accomplishments in their lives with this money.

The YWCA helps women to get back on their feet with counseling and providing them with clothes for their first job interview.

The Hawai’i Youth Symphony which my children participated in gave me as a new parent an opportunity to broaden my children’s musical talent at a minimal cost for violin lessons. It gave my children an understanding of the string instrument and the confidence to perform on stage at free family concerts.

OCAW Hawaii appreciates this generous donation.

Mahalo and Pumehana,
Sharlene

* * * * *

In the meantime, Opera International continues to encourage applications for Muriel Hom Music Grants.

Muriel Hom Music Grants

Grants of \$500 continue to be available, and it is hoped that talented instrumentalists and vocalists who could benefit from some additional funds to further their studies and activities, will apply.

The grant application form has been sent to each chapter president. ***If any OCAW member knows of an individual who is serious about pursuing their music studies and might be able to use some financial assistance, please either contact your chapter president, or send an email to me: devinefive@comcast.net, and we will be more than happy to email you an application which you can then forward to your musician.***

* * * * *

In August 2026, a Muriel Hom Music Grant was awarded to a **young man from Maryland** – actually, our youngest applicant to date. He is 9 years old and a new 4th grader. Despite his very young age, he is extremely mature and wrote a lovely essay in applying for the grant.

He started piano lessons at age 5 and is already brilliant technically and musically. He also has already won awards and has been invited to play at prestigious concerts, and he shares his love of music by playing for

senior residents at an assisted living home.

Maria Yang and I had the pleasure of hearing him perform in concert, and his playing confirmed that he is a most worthy recipient of a Muriel Hom Music Grant.

After our applicant received the music grant, we received the following lovely **thank-you letter**.

(Editor's Note: The OCAW e-newsletter can be accessed online. Thus, at the recommendation of our Webmaster: for security purposes, we do not publish the names of minor children in our issues. Thus, in the following letter, the name of our young grantee has been redacted and the text has been slightly edited to adjust to the redaction.)

Dear Mrs. Linda Devine and Mrs. Maria Yang,

On behalf of our son and the Li family, we thank you for your warm letter and generous grant for him to continue pursuing his musical studies in classical piano.

We read your letter together as a family and it was the highlight of our week. Our son expressed his gratitude to The Organization of Chinese American Women and the late Muriel Hom.

Thank you for the unforgettable memories and leaving an indelible mark on his musical journey. Through remembering her accomplishments and contributions, we will keep Mrs. Hom's memory alive. May our paths cross again.

With deep gratitude,
Claire and Michael Li

Opera International is very pleased to be able to support young musicians such as this recipient.

41st Annual International Young Artist Piano Competition:
Winners Concert and Award Ceremony

(from Linda Devine)

INTERNATIONAL YOUNG ARTIST PIANO COMPETITION (IYAPC)
Promoting Music from the East and the West

As reported in the June issue of the *OCAW E-Newsletter*, in May Opera International funds were used to make a contribution to the International Young Artist Piano Competition, an organization that encourages

young pianists to excel by exhibiting their talent in annual competitions. These events aim to foster cultural exchange between the East and West, and also to promote the music of Chinese composers. Muriel Hom had felt that this was a very worthy organization and had supported it strongly, serving as a longtime IYAPC board member and making personal donations to it for many years.

This year was IYAPC's 41st annual competition. The organization encourages participation from all over, and this year's event drew contestants from Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and California. IYAPC was very grateful for OCAW/Opera International's donation (*see their thoughtful thank-you letter published in the June issue*), and IYAPC Executive Director Li-Ly Chang expressed their strong desire to have OCAW representation at this year's **Winners Concert and Award Ceremony**.

The event was held on Sunday, June 28, 2026, in the Ward Recital Hall of the Benjamin T. Rome School of Music, Drama, and Art of The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. Director Chang welcomed the guests, teachers, performers, parents, and friends, and thanked the judges for their hard work. She nicely gave a warm tribute to Mimi Hom, a longtime IYAPC board member and strong supporter. She then introduced Maria Yang and me as special guests, and asked us to come on stage and give remarks.

Maria introduced herself as OCAW President, and said that our organization was established 49 years ago and consists of five chapters – Maryland, Virginia, New Orleans, Silicon Valley, and Hawaii. She explained that as a nonprofit organization, our mission includes fostering culture and educational and charitable activities. She said that it is our privilege to assist and support the Piano Competition, and to invest in the next generation of talented, gifted, younger musicians. She extended her congratulations to all of the participants and award recipients.

I then introduced myself as OCAW's Communications Vice President and the daughter of Muriel Hom, Opera International's Founder and Director, and I thanked Director Chang for her thoughtful tribute to my mom. I informed the audience that OCAW's premier program for decades had been Opera International, which had produced numerous operas and concerts in the Washington metropolitan area. Just as IYAPC promotes young pianists, Opera International had promoted aspiring, talented young singers, and it had brought much enjoyment to thousands of audience members over the years. I reiterated Mimi's strong belief in IYAPC and that it had meant a lot to her, and said that Maria and I were delighted to be there today to support its wonderful work and express our hope that it will continue. We wished everyone all the best, and encouraged all of the young pianists to continue their studies and spread joy and peace to everyone. Director Chang then pleasantly surprised us by presenting certificates from IYAPC to us, for which we were very grateful.

With opening remarks concluded, the music portion of the event commenced, with the Winners Concert. The competition had been divided into five categories: Group 1 (Ages 8 and under); Group 2 (Ages 9-10); Group 3 (Ages 11-13); Group 4 (Ages 14-18); and Group 5 (College and Young Professional). For each category, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and sometimes 4th place prizes were awarded, with occasional Honorable Mentions. In each category, a special Chinese Prize was also given, for the best performance of a Chinese piece. Certificates were presented, and for the top prizes, cash awards.

For the concert, first the winners of the Chinese Prize performed, beginning with the youngest group and moving up to College/Young Professional. After these five pianists played, the 1st place overall winners performed, starting with the youngest category, and this time playing a Western piece of their choosing. Director Chang acted as emcee and contributed brief commentary in between numbers, where informative.



Azalea Kelley, recipient of the Muriel Lee Hom Memorial Prize, as the 1st place winner of the College/Young Professional group



Executive Director Li-Ly Chang with the seven pianists who performed in the Winners Concert. They were 1st place winners in their age group and/or Chinese Prize winners.

The caliber of the performances was utterly amazing! I was especially caught off guard and impressed by the ability of the younger performers, who were technically brilliant in addition to exhibiting excellent musicianship, with their small fingers literally flying all over the keyboard. In my own fairly serious piano playing days (age 6-18), I performed in numerous recitals and competitions, but I was never able to come even close in ability to these youngsters.

For those who are familiar with the classical music repertoire: just to give you an idea, the 1st place winner age 8 and under performed the 3rd Movement of *Beethoven Sonata No. 8*, also known as the “*Pathetique*.” It is a well-known and loved piece, but technically difficult. Likewise, the 1st place winner age 9-10 played *Fantaisie-Improptu* by Chopin, another well-known, extremely challenging piece. And in addition to their proficiencies, all of the performers’ stage presence and poise were remarkable. It was truly inspiring to watch these gifted children display their incredible talents! It would not be surprising to see some of these young people on concert stages in the future.

At the conclusion of the concert, the Award Ceremony took place, with performers being called up on stage to receive their certificates and cash prizes. As OCAW/Opera International’s donation to IYAPC had been allotted as the 1st overall prize in the College/Young Professional group and named the Muriel Lee Hom Memorial Prize, Director Chang had asked me to present the 3rd and 2nd place prizes in that group, with Maria presenting the 1st place prize to the winner.



Winners of the Age 9 and 10 group

(Photo taken by Maria Yang)



Li-Ly Chang, teachers, winners of the College/Young Professional group, and special guests



Maria Yang, Li-Ly Chang, and Linda Devine

A photo shoot followed. It truly had been a wonderful afternoon filled with inspiring music executed by inspiring performers. Definitely an Opera International donation very well spent!

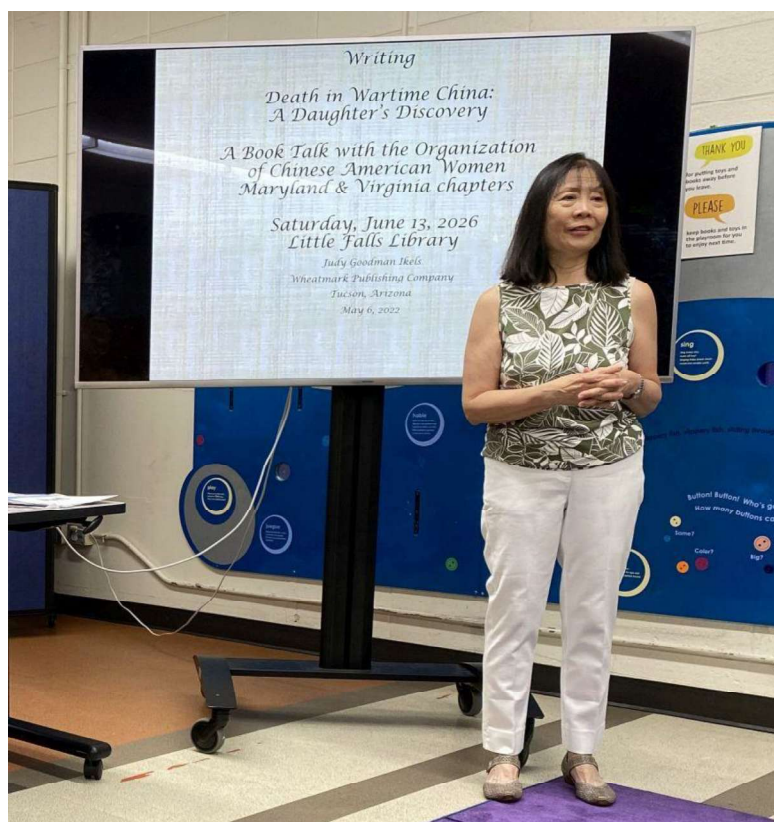


News from the Maryland Chapter

(Patricia Fenn, President)

Book Talk

(from Kitty Hsu Dana, Vice President)

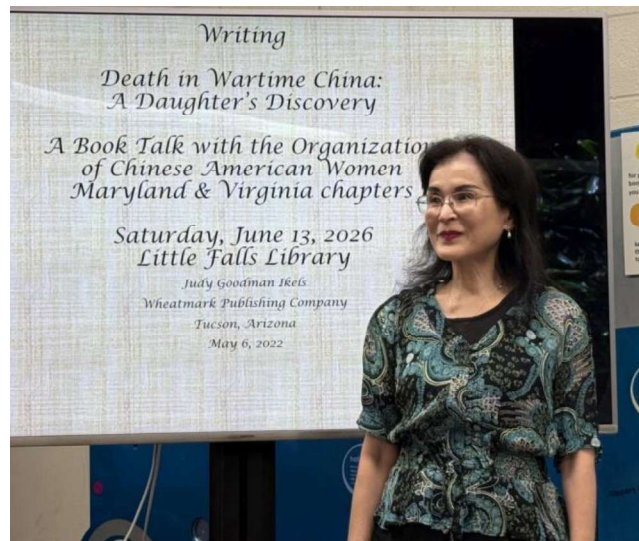


The OCAW Maryland and Virginia Chapters hosted a joint Book Talk on Saturday, June 13, 2026, at the Little Falls Library in Bethesda, MD, featuring author Judy Ikels on *Death in Wartime China: A Daughter's Discovery*.

Judy shared her journey to reconnect with the legacy of her birth father, the pilot of a B-24 Liberator Bomber who perished in China during the Second World War.

Book talk organizer Kitty Hsu Dana introducing the event

(Photo taken by Barbara York)



National President Maria Yang giving remarks

(Photo taken by Rose Li)



(Photo taken by Barbara York)



Author Judy Ikels

(Photo taken by Kitty Hsu Dana)

William H. Wallace, Jr. departed on a mission to raid Japanese forces invading China when his wife was four-months' pregnant with Judy. When his plane lost its engine in 1944, he saved the lives of his seven crew members but died in the crash. Judy was born five months later. As a child, she knew her father was gone at the age of 25 – nothing more. Seventy-one years later (in 2015), Judy received an email from a stranger working on a memorial project for World War II soldiers who had served in China. Thus began her journey of discovery.

Judy learned about villagers in the Kunming area who had kept vigil over her father's body to protect it from wild animals before the American recovery team arrived. Because they believed everyone must be part of a family, the Li Family had adopted "Bill" and had honored his memory. In 2006 a memorial was installed on the site where Bill Wallace's body had been found, spearheaded by Patrick Lucas, the person who had contacted Judy in 2015. Judy and her husband traveled to China to visit the memorial in 2016. They were greeted by the villagers who expressed gratitude for Americans such as Judy's father who had sacrificed for China during World War II. And Judy cherished the opportunity to thank the people who had kept her father's legacy alive.



Judy Ikels at Memorial to William Wallace outside Kunming in 2016

(Photo taken by Kitty Hsu Dana)

After Judy's moving presentation, OCAW members had a spirited Q&A and conversation with her, followed by a book signing. Judy greatly appreciated the group's interest in her story.

Attendees then partook of assorted fruit, pastries, and bottled water, thoughtfully arranged by Kitty, while they continued to visit with one another.

A dozen members participated in the intimate, stimulating event on the lovely Saturday morning, including Maria Yang, OCAW National President; Barbara York, Virginia Chapter President; and Veronica Li, author and former Virginia Chapter Acting President. Barbara is planning an author talk event for Veronica in October, continuing the well-received practice of joint-chapter events.

OCAW gives deep appreciation to the Little Falls Library in Bethesda, MD. Librarian Kati Nolfi provided gracious guidance and support on library policies for using their lovely meeting room – on furniture set-up, audio-visual system, and provisions for refreshments. Special thanks to Camilla Ng, who connected us with the author. Without her this event would not have happened.



Judy Ikels with OCAW Maryland and Virginia attendees
Cathy Roberts, Rose Li, Sally Lee, Maria Yang, Barbara York, Judy Ikels, Linda Devine,
Kitty Hsu Dana, Dick Roberts, Veronica Li, Judy Hsu, and Christina Poy

WAMU Tour and Luncheon

(from Kitty Hsu Dana)

WAMU is our public radio station for the Washington, D.C. region. As part of its commitment to broaden and deepen engagement with communities across the region, the station hosted OCAW members for a tour, a live airing of *The Politics Hour with Koyo Nnamdi*, and a luncheon with the host and producer of the program on Friday, June 26, 2026. The invitation was extended through OCAW Maryland Vice President Kitty Hsu Dana, who serves on the WAMU Community Council. OCAW members from Maryland and Virginia joined the event with great enthusiasm; a few traveled quite a distance to WAMU in northwest Washington.

The station offered a curated tour for our group, led by Sage Duarte, and accompanied by Phyllis Kim, Director of Development. We started with WAMU's control tower, where we learned about their transmission and broadcast to the region as well as how they track listenership. (See sidebar by Sage Duarte.)



(Photos taken by Maria Yang)



Phyllis Kim, WAMU Director of Development (*left*), explaining WAMU history to attendees

Natalie Yuralivker, host of the mid-day programs, welcomed us into her studio. We saw how she managed many moving pieces that made the programs seem seamless to us as listeners. Natalie told us her story from initially volunteering at the station to hosting the mid-day programs years later.



Natalie Yuralivker

(Photos taken by Ed Devine)



Will Jawando, Montgomery County Councilmember fresh from Maryland's primary election as nominee for County Executive and a guest on *The Politics Hour* that day, popped his head in to say hello.



Will Jawando, nominee for Montgomery County Executive

(Photos taken by Ed Devine)

Our group took turns in the master control room to watch a segment of *The Politics Hour* with *Kojo Nnamdi*, a popular and well-regarded program, during its live airing. Matt Blitz, Producer of the program, was in the control room with Naomi Starobin, Managing Director of News for WAMU. Broadcasting live in the studio

were the star and Host Kojo Nnamdi, Resident Analyst Tom Sherwood, Senior D.C. Politics Reporter Alex Koma, and guest Tara Jackson, State's Attorney for Prince George's County and nominee to run for the office for a full term.



Producer Matt Blitz

(Photo taken by Maria Yang)



(Photo taken by Ed Devine)



(Photo taken by Maria Yang)

Afterward, WAMU hosted a lovely luncheon for OCAW members with Kojo Nnamdi and Matt Blitz.



(Photo taken by Ed Devine)



Kojo Nnamdi, the star and host of *The Politics Hour*, and Matt Blitz, the program's producer, heading the luncheon table and interacting with attendees

(Photo taken by Maria Yang)



(Photo taken by Meghaen Anderson)

We heard about what it takes to produce a marquee news show each week for the Washington region. We enjoyed hearing their stories – about their professional evolution to joining WAMU and their personal

backgrounds, e.g., Kojo's early Caribbean American program, to Matt umpiring softball in Virginia. They shared their values and approach for *The Politics Hour*: respect for guests and listeners; commitment to covering what's in the news that people want to hear about; and making a space where guests can be authentic on the program.



Phyllis Kim (*right*) answering questions from Cathy Roberts and Ed Devine



Meghaen Anderson, WAMU Leadership Giving Officer, and Sage Duarte, Intern and tour guide

(Photos taken by Maria Yang)



OCAW National President Maria Yang; Kojo Nnamdi; and Kitty Hsu Dana,
OCAW-MD Vice President and event organizer

(Photo taken by Meghaen Anderson)

OCAW members appreciated the opportunity for conversation with Kojo and Matt. They were very generous with their time answering questions and in conversation with us. After the discussion Kojo stayed for many photo opps with our group!

OCAW members thoroughly enjoyed learning about what goes on “behind the scenes” to bring programs to listeners. We also loved hearing their personal stories – where they were from and what brought them to public radio and WAMU. To a person they were generous and engaging with our group. Their personal insights were a gift to us, and their warm welcome paralleled the warmth they project on their programs to the listening public.

With great appreciation we recognize several WAMU staff members for meticulous preparation prior to, and attentive management during the event: Phyllis Kim, Director of Development and the quarterback for the event; Patrice Jackson, Director of Development Operations, who worked behind the scenes on the luncheon logistics; Meghaen Anderson, Leadership Giving Officer and our greeter and logistics supporter; and Sage Duarte, Intern and tour guide. The station’s thoughtful hospitality included accommodating our dietary preferences and providing handicapped parking in their building.

After the event, the station shared how very much they enjoyed our visit and appreciate our introducing them to OCAW. WAMU was happy to broaden their community circle and to extend their welcome to listeners, donors, and non-donors from Maryland and Virginia. They also enjoyed the candid conversation with us over lunch and appreciated that our group had many regular and careful listeners to *The Politics Hour*. Our group departed with exceptional enthusiasm and deepened appreciation for the station, and our WAMU friends hope to continue to connect with OCAW and our members.



(front row) Noreen Hom, Linda Devine, Sally Lee, Rose Li, Kitty Hsu Dana, Kojo Nnamdi, Maria Yang, Ophelia Yeung, Dorothy Hsiao, Jane Pan, and Nancy Bao

(back row) Cathy Roberts, Ed Devine, Suzy Hung, Francis Pan, Ru Fan, Pam Wong, Jean Lorentzen, Jackie Fredrick, and Susan Young

(Photo taken by Meghaen Anderson)

Sidebar

(from Sage Duarte, WAMU Intern and Tour Guide)

My journey at WAMU has been a full-circle moment for me. I started my college freshman year as a Federal Work Study Student in the business department, and then worked in the events department. I was bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, and was able my senior year to secure another opening in the advancement department, for which I was very grateful. Currently I enjoy giving tours of the station to visitors.

I've learned so much during my time at WAMU, not just skills-wise, but about radio as well. WAMU first went on the air in 1961. The station initially played bluegrass music and evolved to provide more news and public affairs programming. The WAMU tower is located on American University's campus, and if you visit the station in the Van Ness neighborhood in Washington, D.C., you can see 24/7 footage of the inside of the tower. You would also see a variety of monitors that track various things about the radio station, such as the number of people listening to the broadcast at any one time.

One of my favorite things to explain to tours is how we track listeners through something called Nielsen ratings. Nielsen selects families to track their listening habits via a console that is connected to their radio, and it records what the family listens to. But the Nielsen ratings system hasn't always been like this. In the past, to track listening or watching habits (if recording data for television), the families received a book in which they had to physically write down the shows or programs they were ingesting via radio or television. That historic fact really made an impact on me after my first tour, as I thought it was so interesting.

Now that I've graduated, my time at WAMU is coming to a close. I have grown so much in my time here, thanks to the team and their nonstop support. The atmosphere has always been warm, welcoming, and wonderful, and I could not have asked for a better place or better people to work with. I plan on still staying involved with the radio station by becoming a volunteer and working at events (which you can do as well!), so that I can continue to see WAMU flourish. Thank you, WAMU, for all that you do and have done not only for me, but for the Washington Metropolitan area.

(Editor's Note: Kitty said that as a result of coming to our WAMU tour event, her friend Ophelia Yeung wants to join OCAW-MD!)

Art Exhibition and VIP Visitor

(from Kitty Hsu Dana)

This summer several OCAW members visited the art show of Richard Dana, titled *People, Places and Otherwise*, at the American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center of American University in Washington, D.C. Richard is the husband of OCAW Maryland life member and Vice President Kitty Hsu Dana. This solo exhibition opened on Saturday, June 13, 2026 and was on view at the museum for two months to August 9, with an Artist Talk on July 11.



(Photo taken by Greg Staley)



(Photo taken by Kitty Hsu Dana)

A retrospective of black-and-white drawings spanning the artist's career, the exhibition brought together a wide selection of works in graphite, charcoal, and ink. The images were both evocative and precise, moving between the recognizable and the surreal. Drawing on sources as varied as the human condition, the natural world, science, and global cultures, Dana transformed observation and imagination into images that are both intricate and open-ended. However one interprets his work, the artist considers that response valid. His aim is to draw in viewers, not to dictate to them.



Series, *Rambunctious Protozoans*, by Richard Dana

Series, *Bestiary*, by Richard Dana



(Photos taken by Kitty Hsu Dana)

At the exhibition opening, the artist was stunned by the arrival of a prominent public official: U.S. Representative Jamie Raskin of Maryland's 8th Congressional District. His presence was a welcome surprise at the crowded event. Attendees in the gallery recognized Congressman Raskin, be they residents of Maryland and the Washington, D.C. Region or they came from states across the U.S., as he is one of the most prominent Members of the House of Representatives and Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee. He stayed for well over an hour, and many flocked to speak with him. The Congressman's presence was a standout memory for many at the opening, and he very much enjoyed the art and being at the event.

Richard asked Congressman Raskin's staff why he chose to come to this show. Their response: "*because your wife Kitty Dana invited him.*" Kitty had personally flagged the invitation to staffers at his office and had confirmed the best person to send it to. But she had not expected the Congressman to say yes, nor did his office tell her he was going to attend.

Here's the rest of the story: Kitty invited the Congressman *at the suggestion of Patricia Fenn, President of OCAW Maryland*. When Patricia had first heard about Richard's art opening, she had said, "*Congratulations!*" and instantly urged: "*Why don't you invite your Congressman to the opening?*" When told that Congressman Raskin actually came, Patricia was thrilled and remarked, "*It's a good lesson to always ask for what we want!*" Good advice for us all. ☺

Representative Raskin's staff specifically requested a photo of the Congressman in front of Richard's piece, *Mind and Body*. The person who took the picture named it, *Our Fierce Hero: Congressman Jamie Raskin*.



Congressman Jamie Raskin

(Photo taken by Martha Olson)



Congressman Jamie Raskin with Richard and Kitty Dana

(Photo taken by John Dana)

* * * * *

(from Linda Devine)

On Wednesday, July 15, 2026, my husband Ed and I had the pleasure of going to the American University Art Museum to view Richard Dana's exhibition. It was wonderfully presented, and we enjoyed seeing all of the art works displayed.

Although Ed liked everything he saw, the piece below particularly caught his attention.



Ed Devine with

From Above – 2007, Charcoal, graphite on paper, lace

(Photo taken by Linda Devine)

Artworks that I especially liked:



*Enigmatic Power Plant – 2019-2020,
Graphite on paper*



Issues – 2008, Chalk, pastel on paper

(Photos taken by Ed Devine)

As Kitty described, this exhibition contained works in black, white, and gray. Richard has also worked in color, and in the future I would enjoy seeing some of those pieces as well.

I was impressed to read in the exhibition brochure the many cities and countries that have hosted Richard's work. In the United States, he has exhibited in New York, Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Chicago, Dallas, and San Francisco. Internationally, he has exhibited in Brazil, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Poland, Russia, Senegal, Spain, South Africa, Taiwan, Turkey, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam. A very impressive list, indeed!

News from the Virginia Chapter

(from Barbara York, President)

The OCAW Maryland Chapter extended an invitation to the Virginia Chapter to co-host a joint Book Talk, and we were pleased to be involved. Author Judy Ikels spoke about her book, *Death in Wartime China: A Daughter's Discovery*, on Saturday, June 13, 2026, at the Little Falls Library in Bethesda, MD. *(See a detailed article in "News from the Maryland Chapter.")*

We also were invited to participate with the Maryland Chapter at a subsequent event, which was a tour of our WAMU public radio station in Washington, D.C. It included being able to watch a live airing of *The Politics Hour with Koyo Nnamdi*, and a luncheon with the host and producer of the program. It was held on Friday, June 26, 2026. *(See a detailed article in "News from the Maryland Chapter.")*

Several Virginia Chapter members attended both of these events, and both chapters' members enjoyed camaraderie with one another.

Upcoming events

Mid-Autumn Festival Potluck Dinner

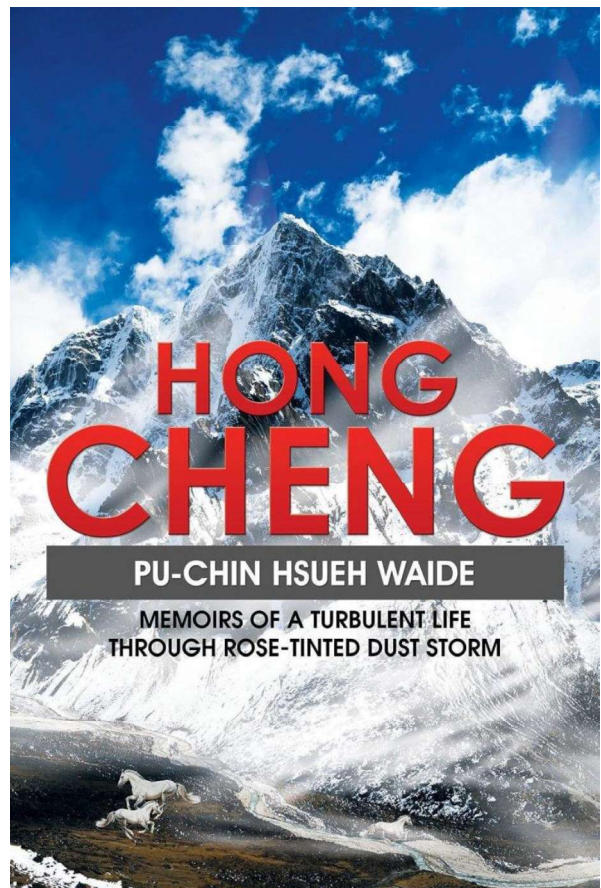
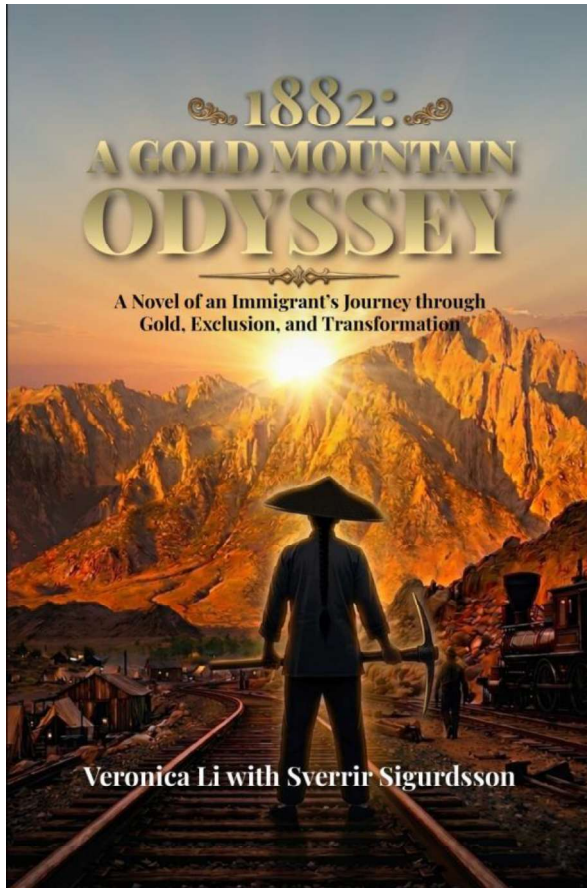
Planning is underway for our chapter's annual Mid-Autumn Festival Potluck Dinner and Moon Viewing scheduled for Saturday, September 26, 2026 from 5:00 p.m. until after we view the moon. Lifetime member Amy Lee has extended her hospitality and booked her condo's party room for our event in Alexandria, VA.



Book talks by two Virginia Chapter Members

Veronica Li and Pu-Chin Waide will be talking about their recent books on Saturday, October 24, 2026 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. at the Dolley Madison Library in McLean, VA.

Veronica's book, *1882: A Gold Mountain Odyssey*, is a novel about an immigrant's journey through gold, the Chinese Exclusion Act, and transformation. Pu-Chin's book, *Hong Cheng: Memoirs of a Turbulent Life Through Rose-Tinted Dust Storm*, is about her father's turbulent life from birth in rural China through the war and his immigration into India.



Future Talk by Echo Krisko on her two books

Upcoming later this fall will be a book talk by Echo Krisko, Virginia Chapter member, on her recently published *The Slow Road to Siena* as well as the book she is currently working on, *The Rising Road to Milan: Part I*. More information will be coming shortly.

News from the New Orleans Chapter

(Yong Yi, President)

Opera International Supports Local Cultural Performance Groups

(from Lily Wu, Vice President)

The Feiyang Dance Team and the New Orleans Skylark Performing Arts Troupe each received a \$500 donation from Opera International in 2026. Both groups include members of the OCAW New Orleans Chapter and are actively involved in promoting cultural awareness through performances and community outreach.

Representative members from both teams gathered at Sushi Masa in Metairie, LA, on Saturday, June 6, 2026, to celebrate this achievement and express their appreciation for Opera International's continued support.

The generous grants will help offset practice hall rental expenses and support future performances. Both groups are committed to sharing cultural traditions, fostering community engagement, and bringing joy to audiences throughout the Greater New Orleans area. Members expressed their gratitude to Opera International and pledged to continue serving the community through the performing arts.



Members gathered to recognize and celebrate Opera International's generous support of local cultural arts programs.



Dr. Yong Yi, Captain of the Feiyang Dance Team (*left*), and Dr. Lily Wu, a member of the New Orleans Skylark Performing Arts Troupe (*right*), received donation checks from Patricia Ellzey, Immediate Past President of the OCAW New Orleans Chapter (*center*), on behalf of their respective organizations.

Editor's Note: After the presentation of the checks, **Pat Ellzey** spoke about how important it was and how grateful they were to have these performers assist in providing authentic Chinese cultural traditional information to all, including educating American-born Chinese children like Pat herself! And besides these Chinese Americans, there are several Chinese adopted children by non-Chinese parents, who do not have opportunities to learn about their ancestry and culture, as well as the general American public itself.

Pat feels that it is very important for others to learn Chinese culture, so it is vital to educate all of these individuals and not take this for granted. She believes that this also helps reduce possible tensions that might exist among the various ethnic races in our country.

Pat added her thanks for this rewarding, important opportunity. She felt that some may not realize how crucial it is that they do this. But they should know that they are providing such an important service. She expressed that this is a great mission for OCAW!

Feiyang Dance Team Participates in Senior Citizen Dance Gala

(from Yong Yi, President, and Feiyang Dance Team Captain)

On Friday, August 7, 2026, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., the Feiyang Dance Team participated in the Jefferson Parish Senior Citizen Dance Gala, a wonderful community celebration filled with music, dancing, and fellowship.

Eight dance teams performed during the event, most featuring lively line dances. Several OCAW members who are also members of the Feiyang Dance Team joined the performances and proudly represented the Chinese community.



The Feiyang Dance Team delivered a joyful performance of “Let’s Dance.” Featured in this group photo are OCAW members Yong Yi (*front row, far left*), Wenyi Shan (*front row, third from the left*), and Weihong Tu (*back row, far left*).

The celebration began and ended with an open dance floor, inviting everyone to come together and enjoy dancing. In between the performances, participants shared a delicious lunch and enjoyed fellowship with friends and other members of the community.



The Senior Gala open floor: hundreds step in sync.



One last march: Joy and triumphs at the Senior Gala

It was a joyful afternoon that promoted active living, friendship, and community connection. We were delighted to be part of this special event and to share the joy of dance with our neighbors.

Luncheon and Flower Arranging Workshop

(from Lily Wu, Vice President)

The OCAW New Orleans Chapter enjoyed a delightful afternoon of fellowship, good food, and creativity at our Luncheon and Flower Arranging Workshop on Saturday, August 29, 2026. Members gathered at the Chinese Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall in Kenner, LA, to enjoy a delicious selection of Chinese dishes, fresh fruit, hot tea, and bottled water while reconnecting with friends and fellow members.



Following lunch, the chapter conducted its business meeting, which included approval of the previous meeting minutes, a review of the financial report, discussion of the chapter's donation to the Chinese School, and announcements about upcoming activities. Members appreciated the opportunity to stay informed and actively engaged in chapter affairs.



The highlight of the afternoon was the hands-on flower arranging workshop. Participants selected from five varieties of flowers and two types of greenery to create their own unique floral arrangements.

Lily Wu demonstrated techniques for selecting, trimming, balancing, and arranging flowers in individual vases. Members enjoyed learning new skills while expressing their creativity, and the resulting arrangements were both beautiful and inspiring.



Our finished arrangements

A special thank-you goes to Lifetime Member Sophie Lin for generously donating tea bags and take-home gifts for all participants.



We also extend our sincere appreciation to the organizing team, volunteers, and photographers, including Yong Yi, Weihong Tu, Nellie Underwood, Mayling Hew, and Pat Ellzey, whose dedication helped make this event a wonderful success.

The workshop concluded with members proudly displaying their floral creations and posing for group photographs. It was a memorable afternoon filled with learning, friendship, creativity, and community spirit. Everyone left with a beautiful arrangement to enjoy at home and fond memories of time spent together.



Proudly displaying our floral creations



A Garden of Smiles and Friendship

“Surrounded by flowers, friendship, and laughter, OCAW members created lasting memories while learning the art of flower arranging and celebrating the joy of community.” ❀❀

News from the Silicon Valley Chapter

(Isabelle Guh, President)

Lunch

(from Cynthia Chang, Public Relationship)

On Friday, July 10, 2026, there was a small lunch gathering of OCAW-SVC members welcoming Silicon Valley Chapter Founder Dorothy Lee, at China Stix restaurant in Santa Clara, CA. Guests enjoyed wonderful fellowship prior to the Silicon Valley Chapter's momentous 40th anniversary celebration the following day.



Dorothy Lee (*sixth from the left*)

The OCAW Silicon Valley Chapter Celebrates Its 40th Anniversary

(from Cynthia Chang, Public Relationship)

The Organization of Chinese American Women (OCAW) Silicon Valley Chapter celebrated its 40th anniversary on Saturday, July 11, 2026 at Florentine Trattoria in Saratoga, California. The event also featured the installation of the chapter's new president and a scholarship presentation.

**PROCLAMATION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF SARATOGA HONORING THE ORGANIZATION OF CHINESE
AMERICAN WOMEN, SILICON VALLEY CHAPTER ON ITS 40TH
ANNIVERSARY**

WHEREAS, the Organization of Chinese American Women (OCAW) was founded in the spring of 1977 by Pauline Tsui in Washington, D.C., as a national non-profit dedicated to advancing and advocating for the needs and concerns of Chinese and Asian Pacific American women; and

WHEREAS, the Silicon Valley Chapter (OCAW-SVC) was founded in the spring of 1986 by Dorothy Lee, and for forty years has worked to expand educational, economic, social, and civic opportunities of Chinese and Asian Pacific American women throughout the region; and

WHEREAS, OCAW-SVC has supported the integration of Chinese American women into American society while promoting leadership, confidence, and community engagement; and

WHEREAS, the Chapter has fostered cross-cultural understanding, helped immigrant families adapt to American society, and collaborated with other organizations sharing similar goals; and

WHEREAS, OCAW-SVC has enriched the City of Saratoga and the broader community through cultural and educational programs, including a Chinese calligraphy booth at Hakone Gardens, lectures on engraving stone seals at local libraries, health and wellness education, and civic participation such as the Walk to End Alzheimer's and community river-cleaning efforts; and

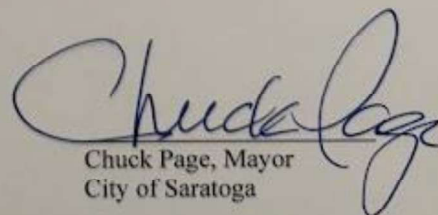
WHEREAS, the Chapter has invested in future generations through its Youth Achievement Award, recognizing academic excellence, community service, and leadership among Chinese American youth; and

WHEREAS, through leadership development and outreach, OCAW-SVC continues to inspire future community leaders and strengthen connections across Silicon Valley.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Saratoga does hereby congratulate the Organization of Chinese American Women, Silicon Valley Chapter, on the occasion of its 40th Anniversary, and commends its members, officers, and volunteers for four decades of service, cultural enrichment, and leadership benefiting Saratoga and the broader community.

WITNESS MY HAND AND THE SEAL OF THE CITY OF SARATOGA this 11th day of July 2026.




Chuck Page, Mayor
City of Saratoga

During the celebration, outgoing President **Yufan Lu** presented a **Certificate of Appreciation** to Founding President **Dorothy Lee** in recognition of her vision and leadership in establishing the Silicon Valley Chapter four decades ago.



Yufan Lu and Dorothy Lee

(Photo taken by Isabelle Guh)



(Photo taken by Sophia Yang)

Thanks to the dedication of successive presidents and members, the chapter has continued to grow and thrive. An **Outstanding Service Award** was also presented to **Cynthia Chang** in recognition of her many years of distinguished service to the organization.



Yufan Lu, Cynthia Chang, and Dorothy Lee

(Photo taken by Isabelle Guh)



(Photo taken by Sophia Yang)

After leaving the San Francisco Bay Area for Illinois in 1989, Founding President Dorothy Lee continued promoting the mission of the Silicon Valley Chapter throughout the Midwest, achieving significant accomplishments. She served for more than 20 years as an advisor to the President of **Purdue University** and as a member of Purdue's **Gifted Education Committee**. She also served as a commissioner for the **City of Naperville** and president of numerous organizations, including the **Chinese American Association of Northern Illinois**, the **Naperville/Lisle Women's Club**, the **Midwest Beinu (Taipei First Girls High School) Alumni Association**, and the **Midwest National Chengchi University Alumni Association**.

Following the mission of OCAW National Headquarters in Washington, D.C., the Silicon Valley Chapter is dedicated to advancing the status of Chinese American women, encouraging greater participation in mainstream society, fostering self-confidence and self-respect, improving the public image of Chinese Americans, promoting intercultural understanding, advocating for equal opportunities, and collaborating with other organizations to serve the community.

Many Silicon Valley Chapter members have held elected public office, including former **Los Gatos–Saratoga Union High School District** trustee **Cynthia Chang**, current trustee **Katherine Tseng**, **Santa Clara Valley Water District** Board Director **Nai-Chuang Hsueh**, former **Fremont** Mayor **Lily Mei**, and former **Saratoga** Mayor **Emily Lo**.

A milestone in the chapter's history occurred in October 1988, when it organized the first **political candidates' forum specifically for Asian American voters**. Candidates running for federal and California state offices participated, and the event attracted approximately 200 attendees.

Outgoing President Yufan Lü thanked her leadership team for organizing a wide variety of activities over the past year, including Lunar New Year celebrations at **Hakone Gardens**, online dance classes, cooking demonstrations, river cleanup projects, library workshops on floral arranging and seal carving, participation in the **Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzheimer's**, community service projects, and member social gatherings.

Incoming President **Isabelle Guh** introduced the new leadership team and expressed her commitment to building on the chapter's legacy while continuing to serve the community.



Isabelle Guh, Dorothy Lee,
and Yufan Lu

(Photo taken by Sophia Yang)

This year's **Youth Achievement Award** was presented to **Enna O'Young**, an 11th-grade student at Archbishop Mitty High School. In addition to outstanding academic performance, she has earned numerous awards in competitive swimming and volunteers her time teaching swimming to children in the community. In recognition of her exceptional achievements, she was admitted early to **Yale University** and will begin her studies there in the fall of 2027.



Enna O'Young

(Photo taken by Sophia Yang)







The program also featured presentations by two distinguished Chinese American authors, who shared their English-language novels inspired by the Chinese American experience:

- **Lily Lee**, a former president of the Silicon Valley Chapter, discussed her novel *Fire Scar*, which uncovers a little-known chapter of early Chinese American history.

Lily Lee

(Photo taken by Sophia Yang)



- **Veronica Li**, a former Acting President of the OCAW Virginia Chapter, introduced her novel *1882: A Gold Mountain Odyssey*, a historical work tracing the experiences of early Chinese immigrants in America from the Gold Rush through the era of the Chinese Exclusion Act.



Veronica Li and husband and colleague Sverrir Sigurdsson

The anniversary celebration brought together both longtime and new members to reflect on the chapter's accomplishments over the past 40 years and to look forward to its future. Participants described the event as both meaningful and inspiring.



(Photos taken by Sophia Yang)



Former OCAW-SVC Presidents

(Standing) Anne Hu, Carol Yuan, Yufan Lu, Tracy Lee, Monica Hsiao, Wendy Chang, Lily Tan, Chia-Huei Chen, and Isabelle Guh (current President)

(Seated) Sophia Yang, Yura Shieu, Jean Chen, Dorothy Lee, Cynthia Chang, and Katy Wang



Do What You Love to End ALZ – “Dance For Health”

(from Ai-Chu Wang, Board member)

On Saturday afternoon, July 11, 2026, I once again organized a fundraising event for the Alzheimer’s Association at South Bay Overseas Chinese Cultural Center in Fremont, CA.

I was honored to have the National Taiwan University (NTU) Alumni Folk Dance Club and the California Line Dance Association of America (CLDAA) co-host the event. The program included folk dancing, line dancing, fun exercise activities, and a brain health talk. Through this event, I hoped to remind everyone to pay attention to both physical and mental well-being, while cheering on all those living with dementia and paying tribute to the family members and caregivers who lovingly care for them. There was no admission fee for this event.

The afternoon began with NTU Alumni Folk Dance Club Lily Shen, Herdaw Che, and Elisa Shoshia Lin who led everyone in folk dances from different parts of the world. From circle dances and changing partners to the solo dance “Tomorrow Will Be Better,” everyone had a wonderful time. For a moment, it felt as if we had all returned to our college days.

Next, Linda, a senior instructor from CLDAA, carefully selected several familiar Chinese and English pop songs and led everyone in fun and beautiful line dances. Dancing to such wonderful music was truly a delightful experience!

Peining Chang, Director of Community Engagement of the Alzheimer’s Association and an NTU alumna, brought a variety of educational materials about Alzheimer’s disease and took photographs throughout the event. Well-known Bay Area journalist Mr. Ben Huang also came especially to cover the event. He helped take our group photos and even brought homemade, all-natural mung bean cakes that he had made himself. His thoughtfulness made the gathering feel especially warm and touching.

Then Ai-Chu Wang gave a presentation providing valuable information about dementia as well as practical knowledge about maintaining brain health.

The final session was a fun mind-and-body exercise activity. Everyone was given a tennis ball and learned a variety of enjoyable activities designed to stimulate the brain while strengthening the body. All had an absolutely wonderful time!

This year marked the fourth time since 2018 that I have organized a fundraising event for the Alzheimer’s Association. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Ms. Kico Lin, founder of CLDAA and a well-known Bay Area leader, as well as Mr. Herdaw Che, a senior member and mentor of the NTU Folk Dance Club, and Ms. Lily Shen, an alumna and instructor of the club, for their tremendous support.

Every time I asked for their help, they agreed without hesitation to co-host and sponsor this meaningful event. Their generous support made it possible for me to organize the event successfully.

I would also like to sincerely thank everyone who participated in the event and all of my friends who generously donated and supported this cause. Thank you all for your love, kindness, and care!

Note: The Alzheimer’s Association is a leading global nonprofit organization dedicated to the care, support, research, and advocacy of Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias. Its vision is “a world without Alzheimer’s and all other dementia.” For more information, please visit [alz.org](https://www.alz.org) or [alz.org/chinese](https://www.alz.org/chinese).



Author Talk

(from Veronica Li, former Acting President, OCAW Virginia Chapter)

On Sunday, July 19, 2026, at the Saratoga Library in Saratoga, CA, Veronica Li talked about her new book, *1882: A Gold Mountain Odyssey*. It's a historical novel about the first large-scale immigration of Chinese to America in the mid-1800s. Their journey through the gold rush, railroad construction, and the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act is a Chinese American origin story. What they experienced shaped the community today.

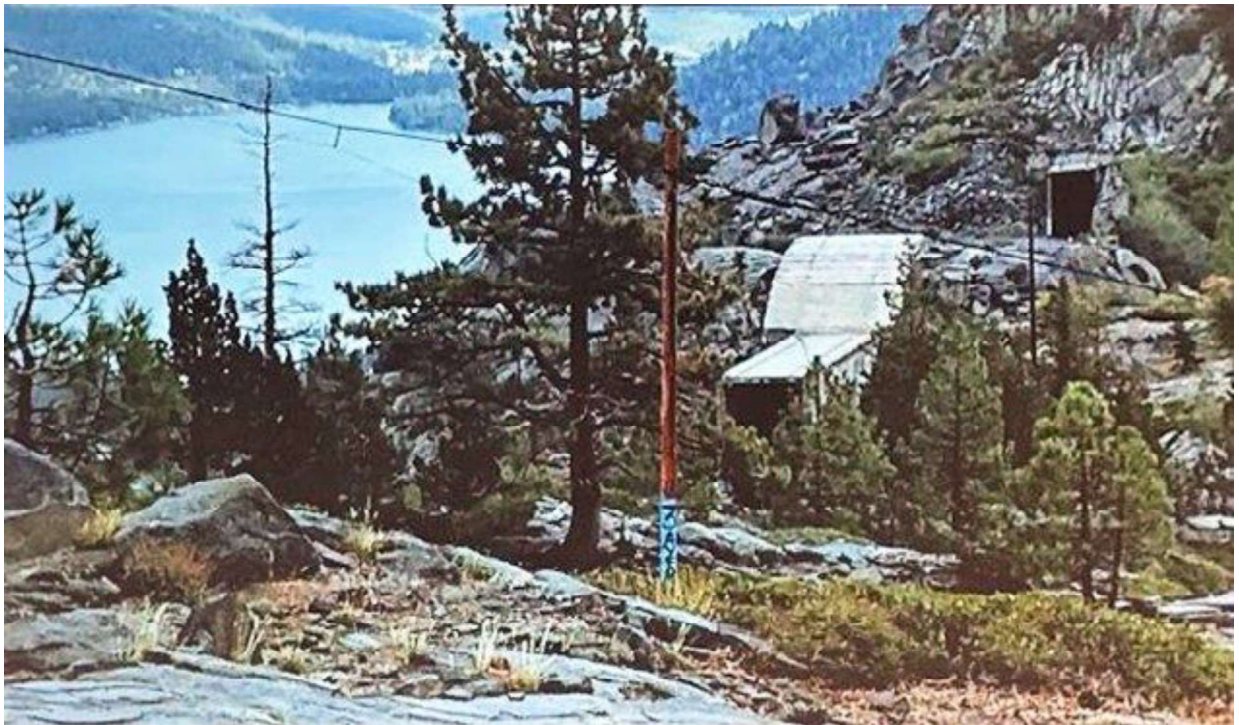


Veronica Li and her husband and colleague Sverrir Sigurdsson

Veronica was inspired to write the book during the COVID-19 pandemic. When certain politicians blamed the Chinese for spreading the virus, attacks against Asian Americans became rampant. Veronica began to wonder how such atrocities could happen in this day and age. It motivated her to look into Chinese American history. She was surprised to find out that the Chinese came to America for the gold rush around 1850, which was why they called America “the Gold Mountain.” The Irish, Italians, Germans, and other Europeans all arrived around the same time. But why are others recognized as Americans while Asian Americans are still being treated as “perpetual aliens?”

After the U.S. gained independence, the original thirteen colonies were ready to expand to the West, all the way to the Pacific. The country needed large numbers of workers to realize its ambition. China was the largest nation at the time, with a population of 430 million. American companies encouraged Chinese laborers to immigrate to the U.S.

For the construction of the first transcontinental railroad, American recruiters went to China and imported 15-20,000 laborers. This railroad, which linked the nation from the Atlantic to the Pacific, facilitated commerce and settlement in the West. Veronica saw with her own eyes the fruits of Chinese labor when she joined a heritage tour organized by the 1882 Foundation. It took her to the places where Chinese railroad workers had lived and worked. She witnessed the tremendous achievements of the Chinese and their contribution to building the American empire. This inspired her to put pen to paper.



The China Wall at Donner Pass is a massive, dry-laid stone retaining wall built in 1867 by Chinese immigrant laborers for the Central Pacific Railroad. Rising up to 75–150 feet high without using any mortar, this historic structure supported the first transcontinental railroad bed through the Sierra Nevada Mountains. You can plan a visit or view trail details via [AllTrails](#).



In her research, Veronica also learned that the discriminatory laws against the Chinese left them defenseless. Chinese immigrants were denied the right to citizenship. Without a vote and other civil rights, they were powerless and became easy scapegoats. Several years after the railroad was completed, a recession hit the country. Americans blamed the Chinese for taking all the jobs. Mobs chased the Chinese from their towns and burned their homes and businesses. Such animosity led to the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882.

Despite the persecution, the Chinese remained strong and resilient. They not only survived but continued to contribute to building the new American nation.

Veronica decided to write the book as a historical novel in order to transport the reader to the place where it all happened. By painting vivid scenes, she enables the reader to walk in the shoes of a 19th-century Chinese American worker, endure his hardships, and experience his joys and sorrows.

After the talk, there was discussion among the participants:

There was much interest in the 1882 Foundation heritage tours.

The audience expressed admiration for the accomplishments of the early Chinese Americans.

A youth organizer said young Chinese Americans have much to gain in reading about the history of their people. This knowledge will help them in their search for identity.



(Standing) Lisa Liu (Saratoga Library librarian); Joyce Zhao, Lilian Sun, and Tiany Chen (three new members who joined OCAW-SVC after the talk); Li-Mei Baranoff; Helen Chiang (SVC); and Jen Tsao (SVC)

(Seated) Cynthia Chang (SVC), Sverrir Sigurdsson, Veronica Li, and Isabelle Guh (SVC President)

(Photos taken by Helen Chiang, Isabelle Guh, and Cynthia Chang)

News from the Hawaii Chapter

(from Sharlene Chun, President)

Author Talk

On Saturday, June 27, 2026, in a small private room in a Chinatown restaurant, 20 members and guests were gathered around a large round table honored to hear former CNN and ABC News reporter and book author Carol Lin speak about her book, *When News Breaks*. It includes the story of how she was the first news reporter on CNN to let the world know about the 911 incident with mostly male reporters who dominated the News Room. She showed us a 2-minute video clip of the chaos the CNN newsroom experienced on a quiet day on September 11, 2001 as a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center. As we watched the video, a lot of us remembered exactly where we were and when we saw the plane hit the skyscraper.

Carol also spoke about her mother and the sacrifices she made to keep her family safe after fleeing Fukien China in a boat. The book cover displays the jade bracelet Carol's mother gave her as the only remnant she had to keep her family alive. Each jade piece was sold for their survival. Carol still has one jade piece left on that bracelet as seen on the cover of her memoir. It is a compelling book on her personal life from reporting to the world about the 911 Tragedy, to her marriage when her husband was diagnosed with cancer, her mother's sacrifices to keep her family safe, and the struggle to have her daughter.

Everyone was glued to every word heard of one woman's courageous story. A must read book. Carol now resides in Hawaii with her husband.



Author and speaker Carol Lin





Carol Lin and President Sharlene Chun

From and About Our Members

AANHPI Celebration and Awards Gala

(from Maria Yang, National President)

I attended the AANHPI Celebration and Awards Gala hosted by the Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) on Saturday, May 30, 2026, at the Marriott Hotel in Fairview Park, Falls Church, Virginia.

The event celebrated leadership, service, and community. As FAPAC President Fahmida Chhipa noted, this year's theme, **“Power in Unity: Strengthening Community Together,”** resonated deeply with FAPAC members and all attendees. It reminds us that we can accomplish great things when we stand together. While our personal stories, cultures, and professional experiences may differ, our shared values of resilience, compassion, and unity continue to bring us closer and strengthen our communities.

During the gala dinner, the Distinguished Public Service Scholarship Award was presented to Nicole Hoang, a senior at the University of Pennsylvania.



I also enjoyed the vibrant cultural performance by the Filipino American Cultural Arts Society, which added energy and inspiration to the evening.





(The photos above taken by Maria Yang)



FAPAC President Fahmida Chhipa and Maria Yang

The celebration concluded with a silent auction to raise scholarship funds, and live music, providing a wonderful ending to an engaging and memorable event.

Book Launch

(from Patricia Fenn, Maryland Chapter President)

On Sunday, July 12, 2026, **Maryland State Delegate Lily Qi** had a book launch at the Politics and Prose Bookstore in Washington, D.C., for her book, ***Elected American: From Red China to Blue Maryland.***



She is a member of the Maryland Legislative Asian-American and Pacific-Islander Caucus and formerly the Chair of the Maryland Governor's Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs.

Thirty years after her solo journey to America, Chinese-born Qi was elected to state office in the fall of 2018. It was a gratifying moment she did not take for granted. She had overcome a viral WeChat disinformation campaign from her Chinese community and was met with skepticism from the Democratic establishment before being elected.

Growing up in Mao's Shanghai, when "politics meant danger," Qi never imagined running for public office. However, living in America, she came to see political participation as a missed opportunity for immigrants. As she campaigned to energize her cultural base, Qi realized she had to prepare first-time voters for how to make their votes count in a system not designed for them.

As the only U.S. state legislator who lived through China's Cultural Revolution, Qi brings a rare cross-system perspective to American politics and modern-day Asian American identity. *Elected American* is a political memoir and an immigrant story that emphasizes that democracy doesn't wait on the sidelines; it favors those who participate.



On Saturday, June 27, 2026, there was a pre-book launch chaired by **Ambassador Julia Chang Bloch**, Executive Chair of the U.S-China Education Trust, and co-founder of OCAW. An article on this event can be found at:

[Event Recap: USCET Salon Featuring Pre-Book Launch with Maryland house delegate Lily Qi – US-China Education Trust](#)

Free Mandarin Chinese Classes

(from Maria Yang, National President)

Dear OCAW Members and Friends:

I am pleased to **offer two free introductory Mandarin Chinese classes** to OCAW lifetime members and to friends who would like to join OCAW as lifetime members.

1. Introduction to Mandarin Chinese Pronunciation

This beginner-level course will introduce **Pinyin romanization, accurate Chinese pronunciation, and basic everyday expressions.**

The goal is to help learners develop basic Mandarin communication skills for **travel, business, and social situations.** Special emphasis will be placed on correct pronunciation and becoming familiar with the Pinyin romanization system.

Class Format

- **Location:** Online via Zoom
- **Total:** 6 hours

- **Class length:** One hour per week
- **Schedule:** Every Wednesday, from Sept. 16 to Oct. 28 (No class on Oct. 7)
- **Time:** 4–5 p.m. (Virginia and Maryland); 3–4 p.m. (New Orleans); 10–11 a.m. (Hawaii)

2. Introduction to Chinese Reading and Writing

After learning Pinyin and basic pronunciation, students can continue with an introduction to **Chinese reading and writing**, progressing step by step from simple characters to more complex ones.

This course is especially suitable for those who **can already speak Mandarin but would like to learn how to read and write Chinese**. Approximately **300 Chinese characters** will be introduced using a beginning-level reading and writing textbook.

Lifetime members may continue taking this class **for as long as they wish**, with one hour of instruction each week.

Class Format

- **Location:** Online via Zoom
- **Class length:** One hour per week
- **Class day and time:** We will determine the most convenient day and time after we have received sufficient interest from participants.
- **Zoom Link:** The link will be sent approximately 10 minutes before each class.

If you are interested in either class, please let me know. I hope these classes will provide a fun and useful opportunity to learn Mandarin Chinese while connecting with fellow OCAW members and friends.

We look forward to learning Chinese together!

Sincerely,
Maria Yang

Tales of Two Murals

by Camilla Ng

(Editor's Note: Camilla is a former Maryland Chapter President.)

On Wednesday, July 1, 2026, I attended the 1882 Foundation's unveiling of a public mural project honoring **Mabel Ping-Hua Lee**. The mural, two stories high, is painted on the side wall of the Chinatown Garden Restaurant building at 618 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.



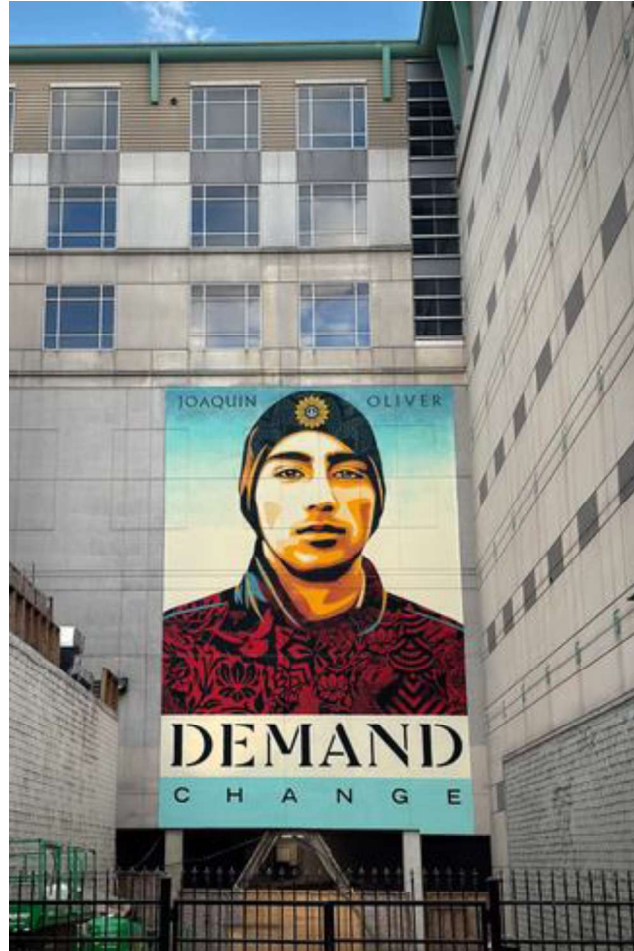
The mural is the idea of Ted Gong, Chairman of the 1882 Foundation, as a way to bring attention to the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, which prohibited Chinese immigrants from becoming citizens, as well as the role all immigrants played in building the country. The mural gives recognition to an overlooked leader, Mabel Ping-Hua Lee, who helped lead the fight for women's rights yet remains largely absent from public history. The mural highlights the role Chinese Americans played in the struggle for American civil rights. It serves to inspire future generations and invites new audiences to engage with history.

Born in China, Lee came to America as a young girl and became the first Chinese woman in the United States to earn a Ph.D. in economics (from Columbia University) in 1921. Lee joined the women's suffrage movement and at just 16 years old, she took part in a famous horseback suffrage parade in New York City in 1912. Because of the Chinese Exclusion Act, she was denied the right to vote even after the 19th Amendment was ratified in 1920. Lee still was denied that right that she fought for because she was still denied citizenship as a Chinese immigrant. The Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed in 1943, but it's unknown whether Lee ever was able to vote.

The mural was painted by the artist Jahru (Jeff Huntington) and his wife Julia Gibb. The vibrant, two-story-tall mural features Lee wearing a striking red hat with a yellow flower pinned to her lapel. But it is the sparks in her eyes that draw attention, with the prominent call-to-action text: **"VOTE. IT'S YOUR VOICE."** We are reminded not to take our right to vote for granted, that it did not come easy for the Chinese Americans. The mural was spearheaded by Ted Gong and the 1882 Foundation in conjunction with the Downtown DC Business Improvement District (BID).

On the wall perpendicular to the Mabel Ping-Hua Lee Mural is another powerful mural portrait which was unveiled over a year ago, on March 24, 2025. It celebrates the life of 17-year-old Parkland School shooting

victim **Joaquin Oliver** and honors the victims of mass shootings and continues the fight for sensible gun reform. At the bottom of the portrait is the text: **“DEMAND CHANGE”**.



This mural was painted by renowned street artist and activist Shepard Fairey, his Obey team, and Joaquin’s father Manuel Oliver who is a visual artist. The mural is partnered with Change the Ref, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, and BID.

“Joaquin’s portrait on this wall is more than just art – a powerful statement. It honors his memory and raises awareness of the ongoing tragedy of gun violence. Through this mural, we’re giving voice to those silenced and showing the world that we will not stop until we see real change,” said Patricia Oliver, Joaquin’s mom.

In the alley space of buildings just steps from busy H Street, these two murals create dialogues with strong political and social statements, urging actions. Next time you are in DC Chinatown, I invite you to step into this space for a quiet moment to see these grand public artworks and reflect on Mabel’s and Joaquin’s messages.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTdrb18v5SA>

Back-to-School Series #3: Asian American Trailblazers – Mabel Ping-Hua Lee

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-uSgYqJvHA>

Smithsonian – Mabel Ping-Hua Lee Fought for Voting Rights on Horseback

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N066JivNfvk>

Podcast – Unsung History – Mabel Ping-Hua Lee

<https://1882foundation.org/mabel/>

Donation for mural long-term maintenance

Editor’s Note: In the last (June) issue of the *OCAW E-Newsletter*, Virginia Chapter lifetime member Pu-Chin Waide authored an article entitled, “A Different Kind of Travel,” in which she recounted some of her experiences in India. The highlight of her trip was the **incredible honor of having an audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama**.

The following is a photo of that meeting.



“De-Coding” Delhi Roads

by Pu-Chin Waide

(Editor’s Note: Pu-Chin is a Virginia Chapter lifetime member and author. In the June issue of the OCAW E-Newsletter, an article she wrote was published as an informal “India Part I” piece. This current article, informally “India Part II,” was originally published in “The Statesman,” an India-based paper, but has since been updated. She said that she hoped that OCAW members “will get a kick” out of reading it! ☺)

Prior to getting my driver's license in New Delhi, I was not required to take any written or practical tests. Since I have been driving for over 50 years, the practical aspect was of no worry to me, but as for the rules and regulations, surely they differed a little from country to country. However, there was no need for concern either, for during my stay in Delhi, I had been able to determine the following highway codes:

Kings of the Road

The most important of all rules – a question of life and death – is that ALL trucks (lorries, as they are called in the sub-continent), and buses are the 'rajas and ranis' of the roads. In fact, I once saw painted on the back of one colorful lorry, "King of the Road." These have the absolute right of way, all the time, even if the green light is in your favor. You MUST always be prepared to have them (a) cut in front of you, (b) turn right from the left lane in front of you, and (c) if coming head-on, you must always go on the soft shoulder and let them have the entire road. This last rule is particularly important at night if you value your life; it is uncertain whether they may or may not swerve onto your side of the soft shoulder.



The Rats

At the other end of the scale, the scooters and scooter-rickshaws are the 'rats' of the roads. They scurry and weave and burrow in and out of the traffic from one lane to another, squeezing into this gap or that space, between any vehicle as long as they get themselves placed ahead of the traffic at a traffic-light line-up. So, you must leave room for them – even the space of one tire is sufficient. Of course, once there, it does not matter if they cannot restart their engines, or are exceptionally slow to proceed when the light turns green and there is a queue of other vehicles waiting to go.



Bicycles and handcarts are allowed to travel in the fast lanes and even against the traffic. Somehow bullock and camel have not yet cottoned onto this privilege.

Eyes Front Always

Another fundamental law observed by everyone is “always look in front; do not bother with what is behind you.” This rule, once learned, is difficult to unlearn, as in the case of my father, who had learned how to drive in India years ago. When he moved to Chicago (US), and had already lived there for many years, he still drove eyes-front all the time, much to the consternation and horror of his passengers, and the wrath of fellow Americans on the road. “The Indian driver,” observed my English husband, “suffers from the ‘Stiff-Neck Syndrome,’ much in the same way as we English suffer from the ‘Stiff-Upper-Lip’ one.” So, never look left nor right nor back – always straight ahead. What the eye does not see, does not exist, and therefore one cannot be held responsible if there is a problem. “I did not see him” will be an irrefutable answer.

Always HONK! One has heard of some people who “cannot walk and chew gum at the same time;” similarly Indian drivers cannot drive and not honk at the same time. Some drivers go so far that as soon as they start their engines, they honk, whether there is any traffic, or whether the car in front can move out of the way, and will continue to do so until they reach their destination. “Hit the horn,” “Why don’t you horn?,” and “just horn,” I have been told many times. The inability to honk – a failing common in the US and the UK – is a serious handicap and shows a lack of character.

“Never wait” is another hard and fast rule, not for one minute, not for one second. If someone is coming out of a parking space, do not wait until he is out; just squeeze in behind him immediately, or someone else will. If you are going to join a main road from a side street, simply drive on without stopping. Remember that you will be in front of the car coming up from behind you. Once I made the mistake of hesitating for a second, and a scooter zoomed in front of me. During that nano second, the approaching car behind me honked loudly, and immediately pulled up alongside me to berate me. Unfortunately, someone wanted to turn into this very

lane at the same time. I was eased back onto the little street I had come from, and I felt obliged to wait till the stream of traffic thinned out before venturing into that road again. Remembering “eyes-front,” I left the other two fellows to sort out their competing right-of-way and drove away honking as I went and feeling rather pleased with myself.



There is also no need to wait even for pedestrians, who are in the middle of the road, to finish crossing. It does not matter if the individual is marooned by the cars. It is he who chose to be there. Finally, there is no need to wait for the red traffic lights to turn green. If you think the red light has kept you waiting long enough, simply put your hands on the horn and go. No one will stop you. Others will avoid you.

Pretty Traffic Lights

This brings me to the next and most unique role traffic lights play there. Most of the time they are barely visible, some of the time they are non-functional, and often they are only obeyed partially. Red does not necessarily mean STOP – especially during the early hours of the morning, or at night. It simply means proceed with caution, or more accurately, proceed quickly before another car comes across. Many times I have been excessively honked at for stopping at a red light; I was under the strange illusion that I was to stay stopped until it changed to green. Both orange and green means “go.” I suppose the orange light was put there to come on before the green to satisfy the patriots who wanted the public to be reminded of their national flag. Flashing lights are a nice diversion; they take the monotony out of dreary traffic lights. Very pretty.

Lines, Circles, and Other Obstacles

Traffic lines on the road are to be regarded as decorations, or if you have difficulty in driving in a straight line, then this is the time to practice. Point the nose of your car along the lines and drive along them. Judging from the numerous people who do this, they must have an extremely difficult problem driving straight.

The single yellow line down the middle of the road plays another role. It enables you to cross over to the other side of the road and overtake any vehicle which may be in your way, with full confidence that the oncoming traffic will move over to their curb side of the road. Traffic islands and physical barriers are put there to allow cars to cut corners and take shortcuts when making turns at crossroads.

At traffic circles, cars coming into the circles from the LEFT always have the right of way. The approach of a roundabout always stirs one's adrenalin glands, as one feels a kind of tension as other drivers speed up to reach the circle first. The faster you get into the circle, the better, for it means "you have won." Those large signs at these islands which say, "Give Way to Your Right," must be a hidden political slogan. If possible, never signal before you do anything, because this will give your game plan away. This is a bad habit which I have acquired from years of driving in the US and UK, particularly in the latter, because in the US many drivers are also free of this habit. For instance, if you signal to go left, you will invariably find a motorcycle or a scooter-rickshaw zooming past before you make your turn, thus forcing you to test the reliability of your brakes – a kind gesture no doubt, but unnerving. But if others do not signal or heed your signals, under pain of death or worse, heed those of the bus and lorry drivers. At the moment of change of direction, you will see out of the window a small hand or four fingers indicating a turn, or if there is a slight movement of those fingers, then it means you may overtake. Occasionally you get a driver with a flair for dramatics who will lean out with his entire arm and wave you forward with an almost dance-like movement. It is these tiny moments which make driving in India a thrill!

If you have a flat tire, or feel that your car is about to have a breakdown, stop wherever you are. Do not bother to pull over to the edge of the road, or get someone to help push you there. Do not bother to signal; simply stop the car, then go and find a few really big stones and put them around your vehicle, and there you are, safe and sound. Do be oblivious to the inconvenience you have caused other drivers and get on with your repairs. When you have finished, do not bother to remove those stones; they may be useful as obstacles for some future breakdowns!

Policemen are sometimes more effective than lights; you get the feeling that they might be watching for errors. But not to worry – you may still overtake from the outside of a central divide right under a policeman's nose. If he tries to stop you, there is really no need to heed him. Once I saw a policeman try to stop someone going through a red light, and he almost got run over by the driver for his pains. The poor law enforcement officer looked angry at first, then dismayed, and finally shrugged, shaking his head helplessly.



The Pedestrians

Finally, the pedestrians. Never give way to those who move about on foot. It's better to run them down, though this is easier said than done, for they are extremely wily and fast. They are past masters at dodging oncoming cars. Never give them a chance to get off the high road divides; in fact do not even let them get off the abnormally high sidewalk curbs. A few words about these; the GOI (Government of India) knows the nature of their population well. Because of the free-spirited drivers and pedestrians who have their own rules and regulations, the only way to keep them relatively in check is to think like them. Since they will cross lines, jump curbs, or cut corners, as I have pointed out, the solution is to have foot-high curbs, making it almost impossible to jump them in an ordinary car. The median divide is often planted with low bushes, and some are even fenced. So the pedestrians use the roads instead of sidewalks, or climb the fences in order to cross the roads, where the zebra crossings are a bit farther than the pedestrian wants to walk.

To continue with the pedestrians: these canny bipeds are all over the roads. They never wait in nice straight lines for their buses at the nice bus stops the GOI has provided. When they see a bus approaching, they surge halfway across the streets, thus forcing the bus to move farther into the traffic. They hop off moving buses in the middle of the road, often in the fast lane right in front of cars. They often like to pat your car as they weave, and like the slow meandering cows, they are deaf to your honks.

I once stopped to let a woman cross the road. She was all set to scowl at me and dodge me, but when I stopped and waved with a smile for her to cross, her eyes widened and her mouth fell open. Slowly her astonishment turned into a foolish grin. Obviously, this had never happened to her; she had at last met her first idiot driver.

At the time of this writing, the cars were slow, so accidents were mostly scratches and dents. But India's first 'fast compact car' Maruti (Wind God) had just come on the market. With all the imports of fast foreign cars, such as Jaguars, Maseratis, Ferraris, and Lamborghinis, Mercedes and BMWs are old hats now. I wonder what the traffic is like today.

When I was there in 2015, I saw a bullock-cart carrying a heavy load of several 25' steel reinforcement rods, slowly walking along a limited access freeway! The bullock-cart owner had modernized; the pair of wheels were car tires. Good for him. I also saw several men climb over the freeway fence to cross over to the other side. I suppose the spirit is still free in India.

(Photos taken by Pu-Chin Waide)