

The Story Behind our Summer Cultural Enrichment Programs

Our summer programs began several years ago as a way for **CATS** to remain in the public eye year round. Producing one show a year creates a challenge from a marketing standpoint in terms of positioning **CATS** with a consistent presence. We needed to let the community know that we are alive and well in between shows. That was the inspiration and the birth of a new idea. A companion program! Being a multicultural theatre company, it is nearly impossible to separate the "culture," in our case - Asian - from "theatre." All our shows have an Asian theme and many with historical perspectives. So, our cultural programs were developed to, not only sustain **CATS** in the public eye year-round, but to complement our theatrical productions, thus providing our patrons with a more comprehensive Asian arts experience.

Our cultural programs over the years have included Asian cooking classes (**CATS Can Cook! Discovering Culture Through Food**), bus tours to places of historic interest, Japanese tea ceremonies, workshops in mahjong, ceramics, gift cards, feng shui, sake tour and tasting, presenting productions by other theatre companies and performing artists, going to the opera, traveling to China, and many more.

This year's programs and events have been the most successful ever! We had workshops that morphed into additional workshops based on popular demand. Many thanks to our cooking instructors **Nikko Wu** (for the Taste of Taiwan) and **Sopa (Sopaworn Savedra)** of Sopa Thai Restaurant, who taught two classes on Thai cuisine and curries. All three cooking classes were well attended and we appreciate the fine efforts of these amazing chefs and their assistants. Their stories of growing up in their homeland were particularly enlightening and heart-warming and they added much to the ambience of the classes.

Our ceramics class at the **Mud Hut** started with a class in Asian teapots (all 17 teapots were individual works of art!) and progressed to another class in Japanese sake cups. Thanks to this collaboration spearheaded by **Paul Harrar**, Arts Liaison, with the Nevada County Superintendent of Schools. Our inspiring instructors were **Rose Shulman** and **Denise Wey**. We have requests for more classes next summer!

Our Asian gift card class taught by **Jennifer Cebollero**, started with one class and expanded to three! Students learned to create one-of-a-kind exquisite cards for those special people in their lives. Many thanks to **Patty Lum-Ohmann** for assisting in these classes, who, by the way, is responsible for Jennifer developing her passion for designing gift cards that ultimately resulted in her successful business at **Creative Cards, Etc.** in Grass Valley.

We had two bus trips this summer. One to **Geikkekkan Sake in Folsom** where we learned about the brewing of Japanese sake, and then we learned to make sushi, all while sipping domestic and important sake and plum wine. Thanks to **Florence Moody** and **Bill Pieper** for the informative tour and delicious lunch and to **Taiko Sushi** for the lesson. The other bus trip was to **Amy Tan's** world premiere opera of **The Bonesetter's Daughter** at the War Memorial Opera House in San Francisco. Fifty-six friends attended the opera. See **Elizabeth Xiu-Wong's** review on page 9. **The Bonesetter's Daughter** is very dear to us, especially since we presented **Amy Tan's** New Yorker short story, **Immortal Heart**, at the Nevada Theatre in 2006 by the Word-for-Word Theatre Company from San Francisco. This short story became the inspiration for her best-selling novel in 2001. And now it's been made into an opera! From story to novel to libretto! Next, a movie??

Last, but not least, **CATS** honored its donors, sponsors, volunteers, and patrons at our annual Thank-a-Thon picnic sponsored by **Steve and Jan Roth**. Thanks Steve and Jan for the beautiful picnic grounds and to **Grass Valley Taiko** and **Al Martinez** who provided entertainment.

If you have skills and ideas and would like to share about a possible workshop or outing, please contact me and we'll chat. Hope to hear from you. Please contact me at info@catsweb.org.

~Jeannie Wong Wood

Sushi-making, Sake Tasting at Gekkeikan Sake (USA) Folsom

CATS Can Cook with Sopa!



L-R: Sopa Savedra, Kila & Chanda Carleton

CATS Can Cook with Nikko!



photo credit: Dee LeVan

L-R: Andy Yun, Dorothy Yun, Cathy Lewis, Jeannie Wong Wood, Karen Freeman, Diane Whitney, Nikko Wu, Nira Dean, Pamela Bryant, Patty Lum-Ohmann, Jean Yun

Asian Themed Gift Cards



L-R: Judy Bagley, Jean Remillard, Jenny Cebollero Sunya Hutchison, Patty Lum-Ohmann

CATS Goes to the Opera!



L-R: Earl Fong, Laura Louie, Elizabeth X. Wong

CATS Annual Picnic & Thank-a-Thon



L-R: Sara Quay, George Jayne, Lisa Moon

Gunpowder Man



photo credit: Jerry Chan

L-R: Hock Tjoa, Sara Quay, Jeannie Wood, Rick Foster, Karen Freeman, Jennifer Ly, Lisa Moon, Patty Lum-Ohmann, Kaye Wedel, Virgil Wong



Mud Hut Ceramic Center