



THE CHINESE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF HAWAII

夏威夷中華總商會



LANTERN

NEWSLETTER

February, 2019

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70th Annual Narcissus Queen Pageant  
(Photos courtesy of Lance Wong)



## Narcissus Festival Events

The Chinatown Open House will be held on **Friday, February 1**, beginning at 6:00 p.m., with *choy cheng* and a gathering of lions from various Chinese lion dance and physical culture associations at the Chamber building, 8 South King Street. Thereafter, the 2019 Narcissus Queen and Court will walk through Chinatown, escorted by Chamber officers, offering Chinese New Year greetings at various restaurants, stores, and Chinese benevolent associations. On Friday and **Saturday, February 1 and 2**, the Chinatown New Year Celebration, will be held at the Chinatown Cultural Plaza from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Friday and from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Saturday. There will be a variety of booths selling food and snacks, Year of the Boar t-shirts and other mementoes, and also narcissus plants.

Coincidentally, the “Old Friends” column in the January 23 *Midweek* featured **Al Waterson**, mentioning him serving as master of “ceremonies” for the Pageant. It’s quite embarrassing that all too often, the Narcissus souvenir book and various printed Chamber programs refer to a master or mistress of “ceremony;” depending on how fast you type it into Google, the search engine may complete it properly for you as “ceremonies.”

## CCS and Confucius Institute Chinese New Year Dinner

The Center for Chinese Studies and Confucius Institute at the UH Manoa will hold its Chinese New Year dinner at Jade Dynasty Seafood Restaurant, Ho’okipa Terrace, 4th Floor, Ala Moana Shopping Center, on **Saturday, February 2**. No-host bar from 5:45 p.m., dinner begins at 6:30 p.m. Cost of the nine-course dinner is \$35.00 per person (\$20 for CCS faculty). To make a reservation, call 956-8891 or e-mail [china@hawaii.edu](mailto:china@hawaii.edu) by January 31 with the name(s) in your party. To make payment, please write a check payable to “East Asian Outreach” or pay cash, and mail or deliver it to the Center for Chinese Studies so that we receive payment by Thursday, January 31. *Xiexie!*



President  
Joseph K.M. Hu

We have just wrapped up the 2019 Narcissus Queen Pageant on Saturday, January 12, and by all accounts, it was a very successful event that was as entertaining as it was suspenseful. We had a total of eleven lovely contestants this year, and an argument could have been made for any of them to have been selected. Their talent performances were outstanding and their elegance and poise were on full display during the *cheongsam* and speech phases.

Ultimately, the judges had to make their selections from this group of outstanding young women and the results were:

<b>Tiana Ai Lin Wong</b>	Queen
<b>Jennifer Manyu Wong</b>	1st Princess
<b>Melody Yuk Yu Lai</b>	2nd Princess
<b>Deanna Miu Ching Choy</b>	3rd Princess
<b>Caroline Mika Mei Lee (Chan) Kodama</b>	4th Princess

Congratulations to our new 2019 Queen and Court, but every contestant was a winner by going through the process. They made new friends, learned about their Chinese culture and heritage, and gained new skills, such as Chinese cooking and *kung fu* self-defense.

Next up is the Narcissus Coronation Ball, coming up on Saturday, January 26, at the Hilton Hawaiian Village. Program chair and Chamber president-elect **Michele Choy** has planned a very special evening in celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Narcissus Festival. I will have more to report on this in next month's issue of the Lantern, so stay tuned.

I will also be reporting on the **Martin Yan** cooking show, which will be taking place on Sunday, January 20, at the Ala Moana Hotel, and is also part of the special 70th anniversary celebration. Michele is really pulling out all the stops for the Narcissus Festival's Platinum Jubilee celebration. She will also be chairing the Narcissus Festival Fashion Show on Sunday, March 24, so be on the lookout for the announcement that will be coming out shortly, giving more details.

Also, don't forget the Chinatown Open House celebration on Friday and Saturday, February 1 and 2, at the Chinatown Cultural Center. Please come and join us as we get together to usher in the Year of the Pig and welcome our 2019 Narcissus Court as they make their first appearance in Chinatown.

Finally, we are getting to that part of the year where new directors and officers will be elected. The nomination committee will be working diligently to find the best candidates for the upcoming elections in March. The nomination committee is comprised of three past Presidents (**Eddie Flores, Jr.**, **Mona Choy-Beddow**, and **Gifford Chang**), President-elect Michele Choy, and me.

Gung Hee Fat Choy! Wishing you all a peaceful and prosperous Year of the Pig!

C H A M B E R N E W S & A C T I V I T I E S

### Business Connection Networking Opportunity

To start the Year of the Boar with better business communication and face-to-face connections with other Chinese Chamber members, the Chamber invites you to a "Business Connections" workshop. The workshop will cover using technology solutions for business communication and member-to-member networking. Hawaii Tech Support will focus on cost-saving strategies for companies currently using multiple technology vendors and solutions to communicate. This will also be a great opportunity to showcase your business and socialize with fellow Chamber members.

The workshop will be held on **Wednesday, February 20**, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the *Anaha* condominium, 1108 Auahi Street. Free public parking may be available nearby. Due to limited space, this event is only for Chamber members and their guests. Registration in advance is required, with \$20.00 per person to cover the cost of heavy *pupu* and refreshments; payment may be made by credit card or check. Contact Lucia by February 13 at [yliang@chinesechamber.com](mailto:yliang@chinesechamber.com) or call (808) 533-3181 to reserve your spot(s).

### Brown Bags Workshops

The Brown Bags workshops will resume on a periodic (rather than monthly) basis on **March 6**, with Morgan Stanley financial advisor **Sarah Moy**, CFA, discussing "Personal Investments." After a turbulent 2018 stock market, beginning in February and continuing from time to time until December, we've had a fairly calm January so far. However, history shows that every Republican president since Theodore Roosevelt in 1909 has had a recession in their first term. Then on **May 8**, on the eve of hurricane season (which begins on June 1 and ends on November 30), **Dennis Hwang** will discuss "Prepare for Natural Disasters." We had several close calls in 2018, with several super-hurricanes (category 3 and above) and Hurricane Lane came very, very close to Hawaii before (thankfully) turning west. And on **August 7**, attorney **Na Lan** will discuss "Hawaii Law Updates That Affect Hawaii Business." All of the workshops will be on Wednesdays at the Chamber's second floor multipurpose room. Further details will be provided as we get closer to the scheduled workshops.



Martin Yan  
Cooking Show  
(Photos courtesy  
of Lance Wong)

## Narcissus Pageant Results

On **Saturday, January 12**, after an evening of excitement and glamour as well as a demonstration of varied talent and what the eleven lovely contestants had learned about their Chinese heritage and culture, came the announcement of a variety of awards. The social media award went to **Jennifer Wong**, Miss Photogenic was **Melody Lai**, and Miss Popularity (based on Pageant ticket and souvenir book sales) was **Monique Palisbo**. The talent award went to **Tiana Wong**, who performed a vocal and jazz dance to “Something’s Got a Hold on Me,” as well as Miss Congeniality, which is determined by a vote of all the contestants.

Then came the moment that everyone had waited for, the announcement of the members of the 70th Narcissus Court and at long last, the new 2019 Narcissus Queen. Fourth Princess is **Caroline Kodama**, Third Princess is **Deanna Choy**, **Melody Lai** is Second Princess, **Jennifer Wong** is First Princess, and **Tiana Wong** is the new Narcissus Queen. Congratulations to all eleven lovely contestants; without each of you, there could not have been a Narcissus Pageant, and you are all winners if you learned more about yourself as well as gained some insight into your Chinese heritage and culture.

## Higher Marginal Tax Rates? Disappeared Deductions?

On January 6, on “Meet the Press,” freshman Rep. **Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez** suggested that the current top federal tax rate should be increased from its current 37% to 70%, which was the top rate up through 1980. (For some more historical context, in 1944 and 1945, the rate was 94%). Right away, there was a bit of right-wing pearl-clutching against the proposal by people (Rep. **Steve Scalise**) who seemingly don’t know how the marginal rate and tax brackets work (“Oh, she wants to take 70% of everyone’s income”) or else they (Americans for Tax Reform president **Grover Norquist**) knew better, but were trying to mislead and scare people. (Much like those who refer to

the estate tax as a “death tax” when only a small number of people’s estates – those \$5.5 million or more – are so taxed, and “AOC”’s proposal is aimed at the minuscule number of Americans who are paid \$10 million or more annually).

Perhaps a bit surprisingly, according to a mid-January 2019 *The Hill*-HarrisX poll, 59% of Americans overall (71% of Democrats, 60% of independents, and even 45% of Republicans) favor the proposed rate, which it should be understood, would only apply to about 2,000 Americans who make \$10 million or more a year, the fortunate 0.05%. According to Gallup Inc., in polls dating back to 1992, 59% or more of Americans have felt that “Upper-income people” are paying too little in taxes. A cynic might note that with many in Congress beholden to big-money donors and PACs, tax reform is not as popular as it is with their constituents, and there are the many millionaires in both houses who are also millionaires with an aversion to income taxes.

According to Investopedia, a marginal tax rate is “the tax rate incurred on each additional dollar of income. The marginal tax rate for an individual will increase as income rises. This method of taxation aims to fairly tax individuals based upon their earnings, with low-income earners being taxed at a lower rate than higher income earners.” And contrary to the claims of people like Scalise and Norquist, the top marginal rate, whether the current 37% set by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (or 70% or even 94%), that doesn’t mean that all income above the current \$500,000 top rate’s floor is taxed at that rate. Instead, a single filer with taxable income of \$1,000,000, after credits and deductions, pays 33.8%.

What gets overlooked is that there are seven current tax brackets that must be considered as well. While your income may put you in one of the brackets, that does not mean that you pay 24%, 32% or whatever overall. Instead, you pay 10% on the first \$9,700.00, then 12% on income above that to \$39,475, 22% on income above that to \$84,200.00, and so on. Within each of the seven brackets, the tax rate is uniform for dollars earned within that bracket.

So in likely debates about a higher marginal tax rate in 2019, remember that the people affected are only 2,000 super-“crazy rich” Americans out of a population of more than 325 million. And despite her youth, Rep. Ocasio-Cortez graduated from Boston University a few years ago *cum laude*, with degrees in international relations and economics, so she does know what she’s talking about. In addition, Nobel economics laureate **Paul Krugman** agrees with her, and renowned economists like **Emmanuel Saez** and **Thomas Piketty** have also written that there should be higher marginal tax rates (and perhaps more tax brackets) for the super-rich amid growing global economic inequality.

Finally, with federal income tax returns due in about three months (Monday, April 15), you should be aware that the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 did away with a number of long-standing tax deductions. You can start your research with “9 Tax Deductions That Are Gone In 2018 (And What To Claim Instead)”’: [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/tax-deductions-2018-2019\\_n\\_5c2d64e4e4b05c88b7059bfb](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/tax-deductions-2018-2019_n_5c2d64e4e4b05c88b7059bfb)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Feb 1 • Fri

### Chinese New Year Celebration

Chinatown Cultural Plaza  
5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Feb 1 • Fri

### Chinatown Open House (Choy Cheng)

Chinatown District  
6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Feb 2 • Sat

### Chinese New Year Celebration

Chinatown Cultural Plaza  
9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Feb 5 • Tue

### Chinese New Year Day

Feb 18 • Mon

### President's Day

Feb 19 • Tue

### Executive Board Meeting

Chamber's Office – 6:00 p.m.

Feb 20 • Wed

### CCCH Business Connections

Anaha – 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Feb 26 • Tue

### Board of Directors Meeting

Maple Garden Restaurant – 12:00 p.m.

Mar 1 • Fri

### Chamber General Election Day

Chamber Office – 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Mar 24 • Sun

### Luncheon & Fashion Show

Hilton Hawaiian Village Coral Ballroom  
9:30 a.m.



Chow Tai Fook Gold Coin Winners at the 70th Annual Narcissus Queen Pageant  
(Photo courtesy of Lance Wong)

## MEMBERS NEWS

According to the January 15 *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, L & L Hawaiian Barbecue was offering free meals to up to 1,000 local federal workers (and their families) affected by the partial government shutdown. The offer included a choice of *kalua* pork and cabbage, chicken *katsu* or hamburger steak plate lunches at L & L's Airport Trade Center location between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon on Sunday, January 20. L & L CEO and former Chamber president **Eddie Flores, Jr.**, L & L chairman **Kwock Yum "Johnson" Kam**, and L & L chief financial officer **Elisia Flores** were all mentioned in **Nina Wu's** article. According to "How Chefs and Restaurants Are Helping Unpaid Government Workers," an article by **Chris Crowley** in *New York* magazine's "Grub Street," restaurants and food service organizations around the country are taking similar action, pointing out that in a 2018 *Money* magazine article, a shocking 40% of Americans can't cover an unexpected \$400.00 expense and in a January 16 *Washington Post* article, the shutdown has also been adversely affecting small businesses. All too often, not mentioned are some 1,000,000 contract workers who have no assurance of collecting back pay.

The January 23 *Midweek Pa'ina* included a photo of Chamber director **Gabe Lee** at the *Star-Advertiser's* Sony Open "skybox" tent.

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