



NEW JERSEY

Embracing the Hopes & Aspirations of Asian Pacific Americans

ACTION

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Impressive First Experience at OCA National Convention!

by Christine Braccino

July 12-15 The theme — *Organize, Connect, Action* — simple and impactful. Three full days of an extensive program of sessions and town halls that were free and open to the public! An ***OCA Day on the Hill*** for participants to advocate to members of Congress about important issues and causes to the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander (AANHPI) community! Letters of good wishes and 50th Anniversary congratulations from members of Congress and States' representatives, including an in-person message from Erika Moritsugu, Deputy Assistant to President Biden! Past National Presidents and distinguished guests and speakers participating! Reception, dinners, entertainment and the big Awards Gala for 2023 honorees, including Virginia Ng who was honored with the ***Lifetime Achievement Award!*** Present throughout the Convention, history, information and displays about OCA's 50 years as an advocate on behalf of all Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.



The Convention was held at the Capitol Hilton, Washington D.C.. It was an impressive, current, relevant and learning experience for me. A resource for the public to hear about what's happening in the

AANHPI community, issues and actions taken, and importantly, what we each may be able to do to support our community. The High School and College tracks in the Convention Program

included AANHPI related sessions and also school and career related sessions. The Convention Program appealed to all age groups and that was evident in the great attendee turn-out.

There were two takeaway messages that I think reflects what I experienced at the 2023 Convention. From the Convention Program, OCA National President, Linda Ng stated "We hope this convention will bring us together and facilitate discussions on AANHPI identity to develop and inspire the next generation of future leaders." Also, OCA National Executive Director, Thu Nguyen, stated "Let's make this convention a meaningful and



memorable one. We should try to learn from each other, inspire each other, and uplift one another. We are here to celebrate our successes, honor our history, and envision our future."

On a break from the Convention and a very short walk from the hotel, I discovered the Chinese American Museum! Its goal is to "establish a museum to preserve, exhibit and lead a meaningful dialogue about the



Chinese American experience — its history, culture and contributions to our country and the world." I was fortunate to see exhibits about Corky Lee's photography, Bruce Lee's accomplishments, and history of the qipao dress! The Museum has interactive exhibits including a Digital Photo Wall.

The public can submit photos and thoughts that may be added to the Wall and it runs continuously. The Wall was truly inspiring to see!

It was memorable weekend, and hope you too get to experience a future OCA National Convention!

OCA



President's Message



Dear OCA-NJ Chapter members,

Happy new year to you and your family! We are grateful for our members' and partners' continued support and engagement towards OCA's mission of "advancing the social, political, and economic well-being of AAPIs".

OCA-NJ's Chapter's Board is hard at work planning for this year's activities and events, and I would like to thank and recognize them for their commitment:

Eric Chau, Vice President	
Laura Lee, Immediate Past President	
Jenny Lee, Treasurer	
Christine Braccino, Secretary	
Grace Cheng	Barbara Kee-Chen
Wendy Chin	L. Ray Lee
Maureen Farrell	John Tan
Alyson Yee	

The Board invites you to join us at our upcoming Lunar New Year of the Dragon Celebration Banquet on February 17, 2024 at Noodle Lee Restaurant, Parsippany, NJ. An evening of delicious food and lion dancing! Also upcoming, are our Chapter's Annual Scholarship Program and our new Chapter Internship Program. We are proud to offer these opportunities to help develop future AAPI leaders. Details on these programs will be available very soon!

Looking forward to a productive and fun new year for our Chapter!

Henry Lee
OCA-NJ Chapter President



by John Tan

October 22nd, 2023 In New York City Chinatown, Mosco Street, a one block long street between Mulberry and Mott Streets is now co-named “Corky Lee Way.” Called Park Street since 1854, it was renamed in 1982 for community activist Frank Mosco. Although a generation apart, the two men knew each other through their civic involvement at the Two Bridges Neighborhood Council and other community work. Now the street boasts the name of two beloved activists who have bolstered the cooperation of the community.

This was the third time that NYC has officially recognized Corky Lee. May 5, 1988 was dedicated by former Manhattan Borough President David Dinkins to honor Corky Lee’s body of work. Mayor Dinkins would proclaim once again on May 7th, 1993 as Corky Lee Day for Lee’s work on behalf of the Asian



American community. Thirty years later, New York City District One Council Member Chris Marte paid tribute to Corky Lee at the Mosco Street naming, “...because everyone agreed that his name should be up there. His name should be shown throughout the day, throughout the night for every single tourist from all around the world to recognize who he was.”

After NYC Mayor Eric Adams signed the bill for the Mosco Street co-naming with Corky Lee Way/李揚國路 on July 23, 2023, the momentous task to plan for the unveiling began. The Corky Lee Way Committee announced the unveiling would include remarks by community leaders and special guests, performances by Judo Club, and followed by a block party by Think!Chinatown, display of Corky’s photographs, Corky Lee film screening at 21 Pell St, “Where’s Corky?,” “Corky Lee Way” sticker giveaways, a life-size Corky cutout for selfies, and a Corky Lee Memory Board to add personal notes. Assemblywoman Grace Lee, New York State Senators Brian Kavanagh and John Liu and the American Legion Lt. B.R. Kimlau Memorial Post 1291 would attend the unveiling. The American Legion will speak about Commander Corky’s advocacy when he and other supporters went to Washington DC to gain support for the Congressional Gold Medal for Chinese American WWII Veterans.

Born in Queens NYC on September 5th, 1947 to immigrant parents Lee Yin Chuck (father and an Army veteran) and Jung Ping Hung (mother and a seamstress) he was proudly named 李揚國 (Lee Young Kok). Translated to Lee Young Qoork on his birth certificate, he would enter the NYC public school as Lee Qoork and was

given the nickname “Corky.” Corky would go onto attend Queens College and was accepted as a VISTA volunteer in 1969 serving poor communities of Lower East Side of Manhattan through the Two Bridges Neighborhood Council.

Corky Lee’s achievements included:

- creating a Chinese language voting ballot to increase Chinese American participation in New York City and resulted in the election of Asian-American candidates in local, state, and federal elective office.
- documented the campaign to seek a day of remembrance for the internment of Japanese Americans during World War 2.
- chronicled the plight of the AAPI communities for health care, employment abuses, police brutality as well as innumerable photographic recordings of the cultural, political, and economic lives.
- lobbied for Congressional gold medals for the 25,000 plus Chinese American World War 2 veterans.

On the Corky Lee Estate website, Corky considered the reenactment of the completion of the 1868 transcontinental railroad at Promontory Point, Utah in 2014 to be his greatest achievement. See the [NPR article and "All Things Considered" broadcast here](#). The photo can be seen in the upcoming book "**CORKY LEE: Asian America**" due April 9th, 2024 and currently available for presale.

With his camera as his “sword” to document inequities impacting the Asian-American communities. For five decades, He became a fixture at Asian American events

Months before the street sign unveiling, tributes for Corky were beginning to take shape in NYC Chinatown.

- Chinatown Mural Project completed a mural depicting one of his latest achievements along with a self-portrait and the likeness of his closest friends on a south-facing Doyer Street wall on September 2021.
- 21 Pell St, co-founded by Lee in 2015 to provide free cultural and community events at First Chinese Baptist Church, held a preview of his documentary “Photographic Justice: The Corky Lee Story” on February 2023. This documentary also premiered in NYCDC in November of 2022 in Chelsea, NYC.

• On the same day in February 2023, International Center of Photography was screening the documentary short film “Dear Corky” in Lower East Side.

• Judo Club, an Asian American acoustic band, held a concert at 21 Pell St and sing the original song titled “It’s Tough Being Corky Lee” in September 2023.

in the New York metropolitan area attending countless Chinese, Japanese, Korean, South & Southeast Asian, and Filipino cultural events with his camera. In a profound speech at the unveiling, Corky’s surviving brother Johann Lee states, “He (Corky) found a way to champion all of us.” No event was complete unless Corky and his camera was in attendance.

OCA-NJ inaugurated “Spirit of Corky Lee Scholarship” which was awarded in May 2021, and honored Lee posthumously with the ***Lifetime Achievement Award*** at annual Holiday Ball. The scholarship and award would join two other awards given to Corky by OCA; the prestigious ***Pioneer Award*** at the 2008 OCA National Convention and the 2019 ***Lifetime Achievement Award*** from OCA-LI.

Amy Chin, Think!Chinatown’s President imparts that we can all now say “I’ll Meet you at Corky Lee Way!”

[Author's video tribute on Facebook](#)

[Asian American Life video on Facebook](#)

[Watch the Unveiling on YouTube by COMA](#)



Annual Summer Family Picnic by Wendy Chin

September 16th Mosco Street in New York City Chinatown was recently co-named after which famous Asian American activist, community organizer, and photojournalist? **Answer: Corky Lee**

Which organization founded in 1973, whose stated mission is to advance the social, political, and economic well-being of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States? **Answer: OCA**

A couple of trivia questions from our first ever OCA Olympic Games!

On Saturday, September 16 at Van Saun County Park, Paramus, NJ, OCA-NJ hosted this year’s OCA 4-Chapters & Chinese Adoptee Alliance (CAA) Annual Summer Family Picnic. Spanning over 130 acres with a zoo, a carousel, and a mini-train ride, Van Saun County Park in Bergen County has been the ideal location that provides ample space for games, relaxation, and communal feasting.



Members and their families enjoyed the fun, food, and festivities. During our recent summer picnic event everyone enjoyed a spectacular showcase of togetherness and entertainment.

The heart of our picnic was a kaleidoscope of activities catering to all age groups. First ever OCA Olympic Games were held with participation from OCA Chapters: New Jersey, New York City, Westchester & Hudson Valley, Long Island, and The Chinese Adoptee Alliance. There were five friendly competitions including a M&M Pass, Pool Noodle Pass, Water Balloon Toss,

Obstacle Course and Trivia that brought out the inner child in everyone. Congratulations to Team CAA who captured 1st prize trophy at the picnic!

While kids enjoyed a Nerf battle, echoes of laughter and lively conversations from the adults

lingered throughout the day. Our summer picnic was more than just an event— it was a celebration of community, connection, and the simple pleasure of summer.



OCA



45th OCA-NJ Holiday Ball

by Laura J. Lee

December 9th The OCA-NJ Chapter celebrated the 2023 Holiday Ball at The Grand in Totowa, NJ. It was a fun evening enjoyed by all with proceeds going to OCA-NJ's scholarship fund for Asian American high school students.

This year's honorees included Dr. Teik C. Lim, President of New Jersey Institute of Technology, which boast a high percentage of Asian student enrollees. Dr. Lim also holds the title of Distinguished Professor of Mechanical Engineering and is internationally recognized as a leading scholar in the field of structural vibrations and acoustics as well as modeling and simulation technology. His leadership in higher education and advancing Asian students is invaluable to our future generations. Glenn D. Magpantay, Esq. was also honored as a long-time civil rights attorney, professor of law and Asian American studies, and LGBTQ rights activist. Among his many accolades and accomplishments, the United States Senate in 2023 appointed Glenn to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights to advise Congress and The White House on the enforcement of civil rights laws and developing national civil rights policy. This year's OCA-NJ Unsung Hero recognized Gloria Yee, who has volunteered her time and energy to OCA-NJ since becoming a member in 2009. She not only attends most OCA-NJ events, but also works behind the scenes to help wherever needed, including a lot of time working on OCA-NJ's special events: Lunar New Year Banquet, APA Heritage and Scholarship Luncheon, and the Holiday Ball.

The evening's cocktail reception was highlighted by an instrumental performance by Stephanie Chou and her band who also performed a vocal set later in the evening. Guests enjoyed good food, raffle baskets, silent auction, Lunar New Year plush Dragon dolls, and lots of dancing with a new DJ who got the crowd on the dance floor. Thank you to all who attended, and happy new year!

OCA

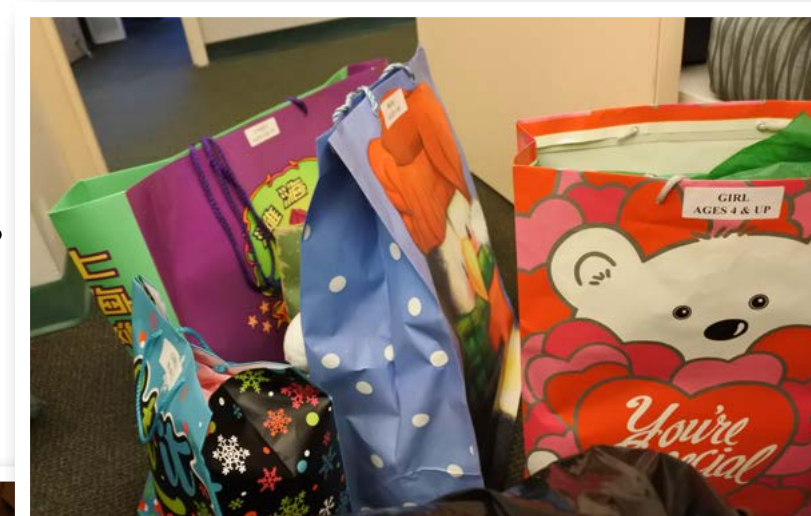


Spirit of the Holidays and Community

by The Staff at Charles B. Wang Community Health Center

December 22nd OCA-NJ continued its longstanding tradition of donating holiday gifts to the pediatric patients at the Charles B. Wang Community Health Center (CBW-CHC). Through the generous efforts of OCA members, more than 75 gifts were distributed to children from 3 to 12+ years old. The recipients were very excited about the wide variety of gifts, from board games and toy trucks to stuffed animals and pajama sets. One mother commented that her son had been reluctant to come to the doctor's office as he hated receiving shots, but was so happy with his present that he almost didn't mind the shot. A grandmother in the waiting room commented that activities like these really helped the sense of community within the Health Center.

As the Health Center begins to do more in-person events after the pandemic, a team of high-school and college-aged volunteers helped to organize and hand out the gifts over the holiday week. The beautifully wrapped presents certainly added a dash of holiday spirit to the waiting area. One CBWCHC Pediatrician asked, "Are they [OCA] doing the Christmas presents again? I love seeing all the kids come in with a box in hand." The diversity of the children receiving the gifts is evidenced by the multilingual thank-you notes they wrote. With cards in English, Mandarin, and Spanish, the kindness of the OCA donations has brought joy and holiday cheer to children of all backgrounds. **OCA**

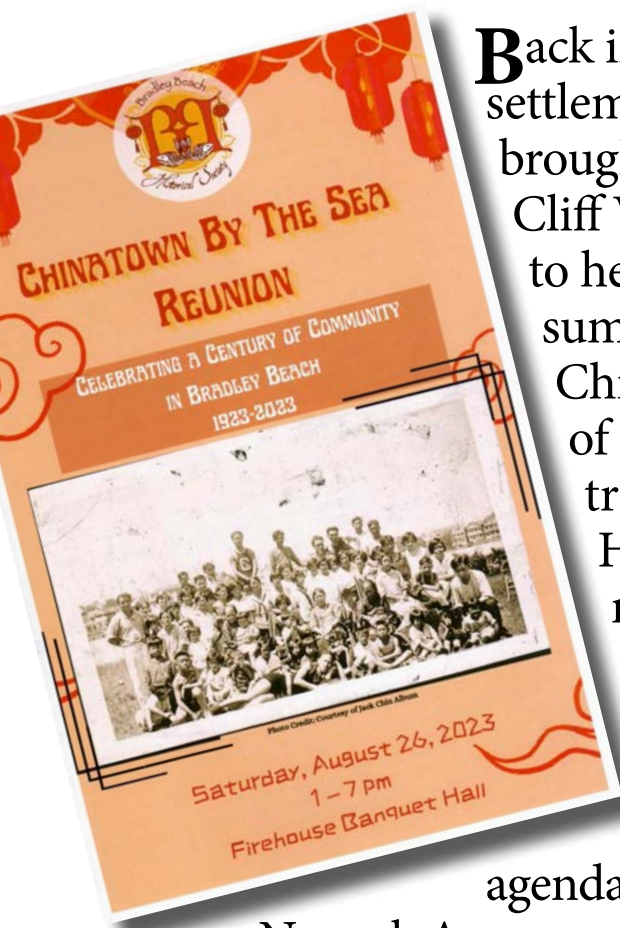


Chinatown by the Sea — A Century of Community

by Christine Braccino

August 26th Over 30 years ago when my family moved to New Jersey, we discovered a town on the Jersey Shore that just felt friendly, very accessible, quiet and relaxing - Bradley Beach (BB). Thirty years later, not much has changed as we enjoy the expansive clean beach and beautiful boardwalk every summer. It's our happy place.

Recently, I learned that BB has a special history with the Chinese American community. That history was celebrated this past summer with a day of activities hosted by the Bradley Beach Historical Society with the help of the Museum of Chinese in America and the Mei Hua Society.



Back in the 1920's, the Church of All Nations, a Methodist settlement house on the Lower East Side in New York City, brought Chinese Americans from the city's Chinatown to Cliff Villa. It was a property the Church owned and used to help people to escape tight living conditions and the summer heat during the tuberculosis epidemic. More Chinese Americans heard about BB and the enjoyment of the ocean, fresh air and open space. They began to travel to BB, including renting and purchasing homes. Homes were passed down through families and generations. "Chinatown By The Sea" was growing. Other ethnic groups also were discovering BB and living as neighbors by the sea.

The celebration on August 26, 2023 included a full day agenda with BB Mayor Larry Fox reading a proclamation that Newark Avenue and Cliff Avenue were to be recognized as "Chinatown By The Sea". There were mini-bus guided and self-guided walking tours of the area, dumpling making demonstration and tasting, and oral history talk with local BB Chinese American residents. A reading and book signing with author Ava Chin ("*Mott Street: A Chinese American Family's Story of Exclusion and Homecoming*"), and a dramatic reading from "*Surfing MY DNA*" with actress Jodi Long. The BB Firehouse Banquet Hall was filled to capacity with attendees, family and friends reunions and good conversation.

I feel now an even greater connection to my happy place on the Jersey Shore!!
OCA

Private Danny Chen will be coming home in *An American Soldier (an Opera)*

May 12th - 19th Premiering May 2024 at the new Perelman Theater in Lower Manhattan, an opera telling the powerful true story of a young soldier from Manhattan's Chinatown who sought to serve his country, only to find his biggest threat was the very people who swore to protect him. "*An American Soldier*", is coming to New York City.





An American Soldier is coming to Perelman Performing Art Center in New York City
Photo by Jai Lennard. David Lee, model.

with composer, Huang Ruo and director, Chay Yew, and this award winning team created "*An American Soldier*".







The opera premiered at the Washington National Opera in Washington D.C., and then at Opera Theatre of St. Louis, where The New York Times named it one of the «Best Classical Works of 2018.» Hwang recently shared about the opera at last year's 12th anniversary commemoration of Pvt. Chen's death - "More than a decade later after his passing, Danny will be coming home."

Performances will be from May 12 - 19, 2024, and tickets are now on sale.
<https://pacnyc.org/whats-on/an-american-soldier/>

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OCA in the News

The latest news and updates from OCA National Center.

OCA CONDEMNS ANTI-PALESTINIAN AND ANTISEMITIC HATE

OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates issued the following statement:

We are deeply saddened by the loss of lives in Gaza and Israel. Our heartfelt condolences go out to the families of the victims, and we pray for the speedy recovery of the injured.

It is important to foster a culture of respect and understanding, especially in times of conflict. Therefore, caution is urged in rhetoric that can be harmful to Palestinian, Arab, Muslim, Jewish, Sikh, and South Asian Americans.

[Read the complete Press-Release from 11/30/23 Here](#)

OCA CELEBRATES 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MAGNUSON ACT

OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates commemorates the 80th anniversary of the Magnuson Act, which repealed the Chinese Exclusion Acts. These acts were the first laws in U.S. history that explicitly targeted and excluded a specific ethnic group from immigration and citizenship.

The Chinese Exclusion Acts were fueled by racial prejudice and economic fears. They prevented Chinese laborers from entering the U.S., denied naturalization rights to Chinese Americans, and exposed them to discrimination, harassment, and violence.

[Read the complete Press-Release from 12/17/23 Here](#)

Advocacy Update from AARP New Jersey: Fighting to Keep Seniors in their Homes

On January 16, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy signed Bill A4049 requiring the Department of Human Services to implement Presumptive Eligibility for Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) for older residents. Currently, when health issues arise, Medicaid approval takes too long — often months — for seniors who need services at home. Most seniors want to age in their own homes, but

they cannot afford to wait for these services, and are forced into nursing homes. This new law will speed up the Medicaid application process so seniors who are likely to qualify for Medicaid will no longer have to wait for extended periods of time and can begin receiving services in their homes when they need it. AARP New Jersey fought for two years to get this legislation enacted. [Learn more here.](#)

Join Us in Celebrating the Year of the Dragon

Saturday February 17, 2024 at Noodle Lee Restaurant in Parsippany

Come and celebrate the Year of the Dragon with us at Noodle Lee Restaurant at 770 Route 46 West, Parsippany, NJ 07054. Enjoy traditional Chinese lion dance performance followed by a Lunar New Year Dinner. For additional information, e-mail: jenocanjboard@gmail.com or visit www.oca-nj.org For online payments & major credit cards: [Please Click here](#)



Enjoy our bi-annual e-Newsletter

Be a Member — or — Renew Now!

We would love to have you on board!!
OCA-NJ is now in our 46th year and we just celebrated our 50th OCA National Convention, Join Us! ...as we move into our next 50 years!

[Click here to Print the Mail-In Application](#)

[Click here to Apply Online](#)

[Click here for Lifetime Membership Online Application \(individual or family\)](#)



ACTION e-Newsletter

Volume 3, No. 6 is made possible with the following contributors:
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Mission Statement

OCA-New Jersey Chapter is a state chapter of OCA, a section 501(c)(3) national organization dedicated to advancing the social, political and economic well-being of Asian Pacific Americans in the United States. Our goals are: (1) To advocate for social justice, equal opportunity and fair treatment. (2) To promote civic participation, education and leadership. (3) To advance coalitions and community building. (4) To foster cultural heritage. Founded in 1973 as the Organization of Chinese Americans, OCA maintains its headquarters in Washington, D.C. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

OCA's PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

- Promoting active participation of Asian Pacific Americans in both civic and national matters;
- Securing the social justice, equal opportunity and equal treatment of Asian Pacific Americans;
- Eliminating prejudices, stereotypes and ignorance of Asian Pacific Americans, and;
- Promoting the cultural heritage of Chinese and Asian Pacific Americans

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