



THE CHINESE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF HAWAII

夏威夷中華總商會



LANTERN

NEWSLETTER

Apr, May & June, 2023

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Chamber Installation photos courtesy of Lance Wong and Ron Ho

Chamber Installation and Awards Dinner

On Friday, May 19, 250 officers, members, and friends gathered at the Jade Dynasty Seafood Restaurant for the installation of officers and directors for 2023-24 and presentation of awards. The evening began with a lion dance, introduction of VIP guests as well as past Chamber Presidents and Emeritus Directors. Greeting remarks were made by outgoing President **Jonathan Cook**, Lieutenant Governor **Sylvia Luke**, Mayor **Rick Blangiardi**, and TECO Director General **Richard Lin**.

Then came the fantastic dinner with a barbecued meat appetizer plate; winter melon crab soup; Peking Duck with buns; sweet sour fried fish fillets; brisket with sweet potato noodles; honey walnut prawns; lettuce-wrapped duck meat; lotus-wrapped

mochi rice; and steamed mochi balls in walnut soup. All in all, a very fine dinner enjoyed by all.

Following the sumptuous dinner, incoming President **Michael Young** was installed by the lieutenant governor, outgoing President **Jonathan Cook** was presented with a pineapple-shaped wall plaque, and our newly installed President made remarks, outlining the year ahead. Then came presentation of awards to **Tiffany Chen**, Outstanding Young Professional Volunteer; **Michael Chang**, Outstanding Narcissus Festival Volunteer; **Lance Wong**, Outstanding Chamber Volunteer; **Kwok Hing Kerry Lau**, Outstanding Business Person; and **Eddie Flores, Jr.**, Lifetime Achievement.

The evening came to a close with entertainment by Pastor **Shon Kihewa** and **Blair Sataraka** and Family and acknowledgments and a toast by President-Elect **Sarah Moy**.





President
Jonathan Cook

It's been quite a year. When my term began, we were facing another COVID surge that we thought might derail our plans to become a fully active Chamber once again. Fortunately, that didn't happen and we haven't looked back since.

The successes we had just in re-launching the full Narcissus Festival Calendar, capped by a Chinese New Year that showed just how greatly it had been missed by all, is something we can take great pride in achieving.

Our increased involvement with, and for, Chinatown, as it faces unprecedented challenges, became a more essential part of our focus as well.

From the massive Chinatown Clean-Ups, with 300-400 volunteers on the streets, to the meetings with Mayor **Rick Blangiardi** and the City on matters of crime, revitalization, and the homeless, to our support services to help non-English speaking business owners with applying for needed grants.

It's not merely a matter of serving our Chamber's roots that drives these efforts, but also the future survival of this district and the culture that defines it and us. We must continue to play a role here and see it through this time of upheaval.

We took other steps toward the future, such as: Beginning of our new Chinatown Walking Tour, led by 'Honolulu Chinatown' author **Gary Coover**; lobbying and advocating to restore HTA funding to promote Chinese tourism to Hawaii; and awarding the

first scholarships from funds raised by our Chinatown Foundation Golf Tournament.

The greatest strides forward will be coming though, from our newly begun long-term Strategic Plan. Our aim is the improve and energize the Chamber to serve our members and the community better in a rapidly changing world.

The Mission and the Purpose of the Chamber is, and will be, unchanged. Our aim is to carry them out more effectively today, just as previous generations did in their time.

We're just starting this process and will need help in the days ahead. Hope we can count on you.

Closing the door on this year does prompt thoughts of what maybe I should have done or at least done better.

However, my greatest hope was that I would have justified the honor and the trust you gave me as President once this ending came. I still feel that obligation now that we are here.

My apologies that I cannot thank everyone who deserves my gratitude, but I must acknowledge my advisors, **Michele Choy** and **Robert Yu**, and our Chamber Board – Immediate Past President **Russell Lau**; President-Elect **Michael Young**; First VP **Sarah Moy**; Second VP **Angie Shiroma**; Third VP **Michelle Wong**; English Secretary **Yu Shing Ting**; Chinese Secretary **Cy Feng**; Treasurer **Brandon Lau**; and Assistant Treasurer **Cynthia Yamasaki**. And there are also the numerous Past Presidents, directors, members, and volunteers, who went out of their way to offer good advice, support, and help whenever and wherever it was needed.

Finally, last but not least in my mind, thank you to our staff members, **Sonny Zhang** and **Tina Ge**, who have amazed me repeatedly with all they get done for us.

— Much *mahalo* to you all, Jon



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We are proud to support the

Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii's 73rd Annual Narcissus Festival

HomeStreet Bank is honored to support our local community and the rich cultural diversity celebrated through the Narcissus Festival.

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Sharing our Aloha



Congratulations
on the 73rd Annual
Narcissus Festival
Celebration!



COVID Update

In early 2020, with the arrival of the COVID-19 virus in the U.S. and its rapid spread around the country, a federal COVID public health emergency (PHE) was declared. In the ensuing three years, more than a million Americans died (400,000 as of January 20, 2021). During that time, a lot of misinformation was spread around, despite frequent factual briefings from Dr. **Anthony Fauci** and Dr. **Deborah Birx**. Three pharmaceutical companies developed vaccines that were administered to people around most of the country, although there were areas where people refused vaccinations despite the shots offering protection against severe illness and death. An updated *NY Times* map shows that as of May 11, 2023, very few areas of the U.S. have been untouched, with the hardest hit areas in the Southeast and lower Midwestern states.

Nevertheless, much of the U.S. population has been vaccinated and even ‘boosted’ and the incidence of COVID-19 has declined. There are still quite a few cases, and as of the week of May 3, there were 1,109 deaths nationwide. (In Hawaii, for the week ending May 31, there were 535 new cases and three deaths). From the third leading cause of death in the U.S. in 2020 and 2021 and fourth leading cause in 2022, so far this year, it’s dropped to seventh.

Thanks to those public health efforts, the PHE was allowed to expire on Thursday, May 11. According to the *New York Times*,

however, that complicates access to tests and treatment in the U.S. For those with private insurance, the eight at-home tests will have to be paid full-price, out-of-pocket at their local drugstore. Those who previously stocked up should check the expiration dates when using them. There may also be co-pays for PCR tests. And vaccines will be covered by private health insurance from an in-network provider.

People on Medicare should be able to receive free PCR and antigen tests ordered by their doctor as well as free vaccines. Access to antivirals like Paxlovid will still be available. Presumably, there are very few, if any, Chamber members who are covered by Medicaid or are not insured at all.

Despite the expiration of the PHE, however, as the statistics cited above show, COVID-19 has NOT gone away and instead of being a pandemic, it may be a lower level epidemic that we still need immunizations for the protection of ourselves as well as our loved ones.

Accordingly, earlier this year, the CDC authorized bivalent booster shots for those 65 and over and the immunocompromised. The original Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna multiple-shot vaccines have been phased out, and a single bivalent shot will be authorized later this year for those who have never been vaccinated or as a booster. Vaccinations in Hawaii (as of May 31), according to the state Department of Health: 78.8% have completed the primary series; 24.1 % have received the booster in the last 12 months; and 22.2% have received the bivalent



Member FDIC

Congratulations, to the Narcissus Festival participants.

We are proud to support the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and their mission to showcase Chinese culture and history in Hawaii.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Jul 18 • Tue

Executive Committee Meeting
Chamber Office – 6:00 p.m.

Jul 25 • Tue

Board of Directors Meeting
Simply Sichuan– 12:00 p.m.

Aug 22 • Tue

Executive Committee Meeting
Chamber Office – 6:00 p.m.

Aug 26 • Sat

Chinatown Cleanup
Chinatown District – 9:00 a.m.

Aug 29 • Tue

Board of Directors Meeting
Simply Sichuan– 12:00 p.m.

Aug 30 • Wed

Quad Chamber Event
Outrigger Canoe Club – 6:00 p.m.

Sep 30 • Sat

Mid-Autumn High-Tea Cultural Experience
Legend Seafood Restaurant
2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Oct 11 • Wed

CCF Golf Fundraiser Event
Hoakalei Country Club – 9:30 a.m.

Nov 7 • Tue

2023 Narcissus Queen Goodwill Tour Departure

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booster. So for those who are eligible, make arrangements to get fully immunized as soon as you're eligible. Your family and friends will thank you. (By the way, the N-95/KN-95 masks are also good protection on the mainland against wildfire smoke, and who knows, you may need the masks in the future).

Tech Corner

Many Chamber members make use of Google's Gmail. In case you missed the news, according to an article in the May 17 *New York Times*, Google may delete your account if you have NOT used it in the last two years. According to the article, Google gave notice that beginning in December, due to security concerns, Google will begin deleting accounts so that you will no longer have access to Gmail.

In addition to affecting your email, Google's actions will also affect any work in Google Docs, Google Workspace, Google Photos and other Google products, which will also be wiped out. In addition, any videos that an affected user has uploaded to YouTube will be wiped out as well.

While this policy was announced on May 16, Google will not start deleting apparently inactive or unused accounts until December. Before doing so, however, Google will send several Gmail notifications to the accounts as well as any backup email addresses.

So if you have a personal Google account that may be affected, you can take simple steps to avoid having your account deleted. You can keep your account active by logging into Gmail or other Google service like Google Search, Google Drive or YouTube or by downloading any app from the Google Play Store. An existing subscription, such as one linked to a news outlet, set up with a Google account would be considered an active account as well as accounts for businesses and schools.



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