

AS THE PEG TURNS...

SACRAMENTO AMERICAN STRING TEACHERS ASSOCIATION FALL 2017 NEWSLETTER

Dear Sacramento ASTA members,

Greetings! I hope everyone has enjoyed a relaxing and restful summer. An ASTA state board meeting was held in Los Angeles on Sunday, August 13th with eleven board members in attendance. Major topics of discussion included section reports, the upcoming state election and the ASTA conference in Atlanta in March of 2018. The next state board meeting will be in San Jose in February at the CASMEC conference.

As of last month, I have returned to the state board to serve as the current President-elect for California ASTA. I will become President in May of 2018. I have agreed to serve again because the current President-elect is not able to serve at this time. We will need additional new board members for our Sacramento section, so please contact me if you are interested. My email is kfeeney@djusd.net.

2017 Solo Competition Results

Congratulations to all of the students who participated in the "Annual Section Solo Competition" held at UC Davis on May 21st. Awards went to the following musicians:

Novice Violin - Amaryn Olmeda (William Barbini)
Junior Violin - Erik Yang (Victoria Tognozzi)
Novice Cello - Benjamin Jiang (Susan Lamb Cook)
Junior Cello - Patrick Song (Richard Andaya)
Senior Cello - Angelica Rojas - (Susan Lamb Cook)

All winners will be featured in the Sacramento fall showcase recital where they will receive their certificates and cash prizes. They are also eligible to enter the ASTA State Solo Competition that will take place in the fall of

2018 in Northern California. Please check for guidelines and application forms at www.calasta.org in the summer of 2018.

Upcoming Events...

Fall Showcase Recital

This year's Fall Recital will take place on Sunday, November 12th, from 2-4 P.M. at the "Melon Ball" located at Watermelon Music in Davis. The venue is located at 1970 Lake Blvd. Ste 1, Davis, CA 95616. (530) 758-1040. The event will include a recital and reception. Please see attached registration form. Performers of all levels and ages are welcome to play.

New Member "Spotlight"

Frieda Yang

A Violinist by Default

"Here. You will play this." Frieda Yang's older brother handed her a half-sized violin when she was eleven-and-a-half years old--a very late age to start this difficult solo instrument. She was ecstatic. Finally, she would be just like her older siblings on the cello and the piano. "But I want to play the cello instead." "There are two cellists in the family already. Besides, an orchestra needs more violinists. If you play it well, when you graduate from high school, you may be assigned to a performing troupe in a commune instead of being sent off to work in the rice paddy fields," her brother explained.

That was motivation enough. It was 1971, in Shanghai, China. Frieda lived in the middle of the Cultural Revolution that warred against anything traditional and Western. A year later, when President Nixon visited Shanghai, a violinist performed a piece of classical music for him at the state dinner. Suddenly, Western music was accepted again.

Learning violin in China was not easy in those days. All her sheet music was hand-copied. Her first violin was very loud because it was unvarnished. In

the winter, due to the lack of indoor heating, she had to use jump rope to warm-up and practice the violin wearing gloves with the fingers cut-off. When the family got a stove, all of her siblings crammed into the same room with the stove and practiced all at the same time.

In 1974, her family was fortunate to have obtained permission to leave China to join their father in Hong Kong, who had left China in 1962 to avoid persecution. The moment they arrived in Hong Kong, her father declared, "Since you've lost much time in China during the chaos of the Cultural Revolution, you don't have much choice but will become musicians to make a living. Therefore, no regular school for you, because, then you'll be spending all your time trying to catch up with school work..."

For the next two years, Frieda practiced five to six hours a day. When she was seventeen, the family immigrated to America. She started at the Juilliard School Pre-College and finished seven years later in the graduate school with the Master of Music degree. She also studied chamber music with the Juilliard String Quartet and played in a quartet for two years. Much of her experience was gained from music festivals such as the Aspen Festival and the Tanglewood Festival. She performed under the batons of great conductors such as Leonard Bernstein, Seiji Ozawa and Kurt Mazur in Tanglewood, and Skitch Henderson and John Williams in the New York Pops.

During her last year at the Juilliard she took the Suzuki Teachers' Training course and started teaching immediately upon graduation at the Queensborough Community College (NY). She taught throughout her performing career as the Assistant-Concert-Master of the National Grand Opera and the New York Grand Opera (1985-94), the Director of the Manhattan Chamber Ensemble (1982-94), and a member of the New York Pops, the Stamford Symphony (CT) and Broadway Show Orchestras. In 1988, she was selected from among four hundred musicians to be featured in a string quartet in an AT&T long-line television commercial.

In 1994, due to her husband's career move, her family moved to the Island of Borneo. It was a tropical beach resort town with a laid-back life style. Life was wonderful. However, there were no stringed-instrumental concerts, only the Royal School of Music exams (ABRSM). For years, Frieda was the only violin teacher in town sending students to those exams. For the next decade, she trained up violinists there where some of them are now professional violinists and teachers. While there, Frieda Yang recorded an album as a tribute to mothers worldwide, "To Mom, With Love!"

Her family moved back to the States in 2008. Currently, she is the only violin teacher in MTAC Placer County Branch. At the MTAC Certificate of Merit (CM) exams in 2017, 85% of her students achieved honors status when on an average only about 10% of the 20,000 plus CM students statewide obtained such status.

Frieda advocates exam taking and competitions. To prepare her students, she actively sends them out performing for churches and senior homes. Her students frequently win top prizes in competitions. Recently, Frieda also took part in the 9th biennial Juilliard Violin Symposium. She believes such continuous learning refines her teaching craft.

Beside teaching from her Music & Mind studio and adjudicating for competitions and Festivals, she also performs chamber music. This summer, she will be performing at the Classical Music Festival in Eisenstadt, Austria--the hometown of Haydn.

Frieda Yang has four children and lives in Granite Bay with her husband Richard Yang, a real-estate developer and a professor in the business school at the William Jessup University. Her contact: Tel. (916) 717-8887. Email: friedayang@yahoo.com. Website: <http://friedayang.com>.

Interesting Info:

There are 18 counties in the Sacramento ASTA section. They include: Amador, Butte, Colusa, El Dorado, Glenn, Lassen, Modoc, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Sutter, Tehama, Yolo and Yuba.

Our current board for the Sacramento section is as follows:

President – Kimberly Cole Feeney
kfeeney@djusd.net

Secretary – Rejean Anderson
rejevcl@yahoo.com

Treasurer – Catherine Heusner
catmusic@juno.com

Members at Large

Gay Currier – gcurrier@macnexus.org

Robert Bloch – rsbloch@ucdavis.edu

