My Dragon Boat Festival Experience
By Eric Woods

This past July, CSCCI took our first group excursion to the 2013 Dragon Boat Festival in Denver. As this was my first time going to the festival, I was pleasantly surprised at both the grand size of the event and the amount of cultural immersion that was around me. The excitement began with a parade headed by a magnificent and ornate 75-foot long dragon that danced and swayed accompanied by drums and gongs. This set the atmosphere of unending excitement that permeated throughout the day. Following the dragon, the boat racing teams enthusiastically paraded through the crowd with banners and flags celebrating their teams.

During the opening ceremony, speeches were given from city council woman Susan Shepherd, congresswoman Diana DeGette, and Denver Mayor Michael Hancock. The main themes of cultural diversity and unity resonated throughout the day, as activities for all tastes could be found. Multiple tents focused on cultural sharing with events such as martial arts, Buddhist traditions, Chinese calligraphy, and even a showcase of traditional Thailand artifacts. To add to our cultural learning, our CSCCI group was given an in depth tour by the festival’s co-founder, Ding Wen Hsu.

The variety that embodied the day was showcased by the traditional musical performances and dances performed on the main stage and the hip-hop breakdancing competitions that took place a couple minutes’ walk away. There were plenty of fun activities for kids as well such as magic shows, coloring games, and lion dances. The festival was a perfect place to try out a wide variety of Asian foods. The kabobs and pot stickers I had were delicious and there were countless options from several vendors to choose from. Along with all these exciting events, the main focus of the day, the Dragon Boat races, proved to be just as intense and nail biting as promised. It was exhilarating to see the rowers pull with all their strength to the beat of a drum while spectators cheered along with me. Seeing the athletes stretch out over the dragon headed boats to snag the finishing flag was a memorable experience. Finally, whenever I needed a pause between all of the excitement, there were many vendors selling Chinese clothing, crafts, and cultural items.

Overall, the day was enjoyable, adventure filled, immersing, and stress-free. Taking the bus with CSCCI eliminated the worries of driving to Denver and allowed us to pull right up to the festival, saving time and hassle compared to parking miles away and taking a shuttle to the lake like other attendees. Also, on the ride up to Denver and back, CSCCI provided water and snacks like almond cookies to make the travel time fly by. We would love to share this experience with the Colorado Springs community, so if you are interested in joining us next year on our trip up to the Dragon Boat Festival please look for more information in the coming newsletters or find our registration area during the CSCCI Chinese New Year Festival. If you would like to see more pictures of our excursion, please check out our Facebook page or visit our website at www.CSCCI.org.

It’s the Year of the Horse!
By Eric Woods

On January 31st the new year of the Horse begins. If you were born in 1930, 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, or 2002, your Chinese Zodiac is the horse. You are probably energetic and love to be part of the crowd; cunning and strong, you are firm in your beliefs. People born in the year of the horse are often stubborn, but extremely hard working and pleasant people. You are very compatible with Tigers, Dogs, and Rams, but you should avoid Rats. This year you can look forward to success in finances and relationships. I hope everybody enjoys their 2014 year of the Horse!
Festival Celebrates the Year of the Horse on Saturday, January 25th 2014
By Herman Tiemens II

The Colorado Springs Chinese Cultural Institute is delighted to announce the continuation of its flagship annual event. The Chinese New Year Festival will be held downtown at the historic City Auditorium - located at 221 East Kiowa - on Saturday, January 25th from 10am-4pm.

The Main Arena will feature local organizations linked to Chinese culture, vendors with items from throughout Asia, representation from several community organizations and culinary selections from local Asian restaurants. The Chinese Language School will host a kids-zone as they have done in the past. Feature performances will be announced on the main stage every 30 minutes and attendees can get up close to watch the martial arts demonstrations taking place on the main floor throughout the day.

The Tea House will provide a quieter place to get away from the excitement of the Main Arena to enjoy a cup of tea and a snack. Smaller, more intimate cultural performances will take place in the Tea House throughout the day.

Local businesses with links to Asian cultures are encouraged to participate and sponsorship opportunities are also available. Those wishing to participate, sponsor, volunteer or simply learn more should contact Mali Hsu at mali.cscci@gmail.com or (719) 287-7624.

CSCCI is grateful to the Bee Vradenburg Foundation, Wells Fargo Advisors, Klite 106.3, KKT 11 and The Gazette for their generous support of this year’s Festival.

Mission Statement

The CSCCI is committed to fostering understanding of Chinese culture by promoting opportunities for events, networking, travel, education and services available to the people of Colorado Springs.

Become a member

Colorado Springs Chinese Cultural Institute

To become a member, please complete the information below and send the form with your check or money order to:

COLORADO SPRINGS CHINESE CULTURAL INSTITUTE
PO BOX 2625

Membership Benefits:
- Discount ticket pricing for all events and activities
- Free Quarterly Newsletter
- E-mail reminders to all our future events
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Annual Membership
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- Business (up to 20 members) $500
- Non-profit organization (up to 5 members) $25
- Non-profit organization (up to 20 members) $75
- Silver Patron $150
- Gold Patron $250
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Chinese Hot Pot
By Eric Woods

More than a thousand years ago, Mongolian warriors roamed through the vastness of Asia, a fearsome and imposing force even before the Mongolian Yuan Dynasty. These mighty soldiers rarely bothered to drag along domestic goods such as cooking utensils but still craved hot, cooked meat after exhilarating engagements. Their solution was the epitome of practical ingenuity. Shields, filled with water and sustenance, were slung over the fire, with helmets used as individual bowls. This simple supper was the first version of the Chinese hot pot, and soon began a sensation that quickly spread throughout China.

Today, hot pot has moved far beyond its humble beginnings with many unique variations developing throughout the various region of China. Growing up exposed to Chinese culture I have had the pleasure of experiencing one of the most popular types, Szechuan hot pot, many times. This hot pot consists of a central simmering bowl of broth, often divided in the middle into mild and spicy hemispheres, which serves as a community cooking pot for all the participants of the meal. Around the cooking pot lay dozens of different types of food, ranging from mushrooms and leafy greens to delicately thin sliced meat, tofu, tasty shrimp, fish, and so much more.

The style of eating hot pot is similar to Western fondue. Each person at the table chooses his or her favorite cuisine and dips it in the boiling, tasty broth using a pair of chopsticks (or a ladle if you haven’t fully mastered the chopstick grip). After giving the food ample time to cook, just pluck the food back out of the hotpot and your meal is about to begin. These hot, savory, and flavor infused bites are then added with rice to give a perfect mixture of zest, texture, and pleasant warmth.

Hot pot dinners are truly social events as waiting for food to cook and cool gives plenty of time for enjoyable conversation. Dinners easily last for hours with several rounds of food filling everybody as they try every tasty food on the table. On chilly fall and winter days, the hot pot is a perfect meal with its soul-warming heat; if you are a spicy enthusiast, the Szechuan specialty is a spicy version of hot pot, bringing even more warmth to the blustery chill (though if you are spicy-phobic like I am, be assured that there will be non-furry broth as well).

T’ai Chi 太极
By Li-Lan

Also known as t’ai chi, tai chi, and taiji. Much consensus points to t’ai chi chuan’s development between the 13th and 17th centuries by a Taoist monk named Chan San Feng. He emphasized exercising the body to achieve balance between Yin and Yang. From its beginning, Tai Chi evolved into five main styles named after the surnames of its founders. They are Chen, Hu, Sun, Wu, and Yang styles.

Tai Chi is a Chinese martial arts isometric exercise practiced for health benefits as well as the martial arts defensive style training. The movements of Tai Chi are designed to promote the free flow of chi / energy within the body to promote balance and wellness through flowing movements, regulated breathing, and mental focus. The results are improved circulation, flexibility, coordination, internal strength, and mental acuity. Many studies contribute Tai Chi to stress reduction and a general sense of wellbeing, making it a popular martial arts choice in China and worldwide.

The Mayo Clinic wrote an article on how Tai Chi reduces stress, and anxiety, and helps to increase flexibility and balance for individuals. You can read the article by going to the following Mayo Clinic web page http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/tai-chi/S.A00087/METHOD=print.

There are more medical research studies on the benefits of Tai Chi Chuan for one’s health. The studies have been encouraging on the therapeutic benefits of Tai Chi and further studies continue on its heal merits. I have worked consistently with Tai Chi since 2002. It helped me manage stress levels during crisis and life changes, and provided me peace of mind while strengthening my body. I have improved balance and coordination, flexibility, posture, and strength as a result of practicing tai chi consistently. I strongly encourage you to give Tai Chi a try and gift yourself the gift of unity, wholeness, and complete health.
About the Editor

By Eric Woods

I've been privileged this past year to be the newsletter editor for CSCCI. Over the last four years, I've been involved with CSCCI, helping with the New Years Festival and other volunteer opportunities. I'm honored to have this direct opportunity to help my community and share Chinese culture. As a 17-year-old junior at Air High School, along with schoolwork I spend my time playing soccer, tennis, and piano.

Having a Chinese mother and an American father, I've had a unique perspective on Chinese culture. By seeing both the eastern and western worlds in one house, I strive to mesh the best of both cultures and in the process have found a deep interest in Chinese traditions. Undoubtedly, some of my most memorable life experiences have been my four trips to China.

Traveling around the country and spending time with my relatives, I began to see the world through different eyes that showed me how interesting the Chinese culture is. I hope through these newsletters I can spread my appreciation of Chinese culture and help the wonderful group of CSCCI members achieve their goal of cultural diffusion.

UPCOMING CSCCI EVENTS

January 25, 2014: CSCCI Chinese New Year Festival, City Auditorium, Co. Springs
June 2014: 42nd Annual Cherry Blossom Festival Sakura Square, Denver
July 2014: Colorado Dragon Boat Festival, Sloan's Lake Park, Denver.

February 14, 2014: Yuanxiao (Lantern) Festival
April 25, 2014: Qin Ming (Pure and Bright) Festival
September 9, 2014: Mid-Autumn Festival

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