

January 2021

Coming February 12, 2021: The Year of the Ox

The year of the Rat has been difficult for us all. Stay at home orders, quarantines, sick loved ones, shutdowns and limitations on use of indoor spaces. Mai Wah Museum visitation took a big hit. A CARES Act award (Coronavirus Aid Relief) from the Humanities Montana helped buffer that loss, but we missed seeing and talking with our diverse visitors from across Montana, various corners of America, and around the world.

So here's to The Year of the Ox! *Gong he fat choy!* As an important animal of traditional Chinese agriculture, the Ox is a symbol of hard work, persistence, helpfulness, and honesty. We celebrate those born in the years 1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009, and 2021.

Sadly, because of the continuing pandemic, the Mai Wah Society will not host our usual annual Chinese New Year Parade. We do plan to produce a short video/slide show as a way to send out our greetings, so watch your email and the Mai Wah Society's website and Facebook page.

Hopefully come summer 2021, the novel coronavirus pandemic is behind us and we can greet you all in person at the Mai Wah Museum. We can't wait to show off the incredible exterior renovations thanks to those of you who supported us in the "Vote Your Main Street" (National Trust for Historic Preservation), grants from local agencies, and donations from members like you.

Please renew your membership for 2021, if you can. We'll send a virtual dragon blessing your way and look forward to again seeing you in person at the museum. Note that in addition to using the mailing form on page 9 you can also renew membership and make donations at our web site: mai-wah.org. >> "JOIN+SUPPORT" >> "Donate" or "Become a Member".



Oxherding paintings like this were popular in the Song dynasty (960-1279)

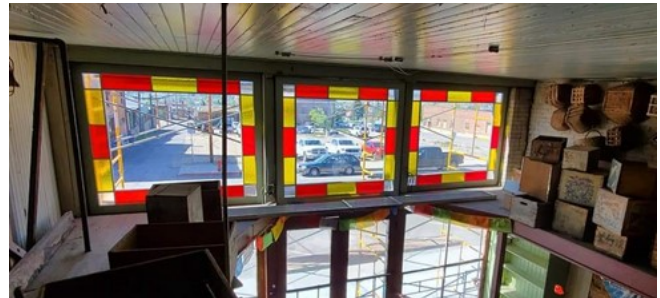


Kwan Yee Gor ("Guan Yu")
This shrine originally graced Butte's joss house and now watches over the Mai Wah Museum

Mai Wah/Wah Chong Tai Restored for the Next 100 Years

Thanks to a strong network of supporters and a highly skilled team of contractors, the Mai Wah/Wah Chong Tai Building shines as brightly today as it did in Butte's heyday a century ago. Our restoration project focused on the preservation and rehabilitation of the building's exterior elements and materials. It was a massive undertaking that relied heavily on grant funds, including a substantial award from Partners in Preservation (PIP), a program created by American Express and the National Trust for Historic Preservation to cultivate grassroots support for preservation projects in America's Main Street districts.

With the exterior envelope of the building secure, the Mai Wah Society's focus is now on enhancing our exhibits and interpretive offerings. Our initial focus is the return on permanent loan of the Mai Wah's original noodle maker machine, rolling table, and other kitchen artifacts and dinnerware and their reinstallation in their rightful home as a new "Mai Wah Noodle Parlor" exhibit.



New stained-glass windows in Wah Chong Tai Mercantile

Work Completed

- Historic Structures Report: assessment of structural components and exterior envelope elements, recommendations for rehabilitation measures and cost estimates.
- Rehabilitation of Mai Wah & Wah Chong Tai storefronts (display windows, entries, transom windows).
- Rehabilitation of 2nd story façade windows.
- Masonry repairs: reconstruction of outer wythe of brick on west wall and west 16' of north wall, reconstruction of east and west parapet walls, repair/reconstruction of deteriorated stone elements on façade.
- Installation of new membrane roofing system.
- Reconstruction of skylights.
- Repair and stabilization of vaulted sidewalk.



New skylights above Mai Wah Noodle Parlor

Contractors

- CTA Architects Engineers, Bozemen; subcontractor Beaudette Consulting Engineers, Bozemen: Historic Structures Report
- Allen M. Fix, retired National Park Service carpenter, Missoula: Mai Wah storefront rehabilitation (3 transom windows)
- Rex Builders, LLP, Butte: Mai Wah storefront, Wah Chong Tai storefront and 2nd story façade window rehabilitation, and skylight fabrication and installation.
- Selensky Masonry, Butte: Brick and stone masonry repairs.
- K&K Roofing: Membrane roofing
- LeProwse Construction: Vaulted sidewalk repair and stabilization.

Funding Sources

- Superfund Advisory Redevelopment and Redevelopment Trust Authority (SARTA) grants
- \$13,178.70 for Historic Structures Report \$29,161.30 for Mai Wah storefront
- National Trust Preservation Fund grant \$4,585.00 for Historic Structures Report
- Partners in Preservation (National Trust & American Express) grant \$132,000.00 for Wah Chong Tai storefront, masonry repairs, roof and skylights
- City-County of Butte-Silver Bow Urban Revitalization Agency grants \$35,274.50 for masonry repair, roof and skylights \$36,405.00 for vaulted sidewalk
- Fredric L. and Mindy Quivik, Mai Wah Society members \$1,000.00 for general rehabilitation



West wall during reconstruction



Section of west wall after reconstruction



Vaulted sidewalk during reconstruction

Congratulations to Our Three New Lifetime Members

This year, we award lifetime memberships to three founders of the Mai Wah Society and Museum. Today, we can see far because we stand on the shoulders of these giants.

Jana Fought

Jana Fought moved to Butte in 1982 to become a partner in the Silver Dollar Saloon. While refurbishing the bar she met Paul Eno from the “Fix It Shop”—the Chinn family’s Mai Wah/Wah Chong Tai building. Numerous Chinese artifacts were hidden among Eno’s collections. After Paul’s death his family agreed to leave the Chinese things in Butte that had belonged to the Chinn family. Jana explains, “That was the beginning of our idea for the Mai Wah Museum. Our first task: A fundraiser so we could pay the taxes. That was the spark the community needed to save the buildings.”

Over the next 20 years Jana served as President, initiated the Chinese New Year parade, established the museum in 1994, installed the permanent exhibit in 2005, contracted for the archaeological dig in 2007, and worked with the Montana Heritage Commission for the return of Wah Chong Tai mercantile artifacts from Nevada City in 2010.



Jana sold her business in 1993 and served as a VISTA/AmeriCorps volunteer for the Butte Uptown Association, creating an annual ethnic celebrations and events calendar for Butte Silver Bow. She was Program Coordinator for First Montana Heritage Parks & Partners, Manager of the Butte Symphony Orchestra, and took an accounting degree from Montana Tech. She worked for Renewable Technologies, the National Affordable Housing Network, and the Butte Silver Bow Arts Foundation. She was a founding member of Butte Citizens for Preservation and Revitalization, a board member of Broadway 215, and a volunteer for Butte Archives. Throughout it all, she has continued to support the Mai Wah Society as a member and volunteer.



Original sign from the mercantile, “Wah Chong Tai” meaning “Beautiful Old China”

Jana is best known for her networking and match-making skills. Her ability to rally people for a cause proved to be her biggest asset.

Jim Griffin

While visiting the historic copper mining town of Jerome, Arizona in the mid 1980's, Jim realized the necessity of having a Chinese history museum in Butte. With tour buses unloading in Jerome, he imagined this would happen at the Mai Wah. Though Butte was not on the tour bus route, other events unfolded that Jim did not imagine: a whole community coming together to acquire and support and build a Chinese history museum; an annual Chinese New Year celebration with authentic parade dragon dragons donated from Taiwan and China; a professionally staged museum exhibit; and an archaeological dig across the street with an exhibit of artifacts from it.

Thanks to the early work of Jim and other volunteers, a troupe of dancers from L.A. came to Butte for Chinese dance performances in the Butte Plaza Mall and the Mother Lode Theater, complete with formal dinners and ceremonies all with support from friends at the Cate School. The entire Wah Chong Tai mercantile—the capstone of the museum—was discovered and acquired from Virginia City and Nevada City through networking with friends there.

In Jim's own words, "I never imagined that we would have a professional curator, how much fun it would be to give tours to visitors, and that I would meet the last of the Chinn family who lived at the Mai Wah." With his wry smile he adds, "I did imagine a heated building open year-round with a director, a self-sustaining enterprise funded by museum fees. Though that hasn't happened, seeing the restored façade gives me so much pride in the current board of directors and all of the boards and volunteers across the decades. I am so grateful to have been part of this collaboration with amazing people. "



Herbalist office space at the Mai Wah



Display cabinet with original wares at the Wah Chong Tai mercantile

Deb Bishop

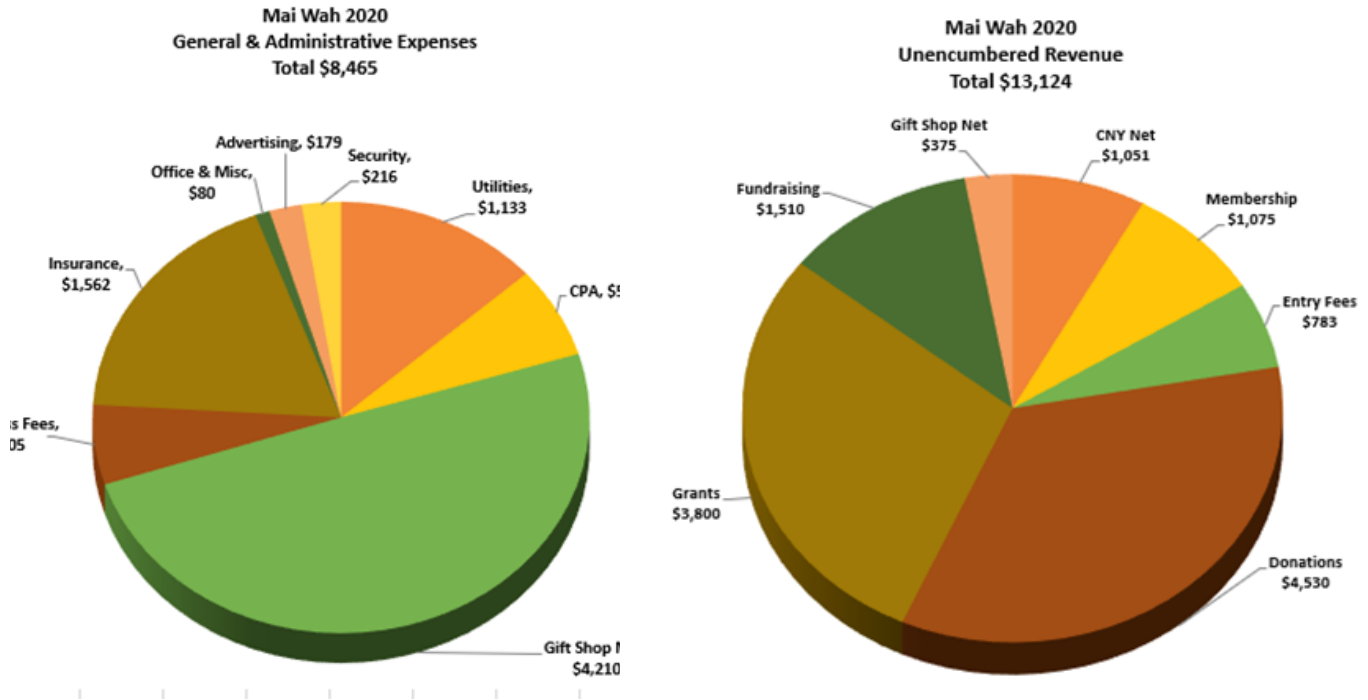
Deb was originally from the Midwest, graduating from a high school in Chicago which had a salad bowl of ethnicities, races and countries of origin. This helped feed her interest in the Mai Wah along with the involvement of her longtime friend, Jana Faught, and Jana's husband Jim Griffin. She moved back to Montana in 1986 after graduating from the UW-Milwaukee. She explains, "My involvement with the Mai Wah began in the early 1990's. There have been slim, tough times but the Mai Wah has grown into the museum it is today one step at a time due to great volunteers. I have served as a board member, secretary, vice president and president as well as the representative to Montana Shares. I retired after 40-some years working with the developmentally disabled, including 30 years at the now closed Montana Developmental Center in Boulder as a recreation therapist. I am so proud of the Mai Wah. We need to remember that it is not just a set of buildings but was the home of the Chinn family and in the heart of Butte's once vibrant Chinatown. My wish for the future is that the Mai Wah Society procures the return of artifacts original to the building, but that are now stored at the Montana Historical Society in Helena."



A few items originally from the Mai Wah and now stored at the Montana Historical Society. A Selective Service Registration card once belonging to Wing Hong Hum, an elaborate stone carving, and the original noodle rolling table and rolling/kneading pins from the Mai Wah Noodle Parlor.

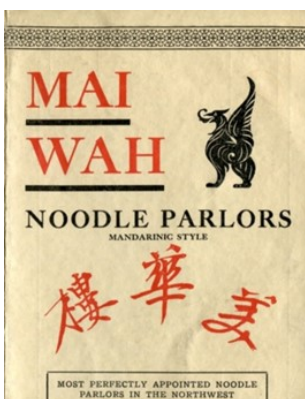
Finances

In 2020, the Mai Wah Society received a total of \$8,465 in ordinary income and a total of \$13,124 in ordinary expenses. The charts do not reflect income and expenses related to specific encumbered accounts or the grants received for the building and sidewalk restoration projects. The charts indicate normal operating expenses and income received from donations, memberships, fundraising, grants, and program events. We received a grant from the Montana Arts Council-Cultural Trust Foundation. The Mai Wah also received a total of \$1,510 from Montana Shares.



Income not included in the charts are for the final building restoration project and a major, unexpected, sidewalk repair. The total cost (reflective from the beginning of the project) for the building restoration was \$178,903 with grants totaling \$168,270. Mai Wah contribution totaled \$10,633. The total cost for the sidewalk repair was \$40,450 with grants totaling \$36,405 and a Mai Wah contribution of \$4,045. Grantors for both projects include the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Partnership with American Express, and Butte Silver Bow URA Development Program.

In addition, the Mai Wah received a \$5,000 special Covid-19 relief grant from Montana Humanities to help with unexpected loss of income from the pandemic .



Have you noticed our “new” logo? It’s adapted from the *Pixiu* (chimera or griffin-like creature) on the 1920s era Mai Wah Noodle Parlor menu. Thanks to graphic designer Marisa Larson for the new adaptation .

And thank you to Rex Builders for fabricating and donating the new sign with the logo.



2020 Membership and Business Blessing Donors

We have three calendar-year membership levels: \$25, \$50, and \$100. Every membership helps our operation—please consider joining for 2021, using the membership form in this newsletter. All levels include free admission to the museum. Thank you to members and donors from 2020!

Paid Members, 2020

\$100 and more level

Honnay Molloy
 Winnie Nishimine
 Dick Gibson
 Don & Kathy Kieffer
 Nancy A. Kiraly
 Butch Gerbrandt & Gretchen Geller
 Jim Griffin & Jana Faught
 James Garris & Michael Hampton
 Brian Holland
 Joyce Chinn & Jon Roush
 Ginger So
 Robert B. Anderson
 Pat & Jan Munday
 Griff & Kim Davidson



\$50 level

Phelps Anderson
 Victor Sloan & Sandra Gong
 Bruce & Cheryl McKee
 Mark Syverson &
 Noorjahan Parwana
 Gregory Bishop
 Fred & Mindy Quivik
 Mary Murphy
 Laurence Huie
 Connie Kenney
 Deanna Schafer
 Henry Tong
 Travis McAdam
 Linda Borton
 Bobbie Stauffer
 Lowell & Ruth Luke
 Judy Wong &
 Michael Holman

\$25 level

Margo Ensz
 James Garris & Michael Hampton
 Larry & Debbie Smith
 Gary J. Weiz
 David Braaten
 Andrea & Jack McCormick
 Elizabeth Ramsey
 Jamie Ford

Thank You! 谢

Business Blessing Donors

Dancing Rainbow
 Northwestern Energy
 Butte Plaza mall
 Ferko, Alana and Bill
 Dori Skrukud
 Copper City PT
 Hearst Free Library
 The Root and Bloom
 Jade Studio
 BSB Public Library
 Butte Frame Shop
 Miners Hotel
 Quarry Brewing
 Bad Beaver Bike
 M&M Bar
 Instry Prints
 Venus Rising
 KBMF
 Gamers Café
 Gamers Casino
 Cavanaugh's
 Taco Del Sol
 Pita Pit
 Main Stope Gallery

2020 donors (over \$50)

Karen Davidson	Roger So
Irene & Don Scheidecker	Colleen Fong
Travis McAdam	Pat & Jan Munday
Mark Johnson	Eric Berg
Glenn Brackett	Kay McCallister
Andrea & Jack McCormick	Ginger So
Dee & Mike Antimisiaris	Amazon Smile
Gretchen Geller &	Dick Gibson
Butch Gerbrandt	US Bank Foundation
Beth Judy	Square Inc.
Debbie Mueller	Stop Light Gallery
Larry & Debbie Smith	Griff & Kim Davidson
Judy Family Foundation	Joyce Chinn &
Winnie Nishimine	Jon Roush





MAI WAH
MUSEUM
BUTTE, MONTANA

Mai Wah Society

MEMBERSHIP & DONATIONS

Memberships and donations to the Mai Wah help make possible all the programs we have—from tours to special educational programs to new exhibits. The Mai Wah Society is a 501(c)3 non-profit, so donations are tax deductible as allowed by law.

**For calendar
year 2021**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Membership levels (check one)

- \$25 (free museum admission, 2 guest passes)
- \$50 (free museum admission, 2 guest passes, \$5 discount on t-shirt)
- \$100 (free museum admission, 2 guest passes, \$5 discount on t-shirt, 15% gift shop discount, private tour for up to 10 people)

Amount enclosed for donation above membership: _____

Please make check payable to Mai Wah Society
and send to
P.O. Box 404, Butte, MT 59703

Thanks very much! 谢谢



Mai Wah Society
 P.O. Box 404
 Butte, MT 59703
www.maiwah.org

PRST STD
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 Butte, MT
 PERMIT NO. 593

Return Service Requested



Mai Wah Society Newsletter
January 2021

**Regular season:
 June-September.
 Off-season tours can be
 arranged with advance
 notice.**

**MONTANA
 CULTURAL
 TRUST**



Partial funding for the Mai Wah's operations was provided by Montana's Cultural Trust

MAI WAH SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS
 Emma Cunneen, Travis McAdam, Mary McCormick, Pat Munday,
 David Stonehocker, Sonny Thornborrow, Kim Tintinger