

January 2022

Coming February 1, 2022: The Year of the Tiger

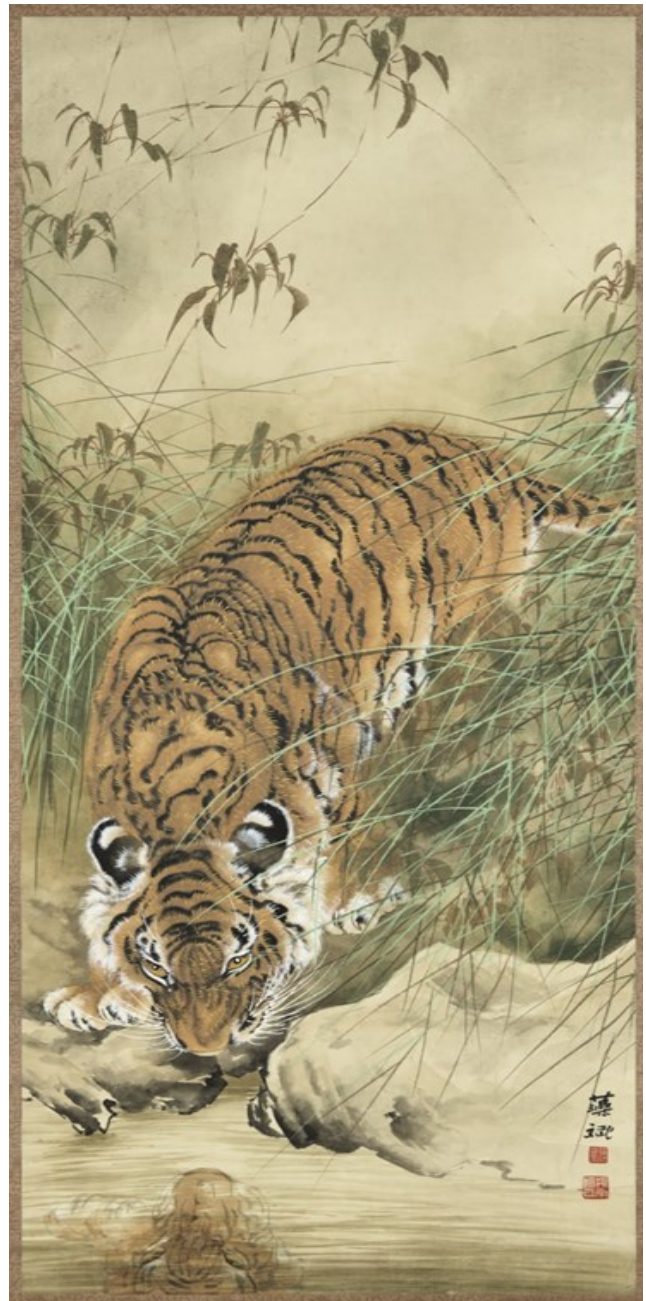
**Year 2022 is the “Year of the Tiger:”
Mai Wah Hopes to Hold Chinese New Year Parade**

The Mai Wah Society hopes to, once again, host Butte America’s annual Chinese New Year Parade, which has been described as the shortest, loudest, and (sometimes) coldest parade in Montana. While the parade was canceled last year due to the pandemic, we hope to hold the event on February 5, 2022, from 3:00-4:30 p.m. Stay tuned to our Facebook page for the latest updates.

The year 2022 finds us celebrating the “Year of the Tiger.” Tigers are the third animal of the Chinese zodiacs. According to legend, Tiger was sure with its speed and vigor that it would finish first in the celestial race for the order of the zodiacs. However, when Tiger emerged, it was told that Rat had placed first due to its cunning, and Ox placed second for its industriousness. This left Tiger in third place.

People born in the Year of the Tiger are ambitious, daring, courageous, and generous. They have an innate sense of justice and are committed to helping others for the greater good. “Tigers” may go into politics, business, or investing careers. They also may go into business for themselves or be drawn to competitive sports where they can push their limits every day. Tigers can be resolute and sometimes rebellious, seeking to change the status quo and break traditions. That also means Tigers may find it fulfilling to pursue careers in research and development to discover new ways of conducting business.

Lucky colors for Tigers are blue and green, while plum blossoms are their lucky flower. Tigers always speak forthrightly and boldly. They always keep their word. These qualities make them natural leaders to which others gravitate.



Painting by Hu Zhaobin, early 20th century, National Palace Museum, Taiwan

Message from the Past President Pat Munday

It was my pleasure to serve as President of the Mai Wah Society from January 2015 through October of this year. Thanks to a fantastic and active board, we have accomplished some great things. The exterior building renovation was a tremendous board accomplishment, ranging from the architectural/engineering assessment to fundraising to project management. While I plan to remain active with the board and to give special tours, I can no longer give the time or attention that the leadership position demands. Please join me in welcoming David Stonehocker as our new President!



One of two “twin” houses built by Margaret Woo’s family in the 1930s in their home village of Kaiping, in the Pearl River Delta near the city of Guangzhou. Pat Munday visited the houses as part of his research into the life of Margaret Woo (1912-1982), who married Howard Y. Chinn in 1945.



Painting by Qi Baishi, early 20th century, courtesy ArtNet



Guan Yu, courtesy Craig Hensel

Rose Hum Lee: Documentary Will Pay Tribute to this Woman of Distinction

This past summer, the Mai Wah Society welcomed a crew from the North By Northwest (NXNW) film studio to the Wah Chong Tai Mercantile for their work on a documentary film about Rose Hum Lee (1904-1964). Produced by Kim Homberg, shooting at the Mai Wah featured a young actress playing the role of Rose Hum as she worked at her parent's store. The Pekin Noodle Parlor also hosted a shoot, where "young Rose" sat drinking tea and attending to her studies.

Rose Hum Lee was a Chinese American woman of great distinction. One of seven siblings born in Butte to Hum Wah Long and Lin Fong, Rose became a popular lecturer, a renowned researcher on Chinese American history and urban sociology, a college professor, and the first Chinese American woman to head an academic department at a U.S. university. Rose graduated from Butte High School in 1921 and married Ku Young Lee, a China-born engineering student. After living some years in Canton, the couple divorced and Rose returned to the U.S. in 1939. She took an undergraduate degree from Carnegie Institute of Technology in 1942 and her PhD from the University of Chicago in 1947. She took a position with the sociology department at racially progressive Roosevelt University in 1945 and was promoted to department chair in 1956. In 1952, she married a Chinese American lawyer named Glenn Ginn.

Rose's many academic works include two books: *The Chinese in the United States of America* (Hong Kong University Press/Oxford University Press, 1960) and *The City: Urbanism and Urbanization in Major World Regions* (Lippincott, 1955).



Butte Pioneers, Hum Wah Long and Chiu Ling Fong and their family in 1920. Rose, the second child, is the third standing from left. Photo courtesy of Mr. Kingsley Wu (son of Amy Hum Wu).



Actress portraying Rose Hum taking direction at the Wah Chong Tai Mercantile as part of the NXNW film production. Photo by Pat Munday.

(left) Rose Hum Lee, first on the right, with other Roosevelt University faculty and administrators c. 1960. Photo courtesy of Roosevelt University Archives.

Historic Headstone Returns

In the fall of 2021, Mai Wah board members David Stonehocker and Mark Johnson participated in the returning of a headstone to China Row, the cemetery for the historic Chinese community of Helena, Montana. Two brothers, Tom and Dave Wright, came into possession of the headstone after going through their uncle's collections following his passing. As Tom Wright noted: "We found it in his garage and wanted to get it back to where it belonged."

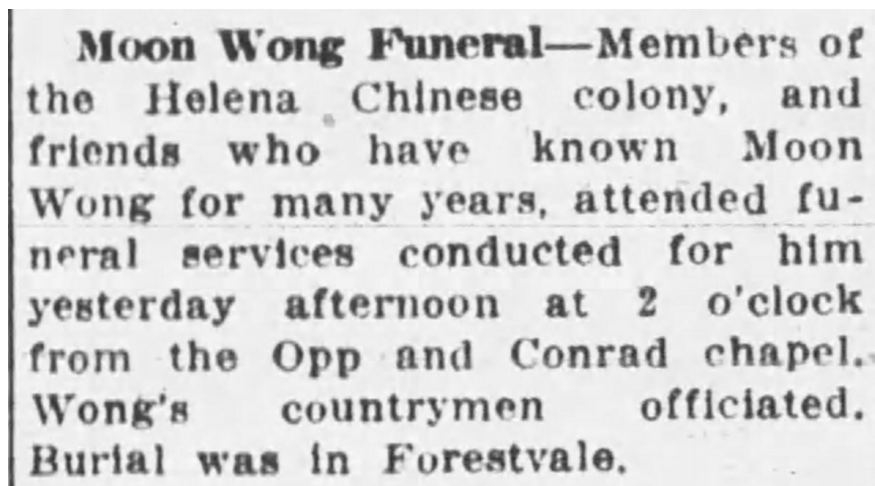


Wong Moon's Headstone

The Wright brothers sought assistance in identifying the individual commemorated by the headstone and the likely original location of the marker. A variety of people helped in the process and a translation of the headstone was obtained. By comparing the type of stone used and corroborating the translation with newspaper records of the time, it was determined that the marker was indeed from Helena's China Row and that the individual commemorated was likely Wong Moon, a resident of Helena, who passed away in January 1934.

Given the Chinese cultural practice of exhuming bones for return to the home village for reburial, the headstone was probably discarded after Wong Moon's remains were exhumed. While Helena's China Row cemetery has only a handful of headstones remaining, records indicate that more than 200 Chinese individuals were interred there. The last known exhumation of remains from China Row occurred in the early 1940s. After this time, disruptions in the cultural practice caused by World War II and the eventual U.S. embargo against Communist China halted the return of remains.

David Stonehocker commented "I think it's a really cool event" to commemorate the return of this headstone. He added, there have been so many things taken from Chinese history, "To have something come back here is wonderful."



Notice of Wong Moon's funeral, Helena Independent Record, Jan. 27 1934

The Middle Kingdom under the Big Sky

Mai Wah board member Mark Johnson is author of a forthcoming book on the experience of Chinese Montanans. Based upon collections and sources salvaged through the efforts of the Mai Wah Society, the book recovers stories of Montana’s Chinese population in their own words and deepens our understanding of Chinese experiences in Montana by examining how Chinese and world history influenced, and were influenced by, Chinese Montanans.

From the earliest days of non-native settlement of Montana, when Chinese immigrants made up more than 10 percent of the territory’s population, Chinese pioneers played a key role in the region’s development. But this population, so crucial to Montana’s history, remains underrepresented in historical accounts. Popular attention to the Chinese in Montana tends to focus on sensational elements—exoticizing Chinese Montanans and distancing their lived experiences from our modern understanding.

Johnson has mined several large collections of primary documents left by Chinese pioneers, translated into English here for the first time. These collections, spanning the 1880s through the 1950s, provide insight into pressures the Chinese community faced—from family members back in China and from non-Chinese Montanans—as economic and cultural disturbances complicated acceptance of Chinese residents in the state. Through their own voices Johnson reveals the agency of Chinese Montanans in shaping the history of the American West and China.

Advanced reviews of the book note:

“Johnson’s transnational approach to his subject sets his work apart from most all other studies done on the Chinese experience in Montana. The author makes excellent use of primary sources, including materials that help to capture the Chinese voices in the story and have rarely, if ever, been utilized by other historians.”—Robert R. Swartout Jr., professor emeritus of history at Carroll College and coeditor of *Montana Legacy: Essays on History, People, and Place*

“Mark Johnson draws insights from a cache of untranslated documents . . . to understand the challenges of Chinese experiences in Montana and the American West. Highlighting voices of Montana’s Chinese residents via their own words, Johnson artfully connects personal accounts with regional and global history. The result is an important book about risk, agency, resilience, resistance, cooperation, and hope.”—Kelly J. Dixon, professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Montana

[The book, due out in May, 2022, is available for purchase at: www.BigSkyChinese.com]



Coming Home to China: Margaret Woo's Story

Shihua Chen Brazill, a Montana State University instructional designer and PhD candidate, and Pat Munday, a Montana Tech professor and past President of the Mai Wah Society, have published the lead article in the latest edition of the international *Journal of Modern Chinese History*. “Coming Home to China: Margaret Woo’s story” is about a woman who was born in China, came to Minneapolis as a young child in 1914, returned to China with her mother and two brothers in 1935 to bury her father in the home village, and fled back to America after the Japanese attack on China in 1937.

Brazill and Munday learned of Margaret Woo when her granddaughters, Elizabeth and Kathryn Molloy, donated a collection of 27 cheongsam (or “qipao”) dresses to the Mai Wah Society. Margaret had the dresses made for her while living in China. Later, during World War II, she met and married Howard Chinn of Butte while he served with the U.S. Military Intelligence Service at Fort Snelling near Minneapolis.

Brazill and Munday’s research included the administrative records of Lingnan University in present-day Guangzhou. Margaret attended Lingnan in 1935-1937 as a way of escaping rural village life in the nearby Pearl River Delta where her parents had a “Lu Mansion”—a large two-story home that blended Victorian with traditional Chinese architecture. Her mother tried to marry her off to a village boy. As Margaret said in a 1982 interview, she told her brother at the time, “I’m not having none of that!” Brazill and Munday located and visited the Woo family’s Lu Mansion, one of two mirror image houses built by Margaret’s father and uncle. Margaret and Howard’s children, Honnay Molloy and Howard L. Chinn, generously provided additional information and photographs about their parents’ lives. Thanks to Brazill’s fluency in Mandarin Chinese and Cantonese dialects, the researchers also interviewed a Woo relative in China and two local Communist Party officials about the Woo family properties and the family’s many business dealings during the 1930s.

Margaret Woo’s life reveals the challenges facing Chinese Americans in the early 20th century, the ability of this young woman to live in two worlds, and the way she realized her version of the American Dream.



Margaret Woo and Howard Chinn wedding. From left to right: Lolita Woo, Margaret Woo, Carole Woo, Howard Y. Chinn, Youngee Chinn. Photo courtesy of Howard L. Chinn and the Woo family.



Historic Woo Du Sing house in Kaiping, China (date u.k.). Image courtesy of Honnay Molloy and the Woo family

Qing Ming 2021

Each year, the Mai Wah Society commemorates Butte's Chinese American legacy with a celebration of the Qing Ming ("Tomb Sweeping Day") holiday. The ceremony and festivities are held in the Chinese section of Butte's Mount Moriah Cemetery.



Funerary altar and ceremonial burner



Grave of a Chinese resident



Offerings of food and wine



Kite flying, a traditional Qing Ming activity

Janet Sperry Obituary

We are saddened by the death of Janet Sue Sperry (Hoyt), December 8, 1938 – August 16, 2021. She is survived by her daughter Elizabeth Sperry and was preceded in death by her daughter Susan R. Sperry.

Janet was an honorary lifetime member of the Mai Wah Society, and we remember her many years of service and support. Janet became active with the Mai Wah in the 1990s soon after the group incorporated and received the building from the Chinn family. Jim Griffin and Debbie Bishop remember how Janet's involvement helped transform the organization. It was a critical time, when the Mai Wah was creating the permanent Wah Chong Tai Mercantile display with the hundreds of artifacts that were returned to the museum as a loan from the Montana Historical Society. As Debbie, who was President at the time, recalls, "This was a very low time for the Mai Wah. There was no functional board of directors, and I had no idea what I was doing. Janet was my go-to gal for virtually every step [and] the Mai Wah rose up from the brink to where we are today." Jim adds, "Janet instructed us because she knew as a professional registrar what standards needed to be upheld. She is responsible for the Mai Wah becoming the quality museum it is today."



Photo of Janet Sperry, posted by her friend Terri Losey at TributeArchive.com.

Having catalogued collections in her career with the Montana Historical Society and retiring as the Society's Registrar, Janet was well versed in and understood the importance of having a professional curator to catalog, conserve, and display our collections. Janet established and generously funded the Merle and Edith Hoyt fund in honor of her parents, born of rugged Midwestern and Southwestern pioneers, who instilled in her a great curiosity about other cultures.

In her years of active service, Janet showed great leadership in developing the Mai Wah's collections. She helped spearhead the archaeological dig (summer 2007), along with the analysis, cataloguing, and display of artifacts. As an outstanding contribution that makes the Mai Wah Museum unique among Chinese museums in the United States, Janet worked with the Montana Heritage Commission in 2010 to set up the loan of more than 2,500 artifacts, with original cases, that were originally from the Wah Chong Tai Mercantile. Purchased by the collector Charles Bovey in the 1940s, they came into state ownership in 1997 and include everything from foodstuffs such as dried fish and noodle to fine teas, children's toys, and herbal medicines.

Janet has also facilitated visits by various researchers and scholars over the years, in part in her service as a board member and in part through her never-ending enthusiasm for history. In addition to her historical and cultural interests, Janet was also active with Audubon and other conservation groups, and was a flutist with a long record of performance for the Helena Symphony and other groups.

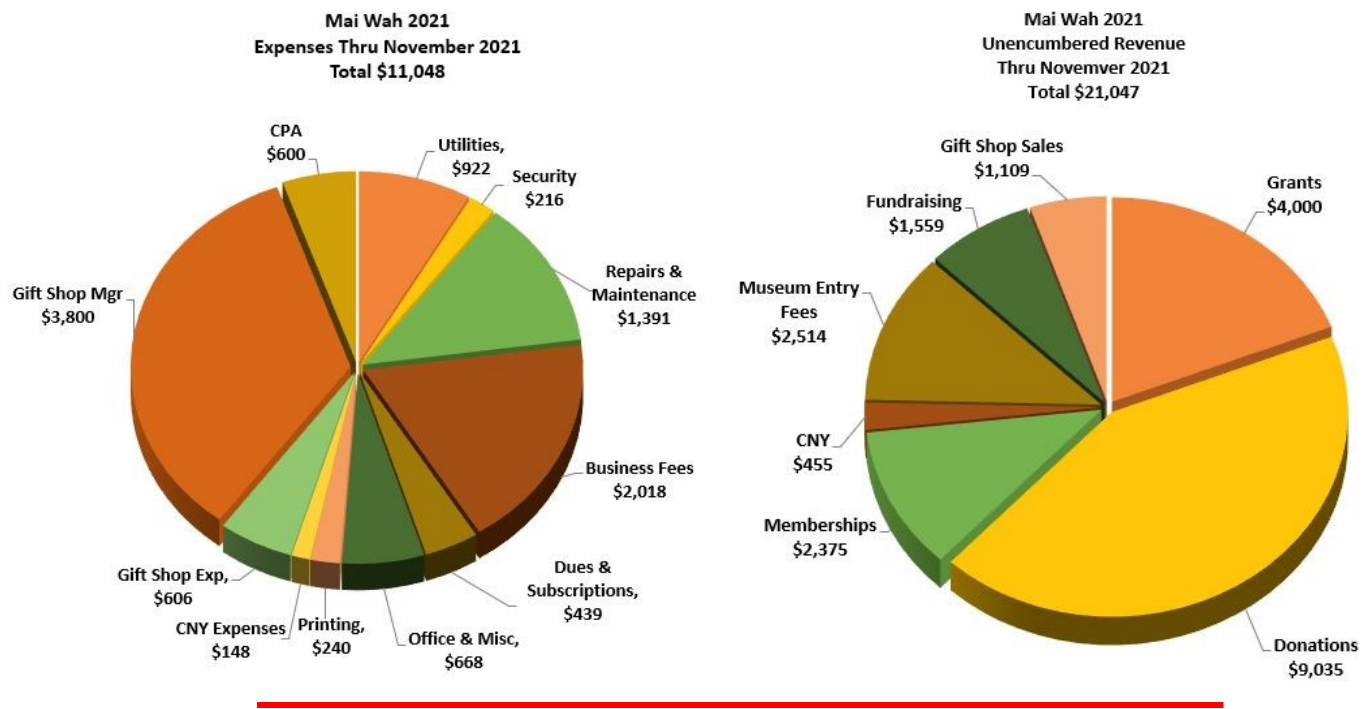
Janet, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your generosity, leadership, and service to the Mai Wah Society.

Finances

The Mai Wah deeply appreciates your memberships, sponsorships, and donations listed in this newsletter. We also value donations in the form of time—sometimes the most valuable commodity. The charts do not reflect income and expenses related to specific, encumbered accounts such as our curator and some exhibits.

In 2021, the Mai Wah Society received a total of \$21,047 in revenue and a total of \$11,048 in expenses through November 2021. The “fundraising” listed under income is money received from the non-profit Montana Shares Program.

This year’s grants included a \$3,800 grant from Montana History Foundation - UV Window Protection, and a payment of \$200 from Montana Arts Council-Cultural Trust Foundation for the remainder of the 2019-2021 granting period.



WCT signs, photo courtesy Craig Hensel

2021 Membership and Business Blessing Donors

We have three calendar-year membership levels: \$25, \$50, and \$100. Every membership level helps our operations—please consider joining for 2022. You can use the membership form in this newsletter or by visiting our website at <http://www.maiwah.org/>. All levels include free admission to the museum. Thank you to our members and donors from 2021!

We also greatly appreciate all non-membership donations. Some folks have set up their Amazon Smile accounts to benefit us. By doing that, a portion of your purchases through Amazon come to the Mai Wah. Visit <https://smile.amazon.com/> to start making your purchases help the Mai Wah! Other donations come from corporation giving programs. If your employer has such a program, please keep the Mai Wah in mind. We appreciate all the support we receive and cannot continue our work without you!

Paid Members, 2021

\$100 and more level

Becky Alseth
Glenn K. Brackett
Julie Bushmaker
Dick Gibson
Heather McCartney Duty
Gretchen Geller & Butch Gerbrandt
Jim Griffin & Jana Faught
Albert R. Farrington
James Garris & Michael Hampton
Douglas Hsia
Nancy Kiraly
Lori MacDonald
Travis McAdam
Albert & Rhonda Mah
Mainstreet Uptown Butte
Pat & Jan Munday
Winifred Lee Nishimine
Jeff & Celia Schahczenski
Ginger So & Ruben Chan
Roger So

\$50 level

Rae Arbogast Family
Mary McCormick & Keith Blount
Linda Borton
Kay & Ray Campeau
Joan Griffith
Connie Kenney
Don & Kathy Kieffer
Dale Martin
Mary McCormick & Keith Blount
Bruce & Cheryl McKee
Mary Murphy
Anne & Mark Miller
Barbeth Orphan
Fred & Mindy Quivik
Ernie Richards
Larry & Debbie Smith
Irene & Don Scheidecker
Jim & Rose Sladek
Marjorie Smith
Bobbie & Mark Stauffer
Judy Wong & Michael Hohman

\$25 level

Eric Berg
David Braaten
Jacqueline Brennan
David & Gloria Carter
Judy Chadwick
Teresa Olcott Cohea
Dan Dodds
Earnest Chann
Julia Crain & Risik Rask
John & Kim Davidson
Erik Hammerstrom
Alexandra Koelle
Andrea & Jack McCormick
Honnay Chinn Molloy & Greg Molloy
Gregory Nokes
Parks Reece
Diane Sands
Henry & Carol Tong
Lee & Steve Whitney
Carmen Winslow
Donna Young
Nancy A Kirly

Thank You! 谢谢

2021 donors (over \$50)

Amazon Smile
Demetra Antimisiaris
Benevity Fund
Gregory Bishop & Sharon Kiln
Glenn K. Brackett
David & Gloria Carter
John & Kim Davidson
Heather McCartney Duty
Charles Kuether & Susan Effertz
Collen Fong
Lisa Larsen & Ray Flaherty
Albert R. Farrington
Jim Griffin & Jana Faught
Just Five
Becky Garland
Joy & John Garrett
Gretchen Geller & Butch Gerbrandt
Joan Griffith
Joy & John Garrett
Jim Griffin & Jana Faught
Mary Morris
Robert Gilman
US Bank

Pat & Jan Munday
Tom & Jeanna Nance
Winnie Nishimine, in honor of the Wah
Jean Lamb family
Thomas & Alanna O'Brien
Yvonne C Oliger
Mary Pitch
Randi Rognlie
Joyce Chinn & Jon Roush
Deanna Schafer
Michele Herrington
Jeff & Celia Schahczenski
Ginger So & Ruben Chan
Betty & Steve Wing
Mark Johnson
Lisa A. Larsen & Raymond Flaherty
Christine Lay
Albert & Rhonda Mah
Mary Murphy Dale Martin
Kay McAllister
Honnay Chinn Molloy & Greg Molloy
Martha Kohl
Ginger Lew

Brain Holland
Laurence Huie
Nancy Huie
Mark Johnson
Charles Kuether & Susan Effertz
Roger So
Dick Gibson
C. Lehnert Ehn

Business Blessing Donors

Anderson Zurmuehlen
Bad Beaver Bikes/Tap'er Lite Coffee
Cavanaugh's Country Celtic
Copper City Physical Therapy
Dancing Rainbow Natural Grocery
Headframe Spirits
Jade Studio
The Judy Family Foundation
KR Creative Strategies
Pita Pit
Taco Del Sol
US Bank Foundation



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 2022**

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 2022

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

**MONTANA
 CULTURAL
 TRUST**



"We are funded in part by coal severance taxes paid based upon coal mined in Montana and deposited in Montana's Cultural and Aesthetic Projects Trust Fund."

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