

January 2023

Coming January 28, 2023: The Year of the Rabbit

Happy “Year of the Rabbit”!

Join us for Butte’s Chinese New Year parade. The dragon will burst from the Butte-Silver Bow Courthouse on 155 West Granite Street at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 28, and then wend its way through Uptown Butte to arrive at the Mai Wah Museum on 17 West Mercury Street. Remember, you are the parade, so come join the fun!

In the Chinese zodiac, Rabbit is a symbol of longevity, peace, and prosperity. People born in a Rabbit year are vigilant, witty, and gentle. Albert Einstein and Michael Jordan were both born in a Rabbit year!



Dragon Dance Team from the Butte High History Club
(2022 Parade)



The Pearl of Wisdom leads the Dragon forward
(2022 parade)



Goddess Chang'e with Rabbit at Lunar Palace by Zhou Wenju,
Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution

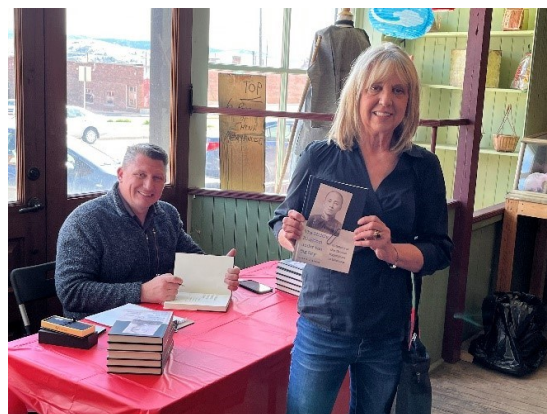
Gong hei fat choy! (恭喜发财),
Traditional Cantonese New Year Greeting

Rose Hum Lee and *The Story of Us*

The *Story of US: The Women Who Shaped Montana* premiered at the Butte-Silver Bow Archives last October. The 40-minute documentary featured Rose Hum Lee and three other women who shaped Montana history. Rose Hum was born in Butte and went on to become a pioneer in the Chinese American history and sociology, and as a professor of sociology became a department head with Roosevelt University. The film was picked up by PBS, although sadly the Rose Hum Lee segment was left on the cutting room floor. To learn more about the film, see the Extreme History Project website at www.extremehistoryproject.org/tag/montana-history.

The Middle Kingdom under the Big Sky is out!

Mai Wah board member Mark Johnson's new book was released in May last year. *The Middle Kingdom under the Big Sky* uses primary documents to describe and explain the struggles and contributions of Chinese Americans in Montana from the 1880s through the 1950s. After a "Brown Bag Luncheon" at the Butte-Silver Bow Archives, the Mai Wah Museum hosted a book signing. Mark's book is available at the museum or at www.bigskychinese.com.



Author Mark Johnson signs a copy of his new book as fellow board member Mary McCormick holds up a copy.

Thank You to the Butte-Silver Bow Archives

The Mai Wah Society sends a huge "Thank you!" to the Butte-Silver Bow Archives for its tremendous support of Butte history and culture. Each Wednesday, the archives hosts a public "Brown Bag Luncheon" featuring talks about our history and culture. The archives also features exhibits of documents and artifacts on historical topics. To learn more, see the archives website at www.buttearchives.org/events and also its video recordings of luncheon speakers at www.youtube.com/@ButteArchives/videos, including Mai Wah board members Mark Johnson and Pat Munday.



Butte-Silver Bow Archives, located in the former Quartz Street fire station at 17 West Quartz Street, Butte MT

“TODAY All Day” Visits Mai Wah and Pekin

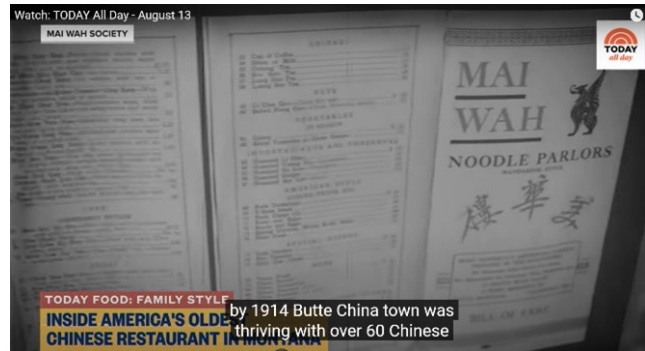
Butte’s Mai Wah Museum and Pekin Noodle Parlor were featured on the August 13, 2022 episode of “TODAY All Day”, a streaming spin-off from NBC’s Today Show. In the “TODAY FOOD: Family Style” segment, host Al Roker explores the history of America’s Chinatowns. Al dials in on the Pekin Noodle Parlor (est. 1909; photo below) as America’s “longest running family owned Chinese restaurant”. For network television, this is a remarkably well researched, historically nuanced, and admirably presented look into Chinese American culture.



As third-generation owner and chef at the Pekin Noodle Parlor, Jerry Tam (photo at right) exemplifies the values described by Young. The show weaves the Tam family story and the larger historical role of Chinese restaurants in America into a seamless story, much of it focused on Butte’s unique Chinatown on America’s western mining frontier.

Those of us who live in or otherwise know Butte understand and appreciate the Pekin as a little stage where the story of food unfolds. When we eat a meal there, we perform Chinese American culture and Butte history. The story began with the Tam elder who emigrated from Canton to Montana in the 1860s. The Pekin was established by Hum Yow, a Tam relative who sold the restaurant to Tam Ding Kuen after Tam emigrated from Hong Kong in 1947. We know Tam as “Danny Wong”, who died in 2020 leaving Jerry to write the next chapter in this amazing story.

You can watch the show on TODAY All Day’s YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eb0iMZM0epU. The America’s Chinatowns segment begins at the 30-minute point and ends at the 60-minute point in the episode. 吃好喝好!(Eat well, drink well!)



To frame Chinese American food, the show interviews Grace Young, an award-winning author, culinary historian, and Chinatown activist. Young grew up in San Francisco and her *The Wisdom of the Chinese Kitchen* (1999) and *The Breath of a Wok* (2004) transcend being more than just cookbooks—instead, they are family and cultural explorations of the history, meaning, and daily significance of Chinese food



Qingming 2022

Qingming, known in English translation as Tomb-Sweeping Day, is celebrated in China on the 15th day after the Spring Equinox. Early April is still a wintry time in Butte and so we celebrate the festival a bit late. Last year, that date was May 14th.

We celebrate Qingming to commemorate Butte's Chinese American legacy, to honor the ancestors with gifts of wine, food, and burning joss paper (spirit money), and to invite the public to learn more about Chinese American culture. Qingming is a celebration of life and the return of spring as well as an appreciation of the ancestors. So, once the solemn part of the celebration ends there is time for the living to enjoy snacks and fly kites. This past year, it was especially gratifying to see children join the festivities.



Asking the Shepherd Boy Where to Find Wine on a Rainy Qing Ming Day
A painting by Liu Guohui (ChinaDaily.com) based on the famous poem by Du Mu

Richard Gibson Honored as Lifetime Member

Richard “Dick” Gibson came to live in Butte in 2003 after semi-retiring from a highly successful career as a geologist. The move sparked what became his second great passion, Butte’s rich and deep history and culture. Dick soon established himself as one of Butte’s most notable and prolific local historians. His tenure on the Mai Wah Society’s Board of Directors, from 2008 to 2018, serves as a microcosm of his significant contributions to our understanding of the forces and peoples that shaped Butte into one of the most dynamic and diverse cities in the American West.

By his own account, Dick is most proud of his work with others to document and preserve the life history of members of the Chinn Family that operated the Wah Chong Tai mercantile and Mai Wah noodle parlor for nearly half a century. Immigration records, photographs and other family documents left behind in the Mai Wah/Wah Chong Tai building all helped him weave the family’s legacy onto interpretive banners. More importantly though, Dick reached out to Chinn Family descendants scattered across the country, collecting remembrances and developing ties with the Society that remain in place to this day. Renewed friendships encouraged some 26 Chinns to travel to Butte for a family reunion in 2014.

Additionally, Dick developed the museum’s exhibit of artifacts uncovered during archaeological excavations in a block of former Chinese business and homes, now a parking lot across the street from the museum. This long and sometime tedious job required combing through literally thousands of artifacts to identify display-worthy specimens, researching artifact functions and age, and preparing interpretive displays and booklets. Project Archeologist Mitzi Rossillon assisted Dick in these efforts.



Dick enjoys biking on the many miles of trails that weave through the Butte area.



Dick making a public presentation on a topic in geology .

In his role as the treasurer, Dick sought to improve the Society’s financial standing. Besides implementing cost saving measures, he updated the organization’s bookkeeping practices to professional standards and established an annual budgeting process. The Society’s improved financial condition played a significant part in its ability to secure sizable grants that were used to stabilize and preserve the Mai Wah/Wah Chong Tai building’s exterior materials and features in 2017-19.

Montana's Chinese Cemeteries: Translating and Interpreting what Remains

While thousands of Chinese residents lived in Montana during the late-19th and early-20th centuries, few traces of their presence remain. Scattered across the state, four cemeteries bear witness to their presence and their passing. Numerous headstones, written in Chinese characters, attest to the presence of Chinese Montanans and hold key information to understand their experiences and transnational connectedness more fully. Specifically, Mt. Moriah Cemetery in Butte has many Chinese headstones. Helena, Bozeman, and Billings also have headstones commemorating their Chinese residents.

The Mai Wah Society, with financial support from the Montana History Foundation, is conducting a grant to study these historic Chinese cemeteries. This grant funds translation of the inscriptions on each headstone so that identification of the individuals commemorated is possible. With this information obtained, research into the lives of these individuals will build as full of a picture as possible of their lives in Montana. Furthermore, the headstones indicate the home village for each individual. It is hoped that these villages can be located, and connections made to more fully appreciate the transnational experience of the Chinese migrants who settled in Montana.



The results of the project will be shared in two ways. First, the stories and linkages uncovered will be featured on a website to share the findings with the public. Second, the Mai Wah Society and the Butte-Silver Bow Public Archives will host a teacher-training workshop for Montana educators to help them incorporate sites relevant to Montana's Chinese history and the experiences of Chinese Montanans into their curriculum. This workshop, open to teachers from across the state, will be held in conjunction with Tomb Sweeping Festival (Qingming Festival) in Butte in the spring of 2023.

For details and to follow the progress of the grant, visit www.BigSkyChinese.com

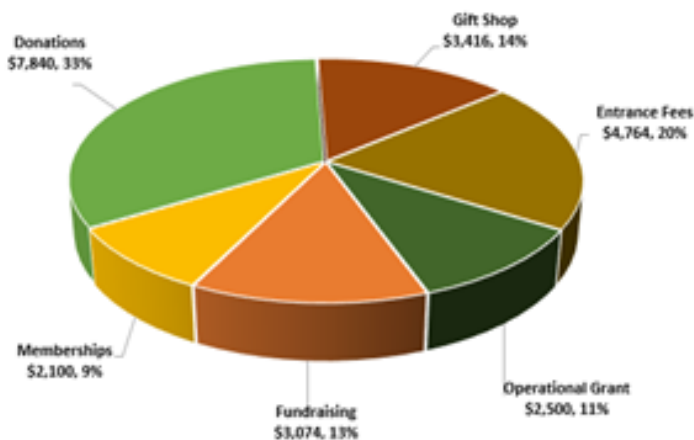
Finances

The Mai Wah deeply appreciates your support. We also value support in the form of time—sometimes the most valuable commodity.

The Mai Wah Society received a total \$23,694 in program income for 2022. This included a cultural trust grant from the Montana Arts Council for general operating expenses. Fundraising included money received from the non-profit Montana Shares Program and our Chinese New Year event. The museum did exceptionally well for program income, bringing in a combination of \$8,180 for the gift shop sales and the museum entrance fees. Donations and memberships also did very well, bringing in a total of \$9,940. Not included in the charts, the Mai Wah received \$7,500 for part of a grant awarded from the Montana History Foundation for Montana Chinese Cemeteries for the translating and interpreting project.

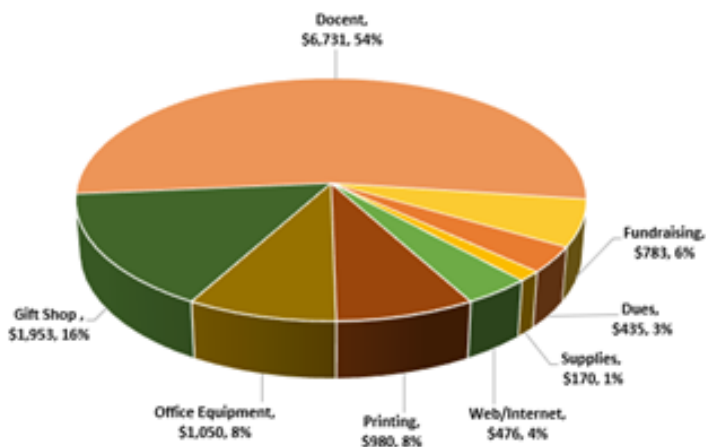


Revenue (\$23,694)

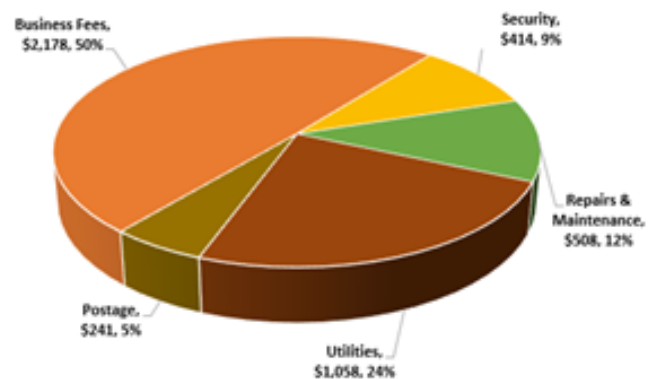


Expenses during 2022 totaled \$16,977 for general operating expenses, program, and fundraising expenses. The majority of expenses were related to business fees, utilities, and the museum docent. Our fundraising expenses were those for the Chinese New Year event. This year, we invested in the museum gift shop, with more inventory, a Square Register unit, and an internet MiFi box for credit card transactions. Thanks to board member and treasurer Kim Tintinger for working with volunteer gift shop manager Jan Munday to make these improvements.

Program & Fundraising Expenses (\$12,578)



G&A Expenses (\$4,399)



2022 Supporters

Thank you to our members and donors for supporting the Mai Wah Society. Please note that we have restructured the former membership levels as donor categories. We have three supporter (donor) levels: \$25, \$50, and \$100 and more. Please consider once again supporting us with your donation for 2023. You can use the donation form in this newsletter or visit our website at www.maiwah.org. We also appreciate additional donations including those from corporate giving programs and local businesses. Happy Year of the Rabbit!

Supporters for 2022

\$100 and more level

Becky Alseth
Demetra Antimisiaris
Julie Bushmaker
Joyce Chinn & Jon Roush
Griff & Kim Davidson
Karen Davidson
Heather McCartney Duty
Linda Dutcher
Dick Gibson
Jim Griffin & Jana Faught
Brian Holland
King F. Hom
Mark Johnson
Don & Nancy B. Jones
Beth Judy
Judy Family Foundation
Nancy A. Kiraly
Alexandra Koelle
Charles Kuether &
Susan Effertz
Christine Lay
Albert & Rhonda Mah
Travis & Jacqueline McAdam
Sheila Monsalud
Jan & Pat Munday
Tom & Jeanna Nance
Winnie Nishimine
Yvonne C. Oliger
Mary Pirch
Jim & Rose Sladek
Ginger So
Roger So
Sons & Daughters of Montana
US Bank Foundation

\$50 level

Linda Borton
David Braaten
Kay & Ray Campeau
Griff & Kim Davidson
Sandra Gong & Victor Sloan
Nancy Huie
Don & Kathy Kieffer
Kay McAllister
Andrea & Jack McCormick
Mary McCormick &
Keith Blount
Bruce & Cheryl McKee
Barbeth Orphan
Noorjahan Parwana & Mark Syverson
Fred & Mindy Quivik
Ernie Richards
Irene & Don Scheidecker
Larry & Debbie Smith
Bobbie Stauffer
Sonny Thornborrow
Henry & Carol Tong
Ian Varley
Gary J. Weiz

\$25 level

Eric Berg
BS Public Library
David & Gloria Carter
Judy Chadwick
Ernest Chann
Celine & Steve Fisher
Becky Garland
Robert Gilman
Erik Hammerstrom &
Aimee Hamilton
Wilma Immonen
Martha Kohl
Lowell & Ruth Luke
Crystal Matteson
Anne & Mark Miller
Honnan Chinn Molloy &
Greg Molloy
Mary Morris
Bill & Janet Pascoe
Diane Sands
Donna J. Young

Special thanks to Winnie Nishimine for her generous donation in honor of the Wah Jean Lam family and to King Hom for his donation in memory of Jack Chinn, Gin Sheow Hom, and Pok Lun Hom (aka Peter Chinn).

Thank You! 谢谢

Chinese New Year Blessing Donors

Bad Beaver Bikes/Tap 'er Lite Coffee Roasters
BSB Public Library
Copper City Physical Therapy
Dancing Rainbow
Elevated Dispensary
Headframe Spirits
Ingraham Environmental Inc.
Jade Hair Studio & Spa
KR Creative Strategies
KBMF Radio
Main Street Uptown Butte
Metals Sports Bar
Miners Hotel
Pita Pit
Quarry Brewing
Dori Skrukrud
Taco Del Sol



MAI WAH
MUSEUM
BUTTE, MONTANA

Mai Wah Society

DONATION FORM

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 2023**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Donation Level

☐ \$25

☐ \$50

☐ \$100 or more

Amount enclosed for donation: _____


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

Thank You! 谢谢

*Mai Wah Society Newsletter
January 2023*

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

MAI WAH SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Shari Curtis, Travis McAdam, Pat Munday, Daniel Gardener,
Mary McCormick, David Stonehocker, Heatherlynn Meeks,
Mark Johnson, Kim Tintinger


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

Return Service Requested

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



"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."

