



過去的幾個星期,人們都在歡天喜地慶祝中國新年,我們深感自豪,因為我們的文化備受關注,受到喜愛。

近日,克利夫蘭當代中文學校在 Solon center for the art 隆重舉辦了 2023 農曆新年慶祝活動, Solon 市長 Edward H. Kraus 在中文學校校長黎博的陪同下觀看表演,他讚不絕口說“這個活動辦得太棒了”,他喜歡中國人,喜歡小孩子,他表示他們是未來,能接受自己國家的傳統文化,一代人一代人的傳承。他說他也喜愛中國食物,看着他津津有味品嚐美食的十分高興。當日還有文藝演出,各個舞蹈藝術表演都非常喜慶。演出場地門口還安排有兩位警察專門維持秩序,進門還有專門人員迎賓。過節啦,大家其樂融融相聚一起。

今年 Tri-C 的大師傅老師 KY WAI WONG 帶領 Tri-C 學在克利夫蘭最豪華的俱樂部之一的 Union Club,隆重主辦中國新年大餐,他讓學生們學習正宗中國傳統菜,其中有最昂貴的鱈魚,長壽面等美味大餐,並且用吉祥橘子做的台特別引人注目。

2月3日,在克利夫蘭 Cavaliers 與孟菲斯 Griz-



zlies 的比賽中,大屏幕上播放的全是克利夫蘭中國城發生的社團活動,有美華協會,有三姐妹舞蹈學校,有 Asian, 克利夫蘭中城華裔代表 Karis Tzeng 還在舞臺上接受表彰,克利夫蘭華人社團在社會上得到尊重,這是各個社團努力與付出得到的成果。

同時在新年期間我們也遇到了災難,殺地地震讓人害怕恐懼,我們沒有辦法阻止自然災難,但是我們也看到我們人為的戰爭在今天還在延續。美國夢到底在哪里? 到底是什么?我認識的一對夫婦,大家都稱她何太太,半個多世紀他們夫婦在美國相敬如賓恩愛有加,三代同堂其樂融融,每次看到他與先生一起請朋友吃飯聊天總能體驗到他倆在一起的恩愛貼體,何太太早年在香港,看到美國娃娃那么美麗,就是因為這個向往他們放棄香港來美國,每次與他們一起都總感到溫暖。



## 爆炸現場 採訪報道

1991 我帶著仰視的心態來到美國,這么多年來對美國的認知模糊了:美國還有許多小鎮窮的讓人想這是不是美國。目前讓華人高度關注的發生在 2 月 3 日,俄亥俄州的小鎮 (East Palestine) 一列載有毒化學物質的火車出軌事故。

2 月 14 日下午 3 點,我得知俄亥俄州州長邁克·德懷恩 Mike DeWine 在哥倫布舉行第四次新聞發佈會。州環境保護局和其它有關部門接到我們的採訪電話後都讓我們直接去發佈會瞭解情況。由於我們已經決定更希望能夠到現場獲得第一手資料,時間緊任務急,儘管知道現場還處於封鎖狀態,我們還是決定開車奔向事故目的地。

離開發生事故地方 30 分鐘的高速上,我看到路牌 Youngstown Caulfield, 想到 10 多年前好朋友黃小波就住在附近,就給她打了電話,她說太巧了,她的上海朋友的工廠就在事故發生的地方!

真是太幸運了! 小波馬上幫我聯繫上工廠的老闆江虹女士,她告訴我們,通往現場的道路還封着,但是她可以帶我們進去!

今天和我一起的是克利夫蘭有名的攝影師老章,他說:我們能進入原爆點了!

東巴勒斯坦是一個典型的美國小村,沒錯,East Palestine village。市中心有一個公共圖書館,加油站,診所,幾家餐館,一元店



## 人生得失相伴 世間福禍相隨



泳池里的氣氛非常類似,眼睛也開始受刺激。已經過了工廠下班的時間,江女士主動帶我們去位于原爆中心的第二家工廠

CeramFab Inc. 她們的這家廠應該是離火車脫軌起火地點最近的工廠了,說是離得最近的建築也大體不差。在全國媒體報道中反復出現,被稱為藍房子的就是江虹她們的工廠。

我們在現場看到停車場左側,大型作業車輛還在不停工作,扭曲的罐車和冷凍車殘骸堆積在一邊。“他們佔用了我們修整一新的停車場,過了好幾天才通知我們,儘管可以理解,但真的很讓人無奈心痛。”看着眼前的滿目蒼夷,江女士神色凝重。

另外停車場的一部分已經被車輛碾壓成泥,幾個人正在把淤積起來的污水抽到罐車里。一個名叫 Gal 的年輕人告訴我們,他所在的公司專攻危險物品處理,這次事故發生後被緊急從東部巴爾莫市召集過來。他們把污水和地標污染物質收集起來,統一轉運到別處再進一步去污處理。他們每天長時間工作,晚上住在附近公司找的酒店里。除了全套作業服和安全帽以外,沒人戴口罩。“環境部門說空氣正常了,不需要再戴(口罩)了。”正逢昨天情人節,我送了他巧克力,看着他滿臉疲憊但精神還很飽滿,為工作在第一線的人員點贊。

還有廠房後面不到 15 米就是鐵路,雙向兩條鐵軌,被置換下的燒焦的枕木和扭曲的鐵軌還在中間地段。廠房對面鐵路的一側一塊空地上同樣停滿了各種工程車輛,不遠處有幾部挖掘機正在把挖起來的泥土裝車。廠房東邊不到 50 米外的樹林里堆滿了廢棄的火車車廂,那里就是第二次控制焚燒的現場。

老章走到鐵路中間尋找最佳鏡頭,江女士叫他小心,因為每 12 分鐘就會有一列火車經過。經營這條鐵路的諾福克南方貨運公



年一度中國新年,也吸引了其他族裔的關注,Cuyahoga County Public Library in Parma, Ohio 一場學術性的新年活動。英文如下

## ICC-WIN Program celebrating the Asian New Year and its customs

A great program on the annual Asian New Year Festival was held on Saturday February 11 at the Cuyahoga County Public Library in Parma, Ohio. This was sponsored by the ICC-WIN organization (Intercultural Community Council and Worldwide Intercultural Network) under its president, Ken Kovach.

We had three great presenters under Moderator Kovach's leadership. They were Jason Chao from the Chinese Community, Ms. Gia Ho Ryan from the Vietnamese Community, and Attorney Joseph Meissner from the Friendship Foundation of American-Vietnamese.

President Kovach had developed an outstanding Power point presentation about this Asian festival. "It covers," he summarizes, " (1) the history of the Celebration, (2) customs, (3) foods, and (4) greetings for the Asian and Vietnamese New Year's." Mr. Kovach offered this almost unknown fact. "By the way, for

and friendship which may have been weakened by long periods of separation.

She also discussed the many special treats of fruits and candy and sweets which are part of the celebration. She had brought a nice selection of these in a large ceramic tray. She had long strings of coconut candy, the tiny spicy ginger candies, and small sesame seed cookies. She passed these around for people to sample and enjoy.

Finally she emphasized how the Tet Season brings the family together and children learn about the culture of Vietnam while honoring their own older relatives. Both she and Jason discussed how the New Year was a time for ending old feuds and rebuilding friendships among all.

Attorney Joseph Meissner, who served in Vietnam war and has returned to that beautiful country some 35 times on humanitarian missions with the Friendship Foundation of American-Vietnamese which was founded in 1993 by Ms. Ryan, offered a serious note to the discussions. "These holidays celebrations have often crossed over into history as important occasions," he began. "Some of these include the famous truce at Christmas in WW I when German and Allied soldiers stopped their fighting and sang Christmas Carols to each other, played soccer together, and even exchanges gifts such as tobacco and food.

He then explained how holiday seasons have actually been used as a

Chinese this is the year of the RABBIT; for the Vietnamese, this is the year of the CAT." The presenters at this event gave various explanations for this difference. (Mr. Kovach's highly educational Power Point presentation can be obtained from him by sending requests to ICC-WIN.)

Jason Chao explained how this festival is meant to celebrate the reunion of families. People will travel across the globe in order to return to their original homes and once again see their parents and all the relatives. It is a time for great rejoicing which includes so many special foods such as a special sticky rice and various cakes. "This is a time for rest and enjoyment," he declared. "no work is to be done such as sweeping the floor and cleaning the house. All of this is to be accomplished before the New Year." He also detailed how parents present special red envelopes to the children, filled with new currency.

Ms. Ryan, wearing a beautiful Ao Dai or Vietnamese long gown with a design in front showing the outline of the country of Viet Nam, continued expanding upon Jason's comments. "That is right about the currency or li xi custom," she began. She showed the bright red envelopes in which the new money is hidden. The Vietnamese also have interesting customs for this period which can last ten days. On the very first day, the home welcomes some special guest who must be the first one to cross the threshold in the New Year. The family believes that such a special person will bring the household good luck and prosperity throughout the upcoming year.

She also recounted how the Vietnamese have their own special Tet foods. One of these is "Ban chung" which is a special square rice cake. Inside the center can be all sorts of goodies, like pork or sweet bean paste. There is a companion round rice cake. Some think the square cake symbolizes males while the round one symbolizes females.

Gia Ho stressed how the family is the whole center of this Tet season and attendance serves to strengthen the bonds of love

and friendship which may have been weakened by long periods of separation.

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camouflage to fool enemy forces. "The Germans used the holiday season as a cover for the Battle of the Bulge in which they sought to break out of Allied encirclement. One of the most serious of such efforts was the Tet Offensive in 1968. There had been an unwritten custom that both sides during the annual Tet period would refrain from offensive military actions and allow many of their troops to go home to their families to enjoy reunions. In 1968, their Communists even urged the South Vietnamese government to allow even more troops time off. The Communists used this time in order to smuggle their weapons and soldiers into many civilian areas and cities. Then on the night of January 31 and day of February 1 they launched devastating surprise attacks all over Vietnam. They hoped to provoke a general uprising among the people against the government. But South Vietnamese soldiers although surprised by Communist treachery and the first day of the fighting, returned to their units and rallied. Although there were 10,000 friendly casualties, the Communists lost over 40,000 of their troops. Also the Southern VC forces were decimated since the North Communists sent them into the battle first. 75% of the casualties were southern Communist soldiers. Finally, there was no general uprising since while many South Vietnamese may not have liked the war, they did not want to live under Communist rule.

Then Meissner summed up. "Up to this time many Allied leaders believed that the were winning the war. But the Tet Offensive although a tremendous Communist defeat, because of the surprise and devastation, people came to believe that the war was a stalemate and Allied leaders looked to negotiations. Why is this events relevant today? Remember at Christmas last year, the Rus-

sians proposed a truce. The Ukrainians leery of Russian trickery did not go along with that. Perhaps they took a lesson from the 1968 Communist strategy of missing a holiday season.

Moderator Ken Kovach concluded this event. He thanked the three presenters, and called for a round of applause from the audience. "This successful event will be followed by more such ICC-Win activities," he promised. "I invite all of you to attend, enjoy and learn as we celebrate all of our great cultures and traditions. "Happy New Year," "Chuc Mung Nam Moi" which translates in Vietnamese as "Happy New Year," and "Gong hei fat choy" (恭喜發財), which is Cantonese Chinese for "Wishing you happiness and prosperity."

"See you again," Kovach thanked all for attending.

