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Chinese Proverb

“The palest ink is better than the best memory.”

好记性不如烂笔头

CSCCI 2015

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Wontons, Mooncakes, and Clay oh my!

This year CSCCI is partnering with the What If Festival and Clayfest for an evening of food, fun, arts, and culture! For the past several years, Mark Wong has held an empty bowl fundraiser in preparation for the two art festivals:

Clayfest is coming. Our annual celebration of clay features potters' wheels, clay and teachers. Free lessons on the wheel and in hand building are made available to all who don't mind getting a little dirty in pursuit of art. The fun starts at the What If Festival in downtown Colorado Springs on September 19th and culminates in a weekend firing of those pieces with even more lessons in Manitou Springs' Soda Springs Park on October 3rd and 4th – 10am-4pm on all days. Actually the fun really begins on the 13th of September with our empty bowls fundraiser...

As much as we appreciate donations, we know that self-sufficiency is better. To this end we put on an empty bowl fundraiser featuring gourmet wontons. These are the best wontons ever tasted since last year's fundraiser. They will come in three flavors – pork and shrimp filling in a chicken/ginger broth; and tofu and black bean filling in a vegetable/mushroom/ ginger broth as a vegan option. All options will be served in a handmade bowl donated by local potters to support our event. Bowls will cost \$10.00 and come with a serving of wontons. For another \$10.00 the bowl becomes bottomless. \$20.00 buys a bowl to keep and as many wontons as you can eat. This event will happen at the Manitou Art Center from 1-4:00pm on September 13th. All proceeds will be used to buy clay and pay teachers at the What If Festival and Clayfest.

The only thing better than an afternoon enjoying scrumptious wantons is an afternoon enjoying scrumptious wantons AND delectable mooncakes! CSCCI will be providing these traditional treats to celebrate this year's moon festival. Read more about the history of mooncakes and the Moon Festival on pages two and three, and make sure to join us on September 13th for an afternoon with fun for everyone!

Find out more about Mark Wong's story, art, and events on page four.



The Moon Festival

By Boni Jiang

September 27th will be a traditional Chinese holiday: the Moon Festival. Families gather together on this day to have dinner and enjoy the moon at night. Since China is quite broad and diverse, different areas have different cultures and activities to celebrate this festival. In Zhejiang Province people like to watch the tides of Qiantang River. In Hunan Province and parts of Hubei and Guangdong provinces people like to light lanterns. In most places people will do one or more activities such as figuring out riddles, eating moon cakes and fruits, enjoying sweet osmanthus (a small, yellow, sweet smelling flower) and drinking osmanthus wine, making lanterns, or building a fire tower.

The Moon Festival originated in China very early. According to the "Book of Rites", emperors (400-700 BC) were already recorded to have moon-related sacrifice/ worship activities. Farmers have been long celebrating fall harvest on this day of "mid-autumn". The Moon Festival eventually became a significant custom next to only the Chinese New Year. This tradition also spread among different ethnic groups across China and beyond China. Today more than twenty minority groups in China and several Asian countries, such as Korea, Vietnam, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philipians, celebrate this festival. Of course overseas Chinese people keep this tradition in different ways. Many Chinese people who are new to North America have an interesting observation: the moon here looks bigger and rounder. Even a famous Chinese poem stated "it is always the moon of hometown that looks rounder".

Although celebration styles vary, the essential spirit of this festival is always about family reunion. When I was young, my grandma always prepared a round cake to symbolize family reunion. Each family member would receive a piece and a missing family member would be remembered by saving a piece too. The round shape (yuan in Chinese) here represents being complete. No wonder there are round tables and round moon cakes. What is better than a full moon to represent this meaning? However, as the moon changes its shapes constantly, it also indicates that life can never be full or complete all the time. Su Shi, a poet also known as Su Tungpo (1037-1101), concluded in his poem:

Men have sorrow and joy; they part or meet again;

The moon is bright or dim and she may wax or wane.

There has been nothing perfect since the olden days.

So let us wish that man

Will live long as he can!

Though miles apart, we'll share the beauty she displays.

中秋节

今年9月27日是中国人的传统佳节—中秋节。这一天的传统活动是阖家团圆，吃饭赏月。由于中国地域宽广，各地风俗不同，中秋节时浙江一带有观潮，湖广一带有燃灯，不少地方都有猜谜，吃月饼、瓜果，赏桂花，饮桂花酒，玩花灯，烧塔等风采各异的活动。

中秋节在中国起源很早，据《礼记》记述，春秋时代帝王就已开始祭月、拜月了。中秋节也是农民以“中秋”这一天作为庆丰收的节日。因此中秋节就是古人遗传下来的一种习俗，而且是中国仅次于春节的第二大传统节日。由于这个节日源远流长，所以在中国不仅汉族群众过中秋节，就是蒙古族、藏族、满族、壮族等二十多个少数民族也过中秋节。而在国外的朝鲜半岛、越南、日本、新加坡、马来西亚、菲律宾等国家和地区的民众、尤其是华裔侨胞都以各种形式过这个节日。在北美的华人也尽力保持这个传统，他们常会有一个有趣的观察：美国的月亮似乎更大更圆，尽管古诗云“月是故乡圆”。

尽管有各种庆祝节日的方式，长久以来这个节日中最重要的精神内涵还是“阖家团圆”。记得我很小的时候，家中过中秋节就有烙“团圆”的习俗，即烙一种象征全家团圆的小饼，祭月之后，由外婆将饼按人数分切，每人一块，如果有人不在家，也要为其留下一份，寓意阖家团圆。“圆”意味着完整，难怪中国人喜欢圆桌和圆圆的月饼，一轮满月不正好代表这个意义吗。不过如同月亮不断改变形状一样，人生又如何能够总是圆满呢？如苏轼的词云：

“人有悲欢离合，
月有阴晴圆缺，
此事古难全。
但愿人长久，
千里共婵娟。”



www.killalofestivalofflight.com



Yvonne Ruperti - www.seriousseats.com

The Mooncake & Its Festival

By Jiaying Peng

As autumn nears, many in the Chinese community look forward to celebrating the Mid-Autumn Festival, also known as the Mooncake Festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month of the Chinese calendar. Inspired by the full moon that appears without fail every year on the night of the holiday, families will celebrate by gathering and sharing an abundant meal, reflecting the moon's wholeness in the wholeness of family. This festival has been celebrated in China for thousands of years, and the dessert associated with it is almost as famous and important as the holiday itself. But how did the mooncake become such a huge staple in the celebration of the holiday?

Everything in Chinese culture needs to have a fable or legend explaining why something is the way it is. So here is the fable that explains why mooncakes are eaten on the fifteenth day of the eighth month (in the Chinese calendar). Once upon a time, China had been overtaken and was ruled by the brutal, ruthless Mongols. The Mongols, who according to this fable, were brutish soldiers and had not bothered to learn about the Chinese culture or participate in its traditions or language. So, there was a bright revolutionary who sought for a way to overthrow the cruel Mongolian overlords. His name was Liu Bowen, and he hatched a bright idea to overthrow the government. Since the Mongols didn't celebrate any Chinese holidays, including the Mid-Autumn Festival, and they certainly didn't eat mooncakes, Liu Bowen got the brilliant idea to spread a message to all of the Chinese using mooncakes. He wrote, "Kill the Mongols on the fifteenth" in Chinese characters on the dough pastry shell of the mooncakes. He distributed these mooncakes a couple of days before the planned attack on the day of the Mid-Autumn Festival. The Mongols would never go near a mooncake, and couldn't even read Chinese so they were completely oblivious to the plan. Liu and his fellow revolutionaries succeeded in their overthrow of the government, all thanks to the Mongols' ignorance and the help of the mooncakes.

So, according to the fable, we eat mooncakes on the Mid-Autumn Festival in order to commemorate this historic event in Chinese history. Today, the Chinese characters on the pastry shell usually just tell the flavor of the cake, and not inciting mass murder. The next time you enjoy a mooncake with your family, think about the history of this little cake, and its influence on not only the holiday, but also Chinese culture.



Deirdre - www.achildgrows.com

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:

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- _____ Non-profit organization (up to 20 members) \$450
- _____ Silver Patron \$150
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- _____ Platinum Patron \$500

Mark Wong Biography

After graduating from Pomona College with a Bachelor of Arts in 1990, Mark Wong returned home to the foot of Pikes Peak where he has been making his one of a kind ceramics ever since. He specializes in all things round as his concentration has been focused on wheel thrown vessels. The decoration of said vessels has led to experimentation with a variety of treatments and temperature ranges. The results have been disappointing at times but now and then an amazing piece is created that justifies the previous failures. In the pursuit of these moments, Wong has developed his own glazes, clays, and even kilns to control the various reactions at varying temperatures needed for these pieces to shine. The classic struggle has continued in converting happy accidents into a consistent line of work. Rich reds and blues in harmony on a stone ware vessel can be breath taking but the customer might have the audacity to want those colors on all the pieces ordered.

With the mastery of these elements, Wong has developed a line of glazes offered on expertly thrown vessels that grace galleries up and down the Front Range. He is also available for custom orders and will emboss vessels with any logo desired for whatever the occasion calls. His latest installations can be seen at craneplayers1000@blogspot.com and mugshotmac@blogspot.com with each blog containing documentation of the shows as well as their premises. He is also involved with the Manitou Art Center where he takes point in organizing Clayfest events (clayfest.com) as well as teaching the occasional class in his studio next to his house.

When Wong isn't puttering (pottering?) about the studio, he can be found roaming Manitou Springs with his dogs, skiing, or slapping the water with a fly or two (Can't call it fishing without getting the net wet.) His work can be seen on line at wongwares.com and he can be reached there as well. (mark@wongwares.com)

Upcoming Asian Holidays

Moon Festival
September 27, 2015

Chinese New Year
February 8, 2016

Upcoming Asian Cultural Events

CSCCI Wonton Empty Bowl Fundraiser
Manitou Art Center, Manitou
September 13, 2015

CSCCI Chinese New Year Festival
City Auditorium, Colorado Springs
January 30, 2016

*Register online at www.cscci.org

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

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Clayfest & What If Festival

Each year at our Chinese New Year's celebration I am proud and honored to show case my abilities at the potters' wheel for the amusement of any who care to watch. If the viewing crowd gets small enough I'll often invite a brave soul to have a lesson. This impromptu duet is often much more amusing than my humble solo efforts and can be seen on a much larger scale at the What If Festival on September 19th this year. Every year the What If Festival, centered in downtown Colorado Springs, attracts thousands of inquisitive minds to a multitude of interactive displays and games. I have been proud to be a part of this for a few years now. Our booth consists of at least 6 wheels with potters giving free lessons to any who don't mind getting their hands dirty. We supply the clay, the wheels and the teachers. We will also provide arrangements for finished work to be fired for a small fee. All pieces not put aside for firing will be recycled as clay for the Clayfest two weeks later.

The Clayfest in Manitou Springs is a weekend celebration of clay. There will be free lessons and demonstrations. Wheel throwing and handbuilding exercises are always featured. Also featured is a portable kiln where works from the What If Festival will be fired after being decorated by their creators. There will also be pieces provided for any who want to decorate one and see it fired before their eyes. This two day event is open to the public and free of charge. Clay and wheels will be provided as well as a large kids' area. For more information please visit clayfest.com and imaginationcelebration.org

I look forward to seeing lots of faces, old and new, at each event!

-Mark Wong

