AACA Graduates Next STEP Classes

Sampan.org

وبالطبع، لن يكون هناك شفط في تدقيق شواهد بريطانية، فهي تقدم الكثير من المعلومات ذات الصلة في مجالات العمل، وتحفيز وتحليل التحديات. في هذا السياق، يمكن للأشخاص الذين يرغبون في التقدم في هذا المجال أن ينظروا إلى هذه الموارد للحصول على معلومات وفرص تعمل بها في السوق.

Babson Global Edge

الصور

INFECTIOUS DISEASE NEWS

Sandeep Chopra

Harvard University

Earlier in the pandemic, Harvard University was one of the first schools to ask students to leave campus. Elyna Chang, a Chinese-American senior who is currently home in Atlanta, Ga., was one of the many students who had to leave on short notice. "I found out I was being kicked off campus mid-March," she said. "I was actually sleeping in my dorm when my roommate woke me up saying to get ready."

Fusion Mayor Hat bean

Despite the exigencies of the pandemic, Chang and her friends continued to communicate and support each other. "We're still trying to stay connected and keep up with each other's lives," she said.

University of Massachusetts

The University of Massachusetts Amherst has made several changes to its campus in response to the pandemic. In addition to requiring students to wear masks and maintain social distancing, the university has implemented new protocols for housing, dining, and transportation. These changes have helped to reduce the spread of COVID-19 on campus.

Virtual University

The Virtual University offers a wide range of online courses and programs, including degrees, certificates, and short courses. The university has a strong commitment to accessibility and affordability, and offers a variety of financial aid options to help students afford their education.

Weather

The weather in Boston is typically characterized by its predictability. During the summer months, the city experiences warm, humid days with occasional thunderstorms. In the fall, the weather becomes cooler, with brisk winds and occasional fog. During the winter, the city experiences cold, snowy conditions, and the summer months are marked by warm weather with occasional thunderstorms.
The Greenway Conservancy hard at work with summer maintenance and improvements

The Greenway Conservancy has been hard at work this summer on The Greenway, working on the maintenance and improvement of Auntie Kay & Uncle Frank Chin Park, the Viewing Garden, and Mary Soo Hoo Park on The Greenway in Boston’s Chinatown.

The Conservancy’s Maintenance staff services the Chinatown Stream fountain three days per week and attends to lighting, masonry, and furniture needs in Chinatown on The Greenway. This year, this has included masonry repairs in the Chinatown Stream fountain, including repair of all fountain lights at the base of the waterfall. In addition, this winter the Conservancy staff worked with the City of Boston on improvements including the installation of additional bike racks along Hudson Street by Mary Soo Hoo Park and improvements to the base of the Chinatown Gateway. To continue to improve sight lines across the park, Conservancy staff relocated a Conservancy storage box from the plaza to the Edinborough Street edge.

The Conservancy’s cleaning contractor begins every day in Chinatown and spends more time here than anywhere else in the park. To improve cleanliness, the Conservancy this year installed eight cigarette recycling receptacles in Chin Park and Mary Soo Hoo Park, and The Greenway in Chinatown has seen a ten-fold increase in power-washing, from once per week previously in Summer 2019 to at least once daily. Although the Conservancy has been a persistent advocate since 2015 for the community’s interest in the addition of a JCDecaux public toilet in the area, the City of Boston this month announced that this will not be moving forward on The Greenway in Chinatown.

The Conservancy has continued to move forward with a lighting study for The Greenway in Chinatown. We anticipate a second community meeting in Fall 2020 to give an update on progress, in addition to our first community meeting and online survey in February 2020 to solicit community feedback. Funding for the study was provided by the Greenway Business Improvement District (BID) and the Conservancy has successfully fundraised from the Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund and the Greenway BID for a first-phase of lighting projects in 2021.

The Conservancy is proud to be working with Chinatown community organizations on the We Love Boston Chinatown resiliency campaign to support local businesses in Chinatown affected by Covid-19. This includes working to supply additional outdoor seating on The Greenway to support restaurants with limited indoor or outdoor seating options during the Commonwealth and City of Boston’s phased reopening.

In Chin Park, the Greenway Play-Cubes are open for children with a supervising adult and Greenway Fountains across the park are running, including the Chinatown Stream along the serpentine path. Conservancy Zone Volunteers are working across The Greenway, as well as volunteers working on Group Volunteer Projects. To learn more about all of the offerings in the park - free fitness classes, City Winery on The Greenway, the food trucks, the Boston Public Market at Dewey Square, the artisan Greenway Open Market, the Greenway Carousel, and more - check out our website at rosekennedygreenway.org. All Greenway programming features enhanced cleaning and physical distancing. To promote safety for our park visitors.

Have questions? Email info@rosekennedygreenway.org.

Rachel Lake is the Marketing and Communications Manager at the Greenway Conservancy.

Flynn Walk-through Continued from page 1

When you want to reflect a long-term issue where you don’t need the police right now, that is the 311 issue,” he said. “I did read the 311 for my district every morning. I’m reading it personally,” he said.

Mike Stratton, Deputy Superintendent of Boston Police Department, addressed the collaboration between local organizations to service residents, including Boston Inspectional Services, the Mayor’s Office of Recovery Services, Pine Street Inn, St. Francis House, Boston Public Health Commission, whose representatives were present at the walk-through.

“We’re working together every day to address these issues, a lot of the issues that are affecting the community down here,” Stratton said. “When they call 311, they go right to my unit and all of our partners, so we can figure out very quickly who’s going to address the concern.”

“I would ask when you put something into 311 over the computer, if you will also copy me on the email, and I could also follow up with the mayor’s office,” Flynn added.

Another problem brought to the attention of attendees is trash on the streets and illegal dumping of trash, a problem that has gotten worse during the pandemic, damaging the environment and image of Chinatown.

“I will talk to Inspectional Services. I’m sure the councilor has talked to them as well,” said Ciccolo. “We’ll see if we can put something together to deal with it together. It’s more of a civil fine issue than it is a criminal arrest issue.”

“I’m going to file a city council resolution, call for an investigation into illegal dumping in Chinatown,” Flynn told Sampan after the walk-through. “And I’m going to advocate for harsher and stricter penalties for anyone caught illegally dumping.”

By Rachel Lake

The Greenway Conservancy was hard at work this summer on The Greenway, working on the maintenance and improvement of Auntie Kay & Uncle Frank Chin Park, the Viewing Garden, and Mary Soo Hoo Park on The Greenway in Boston’s Chinatown.

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Ken Smith/Sampan

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South Shore Health providing world-class care as one
Several years ago when I was practicing psychiatry at Massachusetts General Hospital, I noticed a pattern among the patients who came to see me – while I saw Asian patients in the outpatient setting. However, I knew for a while that I wanted to do something more to engage my community. Even if I can treat patients in my clinic, many of them continued to suffer the high levels of stigma in their communities.

On July 15 of this year, we launched our new initiative HARMONIOUS to bring culturally among the patients who came to see

We thus aim to create an online resource for people of Chinese heritage to share information, highlight local services, and also provide a space for individuals to share stories, recordings, artwork, and other media about their personal mental health experiences. We want people to understand that these are real experiences from real individuals right in their own backyards. Our hope is that translating and amplifying these stories and lived experiences will encourage more of our community to realize that mental health is real, that help exists, and that we can talk about it instead of suffering in silence.

At this time, we are pleased to be partnering with Somapen to extend our reach further and work more closely with our community. Through this new column, we will continue to share valuable information, resources, and stories of real people who may be right in your neighborhood.

This story is part of a series for HARMONIOUS, a Chinese mental health initiative, overseen by Dr. Xiaoduo Fan for the UMass Chinese Mental Health Program in 2013 with the goal of building sustainable academic collaborations between mental health professionals in the United States and China. In addition to our initiatives abroad, we also have an Asian Mental Health Consultation Service in Worcester, Mass. However, we knew for a while that I wanted to do something more to engage my community. Even if I can treat patients in my clinic, many of them continued to suffer the high levels of stigma in their communities.

To obtain a submission form: http://projectharmonious.org/share/
College Students

Continued from page 1

Without making adjustments to their tuition, Harvard has chosen to do online-only for the 2020-21 academic year for most students. “Only freshmen class will be collectively allowed back on campus, with some on-campus housing requests granted to upperclassmen who apply,” she said. “For the spring semester, freshmen will be replaced by seniors. All classes will be held online, and students living on campus will have very limited access to campus buildings.”

Chang has decided to take a gap semester and not do her coursework online this fall. She had planned to work on her senior thesis and make use of all valuable resources and networks on campus, which she is now unable to do. In addition, her decision was heavily influenced by the tuition costs for online and virtual classes. “By going completely virtual, Harvard College is now essentially an overpriced version of the Harvard Extension School,” Chang said. “Looking up their tuition and cost of attendance, a full semester at HES for 16 credits (4 courses) would total to less than $20,000 without any financial aid; yet the college is still charging $67,000 for essentially the same thing.”

“I personally think Harvard could have done a much better job in every aspect,” said Chang. For instance, forcing people to move without offering financial support has become a huge problem. Both shipping items home and keeping them in storage would cost hundreds of dollars that not everyone can afford. Moreover, she said that students would have preferred tuition reductions over “enforcing universal pass/fail, which the majority of the student body actually voted against, and allowing more than one class year back on campus in the fall.”

Moreover, Chang said, “The College held quite a few online town halls never once allowed audience questions and almost always delivered absolutely no useful information besides constantly promoting the fact that they had set up planning teams and were trying their best. All this builds up a few suspect groups with students and sent out surveys to decide what to do for the fall semester. The majority of us did not feel heard and that they weren’t really taking our opinions into account.”

Massachusetts Institute of Technolgy (MIT)

Like Harvard, MIT has elected to go online for the fall semester. However, seniors are prioritized to return to campus in order to complete their coursework in time to graduate. According to MIT News, they will not be moving forward with the planned tuition increase this year. Undergraduates will also be receiving a grant of $5,000 as well as reduced dining costs by 40 percent.

Kevin Lu is a rising junior at MIT. “MIT’s plans for the upcoming semester are to only have seniors and a select few exempted other students,” he said. “I’m not sure how many seniors elected to stay on campus, but I think 212 students were granted exemptions.”

While he is not sure how classes and research will proceed, Lu is particularly disappointed about the cancelation of a capstone mechanical engineering course where students design and launch a product. “My original plans were to carry on with my degree and also continue training with my lightweight rowing team, but now I’ll just be taking classes online at home alone,” Lu said. “I decided this because I don’t want to delay my education, and also I don’t think there is something as productive I could do if I were to defer.”

“This whole situation is unfortunate. The U.S. was better able to contain the virus’s spread like other countries did,” Lu said. “I am not a fan of their response mostly because other schools are opening up.”

Boston University (BU)

Unlike Harvard and MIT, Boston University has chosen to open up campus for returning students and adopt a hybrid model that allows students to take classes remotely or in-person. BU set up a “Back2BU” website that lists extensive details on how BU will proceed with the upcoming semester, including test protocols as well as life on campus.

Sean Cheng, an international student from the Philippines, has been in Boston since the pandemic. According to Cheng, BU has been contacting students regarding their plans for the fall. “I know that we’ve given the option to either take in-person classes, online classes, or a mix of both. They’ve been releasing protocols for the upcoming semester and how I’ll need to strictly implement testing locations across campus and social distancing policies to ensure the safety of staff, students, and faculty,” he said. “According to the latest update, we’ve been informed that all students will be required through a digital agreement to comply with wearing face coverings, daily symptoms attestation, routine and frequent testing, contact tracing, quarantine, and isolation.”

While Cheng is disappointed in how his senior year is turning out, he is still unsure about his plans for the fall. “I can’t really finalize what my exact plans are for the semester,” he said, “but I’ll most likely be taking online classes while staying in Boston. However, if the situation in the US begins to improve by the beginning of the semester, I could potentially attend some smaller in-person classes later on.”

A rising junior, Anica Abaquin is another international student from the Philippines. However, she is back in the Philippines and has decided to remain there for the semester. Abaquin said, “Making the decision to not return to Boston was a very hard, and frankly, upsetting process for me. As a rising junior, I am aware of the limited time I have left not only in college but also in the United States.”

“This pandemic has been a tough journey for all college students,” she added, “but I think that it has had the most impact on international college students. Returning to Boston is a greater challenge for us because of the long travel flights, ever-changing travel restrictions, fear of racism, and the difficulty of being so far away from the comfort of your family in the event that you get sick. On top of that, there are many obstacles we are confronted with from governmental policies and restrictions.”

Though she has decided to take her classes online while home in the Philippines, it was a difficult choice to make. Taking classes in person was not an option for her due to the risk of exposure to Covid-19 while being surrounded by so many people. The decision to take a gap semester seemed unlikely due to not being eligible for OPT or CPT work authorization if she did not take two consecutive summers of full-time registration at school. Moreover, wanting to graduate on-time was a huge factor, and not all courses are offered in the summer to be able to do so. “There are many other factors I weighed out but ultimately, I decided that taking classes remotely is what would work best for my future plans.” Abaquin said.

Regardless of their individual circumstances, college students have been frustrated by a number of factors. “I’m honestlyinfuriated at how long it’s taking for a wealthy country like the U.S. to get things under control,” Cheng said. “The whole situation should’ve been quelled months ago, but it only seems to get worse due to the incompetence of people in power and the neglect of many ignorant people.”

Regarding plans for the upcoming semester, Abaquin said, “As with any case, there are still a lot of unanswered questions, but I suspect them to address these concerns in the upcoming month leading to the beginning of classes. In my opinion, the biggest challenge for universities isn’t in this period of preparation, rather it is in the opening of classes and how they will quickly respond and deal with crisis management.”

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Tel: (617) 426-9492 x 206
Fax: (617) 482-2316
Editor: Ken Smith
editor@sampan.org
Assistant Editor: Margaret Smith
Tel: (617) 426-9492 x 206
Interim Proof Reader: Kenny Weng
Correspondents: Angi Zhou, Rachel Lake, Xiaoduo Fan, Christine McCue, Richard Lin
Translators: Emma Le, Carey Lin, Isaac Wang
Advertising: Emma Le
ads@sampan.org
Production: Emma Le, Ken Smith

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Virtual summer music program greeted with enthusiasm and high enrollment; fall music education plan awaits state guidance

By Christine McCue
Special to Sampan

As Massachusetts schools formulated plans in March to pivot to online classes that students and parents love, Josiah Quincy Orchestra Program (JQOP), a non-profit, school-based organization that serves Boston families. JQOP was able to create the summer program quickly thanks to having a remote infrastructure already in place since March when it was forced to move all music classes and lessons online for 250 children after Boston Public Schools shut down.

“For the past nine years, the heart of our program has been focused on preserving an orchestra experience for Boston’s most vulnerable youth as a way to nurture individual expression, celebrate unique cultures, and develop social and emotional skills,” said JQOP Executive Director Chris Schroeder. “And even though Covid-19 forced us to change our traditional orchestra model, we’ve been able to quickly pivot to online classes that students and parents love, and continue to engage youth in creative music projects into the summer months.”

Beth Harper is a parent of two elementary school children in Boston Public Schools and is also a Boston pediatrician who appreciates JQOP and the benefits it provides. “Our children continue to have a great experience with JQOP, and that includes the Creative Summer program,” said Harper. “Music education has played an especially important and supportive mental-health role during the pandemic. It fosters connections, and can be a creative outlet that helps children discover a passion, relieve stress, and find comfort at an otherwise frightening time.”

Building on the success of its school-year program, the Creative Summer program is organized into hour-long morning or afternoon classes that run a week in July and will continue into August. Age-appropriate classes are held virtually via Zoom with group lessons on a variety of topics, including instrument lessons, composition, improvisation, music technology, and doodling to music. Each summer, JQOP receives project-based instrument lessons with teaching artists who are typically conservatory-trained musicians and music educators who normally perform regularly throughout Boston.

“The teaching artists are invaluable,” said Harper. “They’re trusted adult role models who can help children overcome all kinds of obstacles. It’s been wonderful to have our kids connection with them extend beyond the school year and into the summer.”

Looking ahead to the fall, Schroeder joins other Massachusetts music educators awaiting guidance from the state on what is possible for the upcoming school year in the midst of Covid-19, but it’s clear that youth music ensembles will continue to be presented with unique challenges, and he believes at least some virtual instruction is inevitable. Regardless of what will be required, Schroeder feels confident that JQOP is well positioned to meet the needs of students and families.

Erik Holmgren, program manager of Creative Youth Development for Massachusetts Cultural Council, agrees. “As music and education has undergone a seismic shift in program delivery due to Covid-19, the Josiah Quincy Orchestra Program has taken a leadership role in taking effective steps to continue to carry out its mission,” said Holmgren. “It has tapped into the artistic and educational expertise of the staff, young people, and the community to create an online learning environment that is defined by its assets, and not what is lacking.”

In an effort to help the school planning process across the U.S., the National Association for Music Education and the National Federation of State High School Associations recently issued a report to help guide music educators on everything from scheduling, instrument demonstrations, and virtual instruction. In addition, more than 100 performing arts organizations have commissioned a study on the effects of Covid-19 to better understand what risks exist in performing arts classrooms and performance venues.

Schroeder noted that an Aug. 13 virtual showcase of student work is planned for 7 p.m. Details will be posted on the JQOP website at jqop.org.

Josiah Quincy Orchestra Program was founded in 2011 as a non-profit, creative youth development organization that uses an intensive and unique ensemble-based music curriculum to help underserved children develop the skills necessary to succeed at school and in life. In partnership with Boston Public Schools and community groups across the City of Boston, it provides a variety of music programming serving more than 260 children ages 4-14 annually.

The reality of supernatural powers

By Venerable Master Hsin Yun, Founder of Fo Guang Shan Temple

Life is filled with suffering and impermanence. When faced with difficulties or problems that cannot be resolved, many turn to the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and their empty nature is the ultimate way to liberation. Possessing supernatural powers are the incredible powers attained through the cultivation of concentration during meditation. These powers are extraordinary. They are telephones, airplanes and the Internet. They are comparable to celestial phenomena can be considered forms of supernatural power.

Furthermore, so-called supernatural powers are the property of only Buddha, bodhisattvas, deities, and ghosts, and such powers are not necessarily strange magical practices. Supernatural powers manifest themselves in many forms everywhere in the universe. Where dark clouds gather thickly, it will rain. Or when air currents converge, there will be windstorms. The changing of seasons, the continuance of day and night, and all changes of natural phenomena can be considered forms of supernatural power.

Supernatural powers can also be witnessed in many ways in everyday life: water relieves thirst, food relieves hunger, those who swim well float in the water, and those who ride a bike go wherever they please. In addition, there are numerous supernatural powers available via the Internet. They are the telephone, able to hear thousands of miles away, the power to transcend physical limitations and celestial vision. Organ transplants and the cloning of animals are developments that were unheard of previously, and are supernatural powers.

Therefore, supernatural powers are the accumulation of human experience, the actualization of wisdom, and the highest utilization of capabilities. For with supernatural powers, there is the pursuit of form and existence, and without the limit of the human body. It is called by the emptiness the nature of the truth that there are limitless uses. Supernatural powers are inferior to morals, and they cannot surpass emptiness. Possessing supernatural powers will not bring one happiness, and morals, on the other hand, are the real treasures that are inexhaustible. To be able to realize and understand the truth and its empty nature is the ultimate way to liberation.

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By Edward Hsieh

During times of relative prosperity, it is easy to forget that the unemployment rate was at a recent historic low of 3.5 percent, it is easy for some to ignore that those that are homeless, unemployed, or even unemployed and stuck in a dead end job. Dismissing these individuals by telling them to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps and get a job fails to acknowledge the dirty truth.Existing workforce development systems do not play in the favor of immigrants or the poor.

By Edward Hsieh, the MassHire Career Centers have helped countless individuals find better jobs, but like the Asian American Civic Association (AACA), MassHire has their hands tied by the Federal regulations that guide the job training voucher system. Training vouchers help individuals get trained and education to improve their career pathways and life. However, depending on federal-funding, the availability of vouchers can be limited, according to the “Catapult Papers”, published by The Boston Foundation SkillWorks, federal-funding for training vouchers has drastically declined over the recent decade in Massachusetts. Even worse, the thresholds to qualify for a training voucher are very restrictive. For example, if you live in a 4-person household with a household income above $40,000, you exceed the income threshold and may not qualify for a training voucher, according to the MIT Living Wage Calculator, a household of this size needs approximately $70,000 to even survive in the Boston area. Basically, you are earning too much to get needed training to improve your life, and realistically, it would be a stretch for you to pay out of pocket for training or college while still supporting your family. Another way to say it – you are not poor enough to receive financial assistance to develop career pathways and fund- ing sources that directly support the training of new talent. Next generation workforce development programs feature four key qualities – being market responsive, focusing on job quality, creating impact, and lifting untargeted people. Reaching these milestones hinges on synergizing from the start with employer partners to develop career pathways and funding sources that directly support the training of new talent. Next generation training requires a shift in corporate recruiting thought processes to view an individual as a long-term investment, not just a disposable cog.

With key employer partners including Casella Waste Systems, EL Harvey & Sons, and US Foods, AACA launched its first next generation workforce development program, Green Automotive Maintenance Skills (GAMS), in February 2020. GAMS students train for 20 weeks to become well-paid, ASE-certified diesel technicians and have the potential to reach a six-figure salary in about two years after placement. Considering some of AACA’s first GAMS recruits were homeless and almost all were unemployed, AACA is literally guiding individuals from nothing to self-sufficiency. Many GAMS employers are directly funding vouchers in the program to give AACA funding flexibility. Employer-supported contract training allows nonprofits like AACA to train any individual, regardless of residency, income or even social obstacle. In return, the employer partners get better trained and pre-screened individuals for needed positions. As employers outside the partner network see this benefit, it can drive more employers to shift towards directly investing in the training of potential recruits. In addition to forming these mutually beneficial relationships with employer partners, for FY21, AACA has already been awarded significant grant funds to expand its job training offerings in the Metro-North region. Due to the generosity of ABD, Commonwealth Corporation, and the City of Somerville Job Creation and Retention Trust, AACA will have even more flexibility and funds to train individuals from Malden, Medford, Everett, Somerville, and beyond.

Many members from these particular communities already were coming to AACA for help with other support services but were facing challenges obtaining vouchers or other funding due to their residential location and other obstacles. In recent history, for example, AACA has counted Malden within its top three catchment areas, based on the number of vouchers. However, several of the funds supporting our workforce development training programs do not accept individuals residing outside of Boston proper.

With this expanded funding and the support of our forward-thinking employer partners, AACA is ready to continue expanding to Metro-North and into the next generation in the new fiscal year to help even more of the most at need among immigrant and low-income populations, as well as those that are just barely squeaking by.

Hopefully, as more next generation workforce development programs launch throughout Massachusetts, those on the federal level will take note and make much needed changes to the voucher system. They need to, especially considering the current situation and recent all-time historic high in unemployment of 14.7 percent in April, The time for next generation workforce development is now.

Edward Hsieh is the Chief Operating Officer of the Asian American Civic Association.
Celebrate ‘World Baijiu Day’

It’s the most popular spirit in the world, with over 11 billion liters produced, and nearly all made in a single country – China. Despite its great popularity, many Americans know little, if anything, about it, and it’s time to enlighten people about the wonders of this fascinating spirit known as Baijiu.

Commonly pronounced as “bye Joe”, the term derives from two words, bai (‘grain’) and ji (‘alcoholic drink’), so Baijiu roughly translates as “white liquor.”

I consider Baijiu to be the Durian of the spirits world. Durian, native to Southeast Asia, has a reputation for possessing one of the most foul odors you’ll ever smell, but plenty of people love the taste of Durian, considering it the king of fruits. Similarly, Baijiu has a reputation with many people of having a foul smell and taste, but the Chinese love it, and like Durian, it isn’t properly appreciated outside of Asia.

I want to raise awareness of Baijiu and now it is an excellent time to do so. Since 2013, “World Baijiu Day” has been held annually on Aug. 9, a holiday intended to raise awareness of Baijiu. This holiday was created and organized by Jim Boyce, who runs the blog Grape Wall of China (http://www.grapewallofchina.com). Baijiu events are held all over the world and have been previously held in Boston and Cambridge.

It’s difficult to pinpoint the exact origin of Baijiu, although many sources believe it was most likely invented about 1000 years ago, though it didn’t receive the name Baijiu until about 300 or so years ago. At its most basic, Baijiu is a grain-based, distilled spirit, commonly produced from sorghum, though sometimes made from rice, corn, wheat, or other grains. The production process is unique, with some similarities to the production of Japanese sake. One unusual element is that fermentation of Baijiu usually occurs in 10-foot deep mud pits, some which are over 100 years old. Baijiu is aged in terra cotta urns, for about a year or two, though some are allowed to age for more than 80 years. These porous vessels are considered a way to purify the product, and don’t add any flavor or color to the spirit like oak barrels.

Today, there are about 10,000 different Baijiu distilleries in China, producing an enormous diversity of the spirit from very cheap alcohol to super premium bottles which can cost tens of thousands of dollars. Baijiu is generally divided into four main categories, identified by aroma, which is also unique in the spirit’s industry. The four basic categories include mi xiang (rice aroma), qing xiang (light aroma), nong xiang (strong aroma), and jiang xiang (sauce aroma).

Many Americans who have tasted Baijiu have sampled a sauce aroma Baijiu, like the cheap and expensive Kweichow Moutai, and its funky flavors don’t appeal to them. They don’t realize that not all Baijiu possesses that strong aroma and that there is a great diversity of Baijiu flavor profiles. There is likely a type of Baijiu that will please their palate. That may be my most important advice: that you should explore the diversity of Baijiu and don’t stereotype it based on a single taste.

Baijiu is a potent spirit, with an ABV of 50 percent plus, and is usually drunk at room temperature as a straight shot to the toast of “ganbei”. Baijiu is an important element of Chinese culture, something which is essentially consumed at every restaurant, at every holiday, for every special occasion, and with every business deal. It’s evenentrained within Chinese diplomacy, and has been regularly served at official state dinners. U.S. Presidents, from Richard Nixon on, have been toasted with Baijiu. Traditionally the Chinese do not drink alcohol to get drunk. Alcohol is a significant aspect of their social interactions but moderation is expected, even when consuming a high alcohol spirit like Baijiu. It helps that Baijiu is nearly always consumed with food, helping to dilute the alcohol they drink. When you order Baijiu, you always order it by the bottle rather than the glass as it’s a social drink, not something to drink on your own.

A theme of “World Baijiu Day” is to go beyond ganbei, and offer Baijiu in different forms, from cocktails to foods. How about a Baijiu slushie? Expand your palate and try something different and more unique. Seek out some Baijiu at a local Spirits shop and have your own tasting party.

You can also visit Sumiao Hunan Kitchen, in Cambridge, which will have Baijiu specials, drinks and food, for “World Baijiu Day.” For example, in a prior year, they offered an enticing dish of Sizzling Baijiu Shrimp. They always have several tasty Baijiu cocktails available, but create something new for the holiday.

Be adventurous, taste some Baijiu, and celebrate “World Baijiu Day!”
**2020 Census takers will be going door-to-door this month as the push is on to get household members to respond**

Chinatown and Asians in Boston showing a low response rate

By Ken Smith

If you haven’t completed the 2020 Census questionnaire, then you could hear a knock on your door this month. The deadline for completing the U.S. Census Bureau questionnaire was extended three months because of the Covid-19 pandemic to Oct. 31, but that date has been cut back a month, and will end Sept. 30.

However, the Census Bureau is not waiting for households to voluntarily participate; it’s go-time for them to get household members to respond in communities where the numbers are low – like Chinatown.

The challenge for census takers is to get the most difficult groups to respond, which in the inner cities includes the homeless, renters, the elderly, and races. In the 2010 Census, millions of people were omitted from the census because they didn’t participate.

Lewis Liu, originally from Guangzhou, China, is the Supervisory Partnership Specialist for the New York Regional Census Center, responsible for the Chinese community. He is also fluent in Mandarin and Cantonese and was hired in October of last year for his new role to oversee the census work in Chinese and Asian communities.

He spoke to SAMPAN in a phone interview. He said that in Boston more than 120 bilingual English and Chinese speaking (both mandarin and cantonese) census takers are ready to begin door-to-door work.

For the U.S. as a whole, the census count has reported a 62.6 percent response rate, amounting to 92.5 million households, online, by phone, or by mail. The Mass. response rate as of July 26 was 64.6 percent, two percentage points below the national average, and ranks 20th out of 50 states.

Boston’s response rate was 52.9 percent. Within the city, census tracts with more than 500,000 populations, Boston ranks 35th out of 39 cities.

Boston census tract for Chinatown is 51.8 percent, lower than the City of Boston as a whole. As of July 1, 2019, 692,600 are the population base of Boston, and the Asian community represents 9.6 percent, but there’s no specific breakdown of the different Asian groups. The question on the census allows for ethnicity to be identified.

“In addition to informing our communities about the coronavirus, we are also helping to protect our communities during these difficult times. We know that scammers are running a number of schemes like COVID-19 charity scams or fake vaccines claiming to cure you of the coronavirus. AARP is sounding the alarm about coronavirus scams, whether it is through the AARP Fraud Watch Network or through our partnerships with local authorities. If you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam. So please encourage our community to speak up about fraud.”

Grace Calvelo-Rustia
Associate State Director
AARP Pennsylvania

**PROTECT YOURSELF FROM VARIOUS CORONAVIRUS SCAMS**

**HEALTH SCAMS**

The AARP Fraud Watch Network Helpline has received thousands of calls about sales of personal protective equipment, offers for treatments, and vaccines claiming to prevent a vaccine for when it’s available – all the work of scammers. These fake offers are coming out of the woodwork – by phone, email, text, social media, even in person. There are no cures or treatments or vaccines yet – any offer that suggests so is a scam.

**CHARITY SCAMS**

Do your research before giving money to any charity seeking donations to support those affected by the coronavirus – the charity could be a fraud, or the fundraisers could keep most of the money they raise to line their own pockets. Two good online resources to check out charities include www.charitynavigator.org and www.give.org.

**HOW TO REPORT COVID-19 FRAUD**

If you or someone you know has been the victim of a fraud or scam, call AARP’s Fraud Watch Network Helpline at 877-908-3360. Their trained fraud specialists can help you know what to do next and how to avoid scams in the future.

AARP has been working to promote the health and well-being of older Americans for more than 60 years. During this pandemic, AARP is providing information and resources to help the AAPI community and those caring for them to protect themselves from the virus AND scammers, and to prevent both from affecting others.

For more information and resources about COVID-19, please visit aarp.org/coro or simply scan the QR code below to follow AARP’s AAPI Facebook page.