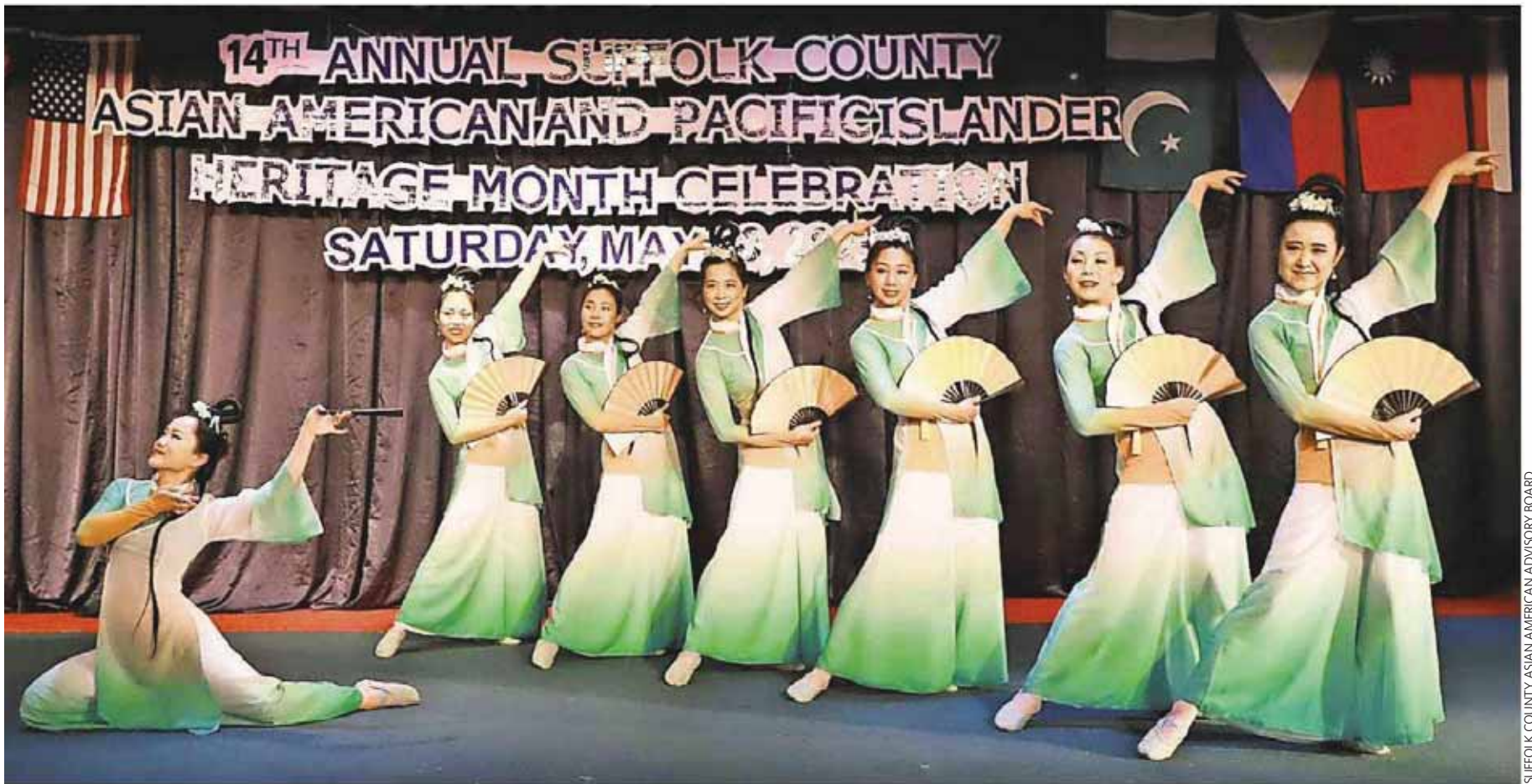




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SUFFOLK COUNTY ASIAN AMERICAN ADVISORY BOARD

Long Island Chinese Dance Group will be performing at the Suffolk Y JCC in Commack on May 18.

A time to CELEBRATE

Honoring Asian culture in cooking, art, music, dance and more across LI

BY MARY GREGORY
 Special to Newsday

Asian cultures are many and varied, familiar and surprising. They go back thousands of years. Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month offers opportunities to connect to our own histories, discover others' and experience distant worlds through our neighbors right here on Long Island.

THIS ART IS HUGE

Stony Brook's Sakura cherry blossom festival may be over, but the blooms don't know that. Marvel at their beauty as you head into the Charles B. Wang Center, which is hosting the work of Korean American master ceramist Sunkoo Yuh in the

exhibition "Cycles of Clay." The center's curator and director of Asian Art and Culture Jinyoung Jin had seen Yuh's work in major museums over the years, including recently at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

"I've always wanted to have his work here," she said, despite the mas-



sive scale and fragility of the pieces. "Long Beach Summer, 2004," the centerpiece of the show, is more than 12 feet tall and weighs 2 tons. It's a monumental conglomeration of figures, animals and natural forms, remembered and imagined, drawn from sketches and doodles. They offer a glimpse into the mind of a particular artist, with the ability, both Jin and Yuh hope, to touch others.

"It's visually stunning," Jin said. "People will find resonance with their personal stories and their backgrounds. That's the power of the artwork."

For a look at local artists sharing their Asian heritage, check out "That was Then, This is Now," an exhibition at Westbury Arts. The title comes from an old Chinese proverb and the artists included new creations responding to art of the past.

GETTING FESTIVE

Two free festivals with music and dance, food and fun feature Asian arts and culture on May 18. The colors and sounds of South Asia come to Nassau Community College as it hosts the fifth annual Vaisakhi Mela. This traditional outdoor Indian street fair draws thousands from all over the region in a buoyant celebration of Punjabi culture. There are traditional bhangra and giddha dancers, live music, dozens of vendors and specialty boutiques, food stalls and plenty of activities for kids. (There's a rain date on May 25.)

If you haven't heard the exotic sound of a Turkish saz (a long-necked stringed instrument), seen a traditional Bangladeshi wedding ceremony or watched a Nepalese folk dance, the Suffolk County Asian American Advisory Board's "One World, Many Cultures" at the Suffolk Y JCC in Commack offers all of those and more. Performances, tasty bites and artwork from Bangladesh, China, India, Korea, Nepal, the Philippines and Vietnam are



JANE JACKSON

Yoshie Takahashi will lead a class in the principles of ikebana at the John P. Humes Japanese Stroll Garden in Locust Valley on May 17.

UPCOMING EVENTS

"CYCLES OF CLAY: THE CERAMIC NARRATIVES OF SUNKOO YUH"

WHEN | WHERE (Through May 24) 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday and noon-7 p.m. Saturday-Sunday (closed May 18-19), Charles B. Wang Center, Skylight Gallery and Zodiac Gallery, 100 Nicolls Rd., Stony Brook

MORE INFO Free; 631-632-4400, stonybrook.edu/commcms/wang

"THAT WAS THEN, THIS IS NOW"

WHEN | WHERE (Through June 6) noon-4 p.m. Thursday, 2-6 p.m. Friday and 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, Westbury Arts, 255 Schenck Ave., Westbury

MORE INFO Free; 516-400-2787, westburyarts.org

"PRINCIPLES OF IKEBANA (JAPANESE FLOWER ARRANGING)"

WHEN | WHERE 3:30 p.m. May 17, John P. Humes Japanese Stroll Garden, 3 Dogwood Lane, Locust Valley

MORE INFO \$15, Free for members (advance registration required); 516-922-1028; northshorelandalliance.org

"FIFTH ANNUAL VAISAKHI MELA, PUNJABI STREET FAIR"

WHEN | WHERE noon-6 p.m. May 18 (rain date May 25), Nassau Community College, Parking lots 4A and 4B, 1 Education Dr., Garden City

MORE INFO Free; 516-857-5297, registration recommended at eventbrite.com

"ONE WORLD, MANY CULTURES"

WHEN | WHERE 12:30-3 p.m. May 18, Suffolk Y JCC, 74 Hauppauge Rd., Commack

MORE INFO Free; 631-853-4738, suffolkcountynyny.gov/events

ASIAN COOKING LESSONS

WHEN | WHERE Check website for dates and times, The Cook's Studio, 10 Wall St., Huntington; 3 Village Green Way, Patchogue; and 805 Broadway, Amityville

MORE INFO \$100-\$125; 631-896-1315; thecooksstudio.com

included, along with children's arts and crafts activities.

FLOWERS AND FOOD

For a moment of quiet and repose amid an abundance of green, head to the John P. Humes Japanese Stroll Garden in Locust Valley. On May 17, you can take a class with Yoshie Takahashi on the principles of ikebana, the ancient art of Japanese flower arranging. Regarded as a high art form, ikebana emphasizes selectivity and harmony over a proliferation of blooms, emulating natural asymmetries on a small scale. Slow down and see the beauty of less.

The cuisines of Asia come in many flavors. Get a taste of several while learning the secrets behind creating those wonderful dishes. The Cook's

Studio, with locations in Amityville, Patchogue and Huntington, can give you the necessary skills.

"We do classes for pot stickers, soup dumplings, sushi. We do a ramen class. We have a pad thai class and Thai fried rice and Bao buns," owner Victor McNulty said.

The classes cost \$100 to \$125 and take about two hours. "When you first come in, you watch the chef do a demo start to finish for a half-hour, like watching a little cooking show. Then it's your turn to cook for about an hour, and then sit and enjoy in the last half hour what you created," McNulty said.

Everything's included. It's all from scratch, and McNulty promises that you'll be cooking "the way a Chinese grandma might make it."

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