

Massachusetts Cultural Council – Folk and Traditional Arts Program
Field Notes Submitted by Eleanor Wachs

**EW-OO-1-FN The 12th Anniversary Asian Lunar New Year Celebration 2000,
North Quincy High School, Jan. 22, 2000**

For the past twelve years, the Asian community in Quincy has celebrated the Lunar New Year by having a large public celebration at the local high school. I have attended the celebration twice and this was my third time attending. The celebration has several purposes: first, the City of Quincy and the local politicians always appear, lending support to the Asian community which represents at least 15% of the city's population. Second, it is a way that the community can present their culture to those outside of it.

In order to get into the auditorium where the event is being held, you have to pass through an area of people manning tables. Most of the signage was not in English, making it clear that this celebration was for those that the underwriters wanted to engage. For example, the Asian Task Force of the city of Quincy has a table spreading the word about city services. Another table has information about a local realtor, ERA, Victory Supermarkets, and another had information about BankBoston, an underwriter of the festival. One table was set up by the Contempo Bakery, a Chinese bakery in North Quincy that had new ownership. The new owners were offering samples of baked goods to passers-by.

The auditorium filled up quickly and to capacity, holding about 350 people. The majority of the audience was Asian. This was a real community event—many people recognized each other and greeted each other warmly. Families were there—babies to seniors.

The program started with greetings from the organizers, particularly Ms. Amanda Lee, this year's chairperson. Others who came were City Councilor Paul Harold, representing Mayor James Sheets, John Lydon, Quincy's Director of Immigrants and Refugees Program and Thomas Chang of Boston Refugee Organization. During the whole proceedings and throughout all the performances, there were three interpreters: English, Chinese (most likely Cantonese) and Vietnamese. Angela Mah was the master of ceremonies.

The program began with a Lion Dance. The performers ended with having a sign for a Happy New Year spewing from the Lion's mouth. Other performers included a dance troupe that danced to Spanish music, which seemed not to belong with the program. Singer Wendy Eng, of the New England Chinese Women's Association sang two popular songs. Included in the program was a fashion show featuring the Indian subcontinent and having seven young woman parade on stage mostly wearing saris. The young Vietnamese acrobat, a Chinese gold medal winner, stole the show and was greeted enthusiastically.

Amanda Lee, the chairperson, is a ballroom dancer and owns the New World Dance Studio in North Quincy. She and her partner, David Ho did several ballroom dances, such as the tango and the waltz. Two singers then followed. The singers were husband and

wife: he is Chinese and she is American. When she started to sing in Chinese, the crowd went wild—cheering and applauding spontaneously. It was clear that the audience was “testing” the American and she passed with flying colors. The couple sang an encore and received a standing ovation.

As with the celebration of years past, there was a large Chinese banquet included in the ticket fee for all who wished to dine together. (I was unable to attend.)



MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL
FOLK & TRADITIONAL ARTS PROGRAM

FIELDNOTES

EVENT

Accession No: EW-00-1-FN Date(s): 1/22/00

Fieldworker(s): Eleanor Wachs

Event: The 12th Anniversary Asian New Year Celebrating 2000

Location: North Quincy High School

Street: Harvard St. City: Quincy^{No} Zip: 02171 Co: _____

Phone: Daytime: _____ Evening: _____ Other: _____

e-mail: _____ Website: _____

Folklife documented: Asian dance, acrobatics and song
(pictures included w/ celebration's program)

Ethnic Heritage: Asian (Chinese, & Vietnamese) Religious affiliation: _____

Other Possible Contacts: Amandade, Director of Asian Services

Quincy Medical Center [redacted] - Chairperson of event

Summary Description of Event:

Annual event highlighting the diversity of the Quincy Asian Community yet all together celebrating the new year. Over 300 people came to the local high school to see local and Boston Asian-American dance, songs and acrobatics. Strong local & city sponsorship and local jobs. All attended.