

# Journey with Newspapers In Education and Wing Luke Museum to Celebrate the New Year!

Asian Americans bring with them many holidays from their ancestral homelands. One of the most important celebrations is the New Year.

Learn about New Year's through the eyes of Barbara Bruecher, who grew up in Hawai'i and whose lineage includes Chinese, Portuguese and Native Hawai'ian ancestry. Barbara is currently a teacher in Seattle where she lives with her husband Kevin, son Trevor, and daughter Natalie.

## NEW YEAR TRADITIONS

Makahiki, the ancient Native Hawai'ian New Year, was a four month period beginning in November after the harvest. A time for giving thanks, it honored Lono, the Hawai'ian God of Harvest. Makahiki nearly disappeared from the islands, but is enjoying a renewed interest over the past decades.

As a child growing up on Oahu, Barbara learned about Makahiki in school. But New Year's Day in Hawai'i was on January 1st and included celebrations from around the Pacific Rim, reflecting the state's multicultural neighborhoods. Barbara remembers

her New Year's feast as a potpourri of Asian and Western foods. However, Native Hawai'ian foods were the central dishes, savored and produced by her extended family so recipes could be taught to the next generation.

Barbara credits her mother for preserving Native Hawai'ian culture through food. "I remember her cutting ti leaves from the yard, ordering luau leaves from the local market and preparing two kinds of lau lau's (chicken or pork wrapped in taro and ti leaves and steamed). Both included butter fish which made the eating experience rich with comfort."

The menu also included squid luau (octopus, taro leaves and coconut milk), lomi lomi salmon (salted salmon with tomatoes and onions), poi (taro root paste) and haupia pie. Barbara's Aunt Charlotte prepared the chicken long rice (chicken, ginger and noodles) and crock pot kalua pork, which was traditionally slow cooked in an imu, or underground oven, fueled by hot rocks.

In Seattle, Barbara prepares these recipes on New Year's Day to connect her family to the rich heritage and community back in Hawai'i and transport a bit of Native Hawai'ian culture to her children. Her daughter Natalie, has grown passionate about her Native Hawaiian ancestry, and wrote a poem about her maternal grandmother, which is shared here.

## Hawai'ian words:

*kupuna* – grandparent; a title said before the name of a grandparent  
*na'auao* – wise/wisdom  
*ohana* – family  
*oiai'o* – truth, honesty  
*pono* – roughly "knowing what's best"



## KUPUNAHINE (GRANDMOTHER)

A poem by Natalie Bruecher

I love my maternal grandmother, Hannah  
And am thankful for all she has given to me.

Kupuna Hannah and I  
Share much with each other.  
We share things like music  
Or culture, or our lives.  
We share conversations across the Pacific  
Or across the room.  
But most importantly, we share love.

She taught me pono,  
She taught me oiai'o,  
And she is na'auao, a true kupuna.  
Parts of my childhood  
Unlock her past.  
She gave me my Hawaiian blood,  
But she also gave me  
My Hawaiian heart.

It was in Hawai'i that I learned what it really means  
To love ohana,  
To feel within my heart  
A place for them.  
Even after they're gone  
I feel their spirits with me.

Though miles away  
Kupuna and I can still discuss  
And when I hear her voice  
I think of her place at Punalu'u  
By the ocean.  
I hear the shallow waves of the North Shore,  
Strong yet calming.  
I think of plumerias  
And the geckos in her backyard that I used to try to catch  
With only a jar when I was young.  
I hear her ukulele  
That she is determined to play  
And I fall asleep to the notes,  
Rising and falling like the ocean waves  
And like my breaths  
When I fall asleep.



Trevor and Natalie Bruecher in Hawaii.  
Photograph courtesy of Barbara Bruecher.

Kick off Lunar New Year in the  
Chinatown-International District

10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Opening Celebration – Saturday, Jan. 25  
Wing Luke Museum  
8th Avenue South and South King Street  
[wingluke.org](http://wingluke.org)

11 a.m.

11:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Lion Dance

Lunar New Year Fair with zodiac scavenger  
hunt, crafts, games and more!

Celebrate Year of the Horse with a private tour. Customized for families, students and other groups, experience New Year traditions through cultural art activities and interactive storytelling. For more info, contact [tours@wingluke.org](mailto:tours@wingluke.org) or 206.623-5124 ext 133.

