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Please send all correspondence to: The Asian Reporter
922 N Killingsworth Street, Suite 2D, Portland, OR 97217
Phone: (503) 283-4440, Fax: (503) 283-4445

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Publisher **Jaime Lim**
Contributing Editors

Ronault L.S. Catalani (Polo), Jeff Wenger
Correspondents

Ian Blazina, Josephine Bridges, Pamela Ellgen,
Maileen Hamto, Edward J. Han, A.P. Kryza,
Marie Lo, Simeon Mamaril, Julie Stegeman,
Toni Tabora-Roberts, Allison Voigts
Illustrator **Jonathan Hill**
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News Department e-mail: news@asianreporter.com

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MY TURN

■ Wayne Chan



How the simplest of treats can overcome the mightiest of oceans

This past month, I had an incredible family reunion.

The operative word is “family,” because for me, that’s what it was.

The reunion was between myself, my brother Steve, and Jim, a person I’ve known for nearly my entire life, as well as his wife Gloria.

Jim, or “Jimmy,” as he has always been known to me, grew up on the same street as our family in the San Diego suburbs. Jimmy had some older brothers, but being the youngest in his family, he didn’t spend a lot of time with them, as they had interests of their own.

We met Jimmy when we moved into our home. I was approximately 12 years old and about three years older than Steve and Jimmy.

Jimmy was a skinny, blonde-haired, full-of-life kid with a love of laughing. Soon enough, we all became fast friends, hanging out after school and on weekends.

We played football in our front yard and basketball in his backyard. We’d play “Marco Polo” in his pool. We’d watch TV together and get in trouble together. In our front yard, there was an olive tree we climbed and pretended we were superheroes in our secret fort. I always wanted to be Batman.

We were inseparable.

My parents saw how close we were and unofficially adopted Jimmy as the “third Chan son.” On Sundays, when we would go to lunch, Jimmy was usually with us, because he knew he was always invited.

One of our favorite restaurants was a dim sum restaurant. Jimmy scarfed down all the various dim sum snacks like a pro. His favorite delicacy was barbeque pork buns, a steamed bun with a sweet

and savory pork mixture inside.

Years went by and I headed to college. Life changed and time moved on. After a few years, Jimmy moved to Arizona to start a new life. We tried to stay in touch, but for the past 25 years, we saw each other sparingly, usually for milestones, like a wedding or my mother’s memorial.

Last month, my brother Steve texted me and said Jimmy was coming back to town and wanted to see if we could have lunch together. I said I was available and we started going back and forth about where we should go.

Steve suggested we find a place by the beach, since there aren’t many

beaches in Arizona. After a minute, I suggested that instead of the beach, maybe Jimmy would appreciate us going to a dim sum place where he could try one of the barbeque pork buns again.

We decided to let Jimmy choose.

He picked the pork buns.

It’s amazing that even after 30 years, while we might not be aware of all the specifics in our lives, the same connection remains.

We reminisced about days gone by and laughed at some of the same things we laughed about all those years ago. And we did it over a plate of steaming hot barbeque pork buns. At the end, Jimmy took a moment to thank us for including a scrawny little kid as part of our family. And we told him how much we appreciated him being our Chan brother.

The one thing we missed was to take a picture of our reunion. I guess that just gives us another reason to get back together soon. And share another plate of pork buns.

Humor writer Wayne Chan lives in the San Diego area; cartoonist Wayne Chan is based in the Bay Area.

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Climbing limits are being set on Mount Fuji

Continued from page 2

the season in 2023 totalled 221,322, according to the Environment Ministry. That is close to the pre-pandemic level and officials expect more visitors this year.

Just a few weeks ago, the town of Fujikawaguchiko in Yamanashi prefecture, began setting up a huge black screen on a sidewalk to block a view of Mount Fuji because tourists were crowding into the area to take photos with the mountain as a backdrop to a convenience store, a social media phenomenon known as “Mount Fuji Lawson” that has disrupted business, traffic, and local life.

Overtourism has also become a growing issue at other popular tourist destinations such as Kyoto and Kamakura as foreign visitors have flocked to Japan in droves since the coronavirus pandemic restrictions were lifted, in part due to the weaker yen.

Trash balloons resume

Continued from page 4

South Korean loudspeaker broadcasts and civilian balloon activities by firing rounds across the border, prompting South Korea to return fire, according to South Korea.

South Korean officials say they don’t restrict activists from flying leaflets to North Korea. A constitutional court ruling last year struck down a contentious law criminalizing such leafleting, calling it a violation of free speech.