



Korean ties

Women promote their native culture through volunteer work

By Loraine McClish
staff writer

LORA SNIDER is a regular visitor to the Farmington Inn. She uses her time there as a volunteer to do whatever is needed to be done at the time, but it is seldom that she leaves without responding to a request to sing.



Lora Snider

Many of the requests are for Snider to sing gospel, and when she does, she'll back it up with the same song sung in her native Korean. If the request is for an American folk song, she will be sure to follow it with a folk Korean song.

The Farmington Hills resident is carrying out the aims of the Korean and American Women's Association of Michigan. Her work as a volunteer is typical of the 300 women who make up the membership.

"Everyone of us are involved in some kind of volunteer work," said Chu Kouri, association president. "Our most important objective is to present a favorable recognition of Korean women, and, at the same time, share the culture of our 4,000-year history. We have fund-raisers to support Americans for International Aid and Adoption. We give aid to help orphans in Korea and we help one another."

To this, Snider added: "We've answered questions for parents who have adopted Korean children. We try to make it as easy as possible for the (Korean) newcomer to America

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— Lora Snider
Farmington Hills

— many times, that's a matter of homesickness. We've given legal advice.

"Whether it's a family or an individual, we're here to try to help."

MEMBERSHIP IN the Korean and American Women's Association is made up of Korean women who have married men in the military; American women who have married Korean men; "and all children, mothers, in-laws, relatives, and even relatives of the in-laws," Snider said. Kouri and Snider alike brushed aside any talk about the student riots that took place in South Korea this summer, strongman Chun Doo Hwan or his handpicked successor, Roh Tae Woo.

"The issue is the here and now," Kouri said. "Getting Americanized — helping one another get through whatever bumps that come, but still sharing knowledge of our heritage with others here."

Among the bumps to hurdle is "the shock that sometimes comes when your child announces a marriage to one of another country, and parents



Front (from left): Chong James, Chang Arnold. Standing: Kim Highlen, Yount Newhouse, Kay Ryerson, Yong Laureen. All are members of the Korean and American Women's Association of Michigan. They're in traditional holiday dress at the Farmington Hills Inn. Some of the gowns were bought on trips back to Korea.

on both sides suffer misgivings," Kouri said. "That happened to me. But it always dissipates — and generally very quickly."

As to Americanization, Snider changed her given name, Sook, to Lora, when she became an American citizen.

"That's an option," she said. "Some families here give their children Korean names. Most of us still

cook some Korean dishes. There are many Korean food markets and many Korean restaurants around, probably because there are about 10,000 Koreans in Michigan."

SNIDER HAS made one trip back to Korea, to visit relatives, since she made her home here.

"The economy there is crazy. Some things you can buy for \$1 here are sky high there. I bought a pair of Reeboks on the street for \$10," she said. "Bargaining Oriental-style in the market place is always fun. I know American tourists who went to Korea in June and did all of their Christmas shopping there."

One of her strong recollections is that there weren't as many Buddha Temples there as she remembered. "I have no statistics to give you,



At top: Sandy Song. Second row (from left): Esther Kim, Vicki Ann, Betty Ann. Front row (from left): Benita Hong, Cathy Hong, Chinsuk Kang, Nimma Yoo. The children study dance with Okhwa Yoo in Birmingham. They are in costume at the Farmington Hills Inn for the Royal Court Dance, a dance performed in national ceremonies.

Staff photos by Randy Borst

Show time

Korean dancers grab spotlight

By Loraine McClish
staff writer

One of the most colorful parties ever given for residents at the Farmington Hills Inn was staged by members of the Korean and American Women's Association of Michigan.

They planned the party and were certainly part of the show, but they turned the brightest spotlights on the youngsters who study Korean dance with Okhwa Yoo in Birmingham.

The adult women came in traditional holiday dress, mostly worn now in Korea by an older generation. The gowns were startling in their brilliance of color and lavish fabric with exquisite embroidery or fine hand painting. With their gowns,

they wore exotic coiffures of jet black hair twisted Oriental style with bright flowers or bows.

The dancers performed in four different costumes, one more elaborate and colorful than the next, each time bringing an audible collective gasp from their audience.

Hand movements in the Korean dances are as important as the footwork. All of the choreography dovetails into the use of the costume and hand-held accessories.

DURING THE Royal Court Dance, or Palace Dance, elongated sleeves with varying colored stripes were used, intermingling one with another to form patterns and shapes within the stately dance that is usually performed before the queen.

During the Dance of the Fans, sparks of pink and red and gold were formed into a constantly changing kaleidoscope.

The graceful and symmetrical patterns were again seen in the Dance of the Drums, the only dance in the program when the dancers accompanied themselves. Both their drums and drumsticks — very much like over-sized tenor drumsticks — were decorated with flowers that swirled against one another in the intrinsic complication of the choreography.

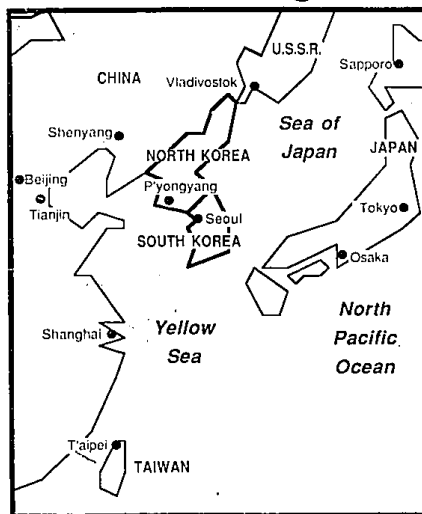
The young dancers closed their show with the Mask Dance, a humorous dance that takes a great deal of precision and skill, and with the use

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international snapshots

Korea — at a glance



Location: Korea, which means "Chosen," occupies a peninsula in northeast Asia extending southeast from Manchuria nearly to the southern islands of Japan. The peninsula and all adjacent islands constitute about 85,000 square miles.

Weather: Winters are cold and dry and summers are hot and rainy, similar to all countries on that fringe of the Asian continent.

Topography: The land is mountainous with fertile river valleys. Western industrialized civilization has brought significant changes into the cities, but the countryside remains little changed by modernizing forces.

Religion: Originally Buddhism, and some Confucianism, Christianity has spread rapidly throughout the peninsula since World War II.

History: Korea has a written history as a dynasty of at least 4,000 years. It remained a dynasty until it was annexed to Japan from 1910 to 1945. It has been divided by the 38th parallel since World War II, occupied by the Soviet Union in the north and the United States in the south. The units ultimately gave way to separate Korean regimes in 1948, called North Korea and South Korea, but those names are still technically unofficial names.

Population: North Korea has 37.7 million people. South Korea has 18 million people.

Language: Korean is spoken in both North and South Korea.

Capitals: Pyongyang is the capital of North Korea. Seoul is the capital of South Korea.

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