

“Florin’s Mochi Madness III”

“Old School” Mochitsuki Outshines the Rain!

- by Andy Noguchi

Rain or shine, the mochi must be pounded! Despite rain, wind, and cold (and the day after a busy New Year’s), over 100 mochi lovers converged on the Florin Buddhist Church for a traditional hand-pounding mochi-making day of fun, festivities, fellowship, and flavors, plus a tasty potluck. The **Florin Buddhist Women’s Association (BWA), Dharma School, Young Adult Buddhist Association (YABA), and Florin J.A.C.L.** jointly sponsored the January 2nd get-together.

Everyone pitched in, pounded, and partook of the workshop and potluck. Huddling under the pergola and in the outside kitchen, we managed to stay fairly dry despite more than our share of “precip”.

All the while, **Jennifer Kubo** kept our pounding synced to a taiko beat and, thankfully, avoiding the mochi-turning fingers of **Stan “mochi master” Umeda**. Glad we had all those young people, helping to pound that 50 pounds of mochigome



Florin Mochi-lovers gather around and take in the pounding tips from Stan Umeda. (photo by Steve Kubo)



Jennifer Kubo lays down the taiko beat to lead the pounding. (Photo by Steve Kubo)

rice.

We all raised our “**mochi IQ**” and learned the importance of coming together to make the traditional community New Year’s treat. The ozoni mochi soup, oroshi daikon mochi, and zenzai explained by **Fumie Shimada** tempted our taste buds. The delicious An Mochi, courtesy of the Florin BWA ladies including **Lois Kashiwase, Judie Miyao, Lois Tanaka**, and many others, couldn’t be topped.

Ruth Seo, always quick on the internet Google research, filled us in on the meaning of the **kasane** (stacked) or **kagami** (mirror) mochi with tangerine (mikan) for the Obutsudon Buddhist altar. With a firm foundation and self reflection, we have hopes for our families from generation to generation.

That “**Reese’s Peanut Butter Cup**” mochi suggested by **John (“shinchan”) Nishida III** really hit the spot, too. (Don’t tell anyone, but I think I ate more than my share).

A special appreciation goes to our invaluable Dharma School group including **Lenny Mizusaka, Corey Nakata, Derek Shimosaki** and others for all the help on clean up. Our facilities folks like **Ron Okimura, Steve**

Kubo, and Walter Menda were indispensable for figuring out key needs and equipment.

By the way, the "prize" for journeying the longest way this year to our event goes to graduate students **Ayano Hirahara** from the **Tokyo University of Science** and **Hui Ean Teh** from **Malaysia**. Thanks go to

U.C. Davis Professor Emeritus Isao Fujimoto for bringing them to join in our festivities.



Lois Kashiwase, Judie Miyao, Hiroko Saigo & Lois Tanaka thoughtfully bag up mochi samples for all. (photo by Steve Kubo).

The 2011 Mochi Madness III ushered in another great community-building New Year. A very good intro for new folks to the nice people of the Buddhist Church of Florin and Florin JACL, too. See you next year.

Thank you to all our volunteers: Our special gratitude goes to our dedicated helpers: Stan Umeda, Lois Kashiwase, Judie Miyao, Fumie /Sam / Howard Shimada, Ron Okimura, Lenny Mizusaka, Terry Nishizaki, Jennifer & Steve Kubo,

Walter Menda, Ruth Seo, John Nishida III, Lois Tanaka, Derek Shimosaki, Cory Nakata, Kenny Kakutani, Utako Kimura, Heidi Sakazaki, Colette Masunaga, Devin Yoshikawa, John Kanemoto, Tadao & Kazuo Koyama, Annie Kim Noguchi, Brandon Fong, May Morishima, Alan Nakano, Kathy Otagiri, Katie & Patty Sanui, Hiroko Saigo, Mike Staley, Charles Hanks, Twila Tomita, Mr. Kurasaki (for the San Jose mikan), and many, many more (my apologies for any oversights on this list).



Ruth Seo shares the story of kasane or kagami mochi. Andy "Vana White" Noguchi assists. (photo by Steve Kubo)



"Young Lions" of mochi lend a hand on the pounding. **Daniel Teranishi, Corey Nakata, Derek Shimosaki, John Nishida, Tadao and Kazuo Koyama.** (photo by Steve Kubo)

Check Out the On-Line Florin Mochi Recipes:

Mochi dishes are loved throughout many Asian countries like China, Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam besides Japan. See the Florin JACL website for 4 pages of recipes, including one from our own Florin BWA.

<http://www.florinjac.com/event-pictures/2008-12-28mochiwkshp/2008-12-28mochirecipes1.pdf>

See the Fun Florin Mochi YouTube Video:

For a neat YouTube video of the 2009 Mochi Madness I by John Onate, please see:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2KUIZzvX8M0&feature=email>