Asian American and Pacific Islanders’ rich heritage spans the world and depths of America’s history.

AAPI stands for Asian American and Pacific Islander. The term is used to describe a diverse and fast-growing population of 23 million Americans that include roughly 50 ethnic groups with roots in more than 40 countries.

A native Chamorro, Christine Igisomar was born and raised on the island of Saipan, in the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, a U.S. territory in the Pacific.

In October 2019, she was promoted to lieutenant commander. She is the first Chamorro woman to achieve this rank in the Coast Guard. In 2020, she became the first Pacific Islander to serve as Aide to the U.S. Coast Guard Commandant.

For her leadership style she turned to the Chamorro spirit of ina'famalek, meaning harmony.

“Approach every meeting, challenge and training opportunity in the spirit of making it good. I found that whenever I did that, people around me started doing it too.”
“Never give up. There are always tough times, regardless of what you do in anything in life. Be able to push through those times and maintain your ultimate goal.”

Nathan Wei Chen is a Chinese American Olympic figure skater. He is the 2022 Olympic champion, a three-time World champion, the 2017 Four Continents champion, a three-time Grand Prix Final champion, and a six-time U.S. national champion.

He is the first skater to have landed five types of quadruple jumps in competition—the toe loop, Salchow, loop, flip, and Lutz—as well as eight quadruple jumps across a single competition in the 2018 World Championships.

He is the first Asian American man to earn an Olympic medal in single skating.

5. Lei aren't only used for celebratory occasions. They are used to symbolize aloha, which means love, appreciation and respect, lei are also appropriate at funerals or memorials.

6. When someone makes you a lei, it is said that they’ve put a part of themselves in it. Never remove the lei in front of the giver, unless you want to appear ungrateful.

7. How do you get rid of a lei? Return it to nature. If it's made of a plant, hang it on a tree, bury it in your backyard, or unstring it and give it to the ocean.

8. Lei Day is a statewide celebration in Hawaii. The celebration begins in the morning of May first every year and continues into the next day. Lei day was established as a holiday in 1929.
In 2011, while on his second tour deployment to Afghanistan, Navy corpsman Jonathan Kong’s platoon was ambushed by the Taliban as the Marines patrolled the village of Kotozay. A Marine was shot in the chest.

In 2014, Kong was awarded the Silver Star for saving the wounded Marine’s life.

According to the citation, Kong “courageously rushed from his covered position, boldly charged into the kill zone dodging a hail of bullets, and reached the casualty.”

He later said, “When a Marine gets hit, you don’t really think….You get so close you’re family, so you have to help.”

His mother, with whom he spoke to on the phone while deployed, had no idea what he had endured. He told her things were “quiet, really boring.” When she received word of the honor he was to receive, she was surprised.

1. Since the Hawaiian language doesn't distinguish between singular or plural, “lei” means one and many. Although, we tend to use “leis” as the plural, it is technically incorrect.

2. Don’t wear it like a necklace. It should be elegantly draped on your shoulders, hanging a little off the front and a little off the back.

3. It’s a total faux pas to refuse a lei.

4. While most lei are made from flowers, they can also be made with feathers, shells, leaves, nuts, and ribbons.
Create your own poi balls and DANCE!

Poi balls are used in a form of Polynesian dance that started in New Zealand. Holding cords that are attached to the poi balls, performers swing and twirl the balls in rhythmic patterns as they dance.

What You’ll Need

Crumpled newspaper (enough for 2 balls)
Six 48-inch-long pieces of yarn
Tape
Two 10-inch circles of fabric

What to Do

1. Crumple newspaper into two balls.

2. Wrap and tie six 48-inch-long pieces of yarn around each ball, as shown. Tape the yarn in place. Braid the leftover yarn and knot the ends together.

3. Cover each ball with a 10-inch circle of fabric. Tie it in place with yarn.

4. Holding the ends of the braids, swing and twirl the poi balls in different rhythmic patterns.