



NORTH AMERICAN OHARA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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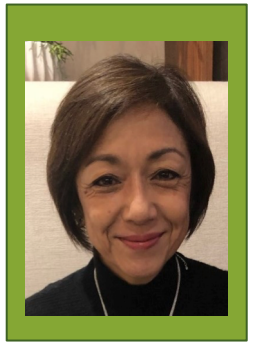


SPRING EDITION

Welcome to the Spring Edition of the newsletter. We hope this newsletter finds everyone well, and looking forward to the Spring temperatures and emergence of flowering bulbs from their winter slumber.

MAR
2021

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



GREETINGS FROM GRACE...

Spring is here! The days are getting longer, the garden is taking on spring hues, and there is a feeling of hope and optimism in the air. I hope you're keeping well!

We have several exciting events planned in the coming months. We are in the process of finalizing details with the International Division for a virtual lecture/demonstration for NAOTA members. We are honored that the Headmaster will take part in the instruction, together with a Sensei from the Council of Ohara Professors. We expect the event to take place sometime in April. Further information will be emailed to you as soon as it becomes available, so stay tuned!

This will be followed by the fourth NAOTA Virtual Katen, to which everyone will be invited to participate. Details on this will be coming your way soon, too.

Finally, Grandmaster Ingrid Luders has offered to conduct a teacher training workshop at her studio in June. This is an invaluable opportunity for current and new teachers alike. For further information, please turn to page 11.

In this newsletter, we continue to feature the Traditional Method. The topic of this issue is the *ichi-boku-zashi* (One-Tree Method) using plum. The article describes this arranging method in detail which is also used for other spring flowering trees such as cherry, cornelian cherry and corkscrew willow.

Almost 20 years ago, Grandmaster Ingrid Luders founded NAOTA. Thanks to her vision, the organization has grown and thrived in the ensuing years. You can read about her illustrious ikebana career in "Meet the Grandmaster" on page 7.

Solomon's seal is a material that is widely used in Ohara School arrangements. If you do not have this plant growing in your garden already, and if you should be so lucky to live in an area where it can flourish, why not give it a try? Please turn to page 12 for tips on how to grow this beautiful and versatile ikebana material.

*The haze of spring has
Countless hues
It does appear;
Streaming across the mountains with
The blossoms' glow.
-Fujiwara no Okikaze*

Warmest Aloha,

Grace

(Honolulu Chapter)

THE TRADITIONAL METHOD



PLUM EN-KEI (FAR VIEW)

This Traditional Method discussion below is republished from the book entitled “The Traditional Ikebana of the Ohara School” by Houn Ohara. English Translation 2019, with permission from The Ohara School of Ikebana Headquarters.

Plum (or Japanese apricot) blooms from late winter to early Spring, before most plants come into flower. Since the very beginning of the art of ikebana, plum, along with pine, has been held in the highest esteem; to a greater degree than with any other material, arranging plum has been considered a severe test of skill and insight. Of course, this is also the case when it is used in the *Shakei Moribana* (Landscape Arrangement) of the Ohara School. Choosing branches and trimming them correctly, and the techniques employed make stringent demands on the ability of the arranger.

The one-tree method, *ichi-boku-zashi*, is the prescribed technique for arranging plum in the *Shakei Moribana* in the *Yoshiki-hon-i* (Traditional Method). A short, thick branch representing the tree trunk, called *boku*, is positioned in the large opening at the center of the *shippo* holder. Flowering branches are then added at the front and back, left and right sides of this *boku*. The result should give the appearance of a single tree viewed from a distance.

The reason for adopting the *ichi-boku-zashi* can be clarified by comparing the *En-kei* (Far-View Depiction) of plum with that of pine described later in the chapter. A single small branch of pine can serve to represent a



large, aged pine tree, but a single plum branch itself cannot; it would still appear to be a branch that grew from the trunk of a tree, and could not possibly serve to represent the entire large tree itself. Thus, the *ichi-boku-zashi* was devised and established as the prescribed technique by using a number of branches arranged to look like a single large tree. The arrangement with other flowering trees such as

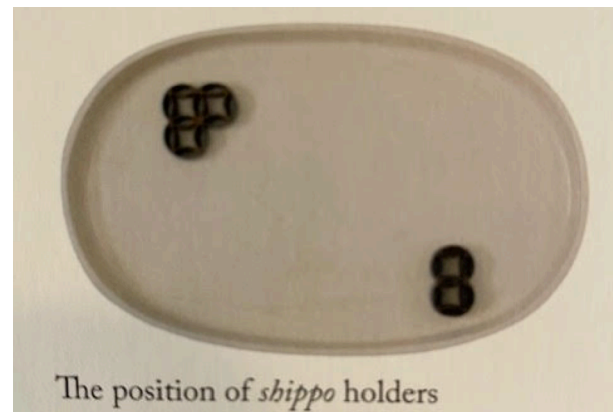
cherry and peach in the *Yoshiki-hon-I* in the *En-kei* employs the same technique as with plum.

The basic rule of the *ichi-boku-zashi* is that a branch used for a *boku* should be selected from different branches used for flowering branches. In other words, a thick branch with no smaller branches projecting from it is placed first as the *boku*, then, thinner flowering branches, selected from a different branch used for *boku*, are added alongside the *boku*. However, if a thick branch happens to have nice flowering side branches, which is sometimes observed in an aged, tight plum branch, those flowering side branches can be utilized.



side view

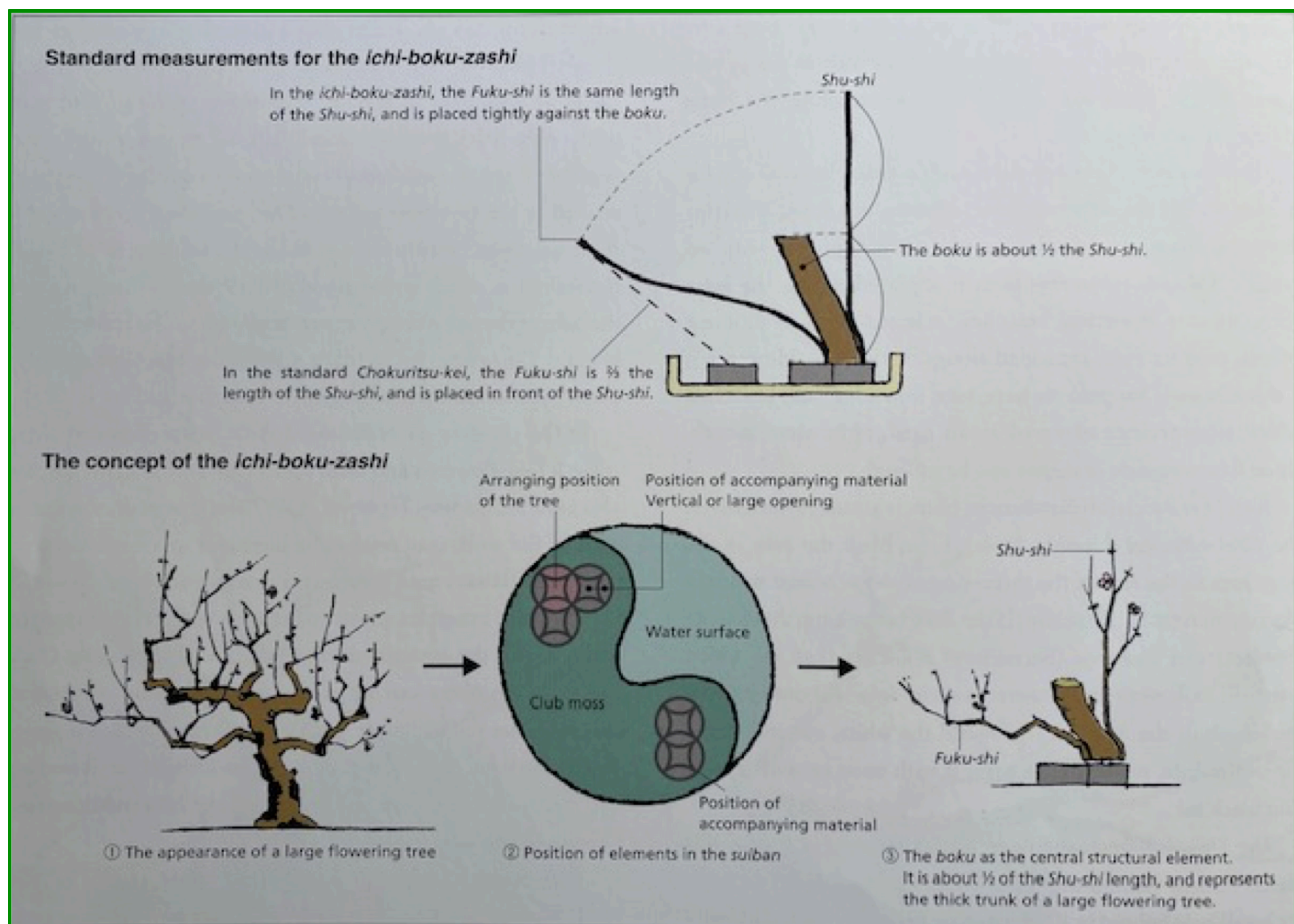
Except in special circumstances, plum is arranged basically in the *Chokuritsu-kei* (Upright Style). First, place the *boku* in the large hole in the rear of the three-ringed *shippo* holder which is placed correctly in the *suiban*. If the *boku* is too long, the *Shu-shi* (Subject) and *Fuku-shi* (Secondary) branches that are added later will look weak and unattractive, the *boku* is about one-half the length of the *Shu-shi*. To conceal the white, cut end at the top of the *boku*, make sure to cover it with moss or stain it with thin black ink.



The *Shu-shi* branch should be cut to the correct length and placed directly behind the *boku* in a gap in the large hole, or in the small hole behind it. Place the base end of the branch closely against the *boku*. Also, there is a tendency to make the branches too tall or too long when attempting to create the impression of a large tree. Remember to pay careful attention to the balance between the scale of the tree and the size of the container.

In the standard *Chokuritsu-kei*, the *Fuku-shi* is two-thirds the length of the *Shu-shi*, and is placed in the left front area of the *suiban*. However, in the *ichi-boku-zashi*, the *Fuku-shi* is about the same length as the *Shu-shi* and emerges from the front base of the *boku*. Since the *Shu-shi* and *Fuku-shi* are placed very close together, if the standard proportions were maintained, the space created by the two branches would be too narrow and cramped. As usual, three branches are added as the *Chukan-shi* (Fillers), the short one, which is placed where the *Fuku-shi* emerges, gives the base of the tree a firm, compact appearance. The arrangement is in the *Chokuritsu-kei*, so that a tall *Chukan-shi* (*Chukan-daka*) is not used unless there is an elegant branch suited for it.

In the *ichi-boku-zashi* discussed above, white-flowered plum is used. Red-flowered and *anzu* apricot, or similar materials, are also used in this way. However, with these materials, the entire scale of the work may need to be increased to a certain extent, since their flowers tend to be larger than white plum blossoms.



All three examples presented in this section are arranged according to the prescribed rules of the *ichi-boku-zashi*. On a rare occasion, there can be exceptionally beautiful, weathered side branches protruding from the major branch which is going to be used

for the *boku*, they may be utilized as flowering branches as they are. Still, remember that the *boku* and flowering branches should be treated separately.

The example which uses azalea as the accompanying material, depicts an old plum tree growing amid hills and fields, while the example with mustard flower as the accompanying material depicts a pastoral landscape where a plum tree is seen. Thus, the accompanying material creates a subtle change in the depicted scene which characterizes the *Yoshiki-hon-i*. Mustard flower may be used as the accompanying material in the *En-kei*, *Chu-kei* (Middle-View Depiction), as well as *Kin-kei* (Near-View Depiction), so it is important to treat it correctly for each perspective. Especially in the *En-kei*, an accompanying material like mustard flower is not treated in its actual size. With the techniques of reduction in mind, arrange it short and low.



MEET THE GRAND MASTER



INTRODUCING... INGRID LUDERS

A life immersed from childhood, growing up in Chile, in the beauty of nature and channeling nature into live art– what can be more fulfilling! I cannot emphasize enough how my love for nature and my constant desire to commune with nature has been the great blessing of my existence and the source of my inspiration and creativity in Ikebana.

The path to becoming a Grand Master of the Ohara School of Ikebana started on the beaches and in the plains of Chile. With the majestic Andes Mountains always present in the background I soaked up the flora and the country's diverse landscape. Newly married, my husband Hans and I moved from Chile to Fukuoka, Japan where he had received a scholarship to study neurology at Kyushu University. To keep busy while following my ingrained love for Japanese art and culture – in those days I spoke better Japanese than English! – I decided at age 26 to take lessons in Ikebana. And study I did: my teacher would instruct all day long so that I had the opportunity to observe after finishing my own daily lesson. In those days, we received instructions while kneeling on a *sabuton* on the floor with a small table and container in front of us. I had lots of practice kneeling because I also practiced Cha-Do, the Japanese art of Tea Ceremony. In Japan, incidentally, it is customary that students of the Ohara School take a monthly examination at the Kenkyukai which I greatly enjoyed.



The discipline and passion I developed instinctively in my early days of learning Ikebana became the foundation for my future practice of this art. Before leaving Japan after four and a half years during which I absorbed the country's customs, practices

and culture I had the honor of taking two classes with Ohara School Headmaster Houn Ohara at Kobe headquarters. It was a major milestone on my path: Headmaster's warm personality and incredibly artistic eye while instructing inspired me to spread the beauty and serenity of this art form wherever fate would take me.

My Instructor's Degree from Ohara School fresh in hand, we moved to Rochester, MN where Hans had accepted another scholarship at Mayo Clinic. I started teaching with two students who had grown into a sizeable group by the time we moved on to NYC where Hans had accepted his first position as neurologist at Columbia University. As fate would have it, I was able to continue my own Ikebana studies with Mr. Mutsuo Tomita, former Director of Ohara Center of New York. Taking his classes and seminars, I became his assistant. Thanks to his excellent teaching abilities I gained great confidence in continuing my own teaching and giving demonstrations. When Hans accepted a position at Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland became our new home where we have resided for the past 43 years.

Because Hans' professional ties with Japan continued, I had many opportunities to immerse myself again and again in Japanese lessons with various professors in Tokyo, Osaka and Kobe.

On one of these trips I was fortunate to attend a one-person exhibition by Professor Kazuhiko Kudo. The sensitivity he showed in his art so enchanted me that I became his student at Kenbi. Over the years I was fortunate to take classes with Headmasters Houn Ohara, Natsuki Ohara and now Hiroki Ohara demonstrating to me that while the Ohara School follows a distinct and often strict curriculum, each headmaster has brought new vitality, new creativity and taste to their work. This realization I often repeat to my students in lessons and in demonstrations – following the structural guidelines of the Ohara School, each has the freedom for her or his own creative touch in arranging. While a teacher excels by sensing a student's innate ability to arrange and express his or her personality, the teacher is also the source of inspiration for the student to develop a taste, style and artistic personality unique to each of them.

For myself, my garden is and remains my greatest source of inspiration in practicing the art of Ikebana. Watching nature unfold and display beauty all around me as it passes through the four seasons fills me with immense joy and energy throughout the year. Other sources of inspiration have been working with clay and paper. Just like

selecting flowers and natural materials to make an Ikebana arrangement, the foundation of a piece of ceramic from gritty clay to smooth glazes teaches me the importance of the container to hold such an arrangement. The two art forms are very complementary: as I am fond of saying, “Ceramics come alive by taking clay from the earth, and Ikebana blossoms into art taking flowers and materials that grow out of the earth!”

The third element that taught me to enhance my Ikebana arrangements is paper – another essential ingredient emanating from earth as paper is derived from the fiber of plants. Ikebana has inspired me to take lessons in paper making and sculpting, and these creations in turn help me to enrich my work in Ikebana. I vividly remember a fabulous exhibition at the Cleveland Museum of Art in the early 1990s called “Paper Now” – it became pathbreaking for me in exploring the art of Ikebana on new levels and to new depths.

While I love making Rimpa and Bunjin arrangements because they are rooted deeply in Japanese and Chinese culture and exact a level of creativity from a practitioner that reaches beyond the ordinary, I cannot easily say that I favor one Ikebana style of arranging over another. It is very important though that students in the Ohara School learn and practice the curriculum diligently as experience and repetition help to build expertise while freeing up creative thinking. Thus, confidence in arranging grows also. It is equally important that Ohara School teachers instruct their students diligently based on the school curriculum to build confidence and experience for the more difficult arrangements that await a student progressing on to higher degree levels.

I received my Ohara School of Ikebana First Degree Master in 1997 and was awarded the School’s Grand Master Degree four years later (2001) by Headmistress Wakako Ohara in recognition of promoting the teachings of the Ohara School as well as my artistic talent. In 2015, I was honored with the Meiyo Ichijiken Award. I consider both awards symbols of achievement for what are now 54 years of studying, teaching and demonstrating the Ohara Art of Ikebana.

Looking back at my world journey with Ohara School of Ikebana I confess that I owe much to my mentor, Ohara Professor Kudo, as well as to the continuous support of the Ohara School of Ikebana. I was happy when in 1989 I could help arrange for Professor Kudo to give a demonstration at the Cleveland Museum of Art as only the second

representative of the Ohara School. Professor Kudo's appearance took place eight years after I had arranged for our School's 4th Headmaster, Natsuki Ohara, to introduce the art of Ikebana to Cleveland audiences at the Cleveland Museum of Art. I would be amiss if I neglected to mention here the critical role Headmistress Wakako Ohara played for Ohara School allowing it successfully to overcome a most difficult time in its history. In 1992, 4th Headmaster Natsuki Ohara passed away when his son, Hiroki Ohara, our 5th Headmaster, was still very young. Three years later the Schools 3rd Headmaster Houn Ohara also passed leaving the Ohara School of Ikebana in the competent hands of the Headmistress until 5th Headmaster was ready to take the reins.

The workshops and demonstrations I have given over four decades of indulging in the art of Ikebana took me all over this country and throughout the world. I have been an Ohara ambassador in 12 states here at home. My work also took me to such diverse places as Santiago, Chile; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Shigaraki, Kobe and Tokyo, Japan; and Toronto, Canada. My teaching and demonstrations have taken place for many Ohara and Ikebana International Chapters, Garden Clubs, Art Institutes and Art Museums – with locations too numerous to list. Suffice it to say that each single time I am called upon to present my arrangements here or abroad I continue to feel the same immense passion and energy for sharing the art of Ikebana with the audience. It is still the same passion I felt the very day kneeling on a sabuton looking at my first Ikebana container, picking up my first flower and my first branch quizzically asking nature for permission to allow my creativity to flow into each stem for placement. It has been an exciting, blessed dance with nature that continues to enrich my life at each turn.

Career Milestones:

- Founder and First President of the North American Ohara Teachers Association (NAOTA)
- Past President of Ikebana International Cleveland Chapter 20
- Past President of Ohara School of Ikebana Northern Ohio Chapter
- Co-Founder of Flower Fund, The Cleveland Museum of Art
- Member of Garden Club of Cleveland, Garden Club of America
- Languages: Spanish, German, English, Japanese



*With Third Headmaster Houn Ohara in Osaka at the Kenkyukaikan June 1993
(Osaka Ohara School Headquarters)*



2-DAY TEACHER TRAINING

Two-day Teacher Training Workshop by Grandmaster Ingrid Lüders June 8 and 9, 2021 in Chagrin Falls, OH

Grandmaster Ingrid Lüders is offering a two-day workshop for NAOTA teachers at her studio in her home in June. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn and review teaching techniques from an accomplished Sensei while practicing ikebana.

For further information, please contact Ingrid directly at luders.ingrid@gmail.com. Space is limited, so if you are interested, please contact her right away.

LET'S GET DIGGING



SPRING MATERIAL - VARIEGATED SOLOMON'S SEAL

Welcome to the first *Let's Get Digging* article where the “gardeners” in our NAOTA membership share their experience with a specific perennial plant that you might want to consider planting in your own gardens.

Today we will discuss Variegated Solomon's Seal, a perennial garden plant that is fairly easy to grow in most places within your garden.

I have personally had success growing this plant in full sun, full shade, and a mix of sun and shade. The key in my experience is to ensure it has sufficient moisture, and that it is in well drained soil. Since I live in North American Plant Hardiness Zone 5 (or 4 depending on the map you use), the full sun (and heat) conditions may be different than the Zone within which you live, so please always refer to your Zone for more specific growing instructions.



This lush green plant requires no maintenance all year, and always has a beautiful display of green and white foliage that makes the garden look fresh and cool. In late summer when it's most hot and dry, the leaves will slowly start to change color to a lighter green and then in autumn to a gold yellow color. If it's happy in the garden, it can grow up to 2 feet tall or more, and of course, in the spring it graces us with its beautiful white bell flowers. It's one of my favorite garden displays, as its rhizomes will multiply year over year enlarging the patch of Solomon's Seal and filling in garden beds. The rhizomes shoot new roots sideways just below the surface of the soil, and new rhizomes will grow causing small Solomon's Seal to pop up out of the soil and begin their life. Thankfully it does well in challenging garden soils that may be a bit hard to grow other plants, such as under trees, or near fir trees. If the patch grows too large, just pull out some plants to prune back the bed, and share with your friends and neighbors. They will appreciate such a versatile low maintenance plant in their yard.

MATERIALS CONDITIONING TIPS



SPRING SEASON

Tanaka Sensei has graciously offered to share her hints and tips on conditioning materials. While the original materials list is long, we have selected a subset of materials that are commonly found and used in the Spring season within North America.

Most cut plant material retains its freshness by the simple method of absorbing water upward through the stems, and most of the preservation methods are merely encouraging this process. The 5 different preservation methods (described in the September 2020 newsletter) include : Cutting Under Water, Increasing the Area of Absorption, Heating the Stems, Using Water Pump, and Chemicals.

	Material	Treatment
1	Calla Lily	Cut in water, rub in salt or ash
2	Chinese Peony	Burn the cut end, or rub in alum
3	Clematis	Cut in water or dip in peppermint oil
4	Crocus	Cut in water or dip in alcohol
5	Daffodil	Cut in water
6	Easter Lily	None needed
7	Evening primrose	Rub salt into cut end
8	Forsythia	None needed
9	Freesia	Cut in water
10	Gerbera	Cut in water or dip in peppermint oil
11	Gloxinia	Cut in water; cut in water then rub salt
12	Heather (Erica)	Cut in water
13	Hyacinth	Cut in water
14	Iris	Cut in water
15	Japanese Allspice	None needed
16	Japanese Quince	None needed
17	Japanese Witch Hazel	Cut in water
18	Lilac	Cut in water; or dip in alcohol
19	Lily of the Valley	Cut in water
20	Lupine	Cut in water
21	Magnolia	None needed
22	Narcissus	Cut in water
23	Pansy	Cut in water
24	Poppy	Burn the cut end, then dip in alcohol; or cut in water
25	Pussy Willow	None needed
26	Ranunculus	Cut in water
27	Rhododendron	Dip in alcohol, or cut in water
28	Solomon's Seal	Cut in water
29	Tulip	Cut in water
30	Wisteria	Dip in alcohol or acetic acid; or cut in water then dip in alcohol

ANNOUNCEMENTS



PUBLICATIONS – MAGAZINES

The new **Ohara-ryu Soka magazine** was launched in January of 2020. The Headmaster's message and sections on ikebana arrangements are translated into English. The magazine with this partial English translation is available **only in eBook format** viewed on your smartphone or tablet. To download the app, search for "Ohara" in the App Store or Google Play, and select the purple icon bearing the Ohara School logo.



小原流eBooks
Magazines & Newspapers

Note: The English translation version must be purchased monthly. Annual subscription is not available.



PRIVACY AND SECURITY

Due to concerns about internet identity theft, the Board has decided to remove all personal information from the NAOTA website. Effective immediately, teachers are listed by name only on the website. Enquiries will be forwarded to the relevant sensei by our webmaster Yoko Tahara.

NAOTA does not send email or text to our members soliciting funds; any such email should be treated with suspicion and deleted immediately. The perpetrators are becoming bolder and sophisticated in their methods, so please remain vigilant.



OFFICIAL OHARA SCHOOL LOGOS

We have received a selection of official Ohara School logos from Headquarters for our use. Please contact Grace at gracesekimitsu@gmail.com who will be happy to send them to you.



HOW DO WE REACH YOU?

We collect your contact information whenever you renew your membership, so that we may contact you throughout the year, whether by email or postal mail, with news or information on the NAOTA organization, as well as regular newsletters.

If you have recently moved, or had reason to change your email address or phone number, please do not wait until renewal time to let us know there is a change. At any time throughout the year, **send your updated contact information to Saskia Eller at: saskia@rochester.rr.com** so that you may continue to receive correspondence from NAOTA without disruption.



SUBMIT MATERIAL FOR THE NEWSLETTER

If you have any articles or information you would like to share with all the NAOTA members, please submit to the newsletter editor Carol Legros at **carol_legros@hotmail.com**. Please respect the deadlines for submission, if you want to be sure that the material is published in the upcoming newsletter. If you miss the deadline, it will be held and put in the following newsletter.

<u>Newsletter</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
March	Feb 1
June	April 1
September	August 1
December	November 1