



# NORTH AMERICAN OHARA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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MAR  
2022

## SPRING EDITION

Welcome to the Spring edition of the newsletter. As the days fly by, we gladly wave goodbye to Old Man Winter, looking forward to the rains and sunshine that mark the start of the Spring season.

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



GREETINGS FROM RUSS...



Dear NAOTA Members,

We are very pleased to bring you another edition of the NAOTA newsletter. I would like to extend my gratitude to all the effort that goes into creating content and bringing relevant topics and information to our members.

I want to thank both Grace Sekimitsu, our immediate past President, and the previous Board, for all the good work they have done to coordinate these newsletters, virtual Katens, video content and preparations for the Toronto Conference in October 2022. Grace and the Board have done a fabulous job keeping our members up to date and engaged over the past two years.

I am thrilled to be working with the new board to continue to execute the vision for NAOTA that has been set forth by previous leadership. We have a lot to do to prepare for the next conference. In these challenging times, returning to our conferences will help restore a sense of normalcy and allow for members to connect and learn together again. I'm optimistic and believe we will all enjoy getting back into the swing of recurring conferences.

With that in mind, we do need to start thinking about and planning for the next few years of conferences. If you believe your study group or chapter may be a good candidate to host a conference. Please contact me directly at [russ@bostonikebana.com](mailto:russ@bostonikebana.com). I would really like to discuss the possibility with you.

Wishing you all good health and happiness,

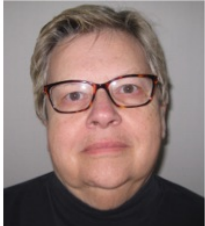
Russell Bowers  
(Massachusetts Chapter)

# 2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



## WELCOME THE NEW BOARD

Meet the new Board members who will be active in their roles from 2022 to 2024.



Alice Buch



Jackie Zhang

**Alice Buch**, Vice President, East Coast  
*(Southeastern Chapter)*

**Jackie Zhang**, Vice President, West Coast  
*(San Diego Sakura Chapter)*



Susan Hirate



Beth Bowers-Klaine



Saskia Eller

**Susan Hirate**, Secretary  
*(Honolulu Chapter)*

**Beth Bowers-Klaine**, Treasurer  
*(Southern US Chapter)*

**Saskia Eller**, Directory and Membership  
*(Finger Lakes Study Group, Northern Ohio Chapter)*



Carol Legros

**Carol Legros**, Newsletter  
*(Toronto Chapter)*



Grace Sekimitsu

**Grace Sekimitsu**, Past President  
*(Honolulu Chapter)*

# HAPPY ANNIVERSARY NAOTA !



## NAOTA'S 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

NAOTA was founded in 2002 after the closing of the Ohara Center of New York. During an Ohara Seminar in Tokyo, Headmistress Wakako Ohara approached several high ranking instructors to discuss the forming of a North American Ohara Teachers Association just as many years before the European Ohara Teachers Association (EOTA) had been established.

It is impressive how NAOTA has blossomed and continues to develop thanks to the hard work of all the past Presidents, board members and supporting members. We have had very special educational experiences over the last 20 years thanks to the teaching of different Professors and Headmaster Hiroki Ohara. You will now have again a unique opportunity to study under the guidance of Headmaster Hiroki Ohara and Professor Nishi during our next Conference of NAOTA in Toronto.

My appreciation and gratitude to you all for enriching my life, they have been unforgettable last 20 years.

*- Ingrid Luders*



*1<sup>st</sup> NAOTA Conference – Honolulu, Hawaii - October 2002*

*From left.... Kathy Toy (Secretary), Ronell Douglass (East Coast VP), Ingrid Luders (Founder & President), Headmistress Wakako Ohara, Professor Kanamori, Judy Hansen (Treasurer), Reiko Kawamura (West Coast VP), Assistant Professor Akihiro Nishi (now Professor), Etsuko Arai (International Division Secretary)*



# THE TRADITIONAL METHOD



## SOLOMON'S SEAL

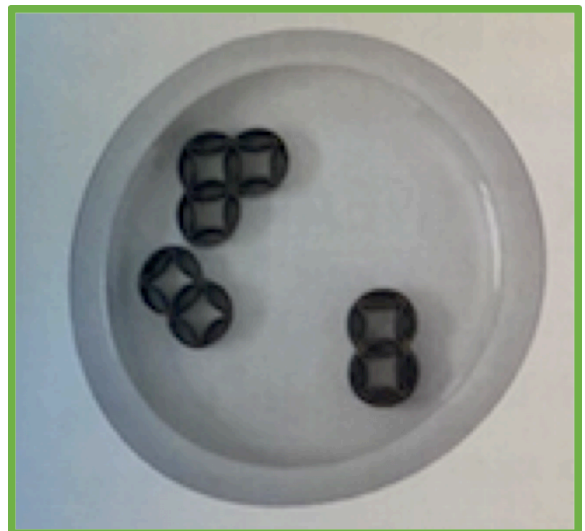
### KIN-KEI (NEAR VIEW)

*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. Note that this arrangement is a Landscape moribana (Shakei).*

Among the materials used in the *Shakei Moribana* (Landscape Arrangement) in the (Traditional Method) in spring, Solomon's seal is perhaps the easiest to handle, and its arranging method is readily understood by the beginner. It is arranged in either the *Chokuritsu-kei* (Upright Style) or the *Keisha-kei* (Slanting Style). The example is composed in the *Chokuritsu-kei* with a total of five stems of Solomon's seal as the *Shu-shi* (Subject), *Fuku-shi* (Secondary), and *Chukan-shi* (Fillers).



A *Chukan-shi* stem is placed between the *Shu-shi* and *Fuku-shi* to connect the two principal stems. Another *Chukan-shi* is in a supporting role at the side of the *Shu-shi*. Another *Chukan-shi* stem, the third one, emerges low from the base area toward the front of the *suiban*. Arrange all five of these stems together skillfully to express the feeling of gregarious growth of Solomon's seal.



The stems of Solomon's seal have leaves all the way down to the base which requires special care. The lowest leaves should not be partially buried in the club moss. However, if too many of these leaves are trimmed off, the stem will not appear to be growing naturally but will look as if it has been inserted in the holder. So find a good balance between them.

Two asters are placed as the *Chukan-shi* at the right side of the base of the Solomon's seal, and three are placed as the *Kyaku-shi* (Object) and its *Chukan-shi* stems. These flowers should not stand rigidly upright but slant a little and expressively. In order to create interesting variations in the height of the asters, a stem with large leaves can be cut short and arranged together with a flower-bearing stem. In the place of aster, *Bletilla striata* can be used as the accompanying material. The Solomon's seal on the market is usually a variegated variety which resembles naturally grown ones, except for the shape of the stem and the way fruits are attached.



# MEET THE SUB GRAND MASTER



## INTRODUCING RONELL DOUGLAS

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My initiation into the art of Ikebana occurred in the late 1970's under an unusual circumstance.

We had a babysitter who attended Bryn Mawr College, who was from Malaysia. She offered to make us a Sunday dinner. After preparing the meal, she asked about flowers for a center piece. Since it was late in November, I said there was nothing in the garden. Regardless, we went out and under fall leaves there were small pink mums. With these mums and a few branches, she made a simple and beautiful arrangement which she told me was based on Ikebana. That was it. I was enthralled.



Happily, I found an Ohara teacher, Ruth Dillon, who gave excellent lessons besides being very strict. After she retired, I studied for many years under Sensei Mutsuo Tomita until his retirement. These were intensive classes and instruction. I owe so much to both.

There have been many memorable moments in my ikebana universe. To name a few:

- Helping to establish NAOTA as Vice President under the leadership of Grand Master and President Ingrid Luders. Our first conference in Hawaii was a resounding success and has continued for these many years.
- Receiving my 2nd degree master's certificate in a formal ceremony in Osaka, Japan, from former Head Mistress, Wakako Ohara. My husband and I were treated most graciously by Ms. Ohara. A memorable event.
- Early on in my studies, seeing an Ohara demonstration here in Philadelphia by Sensei Mutsuo Tomita, took my senses to a new height. The beauty of it all was indescribable.

As a professional artist, the tenets of ikebana have influenced my work, in landscape and flower paintings in which I work in oils. Monoprints, also in oil paint, are another art form I enjoy creating. The use of color combinations, space and texture both in my artwork and in my ikebana arrangements are very important to me.

Through the years I have been featured in art galleries in Philadelphia, Wilmington, Delaware and Washington D.C. I have participated in art shows here and in New York City. My paintings are in many local area collections as well as in Cleveland, Ohio, Japan, Israel, Santa Domingo, Washington, San Francisco and Boston. It is gratifying to know that my work has given pleasure to so many people.

It is difficult to say which Ohara arrangement I like best. Here are three:

- The near view realistic landscape arrangement. I love combining different materials from the garden at different seasons to create a mood of the environment.
- The Rimpa arrangement for the beauty of the combination of flowers and materials in a more stylized way. I try to think of Japanese screen paintings while considering the materials for this arrangement.
- Creating a large free style arrangement lets my imagination go in many directions. I have been fortunate to be able to do such arrangements at The Philadelphia Flower Show, Longwood Gardens, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and at demonstrations and other venues.

My most favorite flower is the lily, particularly the white lily for Heika or larger arrangements and the smaller to medium size lily in any color for the landscape and Rimpa. They just seem to talk to me!

Along with that I must mention Hosta leaves in all shapes, sizes, and color. I use them from spring through fall when the leaves turn color as well as shape. They can be dried then and used through the winter.

For branch material, Japanese Quince when it is in bloom and again in the fall when the fruits are on display.

Many times, I have been asked how I prepare for a demonstration. I have many suggestions but will give just a few. This is a topic unto itself.

First, attending demonstrations from any school will give you ideas on how to do a demonstration. Also, take note of the following:

- Make sure your background is plain and your tablecloths have a neutral color.
- Understand which local flowers and branch materials are available as well as



containers.

- Create a simple drawing showing placement of arrangements, and materials in the arrangement.
- Use containers and flowers that have a visual impact from a distance.
- Avoid complicated arrangements that take too much time. Your audience has a short attention span.
- Make sure you have good assistants both at your side and behind the screens.

I am continually learning from each demonstration that I do. It is an ongoing challenge that I truly enjoy.

Teaching takes a lot of thought as I hope to instruct the basic principles of Ohara Ikebana to my students in an uncomplicated way. With each lesson I try to use flowers and materials that will inspire them. I have been fortunate to have very devoted students both from this area and even people who are here from Japan for a short time.

Since the pandemic when the weather is nice, I have taught outdoors on our patio. Everyone seems to like this setting. When we need materials, they are there for their cutting. Gardening has always been a pleasure for me.

Ohara Ikebana has opened a world of wonders to me and my family. It has meant meeting new and interesting people in ikebana and in my collecting unusual ikebana containers and learning about Japanese and other Asian cultures.

I am forever grateful to have found this fabulous art form.

# LET'S GET DIGGING



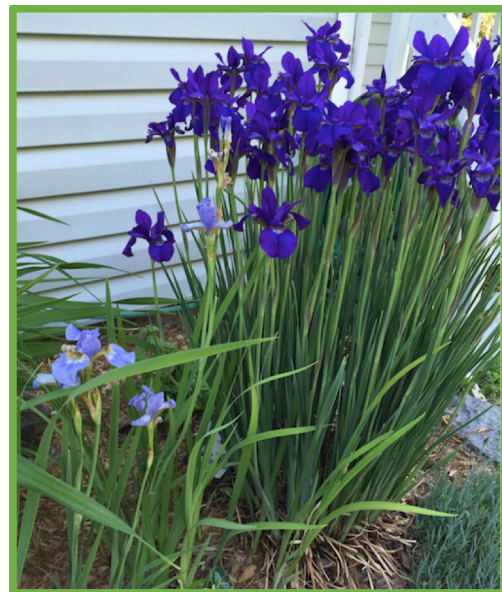
## JAPANESE IRIS

WRITTEN BY CAROL LEGROS

In this issue of *Let's Get Digging*, the featured perennial is one that we love to use in Ikebana and which you might want to consider planting in your own gardens.... the Japanese Iris.

The typical colors we see for this beautiful vibrant yet delicate looking flower are deep purple, mauve, or white. En masse, they provide quite the show of colour and grace with their tall slender stems and delicate green leaves.

These beauties are easy to grow, and are content to live in full sun or part shade locations in your garden provided they are in moist acidic soils. If they settle in nicely and like their location, they will multiply easily as rhizomes do, and require splitting every few years if you want to keep the patch of iris contained.



In my garden, they receive full sun from early morning until late afternoon. Since I live in hardiness zone 5, the sun and heat may differ quite a bit from your location, so don't forget to double check the growing instructions for these Iris in the Zone for your location.

These Iris require little maintenance throughout the year. Once the flowers have finished blooming, the stems can be cut down or left in place as some stalks will develop a seed pod. The leaves continue to provide a beautiful green filler in the garden as well as foliage for summer Ikebana arrangements. In autumn the leaves turn a golden yellow color.

In early spring when the garden is awakening, cut off all the dried leaves or stalks. If needed top up the soil with a bit of mulch to ensure that the bed will stay moist and free of weeds for the season. After that, sit back and enjoy the colour show !

# CAROLYN'S CONTAINER CORNER



NAMAKO

WRITTEN BY CAROLYN ALTER

This will be the first in hopefully an ongoing quarterly column about containers that we use in Ohara ikebana. Since containers contribute about one third of the arrangement, they should not be an afterthought. Consider the size, shape and color of your containers carefully so that they harmonize with your materials. I am always keeping an eye out for announcements of bazaars or estate sales where containers will be available. Second hand shops, Good Will and yard sales are additional opportunities to find treasures.

Things I plan to discuss will include how the season and our material choice's color might and should influence our container choices.

I wanted to lead off discussing a few of our most common blue containers that carry a beautiful glaze called *namako*. This *namako* glaze may contain other colors such as flecks of white and brown tones. It appears on many of our workhorse *moribana* containers such as the basic oval and blue round *shakuichi* as well as the tall *heika* vases. I encourage you to inspect your *namako* glazed vases to look for the "hare's fur pattern" as you can see in all three of these photos. Can you find any more colors other than blue?



For some cultural context, the term *namako* comes from the Japanese term for “sea cucumber” or “sea slug”. I am including a photo of the slug for your enjoyment. The texture and color of which are echoed in the glaze.



Since spring is near, we start thinking about using flowering tree branches such as plum, peach and cherry. Many of these blossoms have pastel pink shades. Any of these branches are beautiful in this blue *heika* vase. We also have yellow narcissus and daffodils, tulips and *nanohana* (*rapeseed*) beginning to bloom. As blue is one of the three primary colors, you can't go wrong complementing it with the other two primary colors of red and yellow, in whatever value hue you choose.

Analogous colors bracketing blue on the color wheel, such as the chartreuse green of the newly emerging tree leaves or ferns along with pale purple irises also appear splendid in these blue *namako* vessels.

I hope I have inspired you to learn more about *namako*. If so, please check out this link for more photos and descriptions in depth of the glaze.

<https://peterteabonsai.wordpress.com/2012/07/23/namako-ceramic-pottery/>



# ANNOUNCEMENTS



## OFFICIAL OHARA SCHOOL LOGOS

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We have received a selection of official Ohara School logos from Headquarters for our use. Please contact Russ at [russell.bowers@bostonikebana.com](mailto:russell.bowers@bostonikebana.com) who will be happy to send them to you.



## HOW DO WE REACH YOU?

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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: [saskiaeller@outlook.com](mailto:saskiaeller@outlook.com)** so that you may continue to receive correspondence from NAOTA without disruption.



## SUBMIT MATERIAL FOR THE NEWSLETTER

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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](mailto: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	May 1
September	August 1
December	November 1