Welcome to the New Year!

My New Year’s resolution is to de-clutter my life. I am not alone in that resolution. It seems that everyone I know (including me) has read the bestselling book by Marie Kondo: “The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing.” And we are all on a rampage to get rid of the clutter. The clutter in our houses, our basements and garages, our cars, and (most importantly) in our lives. In keeping with this philosophy/resolution, I am attempting to de-clutter the UWA newsletters, too. None of us have the time or inclination to read (or write!) lengthy newsletters these days, so I will try to keep it simple and stick with the essentials, plus photos, of course. They are essential, in my book. (In the words of M. Kondo, they “spark joy” so they are keepers.) I am going to try to keep it to one page per month (or as needed), plus events flyers. All the news you need to know, in my humble opinion.

Samovar Tea Lounge – it’s not Jane Austin’s Tea Party.
Saturday, February 27, 11:30 a.m. @ Yerba Buena Gardens, SF

Here’s our first event for the new year – a tea party, but not what you think. Samovar Tea Lounge is a beautiful, up-scale restaurant and tea lounge serving up international food and tea pairings from around the world. Choose from the Russian Tea Service including borscht vegetarian beet soup and tea-smoked chicken salad sandwich, Chinese Service with seasonal veggie stir-fry, organic brown rice, and squash dumplings, or the traditional English service on a 3-tiered platter. There are other international tea choices – or, if you prefer, appetizers & small plates, salads & sandwiches, or rice bowls & brunch. You choose, whatever suits your fancy. Join us for tea – or lunch. Please see flyer for all the details, and RSVP ASAP – space is extremely limited for this one.

A New Webpage for a New Year: uwa.sfsu.edu

The UWA is celebrating the new year with a new website. This may not sound like earth-shattering news to some of you, but to those of us who have been trying to make this happen for years, it is nothing short of a miracle. Once the university began using a uniform webpage template for its departments and colleges several years ago, the UWA Board felt that our website needed to be revised as well. But, as a volunteer organization, we did not have access to many of the university’s technical and computing resources, or sufficient funding needed to keep the old website current, let alone pay for a re-design. We needed the approval and sponsorship of a campus administrator to make this happen. We are very grateful to Robert Nava, VP for University Advancement, for giving us that approval and agreeing to sponsor the UWA for this purpose. Thanks also to the entire UWA Board, and especially Bérénice Le Marchand and Ilona Vandergriff for their efforts to facilitate this process. The real hands-on work of the re-design was done by Dave Reddy, Communications Specialist, University Communications, and his very skilled student assistant Sophia Wenzel, and I thank them for their patience in working with me – even though I am woefully technically challenged. Please check out the new website – uwa.sfsu.edu -- especially the photo gallery which has photos of all current and many past events. And, if you haven’t renewed your dues for the 2015-16 year, please take this opportunity to print out the membership form found on the website and send in your check.
South Pacific.
As many of you are gearing up for the new semester, several of us are making decisions about what to pack for the upcoming UWA cruise of Tahiti and French Polynesia. The cruise is less than two weeks away! There will only be six of us for this cruise, but we six have been shipmates for 15 – 20 years now, having sailed together on many previous UWA cruises. We play well together. My husband Bob and I are leaving this week and extending the trip a few days on either end of the cruise. Betty and Cecilia Lam and Arline and Jim Van Ness will join us on the ship in Tahiti on January 27. Bon Voyage to us all!

What’s up for Spring?
Our first event, at the Samovar Tea Lounge, is set for February 27. We are planning approximately one event per month during the spring semester. The tentative schedule includes another “edible excursion” in March – a gourmet walking tour in the Hayes Valley neighborhood of San Francisco; and the Spring Luncheon at the end of April in the Vista Room. Other possibilities include a docent-led museum tour at the Legion of Honor and/or a tour of the newly remodeled SF Museum of Modern Art after it re-opens later this spring. There is some discussion of another sunset cruise of the bay, possibly in the summer. If you are particularly interested in any of these events, or if you have a better idea we should explore, please contact me at linivory@comcast.net or 415-721-7432.

The Holiday Luncheon.
Most of you know that the Holiday Luncheon on December 5 was our last luncheon at the Palace Hotel. This is because of a change of hotel policy that would now require us to rent a private room for the luncheon, costing way more money than our meager budget can afford. However, for this year only, they waived the room rental so that we could enjoy one last Holiday Luncheon in these grand surroundings. In the end, the luncheon was even better than anticipated, and the room could not have been lovelier.

These luncheons are always an excellent opportunity to relax and enjoy the good company of friends and colleagues. And this year we had one very special guest: Susan Fox-Wolfram, former UWA President and faculty member in the College of Business. Susan now lives in Hawaii (Oahu) with her husband Peter, and she teaches at Hawaii Pacific University. Her guest for the luncheon was Janet Cusheiri, a former neighbor from Half Moon Bay, and also her cabin mate on some of the UWA cruises. It was delightful to see and talk with both of them again.

The UWA Board is currently exploring options for a different -- but still special -- venue for the 2016 Holiday Luncheon.

See more photos of the Holiday Luncheon & other events at: uwa.sfsu.edu