

East-West Center

Alumni news



EAST-WEST
CENTER

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LETTER FROM EWCA PRESIDENT AMANDA ELLIS



Aloha Fellow Alumni,

Our hearts are with all those suffering as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, recognizing experiences are very different according to individual circumstances and across the region.

Students at the Center who were able, have returned home, but some 200 are still in the dorms and a [Student Emergency Fund](#) has been established to assist them to which \$45,000 has already been donated. A huge thanks to our Beijing Chapter alumni who so generously donated 6,000 protective face masks to the Center (see Chapter News below). *Xie Xie!* This kind of solidarity is a fine example of the Center's mission in action through difficult times.

We are, of course, all very sad not to be gathering in Honolulu in June to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the East-West Center, but are looking forward to seeing many alumni in 2021. The last big Center program gathering prior to the COVID-19 shut down was the annual Asian Studies Development Program (ASDP) conference in Atlanta where I was honored to keynote. Special thanks are due to EWC expert Peter Hershock, ASDP Chapter Leader Dona Cady, and former Chapter Leader Jessica Sheetz-Nguyen for their tireless work to make Atlanta such a success. COVID-19 prevented me from making it on to New York where very active chapter president Bill Armbruster hosted a dinner meeting (see Chapter News below).

Please stay safe and healthy!

Warmest Aloha,
Amanda

May 2020

In this Issue:

- Letter from EWCA President
- Update on EWC Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic
- EWCA Chapters and the Pandemic
- 2020 EWC/EWCA International Conference in Honolulu Postponed to Summer 2021
- Alumni News & Achievements
- In Memoriam
- Chapter News

UPDATE ON EAST-WEST CENTER RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

The East-West Center is following the State of Hawai'i emergency stay-at-home order which has now been extended to May 31, 2020. Public access to all East-West Center offices and buildings are closed but EWC housing facilities remain open for current residents. EWC in-person events have been cancelled or postponed for the time being and non-essential staff continue to telework from home. These measures apply to both the Center's Honolulu campus and its Washington, DC office. Watch for further [updates](#).

East-West Center recently launched a [Student Emergency Fund](#) to provide special assistance to current EWC student participants who are facing financial difficulties as they comply with tight restrictions on mobility and access to resources and services due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please consider making a gift to this Fund. It will help us provide financial assistance and emotional support to students in need.

A new online interview program, [EWC Insights on ThinkTech Hawai'i](#) features EWC researchers and is hosted by EWC vice president Karena Lyons. It airs every other Tuesday at 2:00 PM (Hawai'i Standard Time). The [next program](#) will be on May 12, 2020. Other programs and publications can be found on the East-West Center [home page](#).

EWCA CHAPTERS AND THE PANDEMIC

The Alumni Office reached out to EWCA Chapter Leaders throughout the Asia Pacific region to see how their members and communities are faring during the pandemic. Responses are being posted on the [EWCA blog](#) as we receive them.

In these uncertain times, it is understandable that chapters and members are unable to meet and engage in ways they have in the past. As we try to navigate through this period, we look to the positive benefits we can gain from this experience. Now is a good time for chapters to pursue projects that they never had the time to undertake in the past. Social interaction and communication are needed now

APPLY NOW

- [EWC Student Affiliate Program](#) – deadline: May 15, 2020
 - [Pacific Islands Tourism Professional Fellows Program – Fall 2020](#) – deadline: extended to May15, 2020
 - [Korea-United States Journalists Exchange](#) – deadline: May20, 2020
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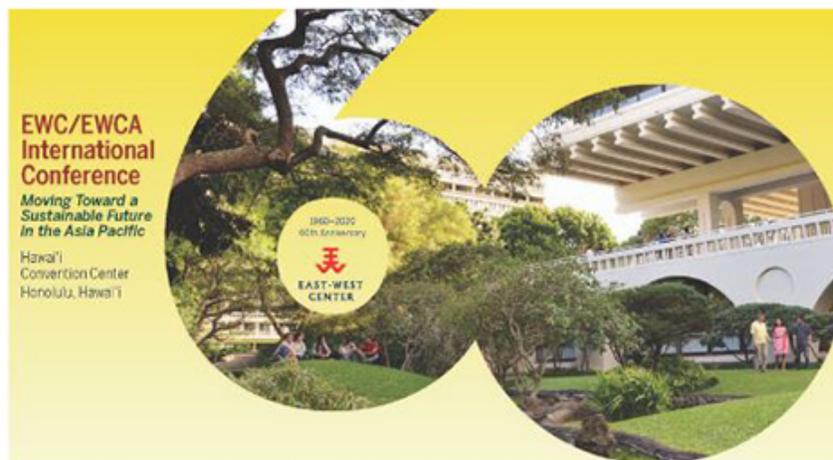
[EWC Memories, 2nd edition](#)

[SUBMIT your favorite EWC Memory](#)

[APLP Navigator](#)

more than ever and we encourage chapters and members to continue to meet and engage whether virtually using Zoom, Skype, or other online meeting applications, through email exchanges, or phone calls. We encourage all chapters to continue to meet and hold chapter meetings virtually using whatever method works best for them and to continue to pursue projects and stay connected.

2020 EWC/EWCA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN HONOLULU POSTPONED TO SUMMER 2021



POSTPONED UNTIL SUMMER 2021

The 2020 EWC/EWCA International Conference has been postponed to Summer 2021. All conference registration fees have been refunded. Thank you to all who donated to the conference fund to support students and other conference costs when registering for the conference. The funds will be retained to support students at the 2021 conference. A few airlines are now waiving fees and offering special exemptions. If you purchased a nonrefundable airline ticket, please check with your airline to see if you are eligible for an exemption.

We are in contact with the Hawai'i Convention Center and hotels to set the date for next year's conference. The new conference dates will be announced when arrangements have been finalized. There will be another call for individual and panel abstract submissions. Stay tuned for further information.

[Who are the Humans of the EWC? Find out!](#)

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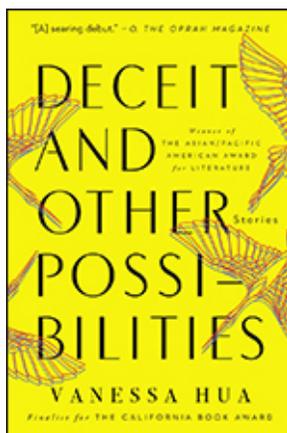
And don't forget . . . Continue to [share](#) your East-West Center Memories with us. [View](#) the updated second edition of EWC Memories.

ALUMNI NEWS & ACHIEVEMENTS

[“India’s Coronavirus Lockdown Is Becoming a Humanitarian Catastrophe”](#) by **Sarosh Bana** (Jefferson Fellowship 1990) appeared in *This Week in Asia* on March 31, 2020.

Melissa Chan (Korea-US Journalists Exchange 2015) received a grant from The Pulitzer Center to head to the Amazon jungle and explore the relationship between Brazil, China, and deforestation. She partnered with Heriberto Araújo to write [“China Wants Food. Brazil Pays the Price”](#), which appeared in *The Atlantic*, followed by [“How Bolsonaro’s Risky Bet on China in the Amazon Could Backfire”](#) in *The Washington Post*.

Listen to the [RELX podcast](#) where **Amanda Ellis** (Open Grants, PhD in Political Science 1986-1989) talks about SDG 5 gender equality and how COVID-19 is affecting women and girls, exacerbating existing inequalities. She also wrote a piece in the International Leadership Association (ILA) Building Bridges series, [“Building Bridges: Communication, Compassion, and Cooperation in a Time of COVID-19”](#).



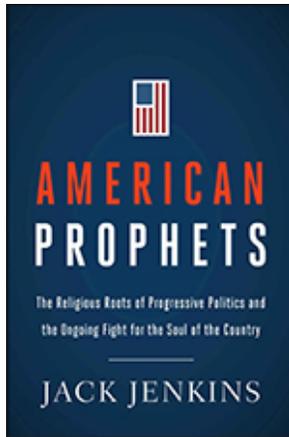
Vanessa Hua’s (Korea-US Journalists Exchange 2005) [Deceit and Other Possibilities](#), winner of the Asian/Pacific Award for Literature, *New York Times* Editor’s Choice, and Finalist for the California Book Award, was first published in 2016 and now features additional new stories of immigrant families navigating a shifting America. Vanessa Hua is also the author of the 2018 novel [A River of Stars](#).

About Us

The East-West Center promotes better relations and understanding among the people and nations of the United States, Asia, and the Pacific through cooperative study, research, and dialogue.

[Short video](#)

Editor:
Sharon Shimabukuro



[*American Prophets: The Religious Roots of Progressive Politics and the Ongoing Fight for the Soul of the Country*](#) by EWC media alumnus **Jack Jenkins** (Senior Journalists Seminar 2016) was recently published by Harper One. Jenkins is a national reporter for *Religious News Service*.

Pulitzer Prize-winning alumnus **Alan Miller** (Communication, MA 1976-1978), founder and CEO of the News Literacy Project in Washington, D.C., wrote a CNN op-ed piece, "[*Across the World, Dictatorial Regimes Use Covid-19 to Quash Press Freedom*](#)".

Miguel Das Queah (New Generation Seminar 2012), is the founder and chairman of Universal Team for Social Action and Help and a member of the District Child Labor Task Force in Guawahati, Assam, India, The NGO focuses on offering education to children of daily wage earners and is a key partner in highlighting children's issues. It has initiated a campaign to support the daily wage workers of Hagznagar during the COVID-19 pandemic.

IN MEMORIAM



Dr. Rosie Majid Ahsan (Population, PhD in Geography 1971-1977) passed away on March 11, 2020 in Dhaka at the age of 78. She is survived by her husband, **Dr. Abu A.M. Ekramul Ahsan** (Institute for Student Interchange, PhD in Agricultural Economics 1967-1969), chapter leader of the EWCA Dhaka Chapter, son Dr. Ishtiaq Ahsan, and daughter Dr. Ishrat Nandini Ahsan. She was

a researcher of national and international repute in the field of population, gender, and environment in the Department of Geography and Environment at Dhaka University, Bangladesh with over 40 years of experience in education, research, and as a consultant at home and abroad. She served as the Executive Secretary of the International Geographical Union Commission on

Commercial Activities and was an active member of the EWCA Dhaka Chapter.

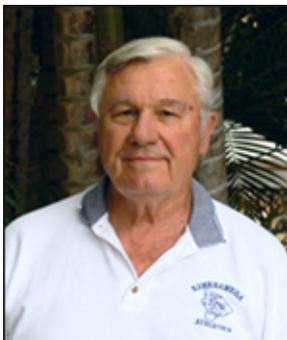


Joan Bickson, former member of the East - West Center Board of Governors, passed away in late March. She served on the Board of Governors from 1995 to 2004. She also served on the Board of Directors of the East-West Center Foundation from 1997 to 2009 and from 2010 to 2017."



In conjunction with World Press Freedom Day on May 3, 2020, the EWC Media Program paid tribute to the dedication and courage of media alumni who risk their lives to keep us informed about important stories that can be life-threatening, sharing the news of the tragic loss of **Sajid Hussain** (Pakistan-U.S. Journalists Exchange, 2012), a Pakistani human rights reporter. Living in exile in Sweden, he had been missing since March 2, 2020, and was found dead on April 23, 2020.

Former vice president of the East-West Center **Douglas Murray** (Open Grants, 1985; Resource Systems, 1986; Culture Learning Institute, 1989) passed away on April 19, 2020 in New York City at the age of 84. He spent his long career strengthening U.S.-Asia relations. In addition to his time at the East-West Center, he taught in Hong Kong through Yale-China, headed The Asia Foundation's Singapore Office, and was president of the National Committee on US-China Relations, China Institute, and Lingnan Foundation.



Former EWC staff member **Gregory Trifonovitch** (Institute for Technical Interchange, 1966) passed away on April 5, 2020. Greg joined the East-West Center's Institute for Technical Interchange to help train American teachers in the 1960s and, through various reorganizations, worked in the Culture Learning Institute and Institute for

Culture and Communication until his retirement in 1991. In 1976, he was instrumental in bringing traditional Micronesian navigator Mau Pailug to the East-West Center to navigate the maiden voyage of the Polynesian Voyaging Society's Hokule'a. EWC president Richard Vuylsteke first met Greg in the summer of 1970 at the orientation for EWC grantees and remembers Greg as a "gifted speaker who related well with people from all cultures and backgrounds. He was a terrific man of great integrity, humor and compassion who touched many lives and made them better. We mourn his passing while celebrating a life very well lived indeed."

CHAPTER NEWS

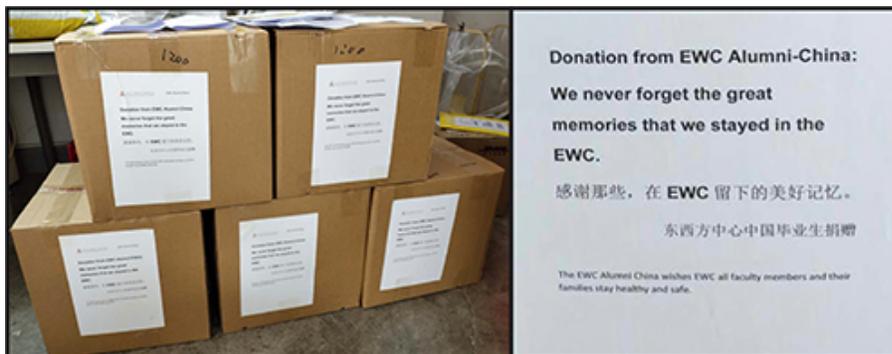
The **EWCA Asia Pacific Leadership Program (APLP) Chapter** is fortunate to have active board members that represent nearly all 19 APLP generations. Participation at Board meetings in January and March increased significantly compared to previous meetings. Topics discussed at these meetings included preparations for the 60th EWC conference (January meeting), APLP website, planning for the next Global Pau Hana (this time to be held in a virtual online setting in May), and discussion of the COVID-19 impact on members as well as surrounding communities and the cancellation of the 60th EWC conference (discussed during March meeting). A special Q1 2020 edition of [The Navigator](#) was published with a focus on the COVID-19 Pandemic, including various perspectives on COVID-19 written by APLP alumni from several generations.



The **Asian Studies Development Program (ASDP) National Conference**, [Understanding Asia, Asian Understandings: Perspectives Past and Present](#), was co-hosted by The University System of Georgia Asia Council on March 5-7, 2020, in Atlanta, Georgia. ASDP alumni continue their commitment to the scholarship

and collegiality that inspire and reflect the best of ASDP. Efforts across the U.S. have risen to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Faculty are working hard to move all on-campus classes to online delivery. Events, study abroad, and graduations are being canceled or postponed, and some institutions are planning for full summer and fall online delivery as well. Through all this, ASDP alumni continue to infuse Asian studies content into the undergraduate and graduate curriculum and to educate not only students but also administration and elected officials about Asia.

ASDP alumnus and director of the University of Central Arkansas regional center, Nicholas Brasovan, sent a letter to an Arkansas senator regarding the use of racist terminology to refer to COVID-19. Through his expert knowledge in ethics and Asian Studies, he was able to point out the harm caused to the community by the ignorance of racist and nationalist naming of the pandemic.



Initiated by ZHANG Hongxia and coordinated and supported by GAO Song and 22 other chapter members, the **EWCA Beijing Chapter** organized an initiative to purchase face masks for East-West Center staff and students. Through the generosity of individual members, 6,000 masks were bought and couriered to the Center, delivered just as the mayor of the City and County of Honolulu recommended that everyone wear a face mask when going out into public spaces. Chapter members have great memories from their time at the East-West Center and wished to keep staff and their families healthy and safe during the coronavirus pandemic. Many thanks to the members who contributed to this project: CHEN Ying, CUI Yue, GAO Song, HAN Song, HE Jifang, HE Lingqi, JIAO Jie, LAN Cuo, LI Lusi, LU Haoting, QU Pengcheng, SHANG Yuan, SHEN Gang, SHOU Zhenwei, SUN Ruibo, WEI Duan, Lani WU, XIE Lincan, XING Yi, YU Jie, ZHANG Hongxia, ZHANG Shouqing, ZHANG Xiaomin, ZHOU, Changwen.

During this challenging social distancing time, the **EWCA Jakarta Chapter** started monthly online discussions. The first Zoom discussion topic was on the Coronavirus Pandemic:

1. EWCA in Indonesia (KALEA) will be active in organizing and contributing to those affected, in the form of donating PPE, funds, and essential food supplements.
2. Actively fighting hoaxes relating to COVID-19 information and campaigning positive attitude in social media, documenting and compiling all of the above activities using #EWCA Jakarta and # KALEA both in English and Indonesian.
3. Using social media, encourage members to be active to campaign in activities of the member's passion and field such as: Art and Musical Performances from Home, suggested by Amin and Cutting Used Masks as suggested by Lita.

The next online discussion will cover: a) Use of religion and how to accelerate curbing of COVID-19; b) KALEA response toward Indonesian Government COVID-19 policies; c) Usage of the existing grass-root group strengths at all levels to change mindsets and to better handle the impact of COVID-19.



The **EWCA New York Chapter** met for dinner on Tuesday, March 10 at Best Sichuan. Ten people braved the threat of the coronavirus to hear guest speaker, NYU Professor Rochelle Almeida, discuss her hilarious travelogue/memoir [*The Year the World Was Mine: An Anglophile Hits a Half Century*](#), about her travels around Europe and India during the 2008-09 academic year when she was teaching at NYU London and traveling on budget airlines and staying at youth hostels during her long weekends and

holidays. The attendees also included a surprise visitor to New York, EWC Leadership Program senior manager Christina Monroe.



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