

Join Poughkeepsie AAUW and the NEA Big Read for:

Beyond Betty Crocker: How Americans Learned to Love Chow Mein, Stir-Fries, and Chinese Food

**Presented by
Dr. Willa Zhen**

Thursday, Nov 8, 2018, 7:00 pm

**Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Poughkeepsie*
67 S Randolph Ave., Poughkeepsie**



Chinese food is one of the most popular types of cuisine in America. Yet it was not always part of the American diet and for many Americans, Chinese food was foreign and exotic. When did Americans learn about chow mein, stir-fries, potstickers, and other beloved Chinese-American dishes? How did they learn? And how did they learn to embrace these new flavors?

Dr. Willa Zhen, food anthropologist and professor at The Culinary Institute of America, will answer these questions at our November 8th meeting. Offered in partnership with The NEA Big Read, this month's program will tap into an underlying theme of the 2018 Big Read book selection,



Everything I Never Told You by Celeste Ng. The NEA Big Read is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest.

Dr. Zhen will take us on a journey that explores the culinary world beyond Betty Crocker to help us understand the role that food plays in the assimilation of cultures. Her talk will specifically highlight some essential Chinese and American cookbooks of the novel's time period to examine how Chinese food became part of the American diet.

Interestingly, with Chinese food now fully incorporated into the United States' culinary repertoire, Dr. Zhen's talk will also examine the struggles that first generation Chinese-Americans experienced when seeking to embrace standard American fare while still honoring the traditional cuisine of their immigrant parents.

Trained as a social anthropologist, Willa Zhen holds a Ph.D. from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), the University of London. Her research has focused on culinary training, skills, and identity among cooks in Guangzhou, China. Her book, *Food Studies: A Hands-on Guide*, takes an experiential approach to teaching food studies concepts and is due for release in December 2018.

Named Amazon's # 1 Best Book of 2014, *Everything I Never Told You* was Celeste Ng's debut novel. Set in Ohio during the 1970's, the story explores "the divisions between cultures and the rifts within a family."

***Directions:** Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Poughkeepsie at 67 South Randolph Ave. can be accessed from Hooker Ave. **OR** take Route 9 to Sharon Dr. (near Holiday Inn). At the end of Sharon turn left onto Beechwood then the first right onto Ferris Lane, next an immediate left to S. Randolph. The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Poughkeepsie is on the right.

Questions: Monique Jones, 849-1692, myj712@aol.com OR
Sandy Lash, 227-4650, sjlash@optonline.net