

Hello Helene,

At one of the dinners at the World Convention, there was a great Ikebana husband's speech. It would be really good of you if you would post it on our European web to share this among our members worldwide. In such difficult times, good humour gives us all a sense of bonding.

My best wishes to you and hoping to see you soon.

Caroline Sui Lin Kerneis, II Paris Contact Person, ikebana.paris@gmail.com

Good evening Ikebana International members and honored guests.

My name is George Newman, and I am the proud spouse of Jane Newman, who is a member of Ikebana international, chapter 1, located in Washington, DC.

It's an honor to be asked to speak on behalf of "Ikebana husbands", thank you for this kind invitation.

I'd like to start by saying that I recognize that many of the founders of the various schools of Ikebana were men who no doubt had the devoted support of their wives. So if you don't mind I'll expand my role and speak on behalf of not just "Ikebana husbands" but Ikebana spouses whether men or women.

I'm very pleased to tell you that having attended your last world convention here in 2006, I have been looking forward to returning for this, shall I say, "immersion course" in your art form.

In trying to describe the role of the Ikebana spouse I am reminded of another wonderful Japanese art, Bunraku, the art of puppetry which is created by dark clothed puppeteers, always in the background seen but not really.

Like the puppeteer, the Ikebana spouse is always there, essential, but just out of sight actively supporting their "star" and their creativity.

As I see it, an essential requirement for being an Ikebana spouse is first loving your spouse and appreciating what they do. Loving your spouse is the easy part; however, understanding the delicate art of Ikebana requires lots of training.

The required training includes:

- Coming to understand that given twenty one flowers you can create one just ordinary arrangement by stuffing them all into one vase or you can create 7 fantastic arrangements by skillfully placing 3 flowers in each of 7 different containers. Indeed less is more.
- Learning the lingo that you use containers not vases. That line material is different from flowers and that those prickly heavy things that you call kenzens cannot be carried in a paper sack.
- Realizing that the small shelf in the storage room used to store Ikebana containers and other items is going to expand to take over the whole room. Building physical strength for carrying and transporting buckets filled with water and flowers to the demonstration without spilling the water all over the inside of your car.
- Being skilled in the use of all kinds of hardware: saws, hammers and clippers and I have learned that the perfect branch in that beautiful pawltonia tree always requires a ladder to reach!
- Skilled in crisis management and innovation: an ability to keep calm and carry on, and to be especially creative when the sound system starts squealing just before the demonstration is to begin.

Now to end on a more serious note, I personally feel a spiritual uplifting whenever I see Ikebana.

I am delighted with my role as an Ikebana spouse and I am delighted to play my small but important Bunraku role in supporting my special spouse, Ikebana international and in promoting your mission of creating "friendship through flowers".

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to be with you.

Download <http://ikebana-europe.org/>