



News & Notes

Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

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December 2003

▣▣ PRESIDENT'S NOTE

The December 18, 2003 Grand Opening of the Chinese American Museum ("CAM") is finally a realized dream for many of our leaders and members who have been part of the project since its 1984 beginning, when Dr. Munson A. Kwok was CHSSC president.



Los Angeles Mayor, James Hahn, and Councilmember Antonio Villaraigosa - along with the El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument Board of Commissioners and the Friends of the Chinese American Museum - were on hand at the event at the historic Garnier Building at 425 North Los Angeles Street. A formal attire champagne reception attended by many CHSSC Board members was held at the Museum the following evening. Curator Suellen Cheng, Assistant Curator Sonia Mak, and the CAM staff are to be congratulated on a job well-done!

The idea for a Los Angeles Chinese American museum had its inception in 1981, when CHSSC collaborated with the City to provide a walking tour that included an Old Chinatown Tour, during its Bicentennial. Howard Quon (who went on to become a Chinese American Citizens Alliance president) had a "Eureka - I have found it!" moment on that tour when he saw the old Garnier Building and exclaimed, "There, there is where I grew up!"

A timeline of Chinese immigration settlement in America, and U.S. legislation affecting Chinese people, introduces the exhibits in the Museum. A completely reconstructed herbalist's shop dominates the first floor. There are then two more floors of exhibits to explore.

Prior to opening day, the CAM had already developed a number of gallery-sized traveling exhibits, going back to 1992. Through the variety of cultural and historic exhibit subjects it has brought to the public, the Museum has established its reputation.

As Dr. Munson Kwok stated, "The Museum will be a significant institution, presenting the stories and culture of Chinese Americans."

Linda Wong Smith, President

▣▣ JANUARY PROGRAM

Wednesday, January 14, 2004, 7:00 p.m.

Castelar Elementary School

Multipurpose Room

840 Yale Street, Los Angeles, Chinatown
(Park on playground, enter on College Street
between Hill and Yale Streets)

**Important: January 2004 Meeting Is
The Second Wednesday Of The Month!**

**"GUIDING THE VISION OF THE NEW CORNFIELD
STATE PARK - WILL IT BENEFIT CHINATOWN AND
HISTORY?"**

A new state park is developing in the large, vacant corridor of land between Broadway and Spring Street, just northeast of Chinatown. The park will be directly accessible from the new Gold Line Station and its presence will be extremely important in impacting Chinatown's future and the Society's historical programs. For our first meeting of 2004, CHSSC will host California State Parks officials who will present various plans for the park and elicit public opinion on the subject. Come see these beautiful new ideas, and participate in designing this green space for our use. These alternatives were developed by the State with input from a community advisory committee that includes former CHSSC president, Munson Kwok. This will be an open public meeting.

Partial plan summaries follow:

Alternative A): "Minimal Build-out." Includes a multi-use trail that would encircle the park and connect to existing and possible future portions of the L.A. River Bikeway, and creation of a large grassy area. The plan includes no lighting, park support facilities or concessions;

Alternative B): "A Walk Through History." Includes a loop trail with interpretive panels on the Tongva Indians, the Zanja Madre (L.A.'s original water distribution system), El Pueblo, the Southern Pacific Railroad, the Los Angeles River, Chinatown, etc. Includes reconstruction of a hotel, depot, and freight house that would serve as a community center, operations support building, and public restrooms;

Alternative C): "Maximum Build-out." Includes an informal recreation area, a pond, two amphitheaters, a small parking lot, and a reconstructed hotel and depot to be used as a folk museum, multi-use community center, park operations support building, and restrooms;

Alternative D): "No Project." No development would occur under this proposal.

CHSSC is honored to have our January meeting considered for this important public forum. Please attend and provide your input toward this exciting development that will affect Chinatown's future.

■ AROUND CHSSC

NOVEMBER PROGRAM REPORT More to the Chinese Side



>> CHSSC VP Programs, Eugene Moy; Will Gow; Jennifer Cho; Sharon Lee & President, Linda Wong Smith (Courtesy Tom Eng)

Video documentarians Will Gow and Sharon Lee screened *More to the Chinese Side*, a 2003 Golden Reel Nominee, at our November Meeting. Gow is a fifth-generation Chinese American who majored in Cinema Studies and History and is pursuing a career in education. Lee is a Korean American from Southern California who is completing her Master's thesis on the Los Angeles Tofu Festival. Mr. Gow and Ms. Lee wrote, directed, and edited the video documentary.

Implicitly, and intelligently, *More to the Chinese Side* asks what makes a person Chinese, and, by extension, a member of a racial or ethnic group. Will and his brothers, Eddie and Max, are the sons of Bruce Gow, a Chinese American, and Ola Jane Gow, who is Caucasian. While attending San Francisco's Abraham Lincoln High School - whose student body is near 100% Asian - the brothers "wanted to be as Asian as possible," according to their mother. Will remembers sitting in Chinatown's Great Star Theater as a teenager and "not feeling like I belonged," because he speaks no Chinese and has not visited China. Brother Max's sentiment, "I feel more to the Chinese side of myself," inspired the film's title.

The Gows' in-laws, the Pettey family, are Janice Gow Pettey, Marvin Pettey, who is Caucasian, and their two sons. Janice and Marvin met in the Peace Corps in Korea. Son Jonathan describes being mistaken as Latino throughout his youth, and is interested in the culture of mixed ethnicities, having studied the subject extensively. Son Matthew, who is adopted, is often asked: "You have a Chinese mom and a Caucasian dad, but you're 100% Chinese. How is that?"

The film ends with Will Gow's summation: "I guess for me, being Chinese is not about cars or unlucky numbers It's not about whether you were born into a family or brought into it. It's not about how you look. Being Chinese is about lineage and culture." Then, his voice cracking with emotion, "I often wonder what it was like for my great-

grandfather. Times have changed, but we haven't forgotten. We may not be the most traditional of families, but in our own ways, we remember our history."

-RB-

CHSSC's 100 x 100 CLUB

By Dr. Wing Mar

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

The 100 x 100 Club is a group of 82 (and growing) CHSSC supporters who believe strongly in the Society's mission and have committed to an annual \$100 contribution toward its programs. More than half the current 100 x 100 Club members did not previously belong to the Society. This is no elite corps, and there are no extra benefits conferred upon Club members, however they receive our newsletter.

At the time of our Spring 2003 Dinner, I started the Club by telephoning 100 potential members and sending them recruitment letters. Most were professionals or small business owners, and some were not Chinese Americans. Many were my friends and professional associates, but the sole requirement is an interest in preserving and propagating Chinese American history.

After one month, we were deeply gratified by 35 positive responses. Now, after a follow up letter, we have 82 people in the Club, and are moving ever closer to our goal of one hundred Club members in less than a year! I am elated that another board member also recently enrolled two of his friends in the Club.

CHSSC needs grass roots support to continue its excellent works, so we created the 100 x 100 Club to address this need. Do you know another historical society with top-flight monthly programs that publishes its newsletter ten times a year? I know of none but the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California.

Our organization is a voice for all Chinese Americans. We must speak clearly about our history and contributions over our 150 years in the United States. Fundamentally, we define our own image, and the respect we receive depends on what we do and say. To put forth positive images, the Society launched its Chinese American Portraits of Pride (CAPP) project. The next issue of *News 'n Notes* will feature an update on the important work the CAPP project is doing.

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY ALUMNI PRAISE CHSSC DOCENTS

On November 18th, Janine Krasik, a good friend of CHSSC Board member, Dr. Betty Gaw, brought an energetic "On The Town" group of Brandeis University alumni to Chinatown for a walking tour, led by our docents, Dr. William Chun Hoon, Eugene Moy and Linda Wong Smith. The Brandeis women so enjoyed their outing - including a bountiful meal at the Golden Dragon restaurant - that Janine quickly wrote Betty an email, enthusing: "We had 22 happy ladies last Tuesday after our tour of Chinatown! The docents were so very knowledgeable and patient with our questions. I am passing the information to our other Brandeis On The Town groups." *Mazel tov* to Bill, Eugene and Linda!

-RB-

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2003 Holiday Potluck Dinner Acknowledgements

Thank you so much to those who shared their culinary creations, picked up the restaurant food, set up, served, put away, washed dishes, etc. at the 2003 CHSSC Holiday Potluck Dinner. And a special thank you to our gift wrapping team: Margie Lew and Susan Sing who beautifully wrapped every book purchased at the Dinner! A special thank you also to Winifred Lew for her wonderful piano accompaniment, former president, Irvin Lai, who led the caroling, to Doreen Nakayama - in many ways the linchpin of the activity - and to one and all for participating in this festive event!

Please Renew Your CHSSC Membership!

It's CHSSC membership renewal time. Please add \$5 if you wish to receive Gum Saan Journal. Checks should be sent to the CHSSC Office at P.O. Box 862647, Los Angeles, CA 90086-2647.

2004 Golden Dragon New Year Parade - Saturday, January 24, 2004 - Call for Flag Bearers

Join the CHSSC marching group as we proudly carry Old Glory and lead the vanguard of the Golden Dragon New Year Parade. The CHSSC flag corps will assemble at 1:00 p.m. at Main and Aliso Streets and John Yee will lead us, as he does each year. For more information, please phone Randy Bloch in the CHSSC Office: (323) 222-0856.

Donor Acknowledgment

The Society thanks Wendel Wye for his donation of \$5,000, given in memory of Choy and Esther Wy.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

What Is Alzheimer's Disease And How Can It Be Prevented? (Part II)

By Dr. Betty C. Gaw

Statistics of Frequency

Four and one half million people in the United States have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease, representing only fifty percent of Americans suffering from the illness. As our aged population and longevity increase, by the year 2030, twenty percent of the U.S. population will reach 65 years of age. This is significant because from age 60 on, people reach the vulnerable age for early memory decline or mild cognitive impairment (MCI) of Alzheimer's Disease, when intervention is the most helpful. At age 65, 5% of the population has AD, 25% by age 70, 40% at age 80, and 50% by age 90. Thus, AD is an affliction of advanced age.

AD is also the most common dementia, since it contributes 52% of dementias. By contrast, vascular dementia caused by atherosclerosis, minor or major strokes results in poor brain circulation contributing 17%, Lewy body dementia 5-25%, and mixed dementias 14%. MCI incidence of progression is 8-15% per year, as compared to normal elderly memory decline of 1-2% per year; therefore, the four



to seven-fold escalating progression of memory loss per year of a person with AD is the red flag for family members to begin to look for an Alzheimer's Disease specialist to expedite diagnosis and treatment and save brain neurons from dying. Having a close relative with AD increases ones risk by four-fold, but the presence of the APOE-4 gene - being the transmitter of the disease, together with head trauma - increases the risk ten-fold.

Risk Factors for AD

Well-established AD risk factors are advancing age, family history of AD, Down's Syndrome, and the APOE-4 gene. Possible risk factors are prior head trauma, with or without unconsciousness; environmental toxins that increase the free-radical and oxidative load on cells' integrity without intake of nutritional anti-oxidants; low level of education or lack of mental exercise and stimulation; lack of physical activity; social isolation; and, chronic high stress or depression.

Preventive Measures

Since AD is 30% determined by the APOE-4 gene and 70% by environment factors, it can be prevented by lifestyle choices and healthy living. The following steps will reduce the risk of Alzheimer's and slow its development when already present:

- Get daily physical and mental exercise;
- Diffuse stress to reduce Cortisol which is a brain killer. Stress is not well tolerated as we age, as the body's response to stress is greater. Cortisol level rises higher and lasts longer as we grow older, per Dr. Dharma S. Khalsa, M.D., a presenter at the Alzheimer's Conference I recently attended. Meditation reduces stress and Cortisol;
- Reduce your weight, if overweight, and control your blood pressure and blood sugar levels, as uncontrolled diabetes, heart disease and stroke increase the risk of AD;
- Avoid head trauma, contact sports, and falls from ladders. Head trauma in the presence of the APOE gene escalates AD risk ten-fold. It is wise to wear a helmet when exposed to this risk;
- Pursue good nutrition that is rich in antioxidants, vegetables, fruits, nuts, whole grains, fish oil, Vitamins C, E & B's, Folic acid, etc. Nutritional brain enhancers such as Phosphatidylserine, Ginkgo, GPC/Glycerophosphocholine, Co-Q 10 are also very beneficial;
- Avoid environmental toxins, pesticides, herbicides, and solvents which are potent brain dissolvers;
- Avoid drugs that poison the liver and kidneys, such as Tylenol, statin drugs and alcohol;
- Avoid electromagnetic fields/EMF which are emitted by cellular phones, electric blankets, and high tension electric wires. These "cook" the brain and cause DNA damage;
- Protect your immune system which prevents infections, immune disorders and cancer;
- Get regular medical checkups and ask your doctor to monitor brain-protective hormones, repleting them with bioidentical hormones when your levels are low; and,
- Get a APOE-4 gene test if you have a relative with AD, to determine your risk for the disease.

Life is beautiful when bodily functions are healthy with no aches or pains, stress is controlled, and you appreciate yourself, your family, and the world about you. After thirty years of intense research on "What Is Happiness," the conclusion is, a loving and supportive FAMILY and good HEALTH. Do you find it surprising that money is not the key to happiness? The most complex, sophisticated and elaborate functions of the human body are the responsibility of the awesome brain. Therefore, we must learn to preserve and protect it. As William Shakespeare wrote, "The Brain is the

soul's fragile dwelling place." And I wholeheartedly concur with the Yellow Emperor of China, that "Prevention is the ultimate of wisdom".

For more information on Alzheimer's Disease, contact the following organizations: Alzheimer's Foundation of America, Phone: 866-232-8484, website: www.alzfdn.org; Alzheimer's Prevention Foundation International, Phone: 520-749-8374, website: www.alzheimersprevention.org; Cenegenics Medical Institute, Phone: 702-953-1510, website: www.888younger.com, for comprehensive Age Management Medicine for physicians and patients. Additionally, an excellent article on Alzheimer's appeared in the October, 2003 issue of *Fortune Magazine*.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, December 21, 2003, 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
HOLIDAY BAZAAR AND CHRISTMAS CAROLING
CHSSC Chinatown Heritage & Visitors Center
411 Bernard Street, L.A. Chinatown 323-222-0856
(donations of new/used bric-a-brac, clothing, etc.)

December 27, 2003, 6:00 p.m.
JAMAICA CULTURAL ALLIANCE CELEBRATION OF JAMAICA'S CHINESE HERITAGE
Marina Beach Marriott,
4100 Admiralty Way, Marina del Rey 323-692-0423

January 22, 2004
CHINESE NEW YEAR 4702, YEAR OF THE MONKEY

January 24, 2004, 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
CHINESE NEW YEAR GOLDEN DRAGON PARADE
L.A. Chinatown 213-617-0396

January 24, 2004, 12:00 p.m.
ALHAMBRA/SAN GABRIEL CHINESE NEW YEAR PARADE/STREET FAIR
626-282-8481

January 24-25, 2004
L.A. CHINATOWN CHINESE NEW YEAR FESTIVAL & CAR SHOW
Hill Street between Ord and Alpine 213-617-0396

January 30, 2004 CHINESE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE NEW YEAR BANQUET

Empress Pavilion Restaurant,
L.A. Chinatown 213-617-0396

January 31, 2004, 4:30 p.m. HISTORIC FAR EAST CAFE - COMMUNITY POTLUCK & PROGRAM

347 East First Street, Little Tokyo
Please RSVP: 323-222-0856

Sunday, February 8, 2004, 8:00 a.m. L.A. CHINATOWN FIRECRACKER 5K/10K RUN

Volunteer Information: John Phung:
firecracker10k@yahoo.com; 213-215-3137

MISSION STATEMENT

The Chinese Historical Society of Southern California was organized in November, 1975. The purposes of the Society are: 1) to bring together people with a mutual interest in the important history and historical role of Chinese and Chinese Americans in Southern California; 2) to pursue, preserve, and communicate knowledge of this history, and 3) to promote the heritage of the Chinese and Chinese American community in support of a better appreciation of the rich, multi-cultural society of the United States.

2003-2004 CHSSC Officers

Linda Wong Smith - President
Pete Chinn - Vice President
Eugene Moy - V.P. Programs
Ben Nakayama - Membership Secretary
William Chew - Treasurer
Franklin Mah - Financial Secretary
Susie Ling, Secretary

Board Members

Dr. Betty Gaw, Gilbert Hom, Dr. Wing Mar

News 'n Notes Editor, Randy Bloch

December News 'n Notes Contributors: Linda Wong Smith,
Dr. Wing Mar, Dr. Betty Gaw, Randy Bloch



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