



News & Notes

Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

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January 2004

■ PRESIDENT'S NOTE

Gung Hay Fat Choy!

I wish all members of the Chinese Historical Society and their families good health, prosperity and good fortune in the New Year!



Recently, I led two classes of fourth and fifth grade students on a walking tour of Chinatown. The children attend Gratts Elementary School near Echo Park. The tour was a supplement to their study of the book, *Chinatown*, by Lawrence Yep as part of the school's "Heritage" literature program. Combined with the tour, was a visit to the new Chinese American Museum (CAM) to view displays on Chinese American history and daily life and the Museum's historical time line. "I learned so much about the culture of Chinese people by visiting Chinatown," said my student, Michael Ortiz. Frankly, I was amazed to hear the words come from his mouth. I was also gratified when my colleague, Luis Garcia, thanked me for leading "so thorough a visit to Chinatown" and to CAM. I thank my friend, Lucille Niki, who helped with logistics by walking with the large group and helping escort them to CAM. The tour was an eye-opener for these elementary school students, the majority of whom are Hispanic, Korean American, African American and Amerindians from Central America. Their visit concluded with lunch at the Golden Dragon Restaurant.

Linda Wong Smith, President

■ FEBRUARY PROGRAM

Wednesday, February 4, 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)

Susan Sovine, writer, editor & literary critic

**"PEARL S. BUCK, AMERICA'S GOODWILL
AMBASSADOR TO CHINA"**

Our February speaker, Susan Sovine, will discuss the life and literature of author, Pearl Sydenstricker Buck (1892-1973). Susan first encountered Pearl Buck's work as a high

school freshman. The Sydenstricker and Sovine families were neighbors in the hills of West Virginia. Ms. Sovine's CHSSC presentation will focus on *The Good Earth*, about which she says "Though it is a work of fiction, the culture she infuses into the story is almost anthropological."

As the owner of "Absolutely Professional," for over ten years Sovine provided full-service editing and manuscript services to a wide variety of clients. She recently worked as an editorial consultant with CHSSC members William and Natalina Chew on Bill's manuscript on the Chinese Transcontinental Railroad workers. Ms. Sovine holds a Master's degree in Literary Critique and is currently completing her Ph.D.

Pearl S. Buck's mother and father were Southern Presbyterian missionaries, stationed in China. She was born in the United States when her parents were on furlough. When she was three months old, the family returned to China. At eighteen, she enrolled in Randolph-Macon Women's College in Lynchburg, Virginia, and graduated in 1914. Her second novel, *The Good Earth*, appeared in 1931 and won the Pulitzer Prize in 1935. In 1938, she won the Nobel Prize in literature. During her lifetime, she published over seventy books. In 1949, she founded the international adoption agency, Welcome House, which, in its five decades, has helped place over five thousand children.

■ AROUND CHSSC

LOS ANGELES' CHINESE AMERICAN MUSEUM OPENS



**>> CAM Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony -
December 18, 2003**

The Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting of the Chinese American Museum (CAM) was a joyful and profoundly significant event. As the air buzzed with anticipation, the Museum's entranceway was a melange of red ribbons and

bows and beautiful bouquets, and festive red lanterns hung overhead. KNBC newsman, Ted Chen, emceed the mid-morning event. Many dignitaries attended such as L.A. Councilpersons Ed Reyes, Antonio Villaraigosa and Tom LaBonge; U.S. Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard; State Senator Gloria Romero; State Assemblywomen Judy Chu and Jackie Goldberg; County Supervisor Mike Antonovich; Monterey Park Councilmembers David Lau and Betty Tom Chu; and, Deputy L.A. Mayors Roberta Yang and Joy Chen. Each official gave brief congratulatory words and presented a commemorative certificate. About 25 members of the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California were present, led by President Linda Wong Smith.

Some officials attending helped secure funding for CAM. Congresswoman Roybal-Allard was instrumental in earmarking \$150,000 in federal dollars for the CAM permanent exhibit. Then California Assembly Speaker, Antonio Villaraigosa, was instrumental in giving \$1 million to the Chinese American Museum and the Los Angeles Italian Hall project. Since CAM is housed in the last standing structure of the City's original Chinatown - the historic Garnier Building - Councilmember Villaraigosa declared it appropriate the Museum expand in the future into the unused portion of that building. He indicated he has introduced a City Council motion to accomplish this.

Fourth grade students from Chinatown's Castelar Elementary School were invited to the podium to explain why they believe a Chinese American museum is important. Said one child: "It shows how different cultures came to the Chinese to get medicine in the old days. It also helps kids learn, who don't know about their ancestors."

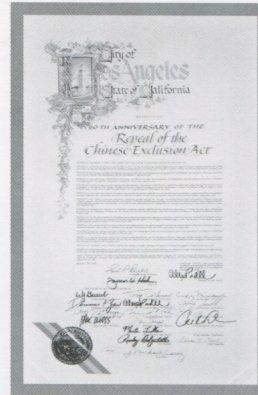
CAM's collections consist of over 4,500 artifacts and several thousand photographs and images, many donated by descendants of the community's pioneer families. To maximize its commitment, an on-site Museum Educator will foster a continuing relationship between the Museum and the public. Said CAM Curator and Executive Director, Suellen Cheng, "We want people to use the Museum to make a fundamental connection between their cultural past and who they are today."

Phase One exhibitions consist of two permanent installations: A Chinese general store and herbal shop; and "Journey: Stories of Chinese Immigration." On display through June, 2004, are: "Neighborhood Stories;" "Tyus Wong: A Retrospective;" and, "Chinatown Stories: Realizing the Imagined."

CAM is located at 425 N. Los Angeles Street at the El Pueblo Historical Monument and is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

-RB-

L.A. CITY COUNCIL ADOPTS RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF CHINESE EXCLUSION ACT REPEAL



Exactly sixty years to the day (December 17, 2003) after the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act - and one day before the Los Angeles Chinese American Museum's opening - Councilmember Ed P. Reyes brought a commemorative Resolution that was adopted the same day. The confluence of the historic dates occurring one day apart was probably part serendipity and part exceptional planning.

Several prominent Chinese Americans attended the City Hall Council Chambers ceremony, including Suellen Cheng and Terry Loo of the Chinese American Museum; Saykin Foo, Munson Kwok and Irvin Lai of the Chinese American Citizens Alliance; Larry Wong, Peter Lau, Michael Cheng and Derek & Daisy Ma of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association; Henry Leong, Carol Kwan and Wilbur Woo of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce; Peter Woo of the Historic Cultural Neighborhood Council; and, Patrick Lee and George Yu of the Chinatown Business Improvement District. CHSSC members, Randy Bloch, William & Natalina Chew, Dr. Wing & Joyce Mar, President Linda Wong Smith, and others attended.

After a brief wait for a quorum, Councilmember Reyes addressed his peers in an appropriately solemn tone:

"Colleagues, today is the 60th Anniversary of the Repeal of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act [enacted, May 6, 1882 and repealed, December 17, 1943] and subsequent Asian exclusion laws. We as a city must remember our past and this period when the Chinese and other Asian Pacific Americans were stripped of their civil liberties. The restrictions of the Chinese Exclusion Act effectively led to the destruction of communities and the deliberate division of families, over generations, through the separation of husbands, wives, and children."

"Today colleagues, I ask you to join me in presenting this Resolution to the Chinese American community of the City of Los Angeles as this City's acknowledgment and apology of the great injustices done to Chinese Americans and other Asian Pacific Americans by our City, the State of California, and this nation and as our further acknowledgment of the ever-continuing contributions to the City of Los Angeles by the Chinese American Community."

"Tomorrow, the Chinese American Museum will officially open at its permanent location within the El Pueblo Historic Monument. It is fitting that our Council Resolution be presented to the Friends of the Chinese American Museum to be placed on permanent display at the Museum for all Angelinos and visitors to our great City of Los Angeles to view and to remember."

Presented on December 17, 2003, Los Angeles City Council Chambers, by Ed P. Reyes, Councilmember, First District.

-RB-

CHSSC'S CHINESE AMERICAN PORTRAITS OF PRIDE ("CAPP") PROJECT

By Dr. Wing Mar

The Chinese American Portraits of Pride ("CAPP") project is an educational program of the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California. CAPP was initiated to record the precious experiences of Chinese American seniors who have distinguished themselves in the health, science and defense fields, but largely gone unrecognized.

The project began with volunteers interviewing and recording oral histories of a few modest individuals who, it was felt, exemplified the experiences of their peers. As the project matured, the CAPP interviewing team combined narrative text with photo enlargements to create an array of attractive educational posters. A CAPP exhibit was then assembled and displayed in various public spaces, including libraries of many local high school and colleges during Asian Pacific Month. A traveling exhibit has ranged as far north as Stockton and Oakland, California.

Now, three years into the project, we will soon publish a book compiling the stories of about 40 CAPP profilees. The working title is, quite naturally, *Chinese American Portraits of Pride*. Plans call for complimentary copies to be shipped to hundreds of libraries, cultural organizations and historical societies in California. Due to the talented, dedicated and committed individuals who have stepped forward, the CAPP book is becoming a reality.

Many Chinese Americans CAPP has profiled are members of the "Greatest Generation" - described by network news anchor, Tom Brokaw, in his book and television series on WW II veterans. In the face of great obstacles and oppressive legislation, the CAPP profilees made great contributions to American society. They are the bridging generation between the early Chinese immigrants to the United States and the younger Chinese Americans of the twenty-first century. We initiated the CAPP project in order to be sure their stories are told.

A CHINATOWN CHRISTMAS

By Linda Chong

In a weekend already filled with joy and goodwill, Sunday, December 21, 2003, was an extra-special day in Chinatown. As if the holidays weren't reason enough for the enhanced sense of community, the weekend of December 19-22 saw the grand opening of the long-awaited Chinese American Museum and, on that Sunday, CHSSC members and others marked "A Chinatown Christmas," a collaborative event we hope will soon be an annual tradition.

"A Chinatown Christmas" was an outreach effort to raise funds and gain support for a proposed book on the history

of the Chinatown Library. Conceptualized by Tom Eng - the ubiquitous photographer who is active with several Chinatown-based organizations - the fun-filled day consisted of a bazaar at the Chinatown Heritage and Visitors Center, followed by an evening of Christmas caroling with Miss Chinatown and members of her court. Items of clothing, bric-a-brac, books, and assorted houseware items were generously donated by CHSSC members, Margie Lew, Eugene Moy, Susan Sing, Dolores Wong, Dr. Betty Gaw, Betty Chow, Tom Eng and Linda Chong to name a few. (If any contributors names are inadvertently omitted here, please rest assured your generosity is most appreciated.) Lillian Ng, manager of Eastwind Books and Arts in Westwood, also contributed to our impressive inventory by sending former CHSSC board member, Don Loo, with several boxes of books and magazines for CHSSC to sell that day.

The afternoon sale and the evening serenade (which involved handing out candy canes to passersby and merchants) caught the attention of many a tourist strolling through Chinatown's Central Plaza, and even garnered an article and a photograph in the next day's *Sing Tao Daily News*. Even better, by day's end, more than \$110 had been raised from the sale! Here's hoping the event will be repeated next Christmas, when more people knowing of the event will lead to greater participation.

== ANNOUNCEMENTS

Membership Renewal - Deadline Approaching!

The membership renewal deadline is February 29, 2004. Please use the Membership Renewal Form enclosed with this issue.

Gum Saan Journal Expanding to New Annual Format

Gum Saan Journal, CHSSC's semi-academic magazine, is enlarging its scope and format. The upcoming issue will include articles on the last spike, on Carson City, and on actor Keye Luke. Says editor, Icy Smith, "This is an exciting growth period for us. Each issue will include several articles now, but *Gum Saan Journal* will be published only once a year. We want to encourage more submissions from students as well as community members and we want GSJ to be a vehicle that encourages Chinese American studies." As *Gum Saan Journal* grows, its price will need to reflect this. Single issues will be available for sale.

Condolences

The Society extends its sincere condolences to the family of Frank Wong who passed away on January 8, 2004. Mr. Wong was profiled in the Society's book on Chinese American World War II veterans, *Duty and Honor*.

1888 Chinese Memorial Shrine Historical Monument Profiled in Children's Textbook

We Remember - State Monuments and Historic Sites - a new, third-grade nonfiction geography text - outlines the Los Angeles Chinese Memorial Shrine which CHSSC led the historic designation and restoration of. The book is published by Ohio textbook company, Zaner-Bloser.

Recent Donor Acknowledgments

The Society thanks Joyce Mar for her recent donation of \$5,000. CHSSC also thanks Yuek Lee Moy for her contribution of \$1,000 and Stanford and Jane Mu for their contribution of \$1,000.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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 24-25, 2004

CHINESE NEW YEAR FESTIVAL - L.A. CHINATOWN

Hill Street between Ord and Alpine
213-617-0396

January 24, 2004, 12:00 p.m.

ALHAMBRA/SAN GABRIEL CHINESE NEW YEAR PARADE/STREET FAIR

626-282-8481

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

Saturday, February 7, 2004, 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

CHINESE AMERICAN MUSEUM LANTERN FESTIVAL

El Pueblo (Olvera Street)
213-626-5240

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

Until February 15, 2004

THE ART AND POETRY OF YUN GEE

Pasadena Museum of California Art
626-568-3665

Ongoing, 12:00 Midnight (alternating Saturdays)

CHOPSCHTICK COMEDY! -

ASIAN AMERICAN COMEDY AT THE IMPROV

8162 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles
323-651-2583

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 and Board Members

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
Dr. Betty Gaw
Gilbert Hom
Dr. Wing Mar

News 'n Notes Editor, Randy Bloch

January *News 'n Notes* Contributors: Linda Wong Smith,
Dr. Wing Mar, Linda Chong and Randy Bloch



**Chinese Historical Society
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