

FEBRUARY 2024

L.A. Chinese Drum & Bugle Corps Panel Discussion

Wednesday, February 7, 2024, 7 PM

From 1954 to 1977, the Los Angeles Chinese Drum & Bugle Corps, also known as the *Imperial Dragons*, grew to compete around the nation. The Corps became a family for the teens who participated. Many of these connections remained long after the Corps disbanded.



Chinese Historical Society
of Southern California

南加州華人歷史學會



Greg
Fong



Robert
Lee



Janice
Lee
Manus



Corey
Mark



Jeff
Ng



Don
Quon



Frank
Wong

**Free to attend. RSVP via Eventbrite on
CHSSC website: <https://chssc.org>**



Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

FEBRUARY 2024

President's message

I hope you had a wonderful New Year celebration. It's hard to believe that another month has come and gone. If you missed Dr. Russell Low's talk, you missed a wonderful presentation. Our next program for February will feature a panel of former Los Angeles Chinese Drum & Bugle Corps members. The Corps proudly represented our community for 25 years. It should be a very interesting discussion so be sure to reserve your ticket for this online program.

On January 9, my wife Grace and I attended a dedication of a reworded plaque at Mills Alley in Pasadena. Pasadena Mayor Victor Gordo led off the formal program that included other dignitaries. Susie Ling, who has taught at Pasadena City College for many years, made impassioned closing comments about the necessity for accurately representing history. She was instrumental in working with the City of Pasadena in adopting more accurate language; the old plaque had failed to acknowledge that a hostile mob had been responsible for causing the 1885 fire that destroyed Yuen Kee's laundry, the hub of Pasadena Chinatown. Board members Linda Bentz, Susan Dickson, Cindy Fong, Gordon Hom and Past President Eugene Moy were also in attendance. You can read her article about this event on page 5. You can also read more about the dedication at:

<https://www.pasadenanow.com/main/city-rewrites-a-wrong-reworded-mills-alley-plaque-dedicated-at-scene-of-1885-yuen-kee-laundry-fire>

More pictures are posted on our website:

<https://chssc.org/mills-alley-plaques-dedication/>

We have a new Community Archivist, Chelsea Liu. She is a recent recipient of an MA in History & Archival Studies and has done work for the Japanese American National Museum and the Library of Congress. She is helping us to organize and process our many collections. Welcome aboard Chelsea!

This year the Lunar New Year, the Year of the Dragon, is on Saturday, February 10th. CHSSC will continue our tradition of leading the 125th Golden Dragon Parade in L.A. Chinatown on Saturday, February 17. The parade starts at 1:00 pm. If you plan on walking in the parade, you need to wear a red shirt and black pants. Hope to see you there. For more information, see the event listing on page 8.

I would like to personally thank all of the people who made donations to CHSSC and for the ones who became new members or renewed their membership for 2024. Your support is vital to our organization. If you have not renewed your membership or would like to become a member, please fill out the membership form at the bottom of page 7 and send in your check. You can also do it online at <https://chssc.org/membership/>. One of the benefits of membership is receiving a copy of our Gum Saan Journal. This year marks the 40th anniversary and a special edition of the journal.

Ricky Leo

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Linda Bentz
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Robert Chong
Cindy Fong
Annalise Harlow
Angela Lancaster
Grace Leo
Albert Lowe
Felicia Tabing

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, multicultural society of the United States.



Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

FEBRUARY 2024

L.A. Chinese Drum & Bugle Corps Panel Discussion

The Los Angeles Chinese Drum and Bugle Corps was a youth group formed by and for the citizens of the Chinese American community in Los Angeles.

The Corps was, in many ways, a continuation of the rich cultural performance history of the community with roots in the Mei Wah Drum Corps, started in the early 1930s, and later, the Chung Wah Drum and Bugle Corps. The Corps enjoyed a 25-year history, proudly representing its community in parades, concerts, and in competition. Until 1976, Corps membership was limited to any youth of Asian ancestry under the age of 22 years.

Nicknamed the *Imperial Dragons*, the Corps eventually grew to compete on a national level against other corps and formed the modern day Drum Corps International. This project is dedicated to the people, history, sights, and sounds of all those who were a part of the Los Angeles Chinese Drum and Bugle Corps legacy.

Panelists:



Greg Fong – Greg joined the Corps in 1962 and marched until 1966 as the drum major, while attending Cal State LA. After his time as an active member, Greg served as an instructor from 1967-1970. He subsequently attended the USC School of Pharmacy and graduated in 1974. In later years, Greg headed up reunion committees and became the de facto lead for the Corps' Legacy Committee.



Robert "Bob" Lee – Also known as "Youngie," Bob was born and raised in Chinatown. Bob was a charter member of the Chung Wah drum corps and played the snare drum. Like many founding members, he eventually became an instructor. He also served as the coordinator between the teaching staff, management, and the very active Parents Auxiliary.



Janice Lee-Manus – Janice began her Corps experience in 1967 as a mascot who followed the color guard captain because she was too small for a uniform or an instrument. Later she became a member of the color guard/flag line and learned the true meaning of teamwork. She said the Corps positively impacted her life – from her sense of family to her self-confidence, determination, discipline, drive, sense of accomplishment, and commitment to stay fit and active. Janice considers her friends from the Corps to be family. She recently retired from a school district, having worked in Assessment and Technology for over 20 years.

Janice's parents were among those extremely active in the Parents Auxiliary. They served on the board, as chairpersons for various fundraisers, and as chefs and chaperones for camps, parades, activities, and tours.



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L.A. Chinese Drum & Bugle Corps Panel Discussion (cont.)

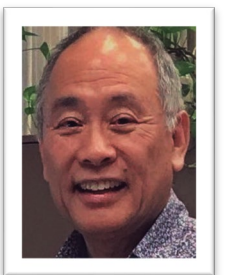
Panelists:



Corey Mark – Corey was a member from 1967-1972. The development of life-long friendships, the challenge of mastering a musical instrument, and proudly representing his community inspired him to continue his involvement in the musical arts supplementing his career in the biotechnology industry. Throughout his adult life he has performed with fife and drum corps, taiko groups, wind symphonies, and various senior and all-age drum corps. Now retired, he currently resides in the greater Houston (TX) area.



Jeff Ng – Jeff was a member from 1974-1977. He loved playing the drums then and still enjoys playing the drums now! Marching with the Corps was the highlight of his childhood: he learned discipline, hard work, perseverance, and teamwork, and traveled parts of the world competing against some of the best corps around. For Jeff, the most meaningful part was making friendships that have lasted a lifetime, including the one with his first drum instructor, Willie Polacek. Jeff graduated from UCLA with an economics degree. He worked for Allstate, established his own agency, and recently retired from a 36-year career in the insurance industry. His retirement activities include playing drums in his band, Elemental Funk, at various community events and dances in Orange County and the South Bay.



Don Quon – Don first met Bill Lee in the Los Angeles Police Department boys' band, where both played snare drums. He joined Bill's newly formed Chung Wah drum corps as a charter member and played the soprano horn from 1954-1960. After leaving the Corps, Don attended UCLA and graduated with an engineering degree; he worked at Boeing beginning in 1962 until he retired in 2009. Don joined the Corps' Legacy Committee in 2013 to help create the public exhibition that was installed at the CHSSC's Heritage Center on Bernard Street.



Frank Wong – Frank was also a charter member who joined in 1954. He played a soprano horn and was a featured soloist. After his years as an active member, he stayed with the Corps and served as a color guard instructor. Frank currently works as a legal researcher. He studied at USC college, went to Belmont High School, and involved with the Lion dance group with his son for many years.



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We Did It – As a Village, Together

By Susie Ling

In Pasadena on 6 November 1885, there was a race riot on Fair Oaks Avenue just south of Colorado Boulevard. Yuen Kee Laundry and some of the other Chinese American businesses were burned out; Pasadena officials also segregated the Chinese pioneers. But on 9 January 2024, Pasadena officials apologized and set-up two plaques to acknowledge the injustice of centuries of anti-Asian hate.

In 2015, journalist and historian Matt Hormann, wrote a detailed piece on the 1885 anti-Chinese Riot in Pasadena Weekly. In 2023, John Dean, an African American with Pasadena Heritage, got an appointment for Eugene Moy and Susie Ling to meet with Pasadena Mayor Victor Gordo. In a summer Japanese American Kansha event at the Pasadena Museum of History, Susie had opportunity to follow-up with Councilmember Gene Masuda. And thus the “village came together”, and about a dozen CHSSC members were there to witness the big event just after New Year.

Another person present for the plaque unveiling was Kristine Lowe. From previous CHSSC oral histories, we know that Kristine is a sixth generation Chinese American and the great-granddaughter of Albert and Ann Tinloy Lowe. When Al Sr. and Ann moved to Pasadena in 1939, a neighbor said, “You can’t live here, Pochahantas.” The neighbors also passed around a petition against the family. Undeterred, the family established Lowe and Sons. Al Jr. was a WW2 vet and later earned the moniker “The Man Who Saved Pasadena” for his work as president of the Pasadena School Board during the 1970s racial integration years. Kristine retired as Captain of the Sierra Madre Fire Department and now serves on the Sierra Madre City Council. She was so happy to be there for her great grandparents, her grandparents, her parents, and her children. She urged the CHSSC to keep doing what we are doing.





Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

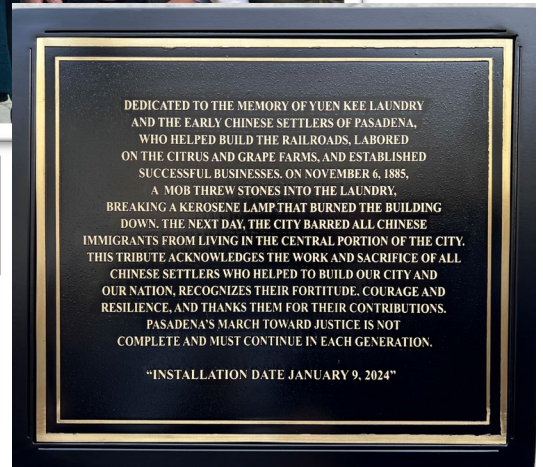
FEBRUARY 2024



Susie Ling and Sandy Greenstein
receive a certificate from
Congresswomen Judy Chu's office

Susie Ling &
Matt Hormann

Re-worded
Plaque



☐ New Membership ☐ Renewal

Name _____
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Mail to: Chinese Historical Society of Southern California
411 Bernard St
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Membership Levels

☐ Regular \$ 57
☐ 100x100 Club \$ 100
☐ Supporter \$ 300
☐ Senior (60+) or student \$ 32

Donation (tax deductible) \$ _____
TOTAL \$ _____

Please make checks payable to CHSSC

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newsletter mailed to your home.

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newsletter sent via email.

To join or renew your membership by debit card, credit card,
or by using your PayPal account, visit our website at chssc.org.

We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, tax ID 95-3155357



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FEBRUARY 2024

Donations for January

In Memory of Lily and Lockchue Ko

Paul Lee

In Memory of Stanton Mu

Curtis Mu

In Memory of May Lee Wong

Debra Wong

In Memory of Kwan Ying and Gin C. Young

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Donations

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The Haunt Ghost Tours

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Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

411 Bernard Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012
Phone: 323-352-8824 Email: info@chssc.org
Website: <https://chssc.org/>

Current and Upcoming Events

125th Golden Dragon Parade, Saturday, February 17, L.A. Chinatown

The Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Los Angeles presents the 125th Golden Dragon Parade on Saturday, February 17, 2024 starting at 1:00 pm. CHSSC will be leading the parade with our banner and flags. If you plan on walking in the parade, you need to wear a red shirt and black pants. Come and cheer us on! Click on the link below for more information:

<https://www.lachinesechamber.org/2024-gdp>

LA Firecracker Run/Walk, Bike and Dog Events, Saturday and Sunday, February 24 and 25, L.A. Chinatown

Come visit our table at this year's L.A. Firecracker Run, celebrating its 46th year. Click on the link below for more information:

<https://firecracker10k.org/>

“Where You Stand: Chinatown 1880 to 1939” Exhibit at Union Station

The exhibit invites participants into the center of the vibrant community of families, businesses, and associations through a multi-dimensional experience of the Chinese community of early Los Angeles.

View historic photographs, listen to oral history recordings, and view augmented reality presentations superimposed onto other locations around Union Station. Click on the link to learn more:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/1e5f963472f4400da19fcb0e3ccfdd5e?item=1>