



JUNE 2024

Square and Circle Club: 100 Years of Service and Philanthropy Wednesday, June 5, 2024, 7 PM



Join Lorraine Dong,
Co-President and Co-Historian
of the Square and Circle Club, as she
provides a brief history of the Square
and Circle Club. On June 15, 2024,
Square and Circle Club will celebrate
its 100th birthday. It is the first and
oldest Chinese/Asian American
women's service organization in the
country, founded by seven young
ladies who decided to help
the flood and famine
victims in China.



Lorraine Dong



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



Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

JUNE 2024

President's message

As my first year as CHSSC president comes to a close, I would like to reflect on the past and look to the upcoming future. We have made incremental steps in renovating our Heritage Center since last year. A generous donation from Winston Young has allowed us to have air conditioning in both buildings and our archives storage, upgraded electrical service, and security cameras installed, adding to architectural plans and foundation reinforcement already completed. I got involved by repairing the porch railing and replacing the stair railings and posts with the help of Willie Lew and my wife Grace. Volunteers including Willie Lew, Susan Sing, and Harry Du Young have put in many hours maintaining the landscaping.

Caitlin Bryant did a wonderful job organizing our Summer Picnic. A large turnout enjoyed the food, entertainment provided by East Wind youth group, the strawberry cream cake donated by Ken Chan of Phoenix Bakery, and each other's company. Our 11th Annual Yosemite Pilgrimage featured guest speaker Phil Sexton. A special dinner/program with bestselling author Lisa See was possible because of our partnership with Bob Lee and the China Society of Southern California.

We launched our virtual Chinatown Field Trip Storymap funded by a grant from the Society of Architectural Historians. The "Where You Stand: Chinatown 1880 to 1939" Exhibit at Union Station opened showcasing the neighborhoods and businesses in the original Los Angeles Chinatown. It was made possible because of our collaboration with Metro Art, The Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West, USC Cinema, and the hard work of Linda Bentz and Eugene Moy.

I was honored to speak at the ribbon cutting at Vista Canyon Metrolink Station where our Lang Station plaque was relocated and a new plaque was dedicated. This year we participated in our first Giving Tuesday campaign with the goal of digitizing our phonograph collection of Cantonese opera. Because of the advocacy of Susie Ling, Pasadena city officials apologized and installed plaques to acknowledge the City's unjust displacement of Chinese from downtown Pasadena in 1885. You can read about the completion of the first phase of our Chinatown Associations project made possible by a grant from the David and Pearl Louie Family Foundation on page 4.

I am looking forward to our Annual Members meeting in June. If you are a member, please vote to approve our revised By-Laws and the 2024-2025 Board of Directors. Our 50th anniversary is coming up next year, stay tuned for details.

If you are a member, thank you for your support. If you aren't, please join us! If you find value in our work, please make a donation so that we can continue to provide our services.

Ricky Leo

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

Ricky Leo, President
Gordon Hom, Vice President
Susan Dickson, Secretary
Franklin Mah, Treasurer
Laureen Hom, Membership Secretary

MEMBERS AT LARGE

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

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

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Circle and Square Club: 100 Years of Service and Philanthropy

On June 15, 2024, Square and Circle Club will celebrate its 100th birthday. It is the first and oldest Chinese/Asian American women’s service organization in the country. Founded in 1924 during the Chinese Exclusion era and when the 19th Amendment was ratified in 1920, seven young ladies decided to help the flood and famine victims in China. Thus began the Square and Circle Club. Three months later, they made history as the first Chinese American women to organize a fundraiser. From jazz dances to Hope Chests, carnivals, musicals, and fashion shows, the Club has raised thousands of dollars to help the community and its various causes. This PowerPoint presentation will provide a brief 100-year history of the Club’s service and philanthropy, and of their impact on Chinese American and women’s history.

Speaker Bio:



Lorraine Dong is Emerita Professor of Asian American Studies at San Francisco State University. Born, raised, and educated in San Francisco Chinatown, she earned her BA and MA from San Francisco State University and her PhD from University of Washington. Lorraine’s research interest is in Asian American children’s literature. Among her works, she is most proud of *Sewing Woman* (1982) of which she wrote the narrative and *The Coming Man* (1994) that she co-authored with Philip Choy and Marlon K. Hom. Lorraine is a strong believer of community service. Elected president of Square and Circle Club for five terms, she is currently its Co-President, Centennial Co-Chair, and Co-Historian.

Slate of Nominees for 2024-2025 Board of Directors

President	Ricky Leo
Vice President	Robert Chong
Secretary	Susan Dickson
Treasurer	TBD
Membership Secretary	Lauren Hom
Directors-At-Large	Linda Bentz, David Castro, Isaac Chu, Annalise Harlow, Gordon Hom, Angela Lancaster, Grace Leo, Albert Lowe, Eugene Moy

The slate will be voted on during the Annual Members Meeting.

Please review the draft revision to our By-laws on our website:

<https://chssc.org/chssc-by-laws-revision-may-15-2024/>

If you are a member, vote to approve at our Annual Members Meeting on June 5.



Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

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Chinatown Associations: Anchors of the Community

By Linda Bentz

We are happy to announce the launch of our newest on-line exhibit *Chinatown Associations: Anchors of the Community*. Associations exemplify the lasting resilience and solidarity within Chinese America, yet they are largely absent from major historical discourse. This project works to unravel and preserve the memory of associations that shaped the Chinese communities in Los Angeles.

For phase one of this project, CHSSC worked with four Los Angeles Chinatown associations: Fong Lun, Eng Family and Lee On Dong Associations and the Chinese American Citizens Alliance. The new exhibit provides an in-depth understanding of the history, character, and evolving role of these historic organizations.

Visit our on-line exhibit at <https://chssc.org/chinatown-associations-anchors-of-the-community/> and hear the voices of the leaders and members of these associations and see current and historical photographs. This exhibit was made possible by a generous donation from the David and Pearl Louie Family Foundation.





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CHSSC Intern's Report

by Michaela Telfer



Since October 2023, I have been interning at CHSSC through the UCLA Community Archives Lab/Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Internship program. I'm relatively new to the archives field so my experiences at CHSSC have been key to helping me learn a lot of the basics of the profession in a hands-on setting. In particular, working at a community organization like CHSSC has allowed me to develop a broader range of skills than I likely would have learned at a larger, more siloed institution. I have learned how to catalogue photographs from the Southern California Oral History Project, process and preserve archival collections, write grant applications, and correct interview transcripts. My main focus has been on processing as many materials as possible which includes learning how to store materials appropriately and make them accessible to community members and researchers. I have been especially excited to work with collections like Dolores Wong's materials and CHSSC's own records which offer a lot of insight into the activism and collaborative labor that have gone into building CHSSC and its surrounding community. These projects have allowed me to develop the core skills that I'll need for any archival jobs I take in the future.

My other major project was an NEH grant application that I co-authored with Andy Tan which will hopefully bring more funds into the organization and allow CHSSC to properly store and make accessible the many archival artifacts in the collection. These artifacts, which come from Los Angeles' Old Chinatown, the Donner Summit, Evergreen Cemetery, and Santa Barbara's historical Chinatown, are a valuable historical resource that also speak to the personal lives of the people and families who lived in these areas in the 19th and 20th centuries. This project helped me gain experience with project planning and develop the skills necessary to survey a collection and assess its needs. I've been very grateful for the opportunity to help care for CHSSC's collections and to learn more about both the archival profession and local history.

CHSSC New Board Nominees



Isaac Chu's early years were in Taiwan, growing up between Taipei and Hualien. Upon immigrating to the United States, he spent his adolescence in the East Bay with many memorable weekends in Oakland's Chinatown.

Moving south, Isaac studied History, Political Science and Economics at UCSD, and continued to study Law at Loyola. Thereafter, he worked as a school teacher before moving into small business management and consultancy. In recent years, Isaac has been learning indigenous cultural lifeways, and also working with community organizations throughout Los Angeles.



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CHSSC New Board Nominees (cont.)



David Castro has worked with CHSSC for over five years, serving as an archival assistant on the Duty and Honor project and as a consultant on digital projects. He recently earned a Master's in Library and Information Science from San Jose State University, specializing in Archival and Records Management, and an Advanced Certificate in Digital Assets Management. He also holds a Bachelor's in History from the University of California, Los Angeles. Born and raised in Los Angeles, David developed a deep affinity for understanding the evolution of the city's cultural landscape and the diverse communities that have called it home. This passion led him to appreciate the vital role of local community archives in preserving and sharing the rich, diverse histories of the city and the rest of the Southland. Currently, David works as a Special Collections and Archive Processing Specialist at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

Archivists & Volunteers



L to R: Luke Diep-Nguyen (volunteer), Chelsea Liu (Community Archivist), Michaela Telfer (Archivist Intern), Joanne Im (volunteer), Andy Tan (Archivist)



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2024 12th Annual Yosemite Pilgrimage



This year, CHSSC will be hosting with the NPS the 12th Annual Yosemite Pilgrimage honoring the many contributions made by early Chinese in Yosemite National Park. We will be meeting in Lee Vining, just outside of the eastern entrance of Yosemite near Tuolumne Meadows. Arrive on Thursday evening, **July 25th**, and enjoy several walks and programs throughout Yosemite on Friday through Sunday, **July 26-28th**. The pilgrimage will end by midday Sunday.

ACTIVITY HQ: Lee Vining Community Center: 296 Mattly Ave, Lee Vining, CA 93541

ACCOMMODATIONS:

Book accommodations in the Lee Vining area.

Lee Vining: <https://www.leevining.com/lodging>

June Lake: 17 min from Lee Vining Community Center on Hwy 395

Mammoth Lakes: 31 min from Lee Vining Community Center on Hwy 395

Camping Option: We have reserved three group campsites at a nearby facility that has restrooms and showers. Cost estimated at \$26-30 per person for all three nights For campground reservations, please email info@chssc.org when you register.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

Thu 7/25: Check into your accommodations

Fri 7/26: Tuolumne Meadows (entrance fee required) and hiking excursions, South Tufa State Park

Sat 7/27: Olmsted Point (entrance fee required) and hike to May Lake, Potluck

Sun 7/28: Check out of accommodations, optional visit to Yosemite's Chinese Laundry Exhibit

Optional excursions to nearby historic sites may be added.

REGISTRATION: \$36 (\$35 + \$1 payment processing fee)

Register on our website: <https://chssc.org/event/2024-yosemite-pilgrimage-registration/>

There will also be a backpacking trip to Sing Peak from July 29-31. Contact: yosemitingspeak@gmail.com for more information. **Please note that the backpacking trip is a separate entity from the Yosemite Pilgrimage and is not sponsored by the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California.**



Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

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

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Donations for May

In Memory of Howard Foon

Sylvia Soo Hoo

In Memory of Rose Kan

Cheryl Tina Kum

Donations

Janice Chang

Kathryn Kwok

Wes Leslie

Announcements and Upcoming Events

“The untold story of the Chinese Americans who helped create Yosemite”

Read this article on the BBC website to learn more about the Chinese contributions to Yosemite:

<https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20240513-the-untold-story-of-the-chinese-americans-who-helped-create-yosemite>

“Asian Americans in Military Service Exhibit

In honor of Asian American Pacific Islander Month, see the Asian Americans in Military Service Exhibit at the Bob Hope Patriotic Hall, 1816 S. Figueroa St, Los Angeles, Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm through the end of June. Free Admission.