



# NEWS 'n NOTES

CHINESE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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Chinatown Heritage & Visitors Center: 323-222-0856

SEPTEMBER 2006

## OCTOBER PROGRAM

*Guest Speaker*

**Ernesto Con**

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2006, 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)

Please join us for a business meeting and hear the President of CHSSC, JW Wong talk about plans for the next five years. The guest speaker, Ernesto Con will talk about his 5-generation family in Costa Rica and his great grandfather's support of Dr. Sun's revolution. He will show slides of the social and political life for Chinese in Costa Rica. The Con family came from the Guangzhou Province. Ernesto came to the United States intending to study medicine. He quit medical school and became a painting contractor. He is also a published poet.

## AROUND CHSSC

### PORTRAITS OF PRIDE (PoP) BOOK TWO PUBLIC MEETING AT CHINATOWN LIBRARY

*By Wing Mar, MD & Randy Bloch*

The *Portraits of Pride 2* public meeting at Chinatown Public Library on Saturday, September 16th was a successful launch of the PoP series' second installment. The book team answered many questions—listening carefully to feedback and airing of opinions—and had a

productive dialogue with audience members. The noontime meeting was well-attended by enthusiastic PoP supporters, including college professors from Cal State Los Angeles and Los Angeles Harbor College, and retired Castelar School principal of many years, Dr. William Chun-Hoon. Also present were high school students and a recent Harvard University graduate, all of whom expressed their desire to help with the project. A young student who remarked she previously had not known of any Chinese American figures of the so-called "Greatest Generation" said she now knows of many, from the pages of *Portraits of Pride*.

Holding the meeting at the Chinatown Public Library maximized opportunities for community input. Some attending had never heard of *Portraits of Pride* and its free library book program. They were curious about the PoP series, asked thoughtful questions and a lively give-and-take took place. Some confusion was in evidence about the PoP series' focus and purpose. Emotionally sensitive topics came up and opinions were put forth on the tone of the upcoming book and whether or not to raise painful memories of prejudice—and issues of discrimination alive today—in the book.

PoP Two Project Director LP Leung was the meeting's keynote speaker. Mr. Leung eloquently described the PoP series' overall mission and the focus of *Portraits of Pride 2*. He explained that in PoP Two, we are responding to the need for a source book emphasizing pride in the accomplishments of Chinese Americans. Speaking at the meeting and on other occasions, he stated: "We are inspired by the lessons of the Wen Ho Lee case to show the positive image of Chinese Americans. The Chinese American experience is not taught in the history classes of our public schools. My own children have little knowledge of the accomplishments of Chinese Americans. *Portraits of Pride 1* led the way, tracing the period of Chinese American history from the Great Depression through World War II. *Portraits of Pride 2* and the PoP series will be a perpetual record of

*(continued on page 3)*



# Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

## SEPTEMBER 2006

(“Portraits”, from page 2)

historical source material for our schools and public libraries and also for our homes, atop our coffee tables.

Joyce Mar, Lead Editor of PoP Book One, spoke next and thanked and congratulated LP Leung for taking leadership of Book Two. She mentioned his tremendous support for PoP from the project’s inception and said he is advancing PoP’s vision through assembling the Book Two team. She emphasized that Book Two’s portraits represent a broader age group and range of careers, and shared news of many encouraging thank you letters received by CHSSC from school libraries sent free copies of *Portraits of Pride 1*.

The overall format of *Portraits of Pride 2* will differ somewhat from the prior volume. In the *Group Portraits* section, a small group of outstanding students is being mentored to write a chapter on Chinese Americans in Agriculture. A chapter on Railroads in the same section is being undertaken by former CHSSC vice-president William F. Chew who has written a book on that subject, and Mrs. Bobbi Leung will author a chapter on Chinese Americans in the Fishing Industry. A section of the book on Chinese American *Superstars* will include sketches of cellist Yo-Yo Ma and architect I.M. Pei, among others. The section on *Unsung Heroes* consists of longer personal portraits that will include David Wong, co-developer of the antidepressant, Prozac; Flossie Wong-Staal, co-discoverer of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS; and, the late Iris Chang, author of *The Chinese in America*.

In view of questions and opinions expressed at the September 16<sup>th</sup> meeting, we feel *Portraits of Pride*’s purpose merits a stating in the newsletter of the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California. Our purpose is to:

1. Help fill in the “Missing in History” gap of Chinese Americans;
2. Increase awareness of the positive contributions of Chinese Americans;
3. Highlight role models for our younger generation;
4. Build on the work done by PoP Book 1 and other CHSSC projects;
5. Broaden and extend the *Portraits of Pride* Free Library Book Program for five years; and
6. Support and mentor succeeding generations of Chinese American historians.

We would also like to clarify the attributes for candidates in *Portraits of Pride 2*:

1. Scientists whose deeds have impacted the country with global consequences and who are mostly unknown to the general public;
2. High-achieving Chinese Americans in non-scientific fields who may or may not be well known;
3. Winners of the Nobel Prize; and
4. Leaders with outstanding character traits participating in community affairs as a role model for our younger generation.

It is clear from the September 16<sup>th</sup> meeting that *Portraits of Pride 2* is on track for a year-end 2008 publication date. And, as the PoP project’s founder quipped, “maybe even in time for the Summer 2008 Beijing Olympics.”

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### Officers

JW Wong, President  
 Kenneth L. Chan, Vice President  
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 Dr. Betty Gaw  
 William Gow  
 Dr. Munson Kwok  
 Irvin Lai  
 Jeannie Liu  
 Dr. Donald Loo  
 George Yin

*News ‘n Notes Editor, Yvonne Chang*

### 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.



### CHSSC 2006 Honorees



Dennis Dun, center, was surprised at the closing performance of "One Nation, Under God" on Aug. 28 when CHSSC's Jack Ong presented him the Society's "Salute to Chinese American Actors" award which Dennis was unable to accept personally at the official presentations event on May 6, 2006. At left is Philip W. Chung, writer/director of the critically acclaimed new stage drama and co-artistic director of Lodestone Theatre Ensemble.



CHSSC caught up with actor Tzi Ma, who was unable to attend our gala Salute to Chinese American Actors, at the Los Angeles premiere of Tzi's new movie, "Red Doors," at the world-famous Egyptian Theater in Hollywood. At the premiere Sept. 20, Society president JW Wong presented Tzi with his medal.



On hand were "Red Doors" co-star Freda Foh Shen, second from right, another CHSSC honoree; and on far right is Georgia Lee, writer-producer-director.

### Acknowledgements

The CHSSC thanks the following for their generosity:

- Frank Yu for his donation of a car and chairs.
- Irvin Lai for his cash contribution.
- Ben Fong donated picnic and office supplies.
- All those who have sold raffle tickets.
- All those who have bought raffle tickets.
- All those who have contributed snacks for the monthly program meetings.
- Winnie Lew, Ruth Lung for bringing and serving snacks at monthly program meetings.
- Gilbert Hom for doing chores around the Heritage Center.
- Eugene Moy for continuing to be available to open the Heritage Center on Sundays.
- JW Wong for running all over town to make sure CHSSC has a presence at various festivals.
- Ernesto Con for selling noodles for the benefit of CHSSC.

### Wish List

- Copier to replace one that is broken.
- Laser printer
- Flat panel monitor
- Cash
- Volunteers to clean the Chinese Shrine



### HISTORICAL CHINATOWN

Chew Kee Store of Fiddletown

*By Yvonne Chang*

Fiddletown is a picturesque and sleepy town, located in Amador County in the heart of Mother Lode. Lured by the promise of Gold Rush it had a Chinese settlement of 791 in 1849, the year Fiddletown was founded. By 1850 the number of Chinese had risen to 4025. At that time only San Francisco had a larger Chinese population. Today there are less than 200 people living in Fiddletown and none are Chinese.

Among the prospectors was Dr. Yee Fong Cheung, a herb doctor. Soon he was discouraged by discriminatory laws placed on Chinese miners and by mining. He established himself as an herb doctor to administer to the medical needs of the Chinese miners and later to the Chinese railroad workers. He built the original store in 1851, expanded his practice to Sacramento and Virginia City in Nevada. Dr. Yee Fong Cheung once cured Governor Leland Stanford's wife from a severe pulmonary disorder when he was in Sacramento.

Sometime in the 1880's a man known as Chew Kee was employed by Dr. Yee who in the early 19th century bought the property. He worked as an assistant to Dr. Yee and provided groceries and supplies to the Chinese in the community. The Chew Kee Store is a museum today where Dr. Yee's medical practice is in evidence. His office included a wooden bed for examining patients, and displayed on his desk are an abacus, a wooden mortar and a pestle. In the cabinets are labeled glass vials, jars once filled with herbal medicines, an old stethoscope and straight razors. Another cabinet, on the wall, contains 25 drawers with Chinese characters on each identifying the contents.

A decorated altar indented into one wall was used for prayer by those who come to the store. Above each door and entryway throughout the building are hung three decorated paper strips. The Chinese believed that strips prevented evil from entering while the perforations in the strips allowed good spirits to pass.

Other artifacts in the museum include Chinese coins, pottery, books, pamphlets, an opium pipe as well as sticks and cards used in Chinese gambling.

Many Chinese remained after mining activity waned, and Dr. Yee continued his medical practice with the assistance of Chew Kee. Dr. Yee retired in 1904, returned to China where he passed away in 1907. His descendants continued to live and work in Sacramento. Among them are dentists and physicians.

The Chew Kee Store was restored in 1988 through the combined efforts of Dr. Yee's great-grand son Dr. Herbert Yee, the State of California and the Fiddletown Preservation Society. As part of the Fiddletown Historic District, it is included in the National Registry of Historic Places.

The last resident of the adobe, Jimmy Chow, died in 1965. In 2001, the building was donated to Amador County by its owners, Richard Stanley and Anne Hellman. In 2003 the Fiddletown Preservation Society received a grant from the State of California for \$203,000 to restore it again along with another remnant of Chinese community known as the Gambling Hall. The construction is scheduled to complete by the end of 2007.

### References

[www.fiddletown.org](http://www.fiddletown.org)

David Yee, UC Davis Medical School CAMSIG, "Fiddletown Story," 2006

[cim.ucdavis.edu/clubs/CAMSIG/Story.html](http://cim.ucdavis.edu/clubs/CAMSIG/Story.html)

### ANNOUNCEMENT

**BUTTON!! BUTTON!!  
WHO'S GOT THE BUTOON?**

During the month of October, there will be a button exhibit displayed by Margie Lew, CHSSC Charter Member, at the Chinatown Library, located at the corner of Ord and Hill Streets. Margie has been collecting buttons for about 40 years, and has them in various shapes, sizes and colors. Come and see how buttons can be used in several ways. All it takes is a little imagination ---- and a lot of time.

Library Branch Library (213)620-0925



SEPTEMBER 2006

**SAVE THE DATE !!**

**Sunday, November 12, 2006**

**CHSSC Fall Dinner**

**Empress Pavilion**



**Doctors Kwan Ming Chan and Karen Chan will present**

**A Discussion on the Spirit of the Pioneers**

**And**

**The Kong Chow Temple**



### HEALTH & WELLNESS



*By Dr. Betty Gaw*

#### SENIOR MOMENT—Part I of II

Have you had a senior moment that embarrassed you because you totally forgot to update your boss on an important event? Or you arrived at your friend's party on the wrong day? We've all had senior moments at any age, but these forgetful memory lapses seem to be occurring more and more frequently as we age.

Of all the vexing health problems facing humans, senior moments are the most embarrassing, frustrating and frightening, depending on the adverse severity of the outcome.

The 84 year old man who plowed into the Santa Monica Farmer's market stalls while driving his car, killing several people, was due to severe lapse of memory which he had no recall of what happened when questioned about it.

These examples of short-circuiting of the brain's functions led to memory loss and undesirable outcomes. Losing one's memory is losing one's personality; as the loss becomes more frequent and severe, it reaches the point of being hazardous to life and property.

#### MEMORY

In a healthy person, the brain consists of some 50 billion brain cells known as neurons. Each neuron has extensions of axons and dendrites, like the long roots of trees. A neuron is the longest cell of the human body, since it has the job of innervating every organ and limb all the way to the digits of fingers and toes. Electrical firing in the neuron sets the nerves into action, receiving or transmitting nerve impulses. Then there are the storage areas for memory, there are processing centers, integrating centers, centers that control--- movement, sight, speech, hearing, touch, temperature, pain, emotion, hunger, autonomic

functions of heart-lung-blood pressure, reflexes, and

taste, etc.

The different areas of the brain coordinate and communicate with each other intricately through electrical impulses, neurotransmitters (chemicals that facilitate the impulses), electrolytes, hormones, and nutrients from food. There are checks and balances, nature's magnificent way of keeping the body in sync and harmony. The enormously complex task of billions of brain cells depend on a healthy biological environment. The brain is a high-energy consumer for oxygen and nutrients, obligating us to supply its needs every moment of life to sustain its optimum health and functioning.

#### WHY DOES MEMORY FAIL?

Last month, I experienced a "brown-out" when some of the electrical lights in my house emitted a dim, soft glow of light whilst the others were totally dead. The entire neighborhood was affected, some businesses worst than others. Gas stations, banks, stores, street traffic lights were either blinking erratically or were in a black-out mode. Imagine if this scenario occurs in one's brain, what would happen to speech, hearing, movement, emotions, memory and recall, temper control, or any cognitive function? When memory lapses, and memory steadily deteriorate to dementia, such as Alzheimer's Disease, then repair, restoration and regeneration of the neurons become daunting, because chronic long term disease leads to death of neurons.

For such an exquisitely complex and delicate organ to remain healthy, we must nourish it daily (every neuron firing requires a minute amount of ionic calcium, and a constant supply of oxygen and glucose), stimulate it with learning new tasks, avoid toxins (tobacco smoking, excess alcohol, brain-altering drugs), use meditation, control stress especially chronic and severe anxiety-depression, get sufficient sleep, and stay healthy all our lives.

Any disease that disrupts the general health of the body, be it dehydration, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, chronic depression, hypertension, cancer, immune disorders, chronic sleep-deprivation, or infection ( e.g. flu, AIDS), that is untreated or uncontrolled, will cause the brain to be adversely impacted. Neurons do die, and the brain shrinks in size.

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### COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Ongoing

#### **BONE MARROW DRIVES by ASIANS FOR MIRACLE MARROW MATCHES**

Various locations throughout L.A. area

Information: (888) 236-4673; [www.asianmarrow.org](http://www.asianmarrow.org)

Thursdays, 3:00-7:00 p.m.

#### **CHINATOWN FARMERS MARKET**

727 N. Hill St., L.A. Chinatown

Information: (213) 680-0243; [www.chinatownla.com](http://www.chinatownla.com)

First Saturday of Every Month, 10:30 a.m.

#### **“UNDISCOVERED CHINATOWN” TOURS**

L.A. Chinatown

Information: (213) 680-0243; [www.chinatownla.com](http://www.chinatownla.com)

Monday, October 2nd, 6:30 p.m.

#### **The China Society of Southern California October Program (lecture and dinner)**

Vanishing Peoples of the Golden Triangle by Pierre Odier

The Golden Triangle conjures intrigue, vast treasures, and mystery for this area at the borders of China and Burma is the source for jade, rubies, and opium.

Golden Dragon Restaurant

960 N. Broadway, Los Angeles, CA

Reservation required, \$12

Mrs. Dorothy Brown

323-463-1396

October 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>, 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

#### **MID-AUTUMN MOON FESTIVAL**

Central Plaza

947 Broadway, L.A. Chinatown

Information: (213) 617-0396

October 7<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

#### **27<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MOON FESTIVAL**

China Alley, San Luis Obispo

Information: (559) 582-4508

Oct. 10, Tues., 7:30 p.m.

#### **Chrysanthemums on the Eastern Edge: Plants in the Chinese Art**

June Li, curator of the Huntington's developing Chinese

Garden, will give a lecture about the current exhibition of Chinese art, “Chrysanthemums on the Eastern Hedge,” and how it helps contextualize the garden, including the traditional symbolism of many of the plants that will be used in the landscape.

Huntington Library, Friends Hall

San Marino, California

Cost—General admission

626-405-2128

[www.huntington.org](http://www.huntington.org)

October 21<sup>st</sup>, 7:30 p.m.

#### **COLD TOFU COMEDY IMPROVISIONAL GROUP PERFORMS**

Maryknoll Japanese Catholic Center

222 S. Hewitt St., Los Angeles

November 10<sup>th</sup> to February 4, 2007

#### **Banquet — A Feast for the Senses Exhibition**

Pacific Asia Museum,

46 N. Las Robles Ave., Pasadena

\$7 for non-members, free for members

Reservation required: (626) 449-2742, ext. 12

November 12th, 2:00 p.m.

Authors on Asia at Pacific Asia Museum

#### **Chinese Food Finder: Los Angeles and the San Gabriel Valley by Carl Chu**

Carl Chu has written the area's definitive Chinese restaurant guide on what to order and where to go to find representative dishes from every region of China, and vital information on the culture of Chinese dining.

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#### **WORDS OF WISDOM**

*Past President, Cy Wong*

A pig doesn't get fat if you weigh it everyday, you have to feed it.

Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there.



**\$100 Could Put You in the Driver's Seat  
Of a Brand New MAZDA3!**

NOW...for a **\$100 tax-deductible donation** to CHSSC, the odds are 1 in 500 for you to win a new 2006 four-door MAZDA3...sporting **great looks** and even **better performance**.

Drawing will be held November 25, 2006. Winner need not be present to win. If 151-250 tickets are sold, Prize: \$2,000. If 51 -150 tickets are sold, prize: \$1,000, Winner is responsible for all taxes, fees and licensing.

To pay by cash, check or money order payable to CHSSC , please complete this form and mail with payment to 415 Bernard St., Los Angeles, CA 90012.

Or to pay by Visa/MC, complete and fax this form to CHSSC: 323-221-4162.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel.: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of tickets: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



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