



# NEWS 'n NOTES

CHINESE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Appreciation of our Chinese American heritage \* A non-profit organization \*  
P.O. Box 862647, Los Angeles, CA 90086-2647 (213) 621-3171

SEPTEMBER 1996

## PROGRAM

Wednesday, October 2, 1996 - 7:30 P.M.  
Castelar School - Multipurpose Room  
840 Yale Street, Los Angeles Chinatown  
(Park on playground. Enter on College Street)  
between Hill and Yale Streets

### GROWING UP WITH EFFIE LAI

Come meet Effie Lai, a diminutive, perky storehouse of Chinese-American history. Effie Lai, who was born in San Francisco, will share stories of her childhood in San Francisco Chinatown as a member of a large family. In 1922, she married a tenant farmer in the little town of Locke, California. Locke is the only town in the United States built and inhabited exclusively by the Chinese until recent years. In Locke, Effie raised 5 children (including our former president Irvin Lai) while struggling through the Great Depression years. To help ends meet, Effie worked many jobs: pear sorter, tomato picker, asparagus canner and bootlegger. Effie Lai's experiences give us insight into the dreams and the courage of the 20th Century Chinese in California.

Effie Lai was profiled in BITTER MELON INSIDE AMERICA'S LAST RURAL CHINESE TOWN by Gillenkirk and Motlow.

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**SAVE FRIDAY, NOV. 1, 1996!!** Mark your calendars now and save the evening for CHSSC's **Fall Dinner**. The money raised will be used to complete the World War II Project. Please plan to attend and bring your family and friends. See enclosed flyer.

**WANTED: WORLD WAR II VETS** to add to and preserve the history of the Chinese in America and Southern California. We will be interviewing each and every Saturday from October 1996 through March 1997 (except Nov. 30 and Dec. 28) from 9:00 a.m.-12 noon at 411 Bernard St. Bring photos in uniform and induction/discharge papers! For more info, call Suellen Cheng 213-626-5240, Jim Fong 213-295-0616, Irvin Lai 213-735-1331, or Marjorie Lee 310-676-4288 or 310-825-5043.

**1996-97 ELECTION** - CONGRATULATIONS to the following members as officers/Board of Directors who were elected at the September 4th meeting and installed by Rev. Paul Louie:

President	Jeffrey Tung
1st Vice President	Sue Yee
Vice President /Programs	Susan Dickson
Secretary	Henrietta Yuan
Treasurer	Munson Kwok
Financial Secretary	Franklin Mah
Membership Secretary	Cy Wong

Board of Directors:

Eugene Cooper  
Irvin Lai  
Eugene Moy  
Ben Nakayama  
Ella Y. Quan  
Susan Woo Yamasaki  
Incumbent Directors:

Incumbents:

Randall Bloch  
Elmo Gambarana  
Winifred Lew  
Ruth Lung

**Past President Irvin Lai was elected by the 1996-97 Board of Directors as the Chairman of the Board.** Congratulations, Irvin.

**LETTER FROM THE NEW PRESIDENT:**

Dear Friends,

Fortune cookies, probably the most ubiquitous contribution Chinese Americans have made to popular American culture, sometimes remind us of the obvious. The week you all so kindly elected me to be the next President of the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, a cookie I ate read, "Live for today, remember yesterday, plan for tomorrow."

As I begin the presidency with optimism, I look to you, our faithful members, for guidance and assistance. My first priority is to personally meet and speak with each one of you.

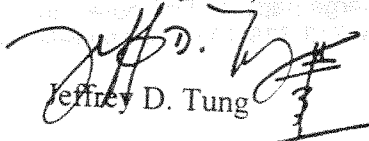
In recent years we have embarked on several very ambitious projects. If we work together we can complete these projects and make the Society better for us and our community. Thus, with your support, I hope to accomplish several key projects, primarily:

- Completion and dedication of the restored Chinese Funerary Shrine;
- Completion and publication of the World War II Veterans Project;
- Increase, expand and involve the Membership;
- Consistently raise funds to support and develop the Chinatown Heritage & Visitors Center.

Finally, to "remember yesterday" is, in a phrase, what the Society is all about in preserving and celebrating the Chinese American experience. Our more immediate "yesterday" is the fine work and leadership of Irvin Lai. I would like to thank him for his dedication and generosity to the Society and I look forward to working closely with him to complete many of the projects undertaken during his successful tenure.

My most recent fortune cookie read, "There is a prospect of a thrilling time ahead for you!" Thus, as President, I enthusiastically embrace the challenge and look forward to working with you, as well as for you in making the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California the best it has ever been.

Sincerely yours,

  
Jeffrey D. Tung

## Something about our new President.....

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Jeffrey Dao-Sheng Tung has devoted much of his time to community service. His parents, his mother Jasmin, from Hong Kong and his father Mark, from China via Taiwan, met in Los Angeles. After living in Chinatown for a couple years they moved to the San Fernando Valley. Having the benefit of grandparents living with him at various times, Jeff developed an appreciation for Chinese culture and became fluent in both Mandarin and Cantonese.

Graduating from Los Angeles City public schools, Jeff went on to the University of California, Berkeley. There he fulfilled a childhood aspiration of studying Architecture. Dissatisfied with his educational experience with regards to Asia and Asian Americans, he became interested in Ethnic Studies. In his four years at Berkeley he earned two Bachelor's Degrees, one in Architecture and the other in the Ethnic Studies. Dedicating some time to community service, Jeff particularly enjoyed assisting the elderly, at-risk youths and new immigrants with tutoring, job training and English skills in Oakland's downtown and Chinatown.

In 1990, while still at Berkeley, a family friend, Dana Wu, then, a student at Columbia University, asked him to join her in writing a book about Chinese American history. Published in 1991 by Millbrook Press, *The Chinese-American Experience*, written for upper elementary and middle school students, received much acclaim including two book-signing events in New York City and being named by the Child Study Association as 1993 Children's Book of the Year. The book can be found throughout the United States and Canada in public libraries, schools and specialty book stores.

After college, Jeff fulfilled a personal commitment to devote some time to study the Bible. He graduated from Living Stream Ministry's two-year program which is recognized by more than 2,500 churches worldwide. He was then assigned to evangelical work at UCLA. He served for

nearly two years as Director of "Christian Students" leading its large membership in its most aggressive campaign in its twenty-five-year history.

More recently, Jeff has assisted two small companies in marketing, sales and management by successfully achieving record monthly sales. He represented one firm at Minority Economic Development Week in Washington, D.C. meeting with various Senators and Congressmen and the late Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown.

In 1995 Jeff was elected as the Chairperson of the Asian/Pacific American Education Commission of the Los Angeles Unified School District and has been recently reelected to serve another term. He has also served as co-chair of the popular Essay and Poster Contest of the Los Angeles Asian Pacific American Heritage Month Committee. Last year he also joined the Board of Directors of the Society and chaired the very successful 1996 Spring Dinner which raised several thousand dollars.

In January of this year he joined the law firm of Grebow, Maruyama, Prinster and Yee in Beverly Hills, as their Director of Business Affairs. Several attorneys from the firm, which specializes in corporate transactions and defense litigation, have attended Society dinners. They have also generously volunteered their services to the Society.

Last semester Jeff began the Masters of Public Administration program at California State University, Northridge.

His experiences also include extensive travel throughout the United States and Canada as well as Taiwan, Hong Kong, Mexico and most of Western Europe. He also enjoys the company of many friends and relatives especially over a good meal. He plays the piano and regularly attends various art, musical and cultural events.

Jeff looks eagerly toward an exciting year as President of the Society and becoming personally acquainted with each one of us.

**PROUD GRANDPARENTS** - CHSSC Secretary Henrietta Yuan and her husband, member William Yuan became grandparents on August 17, 1996 to a baby girl (Michelle Nicole Yuan), 8 lb. 12 oz. born to Donald and Susie Yuan. Michelle is also the granddaughter of Lucille Yee and grandniece of members Eleanor and Forest Yee.

**PROUD GRANDPARENTS** - CHSSC Life members Edith and George Sheu are the proud and happy grandparents of Sarah Leanne Dong, born July 9, 1996, to daughter Kerry Lynn and her husband Steven Michael Dong.

**SPEEDY RECOVERY** to Andrew Kwok who had heart surgery recently. He is is convalescing at home under the capable hands of wife, Mary Yee Kwok.

**BOOKS FOR SALE AT CHSSC MEETINGS & DINNERS:**

**AN AMERICAN CHINATOWN** - two volumes

**LINKING OUR LIVES**

**SWEET BAMBOO**

**ORIGINS & DESTINATIONS**

**THOUSAND PIECES OF GOLD**

**WOODEN FISH SONGS** (one hardbound copy left)

**GILBERT LESTER LEONG**, a prominent member of the Los Angeles Chinese American community, died August 23, 1996 of natural causes. He was a resident of Pasadena.

Born May 9, 1911, Gilbert Leong was the third son, and the first to be born in this country, of a pioneer Chinese American family in Los Angeles. His father, Leung Jeung, was an immigrant "paper son," who struggled first as a vegetable vendor then became the proprietor of the Szechow Restaurant, for many years a landmark first in old then new Chinatown; his mother was the Chinese-language teacher at the Methodist Church and social leader in Chinatown.

Gilbert Leong attended Chouinard Art School where he studied sculpture, and graduated in 1938 from USC's School of Architecture. As one of the first Chinese American architects in the country, Mr. Leong went on to design many residential and commercial buildings in Los Angeles, particularly in the Chinese community. He designed the Kong Chow Family Association and Temple, Bank of American, and the Chinese Baptist and Methodist Churches in Chinatown. He was a member of the Los Angeles Chapter of A.I.A.

Mr. Leong was one of the founders of East West Bank, serving on its Board of Directors for 23 years. The bank, with 21 locations, serves the Asian community throughout California. He was from a founding family and a perpetual director of the Kong Chow Association, serving as that organization's president in 1988 and 1989.

He was an avid student of Chinese language, culture, and Los Angeles Chinese American history. As such, he served on the board of the Museum of Chinese American History that is proposed for El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument. He was currently the subject, along with artist Tyrus Wong, of a documentary on their remembrances of growing up in Los Angeles Chinatown and their struggles and triumphs as artists. The documentary is being produced by actress-director Beulah Quo and Suellen Cheng of the Museum, in association with the Columbia School of Broadcasting.

Mr. Leong was also a member of and frequent speaker at the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California where he will long be remembered for his wit and deep understanding of local history. He was on the board and a member of the Pacific Asian Museum in Pasadena. He co-designed the museum's interior courtyard and garden -- one of the most authentic Chinese gardens in this country and an oasis of reflection in our city.

In 1942, he married Florence See, daughter of Fong See, whose family was chronicled last year in the book On Gold Mountain: The 100-Year Odyssey of a Chinese American Family, written by his niece Lisa See. Upon his wife's death in 1989, he and his daughter, Leslee See Leong, carried on the See family business. The F. Sue One Company, which specializes in fine Asian antiques, is one of the oldest family-owned businesses in Southern California.

He is survived by his daughter, Leslee Leong; two granddaughters, Sian and Mara Leong Nichols; and a sister, Marjorie Hee.

In lieu of flowers, donations are to be made to Friends of the Museum of Chinese American History, 125 Paseo de la Plaza, Suite 400, Los Angeles, CA 90012. (Lisa See)

**CONDOLENCES** to the family of Life Member GILBERT LEONG who recently passed away. Gilbert has been a staunch supporter of CHSSC and was always ready to help the Society whenever asked. He will be missed.

**ASSOCIATED HISTORICAL SOCIETIES OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY TOUR:**

"Historic Ridge Route Tour", Saturday, Nov. 9, 1996. "We will imagine ourselves back in the 1920's as we tour the famous old highway, stopping at sites of bygone resorts and service facilities along the way. Return will be via Interstate 5, where we will catch occasional glimpses of the 2nd Ridge Route, Highway 99, in use from 1933-1972, parts of which lie at the bottom of Pyramid Lake, a reservoir of the L.A. Aqueduct system. We will stop at Vista del Lago Visitor Center. Cost, \$25 per person - includes bus ride, guide commentary, lunch/cold drink. Info: 818-792-1048.

**CHSSC RECEIVES FIRST GROUP OF SANTA BARBARA ARTIFACTS.** The first eight cartons of artifacts from the High Lung Laundry in Santa Barbara have been turned over to the Society. The entire collection has now been sorted, identified, and catalogued, and the remaining cartons will be delivered as soon as the data entry and analysis are completed.

The Collection will be especially valuable for both display and research because most of the hundreds of items are whole. Even at this preliminary stage of study, there seem to be great differences from the Los Angeles Metro Rail materials. For one thing, the Santa Barbara well contained the possessions and discards of a single individual - or small group of individuals - and it is tightly dated in the nineteenth century. Many of the shipping jars have their contents written on the bottom, and many of the wine jars also have calligraphy. There will be some very interesting sorting and translating to be done once the entire collection becomes available.

(R. Greenwood)

**CHS of SAN DIEGO:** The exhibition, "Splendors of Imperial China: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei," will be in San Francisco Oct. 14-Dec. 8. If there is enough interest, a group trip to the Bay area could be organized and also include other sites such as the new Asian Cultural Center in Oakland, Angels Island, etc. in mid October. Interested parties please contact CHS/San Diego, 619-338-9888.

**COMING EVENTS**

Saturday, Sept. 28  
9 a.m. - Noon

Wednesday, Oct. 2  
7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 12  
8 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Sunday, Oct. 27

Noon - 4 p.m.

Friday, Nov. 1

6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 13

3 p.m. - 9 p.m.

**VISITORS WELCOME!!** - Heritage & Visitors Center will be open to welcome visitors and the American Heart Walk participants.

**CHSSC's MONTHLY MEETING** at Castelar School's multi-purpose room.

**CCF Symposium 1996: Chinese Culture within the American Context** sponsored by the Chinese Culture Foundation of S.F. and supported by the Chinese Historical Society of America. Chinese Culture Center, Holiday Inn, 3rd Floor, 750 Kearny St., San Francisco. For more info, call 415-338-0500

**VISITORS WELCOME!!** - The Heritage & Visitors Center will be open to welcome all members, friends and visitors.

**CHSSC's FALL DINNER** (see enclosed flyer)

**FUNDRAISER SOCIAL** - Member Sylvia Soo Hoo and Ways & Means Chair Elmo Gambarana have reserved this date for another fun dinner social at Wild Thyme in Pasadena. Watch for the flyer in the October News 'n Notes.

**"THANK YOU " FOR THE SEPTEMBER MEETING REFRESHMENTS** to Lillian Fong, Elmo Gambarana, Ruth Lung, Ming Toy Rogers, Tim K. Siu, Helen Wan, and Betty Wong.

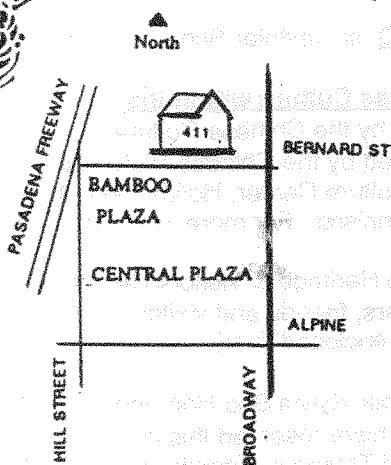
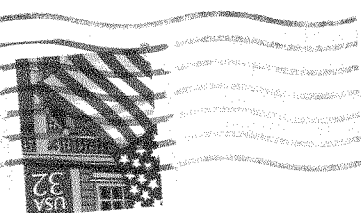
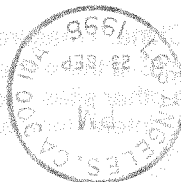
**NEWS 'n NOTES DEADLINE :** All articles must be in to the P.O. Box by the 15th of the month to be considered in that month's News 'n Notes.

ACTIVE Member: Paid to Dec. 31, 1996  
 Paul G. Chace  
 1823 Kenora Drive  
 Escondido, CA 92027

**FIRST CLASS**

P.O. Box 862647 • LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA • 90086-2647

# CHINESE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



## VISIT

the LOS ANGELES  
 CHINATOWN HERITAGE  
 AND VISITORS CENTER

411 Bernard Street, L.A. Chinatown

Information: (213) 621-3171

OPEN 4TH SUNDAY EVERY MONTH

**Noon - 4:00 PM**

**Free Admission**

Architectural landmark    Archeological treasures  
 Asian American history videos    Chinatown history slides  
 Resource books    Friendly docents    Local history exhibit