



News 'n Notes

Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

www.chssc.org ♦ (323) 222-0856

DECEMBER 2001

Happy Holidays to all our members! Please remember to send in your membership renewal fees and pick up your copy of "Bridging the Centuries"!

Anniversary Book Makes Debut

The Society's long-awaited latest publication—*Bridging the Centuries: History of Chinese Americans in Southern California*—finally arrived in early December to an eager reception.

The paperback books, each copy of which comes out to 210 pages, rolled off the delivery trucks just in time to be unveiled at our annual Christmas party on Dec. 5 at Castelar School. Chief Editor and Society member Susie Ling was on hand to sign copies of the book, which began as a project to mark the 25th anniversary of our organization. Vice President Eugene Moy oversaw the overall process, and articles in the five chapters have been written by, or pertain to, numerous members of the CHSSC.

To introduce the book to the general public and the media, a signing party-cum-press briefing was held on Dec. 15 at the Bernard Street house. Press liaison Ann Lau had invited dozens of reporters from Asian American publications, Chinese-language news organizations, and various other media outlets, to have a look at the book as well as the newly improved facade of the properties on 411 and 415 Bernard Street. In anticipation of the book launch, the Victorian houses had been given a new coat of paint, its landscape a few additional plants and flowers, and the rooms inside the Chinatown Heritage and Visitors Center had been transformed into colorful gallery spaces.
[continues on p. 2]

Chinese American Museum Honors "Historymakers" at its Banquet

Some 450 luminaries, activists, and enthusiasts of Chinese American history gathered Dec. 9 at the Universal City Hilton & Towers to attend the Chinese American Museum of Los Angeles' annual fundraising banquet.

Entertainment at the gala was provided by a variety of entertainers, including a band of more than a dozen people
[continues on p. 3]

JANUARY PROGRAM

♦ Playwright
& Actress Annette Lee ♦

presents

"Tales of a Chinese American Storyteller"

Ms. Lee's radio and live performance plays, which often deal with Asian American issues, have been staged throughout the Los Angeles area. Her most recent production, "One Cold, Dark Night," was performed and taped at the Autry Museum of Western Heritage on Oct.

20. Join us for a lively night of discussion.

Wednesday, January 2nd @ 7:00 pm

**Castelar Elementary School - Multipurpose Room
840 Yale Street**

Los Angeles, Chinatown

*Note: Park on the playground & enter from
College St. between Hill & Yale Sts. Please
don't park pass the line running
parallel to Hill on the playground.*

Ho, Ho, Ho! Merry Potluck!

A festive time was had by all who attended the CHSSC's Christmas Potluck on Dec. 5th in Castelar's Multi-Purpose Room.

The evening began with much buzz surrounding the arrival of *Bridging the Centuries*, the Society's latest book and tribute to its now 26-year history. Copies of the book were sold and signed.

Yuletide carols and holiday songs were belted out by the merry-makers shortly after dinner. But their tunes, accompanied by the piano playing of board member Winifred Lew, were interrupted by the arrival of Santa Claus, who apparently is a friend of long-time member Johnny Yee. Jolly St. Nick handed out candy and gifts to the party-goers, who included friends and family of CHSSC members.

Thanks to the more than 50 people who came to partake of the holiday cheer. Whether your donations were a dish of food, a \$5 payment toward that night's meal, or help with set-up or clean-up or the program, we were all very glad to have you in attendance.

—————CONTENTS • December 2001—————

• Book Debut • January Speaker, Annette Lee • CAM Banquet • Milestones & Passages •



Officers and Board Members

President, Irvin Lai
Vice-President, Eugene Moy
V.P. Program, OPEN
Secretary, Henrietta Yuan
Treasurer, Ella Y. Quan
Financial Secretary, Franklin Mah
Membership Secretary, Cy Wong

Board of Directors:
Chair of Board, Susan Dickson
Pete Chinn
Gilbert Hom
Ann Lau
Winifred Lew
Wing Mar
Stanley Mu
Ben Nakayama

Get Well Soon, Franklin!

As some of you may be aware, Financial Secretary Franklin Mah suffered head and other bodily injuries when several boxes (and several thousand pounds) of books collapsed on him as he helped to unload copies of our new book earlier this month. He was taken to the hospital but released later the same evening. At the Dec. 5 Christmas potluck, we collected signatures for a get-well card for Franklin, but we wanted to update all of you on the on-going situation, which is steadily improving. Please join us in wishing Franklin a speedy and full recovery.

Bridging the Centuries Receives Press Coverage, Others' Praise

[continued from p. 1]

One exhibit featured the photographs of Jason Jem. His exhibit, titled "Breaking the Mold," is a collection of portraits of leaders such as former Los Angeles City Council Michael Woo, attorney-civil rights activist Michael Eng and playwright David Henry Hwang.

The collection was first seen by board members Wing Mar and Eugene Moy at a C.A.C.A. dinner, and they were so impressed, they later asked Jason Jem to exhibit his work at CHSSC's Nov. 9 fundraising banquet at the Empress Pavilion. The photos of prominent Chinese Americans are being displayed in the center's former video presentation room.

One of the front rooms of the heritage and visitors center has been turned into a parlor featuring a bilingual exhibit on *Bridging the Centuries*. The display is a collection of vignettes from people featured in the book, which was hailed by local author Lisa See as "an important and inspiring book." Asian American scholar Him Mark Lai called the book "another milestone in this continuing effort" of showing that the experiences of Southern California's Chinese has been very unique from those of their counterparts up North and elsewhere. [continues on p. 3]

Chinese-Themed Art Displayed in Nearby City

"Prosperity With the Arrival of the Horses," an art exhibit timed to pay homage to the next animal of the Lunar New Year zodiac, is scheduled to premiere on Jan. 7th. The art display, which is scheduled to close on Jan. 31, will occupy the lobby of Alhambra City Hall. It will feature the work of 10 acclaimed Chinese artists, all specializing in the depiction of horses. The beauty, majesty and movement of the hooved animals will be emphasized, and an array of crystal sculptures will also be available for viewing to honor the other animals of the Chinese zodiac.

While you're in Alhambra, why not stop by the city's main public library, located a few paces away from the seat of government? There, you will find the arts and crafts of CHSSC's very own Margie Lew on display. [City Hall is located on Second Street near Main Street; Alhambra Public Library is on Fourth and Main streets.]

Passages

The CHSSC wishes to extend its condolences to former president Angi Ma Wong, who recently lost her mother. We also would like to express our regrets to the family of member Richard Lim, who passed on earlier in December.

A Farewell to Pat Li

By CY WONG

Pat Li, actress and former host of 1970s television program "Women's Forum," (KCOP, Channel 13), passed away on Nov. 29th. She had been battling cancer for almost two years.

Her daughter, Stephanie, had stated only a month prior to her mother's death that Pat was "ready for the next act" of her life to begin.

I met Pat more than 30 years ago at the Screen Actors' Guild. We were there with other members of color to form the Ethnic Minorities Committee of the Screen Actors' Guild. Our mission was to fight racism and unjust acts that were being perpetrated on actors by casting directors and producers involved in the motion picture and television industry.

Pat was an active member of many community and professional organizations. She was proud to be one of the founders of the East-West Players and a member of the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California. Last, but not least, she was crazy about animals, especially dogs. In honoring Pat's wishes, no services were held, but should you wish to send a remembrance, the family respectfully suggests donations to the organizations listed in the box below.

Pat Li Scholarship Fund, East-West Players,
244 S. San Pedro St., Ste. #301, Los Angeles,
CA 90012 (213-625-7000)
Actors & Others for Animals, 11523 Burbank
Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91601
(818-755-6045)





playing traditional Chinese musical instruments such as the *pipa*, the *erhu*, and the zither. A team of Chinese acrobats working to levitate a girl standing above glasses filled with four eggs also dazzled the audience. A lion dance troupe kicked off the festivities with its rousing gyrating and shimmying.

The evening's honorees were actress Nancy Kwan ("The World of Suzie Wong"); artist Tyrus Wong, who worked on numerous murals throughout Chinatown as well as Disney's animated motion picture classic, "Bambi"; U.S. District Court Judge Ronald S.W. Lew, for his legal achievements and accomplishments; and a post-humous honor to the late Chinese American activist Billy Lew.

A silent auction included items donated by businesses and friends of the museum, which is now aiming to open some time in the new year. Our own CHSSC donated two copies of its newest book, *Bridging the Centuries: History of Chinese Americans in Southern California*, to fetch donations to the worthy cause. A conventional public, or "non-silent" auction, was conducted by local attorney Mike Eng, who at one point roused the Chinese musicians to bang their gong to encourage bidding.

A separate, adjacent room to the ballroom where dinner and the performances were held, was set aside to display the visual works of Chinese American artists Tyrus Wong, Fred Gong, Bill Jong, Leland Lee, Monroe Leung, and Milton Quon.

Those commercial arts pieces are now being displayed in an exhibit that will run through Feb. 17, 2002. "Inspiring Lines," can be seen at LMAN Studio, 949 Chungking Road in Chinatown. Days of viewing are Wednesday through Sunday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.. 213-680-0243.

Milestones

The horse of the upcoming year's Chinese zodiac has yet to trot in his entrance, but from all available signs, 2002 already promises to be a good year. CHSSC sends its kudos and best wishes to:

- Past CHSSC president (1987-89) Angi Ma Wong, who has three books scheduled for launch in 2002. The first, *Feng Shui Room-by-Room Home Design Kit*, is scheduled for publication in February by Pacific Heritage Books of Palos Verdes. The other two books, *2003 Feng Shui Page-a-Day Calendar* (Workman Books) and *Feng Shui Fortune in Love and Romance* (Storey Books) will be out in the Fall.
- Outgoing CHSSC Administrative Assistant Kelli Allen, who has gone on to pursue her graduate studies and to work in the public school system. She will be missed, but replaced at the office by Linda Chong, former V.P. for programs.

*

Finally, although they're not members of the Society (yet), we congratulate Rose Parade Queen Caroline Hsu, 17, a San Marino resident of Chinese descent, and Kim Eng, a new assistant general manager for our hometown baseball team, the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Donations Received in December

Deepest mahalos (Hawaiian for "Thank You!") to the following individuals whose generous contributions were recently received:

- ⇒ Dr. Steve Liu, who issued a \$5,000 check for house improvements,
- ⇒ L.P. Leung, whose donation of \$43,913.06 toward the oral history project, or CAPP (Chinese American Portraits of Pride), is now in,
- ⇒ Tim and Cecelia Yu, for their \$1,500 gift to refurbish the Bernard Street Houses, and, finally, to:
- ⇒ Board member and fundraising guru, Dr. Wing Mar, whose contribution of \$500, to on-going work on the house, has been noted.

These and other such gifts received throughout the year are vital to keeping our non-profit, all-volunteer organization running. They are tax-deductible and always appreciated, no matter how small the amount! For more information on donations, please contact Dr. Mar.

Fanfare for Bridging the Centuries

[cont'd from p. 2]

Press coverage was coordinated by Board Member Ann Lau and Vice President Eugene Moy. Among the positive coverage generated by the Dec. 15 event was an article (complete with photograph) on the front-page of the Money Section of the Chinese-language *Sing Tao Daily News*. A reporter representing *YOLK*, a monthly magazine on Asian American pop culture and issues, also expressed interest in writing a story about the publication, and there has been talk of sending a photographer from the magazine to do a spread of the exhibits.

A door-size banner introducing the book and its related exhibit, complete with a large reproduction of the photograph on the book cover, was generated through Ann Lau's efforts. It will be displayed outside the Heritage House in the near future to try and lure visitors to inquire about the book and the CHSSC's activities.

Some 2,000 copies of *Bridging the Centuries* are available for sale. They are light and easy to mail to friends and family members.

If you would like more information about selling the books, or can think of places (such as academic conferences and the like) where people might be interested in making a purchase, please contact Ella Quan by calling 323-222-0865.

• CHSSC ISSUES A CALL FOR 'ARMS' •

The ones that dangle off your shoulders, that is! If you or anyone you know has made a new year's resolution pledge to do more volunteer work, look no further than Bernard Street in Chinatown for eager recipients of your help. We are in immediate need of people who can donate a few hours of time to helping us clean out the garage, help distribute and mail the new books, conduct walking tours of Chinatown, or perform a myriad of other tasks. Please contact Linda Chong at the house for details.



Sequoyah School Kids Visit CHSSC House

A spirited group of about 50 kids from Sequoyah School in Pasadena were given a tour of Chinatown on Nov. 30, led by Vice President Eugene Moy, the father of one of the students.

Accompanied by a half dozen or so teachers and parents, the youngsters were taken through the streets of Chinatown, which many of them had never before visited—despite its proximity to the San Gabriel Valley, where most of the children's families live.

Upon returning to the Bernard Street houses, they were treated to a demonstration of Chinese calligraphy. Students crowded around CHSSC house caretaker Peter Wong, who patiently listened to their individual requests and offered them renderings in the Chinese language, using inkstone and brush painting method.

Although Eugene Moy and other volunteers like him have taken the art of Chinatown tour-giving and perfected it down to a science, we are always looking for more walking tour leaders!

Retirees, people between jobs, or anyone else with a few free hours during the weekdays are especially sought!

Don't worry if you don't think you've got the "stage presence" or the "script" in your mind. Training is available for would-be docents, and we will work around your schedule to plan a time.

New exhibit materials are now available in the heritage and visitor's center, and the new paint jobs are worth showing off!

If you are interested in becoming a docent for walking tours through Chinatown, can commit to 1-2 tours a month, and would be available for at least a year, please call our office at (323) 222-0856. We'd love to have you join in.

Have a Great Holiday!
Drive safely • See you in the New Year!

Passion for "Preserving Traditions"

Although it occurred a year after the "On Gold Mountain" exhibit on Chinese Americans had closed, the Autry Museum for Western Heritage recently held a forum involving the Society and its work.

Vice President for Programs Linda Chong was a speaker on a three-person panel assembled to mark the opening of an exhibit on the Ute Indians of Colorado and Utah. The talk on Dec. 2 was titled: "Generation to Generation: Preserving Generations."

The other participants on the panel were Alden Naranjo, a member of the southern Ute Indian tribe and a consultant on the special exhibit, and Sabell Bender, a board member of the Yiddish Kayt of Los Angeles. The free event was moderated by Autry's Assistant Curator Estella Chung, who invited the panelists to discuss ways in which their organizations planned to keep their younger generations interested and involved in their history and culture.

All three participants agreed that maintaining records of oral histories was crucial to their work. They also believed that education-oriented organizations such as CHSSC and Yiddish Kayt (for the Jewish community) had an important task before them, one that could benefit from combining forces and resources with other like groups that relied on consistent participation by its membership.

CURRENT & UPCOMING EXHIBITS & EVENTS

Dec. 15, 2001 - Feb. 17, 2002

"Inspiring Lines," commercial arts exhibit featuring pieces by Chinese American pioneers Fred Gong, Bill Jong, Leland Lee, Monroe Leung, Milton Quon and Tyrus Wong

LMAN Studio

949 Chungking Road, Chinatown
(213) 680-0243 or (213) 626-5240

Dec. 21 & Dec. 22

Asian Night at Stardust Ballroom
Stardust Hotel, Las Vegas

Dec. 22

International jazz saxophonist
Sadao Watanabe in concert
Japan America Theater
244 S. San Pedro St.
Little Tokyo
Tickets: \$35, \$32, etc.
(213) 680-3700

Dec. 22

Asian songstress Coco Lee ("A Love Before Time" from the "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" soundtrack) in concert, singing in Chinese & English
Mandalay Bay Events Center
Las Vegas
9 p.m.
Tickets: \$128 (VIP); \$98; \$68; \$38
1-877-632-7400

Dec. 22

All-star holiday concert of Hong Kong entertainers
Caesar's Palace
Las Vegas
8 p.m.

Through Jan. 1, 2002

DWP Holiday Light Show
Griffith Park, Los Angeles
Crystal Springs Drive
5 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Dec. 25

Chinese singer A-Mei
Christmas Concert
Paris Casino, Las Vegas
Tickets: \$188 (VIP); \$100; \$75; \$50; \$35

Dec. 30

Little Tokyo Community Mochitsuki, making *mochi* (pounded rice cakes) for the new year
Free Admission
Japanese American Cultural & Community Center, 244 S. San Pedro St., Little Tokyo
(213) 628-2725

Dec. 31

China Night Family Dinner Show
Gourmet Carousel, Chinatown
6:30 p.m.
Tickets: \$42 and \$28 (12 & under)
(323) 721-0774



Bill Moyers' Chinese American Series Begins Production

Television journalist-turned-documentary filmmaker Bill Moyers has begun production work on "Becoming American: The Chinese Experience," according to the Fall 2001 issue of *Committee Bridges*, the newsletter of the Committee of 100.

The series will air in November 2002 and producers have already contacted Chinese Americans throughout the country, including CHSSC's own Membership Chairman Cy Wong. The program consists of three 90-minute films, to be shown on consecutive nights on PBS, followed by a half hour of local programming about Chinese Americans.

The series opens by describing how American attitudes toward Chinese changed during the first one hundred years after the establishment of the Chinese Republic in 1911, from admiration and curiosity, to the hostility and scorn of the Exclusion Act era. The second program begins with the first Exclusion Act of 1882 and ends with the 1950s McCarthy era. It will demonstrate how Chinese Americans fought in court against discriminatory policies long before the civil rights movement of the 1960s, and discovered other methods of protesting exclusion, including support of a Chinese boycott of American goods in 1905.

"What does it take to become an American?" is the inquiry made by the third film, which looks at contemporary issues of identity. Moyers has said that this film belongs to the Chinese Americans who are portrayed, including a group of young people he met while filming this summer as they visited their ancestral villages in the Pearl River Delta.

Moyers, who is regarded as one of the foremost documentary filmmakers in the country, says he has dreamed of executing this project for two decades. Funding, however, was his main obstacle. But he found a solution to his problem in the Chinese American community, which was instrumental in helping him meet his \$5 million goal.

Moyers has recruited a highly experienced production team, many of whom are Asian Americans and all with extensive television and film credits. The series producer is Thomas Lennon, whose PBS series, *The Irish in America*, was one of the network's most widely watched documentaries.

EVENTS (CONT'D)

Jan. 1

Tournament of Roses Parade
Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena
Featuring Rose Queen Caroline Hsu
8 a.m.

Jan. 1

Happy New Year in Little Tokyo!
Events such as sake toasts, Taiko drums, kimono fashion show, etc.
Weller Court & New Otani Hotel,
Onizuka Street between 1st and 2nd
11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Jan. 5

Actress-Comedienne Margaret Cho
Live comedy performance
Long Beach Terrace Theater
(213) 480-3232

Jan. 7 to Jan. 31

Year of the Horse art exhibit,
Alhambra City Hall, 101 S. 1st

Jan. 12

Miss Chinatown Fashion Show
11 a.m. reception, noon lunch
1 p.m. fashion show
Biltmore Hotel
506 S. Grand Ave., Downtown
(213) 617-0396

Jan. 12

Little King & Queen of Chinatown
Contest for 5-6 year olds
3:30-5:30 p.m.
\$20 entry fee
Castelar Multipurpose Room
(213) 617-0396

Jan. 19

33rd Miss Chinatown Pageant
Westin Bonaventure Hotel
404 S. Figueroa St., Los Angeles
6-7 p.m. (social/dinner) 8 p.m.
pageant (213) 617-0396

✽ • ✽ • ✽ • ✽ • ✽ • ✽ • ✽ • ✽

Scholarship Race Begins

Calling all budding scholars of Chinese American history! (Or those who know someone who might be!)

Scholarship chairperson and board member Winifred Lew has announced that bids for CHSSC-sponsored tuition assistance has officially begun. She recently sent out 54 packets of applications to interested parties.

The deadline for applying for the college grant has been set for March 8. An oral interview is required prior to the announcement of the final winner. Contact Winifred for more details, if you or someone you know might be interested in applying.



NEWS 'N NOTES NEEDS YOUR NEWS AND NOTES! WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR ARTICLES TO INCLUDE IN YOUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER. DEADLINE IS THE 15TH OF THE MONTH. WE ESPECIALLY NEED YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR 'MILESTONES & PASSAGES'!

MAIL ARTICLES TO P.O. BOX 862647, LOS ANGELES, CA,



6