



News 'n Notes

Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

WWW.CHSSC.ORG • (323) 222-0856

JANUARY 2001

CAPP extended recognitions to Chinese American Scientists

The January meeting was another successful turn out with 60 plus members and friends who were very supportive and appreciative of what Chinese American Portraits of Pride (CAPP) has put together in context of the first phase of recognition in a group of Chinese American Scientists.

Dr. Wing Mar started Chinese American Portraits of Pride in an effort to document the tremendous contributions of men and women who were innovators in their respective fields. To implement the goals of CAPP the committee are documenting from recording oral history, creating photo archives, and taping interviews and sharing the processes and stories to educate the public and also in hopes to generate a wider audience and other organizations to do the same for their culture and community.

The committee has chosen 7 individuals as representatives of the Chinese American scientists or medical researchers: Dr. Steve Liu, Dr. Eddie Way, Allen Gee, John Lee, Ernest Lum, Edgar Wong and Maggie Gee. The CAPP Committee is confident that these 7 people would exemplify the best of the modern day scientists.

He is no Luke Skywalker, but ...

Is he a warrior or a peace seeker? It would be for you to decide. Edgar Wong is a general theorist in his engineering and scientific work when he had to submit a design proposal to the Department of Defense during Ronald Reagan's Presidency. As the director of the missile deployment system in the Western U. S for his company TRW, his task was to design a full proof defense missile system known to us today as STAR WARS. Fortunately for the world, we never had a war to test Edgar Wong's hypothesis of his fool proof defenses system against nuclear war heads. However, his project may have been a deterrence in preventing a nuclear war between superpowers during the Cold War.

Edgar Wong came from a modest family background where his father died early in life. With his family close knit, he was a private person who later took charge of 25-800 people at his project. During his study at Cal Tech he flunked English. He protested the grade he received and brought all his test and blue books to the English department committee for review. His grade was changed to a much higher grade. It turned out that the Southern teacher did not want Chinese American to become an engineer. Edgar did not forgive him, but accepted him for what he was at that time and circumstances. His eagerness to break from the social taboos made him what he is today.

February Program

Wednesday, February 7th, 2000

7:00 PM

Castelar Elementary school

multipurpose room

840 Yale St.

Los Angeles, Chinatown

(Park on playground. Enter on College St.
between Hill and Yale Streets)

L. A. Unconventional

a book by Cecilia Rasmussen

Cecilia Rasmussen has been writing "L.A. Scene: The City Then and Now," for the Los Angeles Times since 1990. She began the weekly column shortly after an interest in local history was piqued by an assignment to research L.A.'s insatiable thirst for water.

In the ensuing years, she hunted for new nuggets of lore about the region's colorful past. Both for work and in her spare time, she scans dusty shelves of old bookstores, county court-houses and out-of-the-way libraries seeking stories of what she terms "the square-jawed courage and gritty tenacity of L.A.'s forgotten pioneers."

Her first book, *Curbside L.A., an Offbeat Guide to the City of Angels*, was published in 1996 by the Los Angeles Times.

Cecilia was recently recognized for her distinguished contributions preserving Los Angeles history through her books and L. A. Times columns by the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, Jewish Historical Society, Historical Society of Southern California, Italian Hall, Los Angeles City Historical Society, and Los Angeles Conservancy.

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In Memoriam

William M. "Bill" Mason

California Historian and CHSSC Co-Founder

December 27, 1930-November 15, 2000

We must sadly note the passing of Bill Mason, friend and co-founder of the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California. Bill, in 1973, then curator of Southern California history at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, met with the Reverend Paul Louie and local historian Paul de Falla on several occasions to plan activities to increase the public awareness of local Chinese American history. He was a key speaker at both an ensuing conference and a seminar, helping spark the enthusiasm which then led to the Society's organizational meeting in 1975. In the following years, Bill was called on to speak at our dinners, conferences, and docent training seminars.

Born in Los Angeles and educated at UCLA, Bill served in the U.S. Marine Corps, earning a Purple Heart in the Korean War. He worked at the Museum of Natural History for 31 years, retiring in 1993, but continued his research and writing. His works totalled six books as well as numerous articles on local and California history. In recent years, he had relocated to northern California to continue his research.

Bill was legendary as an outspoken champion of the rich multiethnic history of Los Angeles. He lectured extensively about the founders of the pueblo of Los Angeles, who were of African, Indian, and Spanish ancestry, and of the Chinese, Japanese, and many other immigrants who helped build the city. His encyclopedic knowledge and endless promotion of our history has led to one historian's tribute to him as one of the four great "citizen historians" in the 200-year history of Los Angeles. By sharing his research with us, he generated understanding and pride among communities.

On a personal level, Bill was a visionary mentor to many community historians, and an anchor in his former Echo Park neighborhood. At a recent memorial and celebration of his life, held at the Pico House at El Pueblo Historic Monument, a parade of historians, friends, and former neighbors praised his sense of humor, his generosity and compassion, and his love of food and drink. Bill will be missed by his wife, Wasana, and stepson Marvin, of Yasotsorn, Thailand, and by his daughter, Monica Kirkhart-Mason Davis, of Los Angeles, and by many, many friends.

Billy Lew

Long time member of CHSSC; first Chinese American CPA in California

December 20, 1912-December 13, 2000

Born in Los Angeles, to the family that operated historic Sun Wing Wo general store in Old Chinatown. His family came from the Toishan, Hoiping district of Guangdong Province, China. He received his Bachelor's degree of the University of Southern California in 1941, majoring in foreign business relations. He was always proud that he had mastered reading and writing in Chinese as a youth.

Because of his bilingual language skills and financial expertise, he became executive secretary of the Chinese Produce Merchants Association during World War II to guide the members on price control regulations. He got his brief chance to be involved in foreign trade after World War II, in 1946, when he worked as a Chinese speaking auditor overseas for an American contractor moving goods through Guam to the Nationalist government in China. Returning to the produce business, he studied nights at UCLA to qualify for his Certified Public Accountant certificate. In 1958, he became the first Chinese American CPA in Los Angeles. He was a longtime and trusted treasurer and keeper of the books for many organizations in Chinese American community: Friends of the Chinese American Museum, Chinese American Citizens Alliance Scholarship Foundation, and others. And he was also the past president and 61 year member of Los Angeles Lodge of C.A.C.A. Billy Lew was an active member of the USC Alumni Association and a staunch USC football fan. He was honored by CHSSC in 1986 with the "Spirit of Old Chinatown" award.

Survived by wife of 44 years, Anna, and son John.

2000-2001

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***Appreciation of our
Chinese American Heritage***

CHSSC

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Phone / Fax

(323) 222-0856

www.chssc.org

A non-profit organization



Special Thanks for January refreshments to:

Margie Lew

Winnie Lew

Ruth Lung

Dolores Wong

Frieda Wong

Johnny Yee

Donna Young

and Noel Toy Young

We apologize if we have inadvertently left anyone off this list.
Your support is invaluable and much appreciated.

25th Anniversary T-Shirts

A limited number of 25th Anniversary commemorative T-shirts are still available at \$20 each or two or more at \$18 each, sizes come in medium, large, and extra large for sale at the Heritage and Visitors Center. Or you can order them by using the membership subscription.

Docents Needed

Retirees, Semi-retirees, anyone with time 'weekdays' WE NEED YOUR HELP. CHSSC has been giving educational tours to students ages 6 through adulthood. The "tour" season has already started and docents are needed. The hours are from 10 a.m. to noon. If you are interested, please contact the office at (323) 222 0856 or call Ella Quan (323) 255 6487

CHSSC Scholarship Funds Needed

How would you like to help a college student fulfill his dream? You can do so by contributing to the CHSSC Scholarship Fund. For the last several years, the CHSSC has awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to a qualified and deserving undergraduate student in a college or university here in Southern California who shows a strong interest in Chinese American studies in the Humanities or Social Sciences. Donations are needed to continue this important program, which starts in December, so please consider contributing to the Scholarship Fund and know that you are helping to encourage a student continue his or her education goals, especially in the field of Chinese American studies.

More and more interest is being shown in the contributions of Chinese Americans to this country and the world, and what better way is there to show your support and applaud their efforts? We will gladly accept donations of any amounts. Just specify "Scholarship Fund" on your donation and accept our thanks for helping in such a tangible way!

Contact Winnie Lew, Scholarship Chair, for more information through the CHSSC office at (323) 222-0856

News 'n Notes

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**Submissions of Calendar
Events and Articles must be
received by the 15th of each
month in order to be
considered in that month's
newsletter**

contact

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333 22nd Street

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Programs for 2001

February - Cecilia Rasmussen

Los Angeles Times writer whose regular column on the third page of Sunday's Metro section brings to life Los Angeles' past. Her articles have chronicled the role of several ethnic communities in our city's history.

March - Gloria Lothrop

History of the Italian American community in Los Angeles, a slide show presentation with a preview of what's going on with the Italian Hall at El Pueblo.

April - James Hong

Presentation by the most recognized character actor whose roles have span the entire spectrum from comedy to dramatics.

May - TBA



January 24

Chinese New Year Day
Year of the Serpent 4699

January 26

Friends of Chinese American Museum
Chinese New Year Banquet
Gourmet Carousel Restaurant
911 N. Broadway, Chinatown
(213) 626-5240

January 27

Miss LA Chinatown Pageant
Westin Bonaventure Hotel
7pm Dinner
\$125 per person
(213) 617-0396

February 4

23rd Annual Firecracker 5K/10K Run
Broadway and College St
Chinatown, 8 am
(323) 256 1363

February 4

Part of Marie Northrop Lecture Serie:
"Why They Love to Hate L.A."
Patt Morrison, Los Angeles Times columnist
and TV commentator,
presented by Los Angeles City Historical
Society and The Historical Department of the
Los Angeles Public Library
at Mark Taper Auditorium, Los Angeles
Central Library, 2 pm
(213) 288 7400

February 9-11

Los Angeles Chinatown Carnival
(213) 617 0396

February 10

Chinese New Year Golden Dragon Parade
Year of the Serpent
North of Broadway, Cesar Chavez & Main St
Chinatown, 2-5 pm
(213) 617 0396
<http://www.lachinesechamber.org>

February 10-11

Los Angeles Chinatown Street Fair
(213) 617 0396

February 10-11

Chinese New Year Lantern Festival
Garvey Ave between Garfield Ave. &
Nicholson Ave, Monterey Park

February 16-18

Conference of California Historical Societies
Spring Symposium
theme "Birth of the Inland Empire"
Hosted by Bloomington, Etiwanda, Fontana,
and Rialto Historical Societies
Reserve by February 8th, 2001
(909) 877 0690 fax (909) 877 0841

February 23

Chinese Chamber of Commerce Chinese New
Year Banquet,
Empress Pavilion Restaurant
\$50 per person
(213) 617 0396

Contact Wanted

Frank Yee, one of the original members of the group had an idea for the CHSSC, is trying to get information on a film about The Rape of Nanking that was shown at a theater, that doesn't exist now, located on Valley Blvd at approximately Atlantic Blvd or Garfield Ave. He would like the name of the film and how to contact the owner of that film to see if a DVD could be made from it. The intent is to preserve it for posterity so that the event will not be a lost memory in the future and to make it more easily available to the general public. This is to prevent history from repeating itself! If somebody has contact to the ex-owner or ex-operator of the theater, the film information might be available from them. Any help would be appreciative.

Please contact Frank Yee at (310) 378-8087 or e-mail at frankyee@msn.com

additional info on the Nanking Massacre on the web

- <http://www.nanking.org>
- <http://www.metroactive.com/papers/metro/12.12.96/cover/china1-9650.html>
- <http://www.jiyuu-shikan.org/nanjing/>
- <http://www.japanecho.com/docs/html/270119.html> - interesting article about the controversy of Iris Chang's *Rape of Nanking*



Thru 2001

Common Ground: The Heart of Community
Japanese American community
 Japanese American National Museum
 (213) 625-0414

Thru January 28, 2001

Tibetan Masterpiece: First 3-Dimensional
Mandala ever built in North America
 at Forest Lawn Memorial Park Museum
 (800) 204-1313 or www.forestlawn.com

January 31 - February 25, 2001

East West Player presents
The Year of the Dragon
 120 Judge John Also Street
 (213) 625-7000

Thru February 11, 2001

Allen Say's Journey: The Art and Words
of a Children's Book Author
 at Japanese American National Museum
 (213) 625-0414

Thru February 18, 2001

More Than a Game: Sport in the Japanese
American Community, story of one
 immigrant group through the universally
 popular topic of sport
 at Japanese American National Museum
 (213) 625-0414

Thru February 25, 2001

Made in California: Art, Image, and Identity,
1900-2000 (including "The Myth of
Chinatown" exhibit portraying Chinese in
California during the early 1900's
 through books, documents, drawings, paint
 ings, photos, and film)
 at Los Angeles County Museum of Art
 (323) 857-6000 or www.lacma.org

Thru May 27, 2001

Superflat, 19 of Japan's most provocative
artists whose work bridges pop culture and
fine art in an exhibition seen for the first
time outside Japan
 at The MOCA Gallery at the Pacific Design
 Center
 (213) 626 6222 or www.moca.org

The Lonely Queue

The Forgotten History of The Courageous Chinese
 Americans in Los Angeles by Icy Smith Foreword by the Chinese
 Historical Society of Southern California. This unprecedented
 pictorial history book presents the vibrant and diverse contribution
 of the 150 years of Chinese Americans in Los Angeles. The
 author worked with researchers and historians to document this
 remarkable history and to trace more than 200 vintage
 photographs, drawings and paintings depicting the struggle of
 making America their home. This first bilingual chronicle is now
 available at CHSSC and will be on sale at the coming February
 meeting.

Hundred Years in the Making

If you have nothing to do and a five dollar bill to spare, I
 highly recommend getting yourself to the Los Angeles County
 Museum of Art before February 25th, 2001. The most extensive
 exhibit this month "Made in California" holds a hundred years of
 history and art combined in telling the many stories of Los
 Angeles past to present (1900 - 2000). The exhibition is divided
 into 5 sections by every 2 decades. Each section features timeline
 in reflection of historical significances to the art movement coun-
 terpart of the particular time period. Section 1 covers 1900 -1920
 illustrating the visionary of California to be a mythology of won-
 ders comparable to ancient Greece. Section 2 is from 1920 - 1940
 with vast change from the Great Depression to Hollywood inva-
 sion and cultural diversities. Section 3 is the war era from 1940 -
 1960 and an illustrative subculture emergence. Section 4 covers
 1960 - 1980 in countercultural politics and a celebration of youth.
 Last but not least section 5 from the 1980 to 2000 scrutinizes self
 identity and what is to become of California in the near future.
 The exhibition encompasses every aspect of life in California and
 it would sure ravel up old memories for those who lived in
 California long enough to remember the good old times.

CAPP Road Trip

The 5th Annual Chinese New Year celebration was held
 at the Cultural Art Center in Torrance on January 18th, 2001. The
 turn out was quite significant with more than 200 people in atten-
 dance. There were many tables set up for display of artworks and
 even Chinese calligraphy. CHSSC had a table set up for the
 CAPP project. We met some members of our own along the way.
 The program consisted of dragon dances and other performances
 which entertained audiences of all ages. Next CAPP movement is
 Cathay Bank in Monterey Park and the 7 scientists and medical
 researchers will be displayed in the main lobby.

HAPPY CHINESE NEW YEAR!



NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
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- ☐ Please include me on the membership roster that will be available to members only
- I am interested in helping with:

☐ Programs

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