



# News & Notes

**Chinese Historical Society of Southern California**

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**August 2003**

## ■ PRESIDENT'S WORD

Greetings to all CHSSC members. I hope you are enjoying a wonderful summer!

I would like to recognize the Society's participation in recent community activities. At Los Angeles' recent Lotus Festival in Echo Park - co-founded by our own Ella Quan - Joy Luck Club actor, Howard Fong, Jim Fong, Gilbert Hom, Bob Lee, Jeff Leng, Marian Leng, Susie Ling and family, Don Loo, Eugene Moy, Angi Ma Wong and Cy Wong helped in CHSSC's booth. Vice-President of Programs, Eugene Moy, gave the CHSSC slide lecture twice at St. Paul's Cathedral, adjacent to Echo Park Lake. Additionally, two weekends after the Lotus Festival, we helped MTA celebrate the grand opening of the Metro Gold Line by hosting a community booth at the Chinatown event. A hearty thank you to all CHSSC volunteers who helped at the Gold Line opening and Lotus Festival.

I look forward to sharing a productive and progressive year and enjoying many exciting CHSSC programs together with you as we begin the new season.

Warmest regards,  
Linda Wong Smith, President

## ■ SEPTEMBER PROGRAM

**Wednesday, September 3, 2003, 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)

Guest Speakers: Raymond Lew & Jack Ong

### **FROM CHINA TO CHINATOWN**

An Evening With Raymond Lew

In 1938, as an 8-year-old boy, Raymond Lew was sent from his home village of Lung Mei (Beautiful Dragon) in China, to seek a better life with his uncle, Lew Sam, who owned the thriving Kwong Dack Wo store on Spring Street in Chinatown. Raymond worked for his uncle while attending Castelar Elementary School, Central and Nightingale junior highs, Belmont High School, and L.A. City College. He learned the import-export business at Kwong Dack Wo, where imported and fresh and dried Chinese goods were sold. Ray became the store's owner and general manager in 1966, as the successful business gained popularity with Hollywood stars and was frequently used as a film location. Kwong Dack Wo was sold in 1979 and CBS Restaurant now occupies the site.

Join us as Raymond Lew shares his rags-to-riches story, including vivid accounts of bigotry, hardship, Ferguson Alley nightlife, and life in Old (Spring Street) Chinatown. Mr. Lew will be interviewed by brother-in-law, actor/writer Jack Ong, who has previously presented programs to CHSSC and guest-starred on television shows "Dharma & Greg," "Friends," and "Touched By an Angel."

## ■ CHSSC HONORS ELLA QUAN AND CY WONG AT GOLDEN DRAGON BANQUET



>> Service Awards Presented to Ella Quan & Cy Wong - Golden Dragon Restaurant - June 29, 2003.  
(Courtesy: Tom Eng)

On the eve of their retirement from office, Treasurer, Ella Quan, and President, Cy Wong, were honored on June 29, 2003 by about 90 Society members who came to appreciate them, deliver glowing tributes, and present the honorees with special achievement awards for their longtime service to CHSSC.

Vice-President, Ann Lau, emceed. The evening began with an invocation, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the singing of God Bless America, led by John Yee. President-Elect, Linda Wong Smith, gave Cy and Ella lovely flowers. Cy then delivered a heartfelt, unaccompanied rendition of "No Man is An Island."

After a delectable meal, many longtime friends and organizational comrades rose to praise the honorees. Margie Lew called Ella Quan "a woman who wears many hats - among them mother, grandmother, community activist, teacher, principal and friend." A founding Society member, Ella served as President, Membership Chair, Treasurer, Gum Saan Journal Co-Editor, News & Notes Editor, Tour Coordinator, coordinator of its monthly meetings, and the list continues. Irvin Lai remarked that Ella co-founded the Society because "Chinese American history needed a caretaker."



Cy Wong has been with the Society for 17 years, serving as President, Membership Secretary, Shrine Preservation Committee member and Board member. Cy shouldered most of the Society's tour doctenting for years, and helped turn the two, once dilapidated Victorian homes on Bernard Street into our Heritage and Visitors Center and CHSSC Office. Margie Lew mentioned the "tons of elbow grease" Cy put into refurbishing the two buildings and said, "I can't believe it is the same place I saw 5 years ago!" Then she said, "Mr. Wong can do no wrong."

Notwithstanding Munson Kwok's quip that "You can't retire from a volunteer outfit," Margie reminded Cy and Ella: "This time when you retire, make sure you retire!" But, let it be noted, Cy and Ella have been sighted many times since the Dinner, helping out exactly as before, at our Chinatown Heritage and Visitor's Center and Office.

*Randall Bloch*

## CHSSC OPENS NEW ARCHIVE STORAGE FACILITY



>> Project Team Inside New Facility, June 30, 2003.  
From left: Randy Bloch, Al Der, Cy Wong, Yvonne Chang, Ann Lau & Linda Rehberger. Not Shown: Roberta Greenwood, Eugene Cooper, Franklin Mah, Philip Tong

Culminating two months of activity during which two interlocking projects were carried out simultaneously, on June 30, 2003, President Cy Wong cut the ribbon to officially open our new Archival Storage Facility. The parallel projects - relocating CHSSC's historical collections to a central storage facility and the construction of that facility on our Bernard Street property; and, cataloging every box in our collections and placing a description of their contents on a computer database - began May 13, 2003 with re-approval of a lapsed National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Grant.

Ann Lau, Project Director, deserves immense praise for leading the Project and as the vision behind simultaneously executing both project phases. Ann also achieved revival of the NEA grant that was originally given the Society for this work; through her initiative and persistence, NEA agreed to extend the project through December of 2003.

Albert Der, Society member and chief architect of many of Los Angeles' best known buildings, designed the archival facility. Al drew almost endless refinements and upgrades of the archival facility's design and secured high quality, industrial shelving at a remarkable cost saving to the Society. The new facility boasts industrial grade steel doors; a UV rated, double-dome skylight; moisture-

protected flooring; industrial quality steel-reinforced shelving; new, high-grade insulation; a stainless steel work bench; and other high-end features.

Cy Wong's (CHSSC President, 2002-2003) daily efforts and contribution to the Project cannot be overestimated. Cy was a continuous presence, offering his services and talents while daily monitoring the Project's progress. Often, it was Cy's construction experience and creative solutions that corrected seemingly unsolvable problems, such as ensuring the rubber linings and thresholds of the Facility's new steel doors were perfectly flush.

Project Curator, Archaeologist Linda Rehberger, faced great challenges in identifying, categorizing and cataloging the Society's separate collections, some presented to her late in the Project's targeted time frame. An early bird who begins her workday at 6:00 a.m., Linda did yeoman's work and we are forever grateful to her. Office Manager, Randy Bloch, administered the Project. Archaeologist, Roberta Greenwood, Anthropologist, Dr. Eugene Cooper, and Archive Committee Chair, Franklin Mah, were Project Advisors. Volunteers, Yvonne Chang and Philip Tong helped extensively with archiving and data entry. We thank Kelli Allen who wrote the original NEA Grant Application and Irvin Lai, president of CHSSC in 2001.

Other Society members contributed valuable hours in support of the Project. Gilbert Hom and Gene Moy used their own vehicles to transport the collection boxes, some quite heavy, from former storage locations. They were assisted by William Moy, Qian Deng, and Linda Chong. Eddie Chen, Susan Sing, and Gilbert and Gene helped our Curator sort the boxes.

In completing this project, we have organized, stored and catalogued our artifacts and collections in a safe repository, giving them the dignity and protection they deserve. Successful completion of CHSSC's first NEA grant project is a positive precedent for future NEA grant applications. We now look forward to full curation of the entire CHSSC collection - an ambitious endeavor that will continue the work completed on June 30, 2003.

*Randall Bloch*

## AROUND CHSSC

### SPRING 2003 DINNER

On May 9th the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California held a vibrant and successful Spring, 2003 Dinner at Empress Pavilion Restaurant in Chinatown. The epicurean menu featured more vegetable dishes than earlier dinners and was very well-received. Guest Speaker, Pam Chun, with a storyteller's persona, evoked a near-mythological image of her great-grandfather, L. Ah Leong, the subject of her book, "The Money Dragon." L. Ah Leong emigrated to Hawaii in the 1880's, founding Honolulu's Chinatown and building a financial empire. Pam shared rare historical documents and photographs, depicting the colonial Hawaii of a century ago. Continuing the Hawaiian theme, performers Faith Rivera and Daniel Ho, both Hawaiian natives, provided spirited entertainment. Board of Directors member, Dr. Wing Mar, announced the great news that the Society's 100 x 100 Club, in which donors make a \$100 annual commitment, has exceeded its target of 100 individuals contacted. Dr. Mar then introduced 10 new Chinese American Portraits of Pride (CAPP) display panels. President Cy Wong, and Board Chair, Eugene Moy, presented certificates to all



outgoing Board members and officers, and President Wong announced a gift of \$10,000 to the Society from Robert and Edith Jung.

We thank table sponsors Wilbur Woo, Kong Chow Benevolent Association, Eugene Wong Moy, Winifred Lew, Ann Lau, Dr. Wing Mar, Col. Hayward Fong and Gee How Oak Tin Association. Thank you also to the Spring 2003 Dinner Committee, Susan Dickson for providing PowerPoint projection set up, Lucille Niki for her lovely centerpieces, Icy Smith for again designing an exquisite program, our reception table staff and all others who helped with the Spring 2003 Dinner.

## **JUNE MEETING REPORT**

### **Chinese Pioneers in the San Gabriel Valley**

Our June speaker was Susie Ling, Associate Professor of History and Asian American Studies at Pasadena City College, longtime Society member and a new member of our Board of Directors. Also a CHSSC publication contributor and editor, Professor Ling has been living in San Gabriel Valley for over two decades and has extensively researched Chinese Americans in the Valley prior to World War II. She presented the following information at the June meeting.

Over one hundred years ago, there were Chinatowns in Pasadena and San Gabriel City. According to the 1880 census, Ah Sam, Ah Show, Ah Dong, Ah Sing, and many others worked and lived in the Valley. Lucky Baldwin had a "Chinese colony" on his ranch with about sixty laborers. Leonard Rose, founder of Rosemead, had a hundred Chinese working on his Sunny Slope vineyards. The Woodbury brothers used Chinese to plant the little trees on what today is known as Christmas Tree Lane in Altadena. In Covina, B. L. Reynolds had Chinese remove worms off his dewberry plants. The Chinese laundered, cooked, and provided vegetables to much of the Valley. The Chinese packed oranges all over the Valley and they stomped grapes at the San Gabriel Winery in Alhambra.

In 1930, Edwin Hayes, station agent of the San Gabriel Depot, wrote: "Every farm employing more than one or two laborers, and every household of wealth and leisure, had its Chinese cook. Work on the farms, and in the few industries that then existed was divided about equally between Chinese and Mexican labor; and the majority of the citrus packing houses of Southern California employed Chinese help exclusively, for the grading, packing, and loading. Each little village had its Chinatown: Pasadena, Azusa, Pomona, El Monte, etc."

The San Gabriel Valley has always been ethnically diverse. As we slurp our noodles on Valley Boulevard, we should know that we are not the first wave of Asian residents. We are traveling on the same land as our ancestors of an earlier century.

## **MTA METRO GOLD LINE OPENING** **July 26-27, 2003**

In an opening weekend celebration for the new MTA Gold Line railway between Union Station and Pasadena, MTA hosted a two-day extravaganza, including free rides, community booths and all-day entertainment. Beneath the dazzling, red and green Chinatown Station, College Street was closed to make room for a stage and booths. CHSSC's booth volunteers, Eddie Chen, Cindy Fong, Howard Fong, Jim Fong, Gilbert Hom, Don Loo, Eugene Moy, Lucille Niki, Philip Tong, Linda Wong Smith, Charles Wong, Henrietta Yuan and William Yuan introduced many

folks to our organization and sold CHSSC books and self-guided Chinatown tour maps. Past CHSSC president and Feng Shui expert, Angi Ma Wong, displayed her many publications in her own booth and answered questions. The Friends of the Chinese American Museum were our "neighbors," and we enjoyed networking with their staff and volunteers. At the west end of College Street, Friends of the Chinatown Library, many of them CHSSC members, maintained a well-staffed booth. MTA generously distributed passes, good for one-way rides through the following week, to booth volunteers and others.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **June General Meeting Refreshments**

Thank you very much to Aurora Bahou, Philip Lee, Winnie Lee, Susie Ling, Ruth Lung, Sylvia Soo Hoo, Betty Wong and Cy Wong for the delicious refreshments at CHSSC's June 4, 2003 General Meeting.

### **Condolences**

The Society expresses its sincere condolences to Winifred Lew and Gary Woo and family on the passing of their mother, Marian L. Woo, just as News 'n Notes went to press last May.

CHSSC sends its sincere condolences to Frank Chee's wife, Lupe, and Glenn and Marshall, his sons, on his passing last May.

### **CHSSC Needs Docents for its Chinatown Tour Program!**

We badly need a few good docents. Tours are scheduled upon request and the season is from September through June. Most tours are in the morning and last from 1 to 1 1/2 hours. Docent training and handbooks are provided and tour guides receive modest compensation. Please phone Randy Bloch in the CHSSC Office (323-222-0856) for more details.

### **Attend a Preview Performance of Byron Yee's "Paper Son" At a Special CHSSC Group Discount Price**

"Paper Son" is Byron Yee's acclaimed solo show about growing up in Oklahoma, moving to California, becoming a stand-up comedian, then finding his heritage. Asked to audition for a Hollywood movie as a "wacky Chinese restaurant owner", the disastrous result pushes Byron into a journey of his past. (See "Upcoming Events" in this News 'n Notes.)

### **Past CHSSC President, Munson Kwok, Honored by Conference of California Historical Societies**

Dr. Munson Kwok, past president of CHSSC (1984-85), received a prestigious Individual Award on June 28, 2003 from the Conference of California Historical Societies at their Awards Luncheon in Van Nuys, California. As a CHSSC Founding Member, Dr. Kwok co-edited the Society's first three books, helped coordinate several Chinese American Studies conferences and the Heading East statewide traveling exhibition, which celebrated California's Sesquicentennial. Over the last 15 years, Dr. Kwok has helped develop the Chinese American Museum.

### **New Gum Saan Journal** **Publication Format and Schedule**

Beginning next year, Gum Saan Journal will be published once a year in December.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**September 13, 2003**

### **MOON FESTIVAL CELEBRATION**

L.A. Chinatown

(310) 689-8083 (lamoontfestival.com)

**September 17, 2003, 7:10 p.m.**

### **CHINESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY NIGHT**

Dodger Stadium

**September 19, 2003**

### **CHINATOWN SERVICE CENTER BANQUET**

Empress Pavilion Restaurant

213-680-1700

**September 21, 2003, 5:30 p.m.**

### **CHINESE AMERICAN MUSEUM**

### **HISTORYMAKERS BANQUET**

Universal City Hilton

213-626-5240

**September 24, 2003, 8:00 p.m.**

### **BYRON YEE'S "PAPER SON"**

### **SPECIAL CHSSC DISCOUNT PERFORMANCE**

(See "Announcements" in this issue of News 'n Notes)

Gascon Center Theater, 8737 Washington Blvd., Culver City

Information: 323-222-0856

(Please send checks to CHSSC Office)

**Until October 5, 2003**

### **DRAWING THE LINE - CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS**

### **REASSESS TRADITIONAL EAST ASIAN CALLIGRAPHY**

Pacific Asia Museum

626-449-2742

**Until February 28, 2004**

### **"THE HEATHEN CHINEE"**

### **STEREOTYPES OF CHINESE IN POPULAR MUSIC**

Chinese Historical Society of America

415-391-1188

## Ongoing

### **CHINESE AMERICAN PORTRAITS OF PRIDE (CAPP) EXHIBIT**

Los Angeles Harbor College (Library)

1111 Figueroa Place, Wilmington, CA

310-233-4000 or CHSSC Office: 323-222-0856

## 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.

## 2003-2004 CHSSC Officers

Linda Wong Smith - President,

Pete Chinn - Vice President

Eugene Moy - V.P. Programs

Ben Nakayama - Membership Secretary

William Chew - Treasurer, Franklin Mah - Financial Secretary

## Board Members

Dr. Betty Gaw, Gilbert Hom, Gifford Hwa,

Susie Ling, Dr. Wing Mar

News 'n Notes Editor, Randy Bloch



**Chinese Historical Society  
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