



News & Notes

Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

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September 2003

■ PRESIDENT'S WORD

I extend my warm thanks to our September Guest Speakers, Raymond Lew and Jack Ong, for helping kick off CHSSC's new season in grand fashion. How wonderful to hear Ray Lew's deeply touching story and share the history of an individual with deep roots in Los Angeles' Old Chinatown. And Ray's brother-in-law, Actor Jack Ong, gave much of himself and added so much dynamism to the proceedings. In fact, Jack was so taken with the meeting's vibrancy and zeal that he phoned our Office the next day, overflowing with enthusiasm over the fresh energy and positive spirit the new Board has brought to the Society.



Turning to upcoming activities, I hope you will join us on Wednesday, September 24th at 8:00 p.m., at Culver City's Gascon Theater (in the historic Helms Bakery building) for Brian Yee's one-man-show, *Paper Son*. The evening's proceeds will be donated to the Society, and refreshments will be served. Reviewer, Susan Walker, was so impressed by *Paper Son* that she wrote: "*Byron Yee calls himself a stand-up comic, but that description doesn't do the San Franciscan justice. Only a consummate story teller could have put together Paper Son to make a unique and moving tale out of an experience common to millions of first-generation North Americans.*" Please see Upcoming Events in this issue for more particulars.

I encourage all our members to read each issue of News 'n Notes and to attend our general meetings, held the first Wednesday of the month, except July and August.

Looking ahead, we will hold our Fall Fundraising Dinner on Friday, November 7, 2003. Thank you for supporting all of our activities, and if there are any Society members I have not yet met, I hope to make your acquaintance in the very near future.

Linda Wong Smith, President

■ OCTOBER PROGRAM

Wednesday, October 1, 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 Speaker: Carl Chu

FINDING CHINESE FOOD IN LOS ANGELES

Please join us on October 1st as author and former transportation consultant, Carl Chu, discusses his exciting

new book, *Finding Chinese Food in Los Angeles*. In his first self-published work, Chu introduces readers to the details and intricacies of Chinese regional cooking - and tells us where in Los Angeles to find it! More importantly, through his analysis of Chinese food, Chu illustrates how much change has taken place in the Chinese community and gives vision to the future dynamism of the Chinese in America.

Carl Chu was born in Taiwan and came to the U.S. with his family in 1980. He grew up in Downey, and earned a master's degree in transportation economics at Northwestern University. In Chicago, he worked as a transportation consultant before returning to Los Angeles to develop his writing skills. In developing an understanding of how Chinese culinary skills have evolved, Carl Chu has considered the historical and social contexts of Chinese cooking in painstaking detail. Not to be missed!

■ AROUND CHSSC

AN EVENING WITH RAYMOND LEW



>> Raymond Lew and Jack Ong - CHSSC General Meeting, September 3, 2003 (Courtesy of Tom Eng)

In 1938, 8-year-old Raymond Lew's grandmother asked him: "Would you like to go to a mountain of gold?" At our September General Meeting, Mr. Lew, stimulated by the questions of his brother-in-law, Actor Jack Ong, told how, as a young man, he boarded a ship to cross the ocean from China, then settled in Los Angeles' Chinatown - learning the import/export business at his uncle's market, Kwong Dack Wo - and eventually became a successful entrepreneur as the store's owner.

When young Raymond arrived in Los Angeles, he had no bed to sleep on. He was taken in the care of his uncle, Lew Sam, owner of Kwong Dack Wo, on the corner of Spring and Ord Streets. He attended elementary school when "Castelar was an old wooden shack" and the surrounding neighborhood had "40-50 Chinese, and was 90% Mexican."

and around 10% Italian." The family once owned the entire Ord Street frontage from Spring Street to Alameda Street, and sold the northwest corner of Alameda and Ord to Philippe's, when the restaurant moved from Downtown.

Ray told how years later as the store's owner, he maintained a bean sprout growing operation in the large, dark basement below the store. Ray's yellow pickup truck with an "icebox" mounted behind the cab caught young Jack Ong's attention in Mesa, Arizona. They became good friends, and Ray eventually married Jack's sister, Lily. Over the years, the store became a celebrity destination (Ray remembers Babe Ruth dropping in) and was regularly used as a film location. Footage of the store is shown in *I'll Cry Tomorrow*, with actress Susan Hayward. Among the store's celebrity customers were James Wong Howe, Beulah Quo, James Hong, Philip Ahn, and restaurateur, Arthur Wong. The store's closure signaled the end of an era.

Ray generously supplied photos for our September 3rd presentation, which were scanned by Jack Ong and projected via PowerPoint by Eugene Moy. Old friend and Kwong Dack Wo customer, Jack Hom - a Society member and longtime Atwater area restaurant owner - contributed colorful anecdotes from days past at the activity. Unfortunately, the family has no surviving exterior photos of the store, and Jack Ong has strongly appealed to CHSSC members to search their albums for such photographs. Should you locate such photos, please phone the Society at 323-222-0856.

RB

LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE REPORT

On Saturday, August 30th, members of the CHSSC Landscape Committee - Eugene Moy, Dr. Betty Gaw, Philip Tong, and Gifford Hwa - met in the CHSSC Office to review the recently completed property survey, and to tour the Bernard Street property to set goals for its improvement. Design suggestions from landscape architects who prepared prior proposals were reviewed and discussed. To create space for parking and outdoor events, it was determined two crape myrtle trees, a fig tree, and a deteriorating lattice and brick patio will need to be removed. After grading work, plans call for paving stones and stamped concrete to cover most of the area. This will include a widened center walkway, and a driveway with raised planters that can double as seats. Other improvements being considered are new sprinklers and electrical outlets, a faucet for a wash basin, area lighting, disabled-access ramps for each house, and new, electronic driveway gates, decorated with CHSSC's logo in English and Chinese. A donor wall will be a prominent feature along with shade amenities incorporating new perimeter trees and landscape netting. Further horticultural improvements call for China and California cultivars of low-maintenance species, including perennials, at the front, rear, and sides of the property. These recommendations want what the Committee considers minimum functional and aesthetic goals.

As plans move forward, Eugene Moy will prepare rough specifications and each Committee member will receive copies of contractors' bids. In October, a final scope and budget will be presented to CHSSC's Board for approval. Though the final budget is still being developed, donations from \$2,000-\$20,000 are encouraged for this valuable and long overdue project. Project contributors will be prominently acknowledged on a Donor Wall Plaque.

BG/GM

■ CENSUS 2000

The New Face of Asian Pacific America (2003) - edited by Eric Lai and Dennis Arguelles - is an information-packed, yet coherent, English-translation of the mumbo jumbo statistics from the 2000 census. UCLA's Asian American Studies Center and Asian Week put together this distinguished

panel of authors. Organization of Chinese Americans helped with this timely project too. Here is a synopsis of the interesting findings.

The 2000 census confirms what we already know: the Asian Pacific American (APA) population has been growing. While in 1990, Asians comprised 3% of the US population, we are now 4.5% at 12.5 million. California has the most APA at 4.3 million - which is about 13%, and nearly doubles the proportion of African Americans (7%) in our state. Chinese are now the largest Asian ethnic group in California, followed by Pilipinos, Vietnamese, Japanese, Koreans, and Asian Indians. In 1990, the number of Pilipinos exceeded the number of Chinese. Hawaii's proportion of APA increased to 71%. The state with the fastest growing population of Asians is Nevada (225% increase since 1990), but Arizona and Colorado more than doubled their Asian population too.

The most significant change in census data is the counting of hapas, or people of mixed ancestry or race. Instead of choosing between your mother's ethnicity or your father's ethnicity, the 2000 census allows you to choose more than one category. This is significant as multiracial and multiethnic people are on a serious rise. For example, 15% of Chinese in the United States are of mixed heritage while 22% of Pilipinos and 30% of Japanese fit that category. For Hawaiians, two-thirds are of mixed ancestry. 400,000 APA's also marked themselves as Hispanic as they are "Chino Latino" or Japanese Peruvian or Asian Indians from Jamaica, etc. Asian Hispanics are about 4% of the Asians in Southern California.

Another significant trend is intra-group diversity. What exactly does being "Chinese American" signify these days? UCLA's Dr. Min Zhou suggests that in Los Angeles, 23% of Chinese Americans are American-born, 27% are born in the mainland, 20% are born in Taiwan, 8% are born in Hong Kong, and 22% are born in other countries. One-third of Vietnamese in the U.S. have some Chinese ancestry. We speak a multitude of dialects and have sharply diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Indeed, Chinese - like other Asians - tend to be bimodal. Asian Americans have high household incomes of \$51,908, but 12.4% are officially poor.

What city in 2000 had the largest percentage of Chinese Americans? Monterey Park, of course, at 44.6%. This was followed by Arcadia (37.1%), San Gabriel (36.6%), Alhambra (36.2%), and other cities all in the San Gabriel Valley. Non-San Gabriel Valley cities include Cupertino (25.3%) and San Francisco (20.7%).

For people in policy-making fields, social services, or others who want to read the other 300 pages of *The New Face*, see www.asianweek.com.

SL

■ HEALTH & WELLNESS Somatization

By Dr. Margaret T. Lin and Dr. Wing Mar

As in many of our *News 'n Notes* Health and Wellness articles, here we present a health issue with particular relevance for Chinese Americans. I asked Dr. Margaret T. Lin, M.D., a staff psychiatrist at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, to co-author our first article on mental health issues related to Chinese Americans. Thus, this article advocates for an understanding of somatization as an illness behavior in a cultural context so readers may be empowered in both helping themselves and others with such a presentation of complaints.

The single word to understand is "somatization" which is broadly defined as the tendency to experience and communicate somatic distress and symptoms without medical evidence and, when seeking help, to attribute them to physical illness. This is an oft-seen tendency in Chinese Americans and is frustrating for both patients and clinicians. In their frustration, clinicians often label such patients as "difficult." Similarly, the distressed

individual often makes the rounds of doctors without getting appropriate help.

Knowing that somatization may be an expression of mental distress can help both clinicians and their patients. An individual who is depressed may report having fatigue, unusual sensations in the body, pain, poor concentration, headaches, insomnia and over 50 other possible symptoms. Based on a 1980 clinical study, over 87% of Chinese patients reporting such symptoms were found to have clinical depression, and responded to antidepressant medications.

A reason Chinese Americans may report somatic complaints is that the Asian health belief system is based on a continuum between mind and body. Hence, an individual reporting somatic complaints is not trying to be difficult but, rather, is reporting his/her distress in a way that makes sense to them. In recent years, as Western medicine strives to embrace more holistic approaches, Chinese medical training has begun to more strongly emphasize the dichotomy between mind and body. Both push and pull have been observed and clinicians should be aware of the cultural context in which somatization occurs in order to better serve their patients.

Another explanation for the greater tendency to somatize among Chinese Americans is their expectations when visiting physicians. Commonly, a Chinese American individual seeking help from a Western physician expects to receive a prescription for their physical problems. The management of psychological distress is often achieved through extended family support or religious means. Seeking help for psychological distress from a mental health professional is uncommon in most Asian cultures and is often stigmatized.

In conclusion, the management of medically unexplained symptoms is a challenge to both a distressed person and his or her provider. Frustration can be greatly diminished when both sides understand the cultural influences on an individual's health belief system and their effects on help-seeking presentation and behavior. The caregivers of a person with medically-unexplained symptoms should be alerted that the individual may be depressed. Clinicians can help by making efforts to lessen the stigma of mental illness through better educating their patients about depression. Expressing empathy toward somatic complaints requires clearly understanding them as cultural idioms of mental distress. And expressing empathy rather than annoyance toward medically unexplained symptoms goes a long way toward establishing rapport with patients. Once rapport is established, a patient will be far more likely to act upon the provider's recommendation to obtain mental health assistance.

== ANNOUNCEMENTS

Condolences

The Society extends its condolences to the family of Pearl Louie who passed away on August 27, 2003.

New Printing of *Duty and Honor* Available!

Responding to pleas from Chinese American WWII Veterans and their families and friends, the Society has reprinted a small number of copies of *Duty and Honor*, which are currently available. The richly detailed historical work contains over 200 pages of informative essays, rare photographs, and community history. This will be the last opportunity to purchase the book. *Please order your copies now before Duty and Honor goes out of print forever!!* Cost: \$36.00 (same as 1998); 8.25 CA Sales Tax (\$2.97); \$5.00 shipping (\$2.00 each additional copy); or phone (323) 222-0856 to pick up your copy at the CHSSC Office.

September General Meeting Refreshments

Thank you to Lupe Chee, Katie Kwok, Ruth Lung, Tim & Annie Siu, Donna Young & Henrietta Yuan for the delicious refreshments at CHSSC's September 3, 2003 General Meeting.

CHSSC Docent Training Workshop

On Saturday, October 4th, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., we will lead a Workshop at the Society's Offices to train Chinatown tour guides. The CHSSC Docent Training Manual will be distributed at the activity. Our tours are conducted by reservation only and peak season is from September to June. Tours last about an hour and are usually held weekday mornings. Our tour guides receive modest compensation. Please phone Randy Bloch in the CHSSC Office (323-222-0856) for more details.

News 'n Notes Articles Wanted; Editorial Volunteer Sought

News'n Notes seeks a volunteer to help compile our "Upcoming Events" column. We also strongly invite your contributions, articles, etc. Please phone Randy Bloch at (323) 222-0856.

Donations

The Chinese Historical Society of Southern California expresses its deepest appreciation to the following recent financial donors: Mary Lee Chan, Lupe Chee, George Cheng, William Chew, Lois & Henry Chi, Celia Chui, Stanley Chun, East West Bank, Col. Hayward Fong, Ralph Fong, Sr., Paul C. Fu, John M. Gault, Betty C. Gaw, Susan J. Go, Rose L. Ho, Gilbert Hom, James Hong, Jason & Alice Jem, Robert & Edith Jung, Suellen & Munson Kwok, L.A. Chinatown Firecracker Run Committee, Daisy & Eugene Lam, Ann Lau, Patrick Lee, Rose Marie Lee, Steven Leong, Nadine & Israel Levy, Chong & Isobel Lew, Winifred Lew, Bee-De Lim, Steve & Milly Liu, Eugene & Dorothy Louie, Howard Louis, Nelman Low, M.D., Franklin Mah, Wing Mar, M.D., Christine Mei, Milspec Industries, Eugene Moy, Ben & Doreen Nakayama, Pacific Heritage Books, George Poon, Carolyn Sauvage-Mar, Standard Savings Bank, Gregory Sue, D.D.S., Eleanor Telemaque, Cy Wong, Edgar Yuen Wong, Judge Delbert Wong, Yep H. Wong, Kyra Woo, Tom Woo, Karen Yee, and Timothy & Cecilia Yu.

Donation of Office Supplies

Thank you to Ben and Doreen Nakayama for their generous donation of computer supplies to the CHSSC Office.

El Camino College Thanks CHSSC for Loan of CAPP Exhibit

In a thank you letter of August 14, 2003, El Camino College Public Access Librarian, Ed Martinez, wrote: "Your posters were very well received by our students and broadened the educational experience which our campus offers to the community." Congratulations to Chinese American Portraits of Pride (CAPP) Coordinator, Dr. Wing Mar!

== UPCOMING EVENTS

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" AT \$15 CHSSC DISCOUNT PRICE

Gascon Center Theater,
8737 Washington Blvd., Culver City
Information: 323-222-0856
(Please mail checks to CHSSC Office)

September 26, 2003, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

FREE PERSONAL CREDIT WORKSHOP IN MANDARIN Chinatown Service Center

RSVP: 213-808-1754

October 2, 2003

OCA IMAGE AWARDS

Omni Hotel,

251 S. Olive St., Los Angeles

Information: 213-250-9888

October 2-5, 2003

SAN DIEGO ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL

Information: 858-616-8525

October 4, 2003, 6:00 p.m.

26TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF THE AUGUST MOON

**Pasadena Conference Center for Pacific Asia
Museum**

Information: 626-449-2742

October 4, 2003, 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

HANFORD MOON FESTIVAL (Free Event)

China Alley, Hanford

Information: 213-582-4508

October 5, 2003, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**HONG KONG ASSOCIATION/CHINESE CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE PICNIC**

Santa Anita Race Park

Information: 213-622-3194 x 201/206

Until October 5, 2003

**DRAWING THE LINE - CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS
REASSESS TRADITIONAL EAST ASIAN
CALLIGRAPHY**

Pacific Asia Museum

Information: 626-449-2742

October 6, 2003, 6:30 p.m.

CHINESE GOLD JEWELRY OF LEE KING YEE

(Founder of Jin Hing Company)

China Society Dinner Meeting

Golden Dragon Restaurant,

960 N. Broadway, Los Angeles

Information: 213-628-8439

October 17, 2003, 7:00 p.m.

AUTHOR LISA SEE (Dragon Bones)

AT PACIFIC ASIA MUSEUM

Information: 626-449-2742

October 24, 2003

ASIAN YOUTH CENTER BANQUET

Westin Bonaventure Hotel

Information: 626-309-0622

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

September News 'n Notes Contributors: Dr. Margaret T. Lin,
Susie Ling, Dr. Wing Mar, Eugene Moy, Dr. Betty Gaw, Randy
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