



# NEWS 'n NOTES

CHINESE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

P.O. Box 862647, Los Angeles, CA 90086-2647; Voice: 323-222-0856;

Fax: 323-221-4162; Email: [chssc@earthlink.net](mailto:chssc@earthlink.net); Web: [chssc.org](http://chssc.org);

Chinatown Heritage & Visitors Center: 323-222-1918

**MARCH 2004**

## TOWARD CHSSC's 30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY

Last November, the CHSSC Board held an effective retreat in which we reorganized our responsibilities for more efficiency. We continue to pursue our mission and goals established almost three decades ago – before personal computers were invented, before the state's electric crisis, and when U.S. postage cost fifteen cents. The projects discussed below are all genuine efforts to validate our Society's mission of promoting interest in and recognition of Chinese American history. We truly welcome your input, suggestions, and support.

### News 'n Notes

With this issue of *News and Notes*, a new format is introduced. Frankly, our slicker, multicolored production cost significant money, time, and space. We sincerely hope the newsletter articles; Announcements; Community Calendar; and the Health and Wellness columns are organized to interest our readership.

### Gum Saan Journal

In April, we release a new format of *Gum Saan Journal* with four articles. Thanks to the diligence of volunteer editor Icy Smith, *Gum Saan Journal* has grown substantially in image and content. We proudly look forward this year to a special issue dedicated to Judge Delbert Wong, a pioneering giant in the legal field. To cover production cost, the rate of the newly formatted 60-page *Gum Saan Journal* will increase to \$8 per copy, plus \$2 shipping and handling for subscription copies. Professional editorial work is generously donated. We aim to publish one issue per year in

(Continued on page 2)

## APRIL PROGRAM

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 2004**

**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:*

**ADELINE YEN MAH**

*Physician & Author*

Writer and physician, Adeline Yen Mah, will read from her latest book, *Thousand Pieces of Gold, A Memoir of China's Past Through Its Proverbs* for our April General Meeting Program. The event is co-sponsored by CHSSC and the Friends of the Chinatown Library. The book explores China's renowned proverbs in their historic and cultural context and their relevance in modern society. Dr. Mah's book was nominated for a best non-fiction award in 2003 by the Southern California Book Seller's Association.

Dr. Mah also authored New York Times bestseller, *Falling Leaves*, an autobiography of her early life in China, education in Hong Kong, and achievement of a medical degree in London, England. She quotes from her Yeh Yeh (grandfather) who had a significant influence on her life, her writing and her most recent work, *Thousand Pieces of Gold* . . .

*"Let these proverbs I've taught you and the stories behind these proverbs be your most precious treasure. Cherish them and carry them with you wherever you go. Always keep in mind that life is short, riches come and go but written words are immortal."*

Dr. Mah is also the author of *Watching the Tree; Chinese Cinderella*, a children's book; and is currently completing another children's book. All of her books will be available for purchase and signing at the April 7th meeting.





# Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

**MARCH 2004**

*(Toward CHSSC's 30th Anniversary, cont'd from Page 1)*

our new, expanded format. When possible, we encourage our members to buy their copy at monthly meetings and spring dinners. All previously paid subscriptions will naturally be honored.

## Publications and CHSSC Website

Our biggest anticipation is for the *Portraits of Pride* publication directed by Dr. Wing Mar and his hard-working group of volunteers. We continue to market and distribute our books *Duty and Honor*, *Bridging the Centuries*, and even *Linking Our Lives*, our first publication. Indeed, our Chinatown Heritage and Visitors Center is a rich bookstore. We also continue building and posting timely announcements on our website and to answer questions on Chinese American history that the general public directs to us.

## Scholarship

Thanks to the continuing generous support of our members, this year CHSSC is offering two One Thousand Dollar scholarships to students focusing on Chinese American studies. This year, our distinguished panel of volunteer judges includes Dr. Swan Ngin, Anthropology Professor at CSULA; Dr. Haiming Liu, Ethnic and Women's Studies Professor at Cal Poly Pomona; and Judy Soohoo of UCLA's Asian American Studies Center. In the future, we hope to build a substantial trust fund so scholarship monies will automatically be generated from interest on the fund. This year's scholarship winners will receive their awards at our Spring Fundraising Dinner on April 24th.

## Shrine Preservation

CHSSC restored and maintains a 19th century memorial shrine built by the first generation of Chinese pioneers at Evergreen Cemetery in Los Angeles. A committee of Randy Bloch, Professor Gene Cooper of USC, and Gilbert Hom keeps the site tidy, monitors its structural integrity, and watches for vandalism. Last year, groups from the USC Department of Anthropology, the Latino Urban Forum, and the Japanese American Museum visited the historic site. This year, a nationally-marketed children's textbook, *We Remember - State Monuments and Historic Sites*, included the Shrine as one of 16 United States historic sites the book profiles.

*(Continued on page 5)*

## 2003-2004 CHSSC Officers

Linda Wong Smith, President

Pete Chinn, Vice President

Eugene Moy, V.P. Programs

Susie Ling, Secretary

Ben Nakayama, Membership  
Secretary

William Chew, Treasurer

Franklin Mah, Financial Secretary

## Board Members

Dr. Betty Gaw     Gilbert Hom

Dr. Wing Mar

*News 'n Notes Editor: Randy Bloch*

## 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.



FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING REPORT

By Linda Chong

February's general meeting was a joyful opportunity to meet a new friend of the CHSSC family while learning about Pearl S. Buck, the legendary author who made it her life's work to eradicate prejudice and ignorance based on racial and cultural differences.

Our guest speaker was Susan Sovine, a locally based author, editor, and literary and book consultant whose West Virginia hometown is near Pearl Buck's birthplace in Hillsboro. Ms. Sovine became acquainted with our organization by working closely with CHSSC treasurer William F. Chew, whose first book, *Nameless Builders of the Transcontinental*, was the subject of our March general meeting and celebration.

Crediting Bill Chew for her newfound interest in the history of the Chinese in the United States, Ms. Sovine brought her presentation to life with personal anecdotes about her own upbringing in rural, conservative and highly religious West Virginia—the family home of Ms. Buck (who retained the middle initial “S” to represent her maiden name of Sydenstricker). In doing so, Ms. Sovine vividly illustrated just how remarkable and exceptional Pearl Buck was—not just as a result of her life experiences in China, but for her many contributions and efforts as a philanthropist and an advocate for civil rights.

For many of us, Pearl Buck is best known as the author of *The Good Earth*, the best-selling novel about peasants in China that inspired the Hollywood movie filmed in L.A.'s old China City. But Ms. Buck, a Pulitzer and Nobel Laureate, also fought tirelessly throughout her life on behalf of African Americans and volunteered to sit on the board of the Urban League and on the board of trustees for Howard University, traditionally considered a black institution in Washington, D.C. Furthermore, she used her influence to raise public awareness and criticize the Roosevelt Administration for its policy of placing Japanese Americans in internment camps during World War II.

Pearl Buck's work as an activist and an author did not always make her friends, Ms. Sovine said. In fact, her controversial stances resulted in her name being placed on the infamous “Enemies List” compiled by former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover. Ms. Buck's 40 years of living in China led her to become bicultural, bilingual and literate in both Chinese and English, and she was a creative and passionate woman uniquely suited to explain the people, history and culture of China to Americans. But in the tense post-World War II climate created by the likes of Senator Joseph McCarthy and his House Un-American Activities Committee, Pearl Buck became suspected of being a subversive with sympathies to a Communist power.

Ms. Buck also should be remembered for founding Welcome House, an adoption agency that still exists, but whose origins were rooted in a desire to find homes for mixed-raced children born in the United States. Shortly after its establishment, Buck successfully lobbied Congress to allow the mixed-raced children of American military personnel into the United States, extending Welcome House's welcome mat to countless children of World War II unions in Germany and Japan. Ms. Buck and her second husband, Richard Walsh, also adopted several mixed-raced children.

Ms. Sovine credits Pearl Buck for changing the image of Asian people, especially the Chinese, in the American mind—a humanizing process that ultimately facilitated the 1943 repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act and steered Washington to support China in its fight against Japan's aggression in World War II. By the time of her death in 1973, Pearl Buck published more than 70 books, including novels, short stories, biographies, an autobiography, poetry, drama, children's literature, and translations of Chinese writing. Her contributions as an American were recognized posthumously by the United States Postal Service, which issued a stamp in honor of Pearl S. Buck's extraordinary life.





### HEALTH & WELLNESS

#### What Is Your Body Mass Index?

*By Dr. Betty Gaw*

In my prior article "Fat Is Under Attack," I suggest that we all ask our physicians to compute our Body Mass Index. Regretfully, few primary physicians, except pediatricians, measure patients' heights and some medical offices do not even take patients' weights. Height and body weight are necessary to calculate one's Body Mass Index ("BMI").

During the last 15 years, the ranges of "Ideal" body weight vs. "Underweight" vs. "Overweight" vs. "Obese," as expressed in pounds or kilograms, have been replaced by the more accurate Body Mass Index. BMI is calculated by multiplying one's weight in pounds by 703, and dividing that by one's height, squared. Thus, a person who weighs 125 pounds and measures five foot two inches in height, has a BMI of  $125 \times 703 = 87875$  divided by  $62 \times 62 = 3844 = 22.86$ , a healthy BMI. For a man of 200 pounds with a six foot tall frame, his BMI is  $200 \times 703$  divided by  $72 \times 72 = 27.12$ , which denotes overweight. A man or woman with a weight of 200 pounds on a five foot four frame calculates to  $200 \times 703$  divided by  $64 \times 64 = 34.33$ , i.e. in the obese category.

#### Range of Body Mass Index

Healthy:	18.5 to 24.9
Overweight:	25 to 29.9
Obese:	Greater than 30.

#### What is the significance of BMI?

Just as hypertension and elevated triglycerides/low density lipoprotein/homocysteine are risk factors for disease, so too having increased BMI reflects health risks, not body shape nor physical appearance. Truncal obesity increases body weight due to massive deposits of intra-abdominal fat, not muscle, hence increasing BMI. Waist measurement is therefore helpful in tracking weight gain. In my last Health & Wellness column on Type 2 Diabetes, overweight/obesity is stressed as one of the contributory factors to that metabolic disorder. In the year 2003, the five countries with the greatest incidence of Type 2 Diabetes are India: 35.5 million, China: 23.8 million of a population of 1.2 billion, United States: 16 million, Russia: 9.7 million, and Japan: 6.7 million.

#### Lifestyle Changes With Professional Guidance

When I was struggling for twelve years with unrelenting weight gain, going from size 8 clothes to size 12 despite following the rules for a healthy lifestyle, my BMI was 24.97, or borderline "overweight". I despised my abdominal girth and decided not to shop for another wardrobe, one size bigger. I felt it was crucial at that stage to seek medical advice in anti-aging medicine, or age-related medical management. Being prescribed the right hormones, taking the appropriate supplements,

*(Continued on page 5)*





*(Toward CHSSC's 30th Anniversary, from page 2)*

### Archives

The former carport of CHSSC's Heritage Center is now an Archival Center housing all the historical documents, artifacts – and junk – the Society has collected in its three decades! In 2003, immediate past Vice-President Ann Lau and others reactivated a National Endowment for the Arts grant to centrally locate all the Society's archival holdings; install shelves and otherwise modify the garage into an archival facility; begin repackaging some of our most precious collections in acid-free material; and create a spreadsheet database to list the items. Administrative Assistant Randy Bloch has written a second NEA proposal in hopes of continuing to archive our holdings.

### Historic Research and Recognition

We have more ideas for research projects, focusing largely on oral histories. We do not have enough resources for these at present and many of our Board members are focused diligently on programming and administrative responsibilities. *News and Notes* will report on that aspect of CHSSC's work in upcoming issues.

*(Health and Wellness, from page 4)*

reducing stress, and cutting back on carbohydrates brought success in eliminating fat while replacing it with healthier muscle. Even doctors need second opinions!

The Center of Disease Control National Center for Health Statistics gives us guidelines for assessing health risk factors for children by correlating height to weight. Since children are becoming overweight or obese at a younger age and with greater frequency worldwide, it is important their body composition for fatness or leanness be measured. Children's body fat composition changes at different ages, and boys differ from girls. BMI is correlated with underweight as less than the 5<sup>th</sup> percentile, overweight is the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile, and obese is greater than the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile. Please refer to the following websites for charts showing the BMI-for-Age for Boys ages 2-20 years: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/bmi-for-age.htm> and that for girls of 2-20 years: <http://www.keepkidshealthy.com/growthcharts/girlsbmi.gif>.

Body Mass Index is thus a tool for measuring health-related risk factors when elevated so that appropriate measures can be taken to reduce risk. With body fat composition measurement, it can be determined whether excess weight is due only to fat, and the amount of fat present. While such medical procedures are not free of charge, computing one's BMI index requires only an accurate scale and a tape measure. The best time to take one's weight and height is in the morning when slightly taller and breakfast has not yet been eaten.

The simplest anti-aging strategy is to maintain one's BMI in the healthy range of 18.5 to 24.9. Practice prevention, since "Prevention is the ultimate of wisdom."





### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **100 X 100 CLUB MEMBERS**

Thank you and congratulations to the following CHSSC members and friends who are members of our 100 x 100 Club: Byron C. Chan, Kenneth L. Chan, Vincent Chan, Tai S. Chang, Adrienne Chen, Ken & Susan Chen, George Cheng, Gregory V. Chew, William F. & Natalina Chew, Lois Chi, John Chia, Pete Chinn, Andrew G. Chong, Julie S. Chow, Luis A. Chui, Spencer Chun, Stanley Chun, James Chung, William & Margie Chun-Hoon, Col. Hayward Liu Fong, Jim Fong, John Fong, Ralph and Mary Fong, Paul Fu, John Gault, Betty Gaw, Allen & Mary Gee, Galen Ho, Rose Ho, Gilbert Hom, Jack Hom, James Hong, Sue Chow Hoy, Jason Jem, Edwin Kwoh, Collin Lai, Ann Lau, Pat Lau, Calvin and Winifred Lee, John M. Lee, Joseph and Linda Lee, Rosemarie and Bowmond R. Lee, Steven and Ella Leong, Dorothy Y. Louie Lew, Winifred Lew, Bee-De & Samuel T. Lim, Dr. William Liu, Steve and Milly Liu, Dorothy and Eugene Louie, Howard Louis, Nelman C. Low, Marcella Low, Robert W. Mah, Carolyn Sauvage-Mar, Jeff & Louise Mar, Joyce Mar, Ken and Josie Mar, Wing Mar, Craig & Gayle Marchun, Paul McCabe, Christine Mei, Victor Michel, Dirk Minderhout, Ben & Doreen Nakayama, Claudia Oshita, Kieu and George Poon, Julie Raskoff, Andrew Seid, Beverly Shue, Victor Siew, Icy Smith, Nadine Soo Hoo Levy, Darryl Y. Sue, Gregory Sue, Albert Toy, Deanna & Ron Toy, Robert Wang, Angi Ma Wong, Delbert and Dolores Wong, Yep Wong, Edgar Wong, Kyra Woo, Tom Woo, Wilbur Woo, Wendel Wye, Joseph & Felicia Young and Ruth Seid Yue.

#### **2003 CHSSC DONORS**

The Chinese Historical Society of Southern California expresses its deep appreciation to the following 2003 financial contributors: Mary Lee Chan, Lupe Chee, Adrienne W. Chen, William Chew, Gregory V. Chew, Carl Chu, Carole Chung, Jeffrey & Lynn Copans, Susan J. Go, Gilbert Hom, Robert & Edith Jung, Suellen & Munson Kwok, L.A. Chinatown Firecracker Run Committee, Los Angeles Chinese Women's Club, Daisy & Eugene Lam, Ann Lau, Patrick Lee, Nadine & Israel Levy, Winifred L. Lew, Steve & Milly L. Liu, Eugene & Dorothy Louie, Russell N. Low, Franklin Mah, Don Miller and Pat Lau, Milspec Industries, Eugene W. Moy, Standard Savings, Tarzana Mariners, Eleanor Telemaque, Cy Wong, Edgar Yuen Wong, Yep H. Wong, Tom F. Woo, Wendel & Debra Wye, Karen Yee, and Timothy & Cecilia Yu.

#### **FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING REFRESHMENTS**

Thank you so much to Ruth Lung, Winnie Lew, Julie Raskoff, Linda Chong, Dolores Wong, and Dorothy Lew for the delicious refreshments at the February 4, 2004 CHSSC General Meeting.

#### **MEMBERSHIP RATES**

With heavy heart but fiscal prudence we bring the question of raising our annual dues to our membership. At the April General Meeting, members will be asked to vote whether the Society should raise its membership rates to \$35 for Individuals and \$20 for Students and Seniors.

#### **VENTURA COUNTY CHINESE AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

CHSSC has a new sister: Ventura County Chinese American Historical Society. The City of Ventura traces its Chinese American community back to 1865. With leadership from CHSSC friends like Linda Bentz and Roberta Greenwood, the Ventura Society has a very interesting website at [www.polyfet.com/vccaahs/](http://www.polyfet.com/vccaahs/). The Society also hopes to establish a mural at the China Alley site.





**MARCH 2004**

## **COMMUNITY CALENDAR**

**April 10 & 25, 2004, 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

NIGHT MARKET IN CHINATOWN CENTRAL PLAZA - SPONSORED BY L.A. CHINATOWN BUSINESS COUNCIL  
947 N. Broadway, Los Angeles

**April 18 & 19, 2004**

MONTEREY PARK CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL  
Barnes Park

**April 19, 2004, 6:30 p.m.**

TED WANG & CHEN CHEN REVIEW *THE ABBOTT & THE WIDOW - TALES FROM THE MING DYNASTY, A SERIES OF CLASSICAL CHINESE SHORT STORIES*  
Chinatown Branch Library

**April 24, 2004, 6:00 p.m.**

CHSSC 2004 ANNUAL SPRING DINNER - AUTHOR IRIS CHANG (*THE CHINESE IN AMERICA: A NARRATIVE HISTORY*)

Empress Pavilion Restaurant, L.A. Chinatown  
Information: (323) 222-0856

**April 26, 2004**

ANNUAL EAST WEST PLAYERS VISIONARY AWARDS DINNER  
Hilton Hotel, Universal City  
Information: (213) 625-7000

**April 29 to May 6, 2004**

VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS ASIAN FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL  
Directors Guild Theater & Japan America Theater  
Information: (213) 680-4462 x 68

**May 3 to May 28, 2004**

EXHIBIT OF TEN NEW CHSSC *PORTRAITS OF PRIDE* PROFILES  
Los Angeles Harbor College (Library)  
1111 Figueroa Place, Wilmington, CA

**June 23, 2004, 7:00 p.m.**

*REVISITING EAST ADAMS* FILM DOCUMENTARY PREMIERE  
David Henry Hwang Theater, 120 Judge John Aiso Street, Los Angeles  
Information: jennycho@ucla.edu; (323) 222-0856

**Through June 27, 2004**

*REVISITING EAST ADAMS* - AN EXHIBITION OF PHOTOGRAPHS AND MEMORABILIA FROM THE EAST ADAMS NEIGHBORHOOD, CIRCA 1930's TO 1950's  
Curators, Jennifer Cho & William Gow  
CHSSC Chinatown Heritage and Visitors Center  
411 Bernard Street, L.A. Chinatown