

JUNE 2010

## Grace Young

*On Sunday, May 23, 2010,  
the Chinese Historical Society of  
Southern California hosted a luncheon.*

Cookbook author Grace Young's fortune cookie set the tone for her talk at the Plum Tree Inn Restaurant: "You have natural grace," written in Spanish and English.

Even with her extensive travel, researching the cuisine of the Chinese diaspora, she said this was the first time she encountered a Spanish-English fortune cookie. But Young is very familiar with what happens when Chinese stir-fry collides with different cultures.

Her newest book is "Stir-Frying to the Sky's Edge." The book has a primer on proper wok seasoning and cooking, but it also shares the stories of the chefs of the Chinese diaspora in Indonesia, the Carribeans and the Mississippi Delta.

"They might not be able to make Peking duck or Chinese dimsum, but they could always make Chinese stir-fry," she said to an audience of about 30 people.

Her "culinary detective hunt" started when she found a Jamaican-Chinese restaurant in New York. The food, she said, was mostly typical, mediocre food, and jerk chicken fried rice was awful, but from there she discovered everything from Chinese-Argentinian to Chinese-Caribbean restaurants in New York and around the world.

When the Chinese moved to places such as Holland or the Mississippi Delta, many traditional Chinese ingredients, such as snow peas and lotus root were unavailable, so they adapted local substitutes, like peeled English peas and sliced potatoes, perfectly prepared to mimic the originals.



She pointed out that the Chinese in Trinidad initially didn't have rice vinegar, so they substituted it with the locally produced rum. They also washed the shrimp with lime before cooking it, which is a Trinidadian practice to remove the fishy taste from seafood.

Chinese restaurants often cater to the locals, rather than to Chinese tastes. For example, one Chinese restaurant in Omaha, Nebraska she visited served soy sauce, bread rolls and butter with their Chinese food. They also tacked on "steakhouse" at the end of the restaurant name, to make the white locals more comfortable about entering a Chinese restaurant. Also, a restaurant in Holland serves french fries as a side with every

dish and tweaked many recipes to have a sauce -- even if they typically don't require sauce, like rice -- to cater to the tastes of the Dutch population.

An unexpected outcome of her research for recipes was the outpouring of personal stories. In her interview with Ellen J. Fong, whose family was one of two Chinese families in the Mississippi Delta in the 1930s and 1940s.

Young learned about the history of Chinese in the Delta -- they were brought in to replace black slaves and worked grueling hours to make ends meet.

Her book "records and honors the food and recipes of Chinese people," she said. "And it recognizes the suffering and also the fact that they ate well."

When she tried to find a record of Chinese wok cooking in America, one Library of Congress employee told her frankly that people weren't interested in recording the Chinese.

"I realized how hard it must've been to be Chinese back then," she said.

### In Defense of Chop Suey

Grace Young, like many Chinese Americans, decried chop suey as "a Charlie Chan dish with no relationship to real Chinese cooking." But she eventually recognized its significance. While it may not have any real connection with traditional Chinese cuisine, Young said that chop suey was key in allaying the fears of the very foreign Chinese culture to Americans. It was a safe dish, made with familiar ingredients, like onions and celery, cornstarch gravy and just enough "exotic" ingredients, like bean sprouts. It was the dish that paved the way for Americans to be exposed to Chinese art, music, food and décor.



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## Final Nominations to the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California Board of Directors 2010-2011

The following slate of nominations includes those  
nominated at the general meeting of May 5, 2010:

### Officers

President - Gordon Hom  
Vice President - Susan Dickson  
VP for Programs - Francine Redada  
Secretary - Winifred Lew  
Membership Sec. - Mei T. Ong  
Treasurer - Dennis Lee, C.P.A.

### Members at Large for 2-year Term

Albert Chang, MD  
Pedro Chan  
Jenny Cho  
Irvin Lai  
Henry Leong  
Diane Poon

### Members at Large returning for 2nd Year of 2-year Term (Not for Election)

Kenneth L. Chan  
Richard Liu  
Donald Loo  
Eugene Moy  
William Tong

Board members serve from July 1 to June 30.

The Board of Directors meet on the second Saturday of each month from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Board members have opportunities to serve on committees such as the Archive Committee, the Programs Committee, the Nomination Committee, the Outreach Committee, etc. Committees meet at various agreed upon dates and times.

Election will take place at the June 2nd meeting at  
Castelar Elementary School's Multi-Purpose Room.

## Board of Directors

### Officers

Gordon Hom, President  
Susan Dickson, Vice President  
Mei T. Ong, VP for Programs  
Winifred Lew, Secretary  
Albert Chang, MD, Membership Sec.  
Dennis Lee, C.P.A., Treasurer

### Members at Large

Jean G. Chan  
Kenneth L. Chan  
Jenny Cho  
Irvin Lai  
Henry Leong  
Richard Liu  
Donald Loo  
Eugene Moy  
Diane Poon  
Francine Redada  
William Tong

## 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, multicultural society of the United States.



JUNE 2010

## Journey of a Paper Son

Wednesday, June 2, 2010 7:00 p.m.

Castelar School  
840 Yale Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Free parking - enter via College Street

*The event is open and free to the public.  
Refreshments will be served.*

**F**or many Chinese Americans, their roots go back to a "paper son," someone who came to the U.S. under false papers that claimed they had family in the U.S.

June's monthly program will feature a screening of "Journey of a Paper Son," a short film that stars CHSSC member Jack Ong. He plays Ming, a dying old man who reveals to his children that he came to America as a paper son. He requests they change his name from his paper son name to its original. Ong will also moderate a Q&A with the producer and cast of the movie after the screening.

Ong thought he was especially suited for the role, as his father had assisted at least three paper sons. The last paper son died two weeks before "Journey" started shooting.

Ong recalls his parents reminding him, "Be careful! Never tell anyone that so-and-so isn't really your brother. If the immigration authorities find out, Baba and Mama will be deported along with him, and you'll be left here all alone."

We will also open the mic to audience members about their "paper son" stories.

Bringing paper sons to America became common practice after the Chinese Exclusion Act was signed by President Chester A. Arthur in 1882 (the act was repealed in 1943). would claim to have sons back in China, which under the Exclusion Act, relatives could come to America. The 1906 earthquake in San Francisco, which destroyed the immigration records, also helped bring more paper sons to the United States.



Jack Ong



Cast and crew of "Journey of a Paper Son"



JUNE 2010

## Today's History Tomorrow's Mystery

Christina Hwee

Through protests, letters, and the research of Chinese immigrants, I am one of a small group of students at the University of California, Riverside (UCR) who found a new approach to education. I have combined the work in scholastics with the work of rescuing an important and cultural archaeological site.

My project focuses on the protection and preservation of Riverside's Chinatown, an archaeological site, with The Save Our Chinatown Committee (SOCC). Myself and other students use methods such as community organization, public relations and community outreach to protect one of the last remaining archaeological Chinatown sites in the United States.

One example of our efforts, is the student-led protest to the Riverside Board of Education (RCOE) and we voiced our concerns for the site. As we marched to the site we held several different types picket signs, some of which said, "Don't let our history be a mystery."

"It is important to be aware of the history because we are a product of it." Among the five interns, our goal for this project is to reclaim history and redefine identity in the Asian-American community.

"We must protect the place where our forbearers lived and worked. It is the source of information for our understanding of the past," said Teresa Tran, one of the outreach student interns at a meeting on the Riverside Chinatown. As one of the student interns working to protect the archaeological site with the SOCC, I have been transformed into a more vigilant learner and active participant in the community. The activities used by the interns and other students for this project included protests, auction banquets, and the organization of student groups on campus at UCR.

As the Public Relations intern, I helped write press releases and other types of articles that inform the community about Riverside's Chinatown site. For example, I wrote to RCOE that was used during the protest. I wrote a formal letter that was generic enough for most students to sign. During the protest, the students also wrote personal messages at the protest beneath the letter. A total of 22 letters were submitted to RCOE.

I feel that the activism, the protests, and activities I have participated in have helped me to redefine my history and culture.

I think as the new generation progresses, we are constantly trying to redefine ourselves and our identities. We try to stay away from stereotypes, but at the same time we can sometimes be at a loss as to who we really are. Are we Asians? Are we Americans? What does it even mean to be an Asian-American?

I find it extremely important to protect the culture that has been here. I would love to learn more about the contributions of the Chinese to community I am

residing in. Like me, many students are frustrated, angry, irritated, and annoyed at the idea of a destroyed site. We recognize how vital this site is to understanding Riverside's history correctly, and we will continue to fight to protect it.

To learn more about the Save Our Chinatown Committee and the cause, go to [www.saveourchinatown.org](http://www.saveourchinatown.org)



The only marker at Riverside's historic Chinatown archaeological site

*Christina Hwee is a student at UC Riverside and is one of five interns who have been working with the Save Our Chinatown Committee to increase the public awareness of the threat to an important historical site.*



JUNE 2010

## David & Pearl Louie Foundation Scholarship

### Award Presentation

*Wednesday, June 2, 2010 7:00 p.m.*

*Castelar School  
840 Yale Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012*

Free parking - enter via College Street

The Undergraduate Award of \$1000 will go to Amy Lieu, a UCLA junior majoring in communication studies. Amy is Vietnamese Chinese and is a leader of the UCLA TeoChew Association. She has volunteered for Asian Pacific American Legal Center, KTLA, UCLA Radio, Reading to Kids and ELACC. She is from Alhambra and the judges described her as "showing great compassion" with her community work.

The Graduate Award of \$1000 is awarded to Denny Chan, a member of the infamous UCI inaugural law class. Denny is from Michigan. His father is a restaurant cook and his mother is a factory worker; both do not speak English. At 18, Denny asked his father if he had heard of Vincent Chin. His father replied "Of course!" This is the foundation of Denny's commitment to social justice. His undergraduate work focused on voting rights in Michigan and he worked with Asian Pacific Islander American Vote, Michigan. He has also volunteered for Legal Aid of Orange County. Two of the judges fought very hard for Denny. They believe that Denny has "incredible potential" and already a "long history of community activism".

An additional Graduate Award of \$1000 is awarded to Jason Stohler. Raised in rural South Dakota where there were no Chinese Americans. He worked himself through college and taught English in Nanjing before becoming a data analyst in Chicago. He continued his education at University of Chicago and NYU. His internship with the Museum of Chinese in the Americas brought him to the History program at UCSB. His academic record is fantastic and his commitment to Chinese American 19th century immigration history is simply touching! He is such a wonderful person. His commitment to Chinese American history deserves affirmation from CHSSC!

## The Annual Chinese Historical Society of Southern California Summer Picnic



Saturday, August 28, 2010

11:00 A.M.



### Dim Sum Potluck

*Bring your favorite*



Shadow Park

Community Club House

12800 Alconbury Street

Cerritos, CA 90703

**Wednesday, June 2, 2010, 7:00 pm**

**"Journey of a Paper Son"** - a new film festival odyssey.- Free Jack Ong along his friends, cast and crew will preview the movie "Paper Sons". .

Castelar Elementary School - Enter on College btwn Yale & Hill Chinese Historical Society of Southern California [www.chssc.org](http://www.chssc.org) [www.youtube.com/watch?v=fPTX-hBRe9Y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fPTX-hBRe9Y)

**Wednesday, June 2, 2010, 7:00 pm**

**Presentation of the Louie Foundation Scholarship Award**

Castelar Elementary School - Enter on College btwn Yale & Hill Chinese Historical Society of Southern California [www.chssc.org](http://www.chssc.org)

**Saturday, June 5, 12:30 to 4:00 pm**

**OCA-GLA & Families with Children from China Picnic**

NEW LOCATION: Vincent Lugo Park (Palms Picnic Area)  
300 West Wells Street, San Gabriel 91776

**WHAT TO BRING:**

Food to share: Main Dish or Two Salads/Sides/Desserts  
(to serve 8-10 guests)

Picnic Blankets, Lawn Chairs, Toys, Games, Sunscreen  
RSVP by June 3 to Jeri Okamoto Floyd at [jerifloyd@ca.rr.com](mailto:jerifloyd@ca.rr.com)

**Wednesday, June 30, 2010 7:00 P.M. - Free**

**Meet The Author - Jenny Cho** Jenny Cho will speaking about the book, Chinatown in Los Angeles, which shows the history of Chinatown through pictures. Books will be available for purchase and signing. Katy Geissert Civic Center Library Community Meeting Room in Torrance, CA [www.ci.torrance.ca.us/](http://www.ci.torrance.ca.us/)

**Sunday, July 18, 2010 1:30 P.M**

**FAR EAST CAFÉ REUNION**

Experience one of the most favorite restaurant in Little Tokyo  
<http://chssc.org.blogspot.com/search/label/Far%20East%20Cafe>

**March 28 to July 25 2010**

**Secrets of the Silk Road** – Cost: Adults/\$18 Weekdays; \$20 Weekends/ Students & Seniors/\$16

This landmark exhibition features more than 150 objects relating to all aspects of the people and cultures of the Silk Road during its early period. The legendary trade route linked Xian, the then-capitol of China in the East, to major Mediterranean cities in the West such as Rome and Baghdad.

Bowers Museum Address: 2002 North Main Street, Santa Ana, California 92706

[www.bowers.org/index.php/art/exhibitions\\_details/35](http://www.bowers.org/index.php/art/exhibitions_details/35)

**Sunday, August 8, 2010**

**Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway** (2010) National Book Tour Authors Erika Lee and Judy Yung will join CAM for an intimate talk on this landmark book that provides the first comprehensive history of Angel Island Immigration Station, known as the "Ellis Island of the West."

Chinese American Museum – Los Angeles [www.camla.org](http://www.camla.org)

**Saturday, August 28, 2010 11:00 A.M.**

**CHSSC Summertime Picnic Potluck**

Bring your favorite Dim Sum  
Shadow Park, Community Club House, Cerritos, CA



**Chinese Historical Society  
of Southern California**

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*Help us save paper and postage, email us for your online newsletter at [chssc@hotmail.com](mailto:chssc@hotmail.com)*