

NEWS'N NOTES



Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

411 Bernard Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012
Phone: 323-222-0856 Email: chssc@hotmail.com
Website: www.chssc.org

FEBRUARY 2017



Special Screening of
the award-winning documentary
directed by Pamela Tom

Wednesday, February 1, 2017
6:30 p.m.

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

Free parking - enter via College Street
This event is open to the public.



In memory of Tyrus Wong, this monthly meeting, we will be collaborating with the China Society of Southern California, and director Pamela Tom to host a screening of the award-winning documentary *Tyrus*. Join us in celebrating Tyrus' life long achievements as a pioneering Chinese American artist in the film industry, and beyond.

Tyrus is Pamela Tom's tour-de-force documentary about Guangzhou-born, L.A. based visual artist, Tyrus Wong and his breathtaking scope of work across multiple artistic mediums and his personal and professional journey navigating racial bigotry in 20th century America.

The film makes meticulous use of Tyrus Wong's exquisite art, archival footage, illuminating interviews and commentary from Wong himself to document how his unique style, melding Chinese calligraphic and landscape influences with contemporary Western art, helped the Disney animated film, *Bambi* (1942) specifically, and early Hollywood in general establish their signature visual styles.

Tyrus, the film, makes a critical contribution to the documentary tradition and to American society in correcting a historical wrong by spotlighting this seminal, but heretofore under-credited figure.



Pamela Tom is a writer, director and producer whose work includes documentary and narrative film and television. Tom served as a production executive at KCET and was the post-production producer on the BBC/PBS national series *WW2: Behind Closed Doors: Stalin, The Nazis, and the West* and the network producer on *Wired Science*, a PBS national primetime series produced in partnership with *Wired* magazine. She was also the

field producer on the PBS pilot, *Becoming the Buddha in Los Angeles*.

Tom's award-winning narrative short film *Two Lies*, about a divorced Chinese woman who has plastic surgery to make her eyes rounder, screened at hundreds of film festivals including the Sundance Film Festival, New Directors/New Films, the Smithsonian Institution, and aired on numerous PBS stations, including KCET, WNET and WGBH. Tom is the recipient of the Walt Disney Writing Fellowship, the Dorothy Arzner Award For Outstanding Woman Director, the Edna and Yu Shan Han Award, and the Asian Pacific Women's Network Award. She has taught documentary film at UC Santa Barbara and Loyola Marymount University as well as film directing at UCLA Extension. She served as the Director of Diversity at Film Independent, where she was a leading spokesperson on issues related to diversity in the film industry. She received her BA with Honors from Brown University and an MFA in film from UCLA's School of Theater, Film, and Television.



The China Society of
Southern California



Jon SooHoo - Los Angeles Dodgers Team Photographer

There was a record turnout for our first meeting of the year. We were joined by the world renowned Jon Soohoo, past CHSSC Honoree, and official photographer of the Los Angeles Dodgers as a guest speaker. We were also joined by Mark Langill, Los Angeles Dodgers team historian and publications editor, who moderated the meeting. Jon shared video presentations featuring career highlights as a photographer with the Dodgers and other Los Angeles sport franchises. He also conducted Q&A and conversed with our audience throughout. We would like to say thank you to Jon and Mark for a fun-filled night to remember. Stay tuned for more exciting and compelling events for the year of 2017.



Meeting Sponsorship

The CHSSC has and always will provide free programs to public. In the past, we have been able to account for our venue expenses through donations from our members and agreements with the leadership at Castelar. But due to measures from the school district, the CHSSC will have to incur an extra expense of \$117.87 per meeting. To help subsidize these extra expenses, we are now giving our members and their businesses a chance to sponsor a meeting. A donation of \$100 is requested to sponsor a meeting. All donations are tax-deductible, and sponsors will be acknowledged in the following month's newsletter with their name or business logo. We appreciate your understanding and we hope to see everyone at our next meeting.

Board of Directors

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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.



FEBRUARY 2017

CHSSC is accepting applications for the 2017 summer internship program!

Thanks to generous CHSSC members, CHSSC is proud continue developing its internship program with two \$1000 summer internships to undergraduates with an interest in Chinese American history, Asian American Studies, Asian American community work, and/or archival studies. For more information about the application, please visit chssc.org. Applications are due April 7, 2017.

How to Apply For a Summer 2017 Internship at CHSSC

Please email the following to CHSSC board member Dr. Kelly Fong at kelfong@ucla.edu by April 7, 2017:

- Current CV or resume, including coursework in Asian American Studies, history, museum studies, or related fields.
- One letter of recommendation from a professor or supervisor who can attest to interest in Chinese American/Asian American Studies and/or archival experience.
- 500 word or less essay that explains your background and interest in a CHSSC internship. Essay should address how a CHSSC internship fits within your future academic or career goals. If you have experience working with community organizations, research on Asian American/ Chinese American history, and/or working with archival sources, please be sure to include this in your essay.

Criteria for interns:

- Interns should be undergraduate students whose major and/or coursework shows interest in Asian American history, historic research, archival preservation, museum studies, and/or Asian American communities.
- Student must be a currently enrolled undergraduate who has completed at least two years of college by June 2017. Students graduating in Spring 2017 are eligible.
- Students do not need to reside in LA, but will be required to go to CHSSC headquarters in Los Angeles Chinatown to complete their intern hours.

Intern duties include:

- A total of 60 hours of work with CHSSC board members, staff, and volunteers over 10 weeks in Summer 2017.
- Interns will primarily work with the CHSSC archives committee on a project to be completed during the internship period. Projects will be related to organizing, cataloging, and preserving the CHSSC archives. Potential projects include databasing CHSSC archival materials; contribute to ongoing efforts to inventory and/or organize the archives; assist with translating Chinese language materials; or helping the archives committee with expanding CHSSC's online archival presence on the Online Archive of California (OAC).
- At the end of the internship, interns will be responsible for writing a short essay about their project that will appear in the CHSSC monthly newsletter, News N' Notes.

The CHSSC internship committee anticipates announcing results in late April.

Please Renew Your Membership Now!
Renew online! www.chssc.org/join/membership.aspx



**Chinese Historical Society
of Southern California**

南加州華人歷史學會

Membership

Silver

Monthly newsletter.
Free *Gum Saan Journal*.
Discount on field trips to historical sites.
Discount on publications and products.
Admission to Heritage Center during non-public hours (call in advance)

100 x 100 Club

All benefits of Silver membership.
Invitation for 2 to special events.

Diamond

All benefits of 100 x 100 Club membership.
2 complimentary tickets to Annual Gala Dinner.

Student/Senior (60+)

All benefits of Silver membership.

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- 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.**

New Membership Renewal

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____

Email _____

Visa/MC # _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

<input type="checkbox"/> Silver	\$ 57.
<input type="checkbox"/> 100 x 100 Club	\$ 100.
<input type="checkbox"/> Diamond	\$ 300.
<input type="checkbox"/> Student or Senior (60+)	\$ 32.
Donation (tax deductible)	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

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Make checks payable to CHSSC

We are a 501(c)3
non-profit organization,
tax ID: 95-3155357

I am interested in helping with:

Programs
 Publications
 Research
 Publicity
 Fundraising
 Other _____



In Memoriam



Tyrus Wong

The CHSSC would like to express its sincere condolences to the family of Tyrus Wong. Tyrus passed away at the age of 106 on December 30, 2016. Thank you Tyrus and family for your continuous support of the CHSSC and its mission over the years.

Tyrus Wong was born on October 25, 1910 in Toishan, China. Seeking better opportunities in the United States, he and his father set off from their home in China in order to be able to send financial help back to their family. Upon arrival, he was processed through Angel Island alone, just nine years old at the time. His father, having come to the United States before, had already been processed through immigration at Angel Island and waited for his son in San Francisco.

After living and working in Sacramento awhile, his father would eventually make his way down to Los Angeles in search of better employment. Tyrus and his father lived in a small apartment in Ferguson Alley in L.A.'s Chinatown, sharing the space with other recent immigrants and farm laborers. Meanwhile, Tyrus at a very young age found an affinity for drawing and sketching. One of his instructors at Benjamin Franklin Junior High suggested he try for a scholarship at Otis Art Institute.

He would leave Benjamin Franklin Junior High School in Pasadena to attend Otis where his artwork left an impression on the dean, earning him a scholarship for the term. Once the duration of his scholarship had ended, Tyrus was in need of tuition in order to continue attending Otis. Through the help of members of the Chinatown community, Tyrus' father raised the money for tuition for one more term. Tyrus then won a full scholarship to complete his art education at Otis for the full 4 years. He was the only Chinese-American student at the school.

While still a student, Tyrus helped his friend Eddy See create the name and concept for the highly acclaimed Dragon's Den (1935) restaurant in the F. Suie One Company's basement in Old Chinatown. With hammer and paint brushes in hand, Tyrus and fellow Otis alumnus and friend, Benji Okubo, created the atmosphere for Dragon's Den by painting The Eight Immortals and a Chinese dragon on the exposed brick wall. While Tyrus worked without salary as a waiter in the restaurant during the Great Depression, his artwork was simultaneously displayed in the restaurant's mezzanine gallery.

Tyrus graduated from Otis at the top of his class and continued to have a diverse and lucrative artistic career. At a time when Asian Americans were not widely recognized in the field, Tyrus Wong started at the Walt Disney Studios (1938-1941) as an entry-level in-between. Later, his beautiful landscapes and forest renditions helped him become a lead inspirational artist on the production of Bambi (1942). He also worked as a pre-production artist for Warner Bros. Studios, Columbia, RKO and 20th Century Fox for over thirty years. Tyrus hand-painted his designs on ceramic plates for Winfield Pottery of Pasadena. He also designed his signature line of high-end holiday cards for over 20 years, one design selling over 1 million copies.

On top of all of his successes and achievements, Tyrus Wong has a winning and friendly personality, earning him many devoted friends over the years. He can be found on the fourth Saturday of every month at Santa Monica Beach with friends and family, flying his many beautiful and hand-crafted kites.

In Memoriam



Robert K. Wong

It is with sadness and regret that we announce the passing of Robert Wong. Robert passed away Saturday, January 21, 2017.

Robert K. Wong was born February 5, 1919 in Jung Shan, Kwangtung province, China. His middle name "Kuey" means middle of the stream. At age 2, Robert immigrated to Ottawa, Canada, where his family joined another family from the same village that had started a laundry. At an early age, Robert attended a Sunday School where he learned English. He also learned about God's plan of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, whom Robert accepted as his personal savior. This same Sunday School teacher gave Robert a book that would change his life, Dale Carnegie's "How To Win Friends and Influence People."

While in high school, Robert was resourceful enough to rent a vacant store space and started Wong's Produce Market to help support the family. Daily, he would take a bike or public transportation early in the morning to buy from the wholesale market fruits and vegetables for the market. He still found time to join the gymnastics team and later started a gymnastic scholarship at his high school.

Robert was accepted to Queens University in Kingston Ontario, but someone had to watch the market. Younger brother Gordon offered to leave school so Robert could go to Queens, where he received a B.A. in Commerce, the Canadian equivalent to business. Then in 1947, Robert met May S. Lee while she was traveling with her family to Montreal, Canada. Robert hosted May and her father, brother, and sister to a delicious Chinese dinner and then set up a triple date for May's Brother and sister choosing to pair May for herself. Robert made a good impression by speaking Cantonese to May's father. Soon thereafter, on August 21, 1948, Robert married May in Ottawa, Canada.

Wanting to have her first child be an American citizen, May returned to Los Angeles to have their first child Stephen Brian Wong. Soon a second child, Debra May Wong followed. In 1955, the company where Robert was an industrial engineer, Kwikset Locks moved to Anaheim, and so the family moved there. Robert started investing in real estate and was able to retire early in 1962 so he could attend to his investments full time.

Robert is survived by his wife May, son Stephen, married to Nancy Young, with daughters Erinn, April & Courtney, and great grandson Ari Homan, daughter Debra married to Dr. Francis Wong, who have daughters Candice, Brittany, Juliet, son Brendan, great grandson Oliver Torres, Jacob Morey, Jeremiah Morey, great granddaughter Vivian Torres.

Robert and May Wong have been longtime members and supporters of the CHSSC. Their contributions to the CHSSC have been instrumental in funding several major projects such as *Portraits of Pride*, and more recently, *Fighting For The Dream* by Victoria Moy. We would like to express our sincere condolences to May and the rest of the Wong family. His legacy will continue to live on through the CHSSC. Robert's service is set for 10:00AM on Saturday, February 4, 2017 at Pacific View Memorial Park, 3500 Pacific View Dr, Corona Del Mar, CA 92625.



JANUARY 2017

Archive Spotlight

This month the Archive Spotlight will focus on the Robert A. Nash Collection. As Charter Member #1, Dr. Nash was instrumental in starting the CHSSC in 1975. He was born in Bellefontaine, Ohio in 1915. During the 1950s to the early 1960s he conducted fieldwork for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Italy, Turkey, Portugal and Greece. It appears that education was very important to Dr. Nash. Beginning in the early 1960s, he attended Pasadena City College and went on to receive his Bachelor of Arts and Masters of Arts degrees from California State University at Los Angeles. He earned his doctorate from the Geography Department at University of California, Los Angeles in 1971. His dissertation, *The Chinese Shrimp Fishery in California*, is a seminal work in Chinese American history and geography. According to Dr. Nash, "The major objective of the research . . . is a contribution to the history of this ethnic minority's participation in the development of the State that has heretofore been slighted."

Robert A. Nash spent many years methodically detailing and writing about Chinese fishing activities and watercraft. Especially, California built Chinese junks and sampans. Dr. Nash passed away in Sierra Madre in 1976. Afterwards, his notes, letters, artifacts, photographs, oral histories, drawings and publications were donated to CHSSC.



This collection is a treasure trove for researchers interested in Chinese American maritime activities, the execution and evolution of Chinese commercial fishing activities and general Chinese American history in California. One of the images contained in the Robert A. Nash Collection has been widely published. The image is the three masted Chinese junk, the Sun Yun Lee, built in San Diego in 1884. This vessels was used for Chinese fishing activities in San Diego and Baja California.

118th Golden Dragon Parade

Saturday, February 4, 2017 - 12:00 noon

Participants must wear a red top and black bottoms.
Meet at Hill St. & Ord St. in front of the Chinatown Library



Join us in the Lunar New Year Festivities with the CHSSC! Take part in the 118th Golden Dragon Parade by marching with the CHSSC flag unit, or relax with fellow friends and members at the CHSSC headquarters on Bernard St. Every year, thousands of individuals line the parade route with many more watching the telecast. With over 100 years of tradition in Southern California, the Golden Dragon Parade has become the premiere cultural event for celebrating the Lunar New Year in the greater Los Angeles area.

The day of the Lunar New Year is the most celebrated holiday of the year for nearly 1.5 million persons of Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese descent in Southern California. It is celebrated with colorful festivals, parades, and most importantly, large family gatherings. It is also a time when ancestors are fondly remembered and families give thanks for their blessings. As always, the CHSSC wishes to do everything we can to keep these traditions alive, so that future generations can take part in them as well.

We invite you to be a part of this important annual celebration- as a spectator, participant, or sponsor.

For additional information
email CHSSC@hotmail.com or call (323) 222-0856



Notes on Chinese American History

A monthly column about Chinese American History by CHSSC member, William Gow.

In this month's column, I focus on the historical coverage of Chinese New Year in the city's papers during the Chinese Exclusion period (1882-1943). For most of this time, Los Angeles newspapers ran annual stories about Lunar New Year celebrations in Chinatown. Because of the consistency of this coverage throughout the Chinese Exclusion era, news representations of Chinese New Year can further demonstrate the bias evident in primary sources about Chinese Americans, while also showing the ways in which news representations of Chinese Americans shifted over a six-decade period. Early in the Chinese Exclusion era reporting on Chinese New Year often featured the familiar stereotypes of opium use, gambling, and tong violence, but as time progressed the coverage of the New Year's celebration became less overtly racist and more accepting of the festivities.

Reporting on the New Year's festivities on February 8, 1891 the Los Angeles Times reported that the vegetable gardeners and laundrymen were "all taking the day off and indulging in excess opium." A few years later on January 26, 1895 the paper reported on the restrictions the city placed on firecrackers during the New Year's celebration stating, "Some are angry that their fire cracker shooting is restricted, but the danger of highbinder shooting under cover of it is so great the thing is necessary." Articles like these show the inability of the reporters in the 1890s to see Chinatown in any way except ridden with vice.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, newspaper coverage began to focus on other aspects of the festival. For example in 1912, shortly after the founding of the new Chinese republic, the city's papers reported on what they believed would be the last Chinese New Year celebration in the city. The Los Angeles Herald ran an article entitled "Chinese Celebrate Last Noisy New Year. The paper claimed that, "Chinatown is today celebrating New Year's, the first under the republic and the last under the old Manchu custom. Next year the Chinese will join with Americans and celebrate on January 1. "On February 17 of that year, the Los Angeles Times ran a similar story headlined, "The passing of Chinese New Year".

By the 1920s the Los Angeles Times had begun to focus more on the cultural aspects of the festival. During the Chinese New Year celebration on February 8, 1924, the Los Angeles Times detailed the Chinese lion dance at that year's celebration. The paper described the lion in detail: "He is built of silks and feathers and furs with flapping ears, a tongue of fire, huge rolling eyes, whiskers like the beard of Moses, a tinkling tail, and four human feet." The paper went on to quote Chinatown resident Tom Gubbins, "'Tomorrow there will be no evil spirits in Chinatown,' said Gubbins, 'for the lion is driving them all away.'" This interest in the details and meanings of the festival to the participants separates this coverage from the coverage of Chinese New Year's in the prior century.

By the start of the Sino-Japanese war the coverage of Chinese New Year struck an even more sympathetic tone. On January 12, 1938, the Los Angeles Times wrote an article discussing the decision not to celebrate Chinese New Year in Los Angeles: "The money which Los Angeles Chinese usually spend on fireworks for their New Year's celebration will be sent to the homeland to buy food, clothing and medical supplies for the Chinese Army." The article went on to catalogue the events that would not happen that year: "No dragon will dance for lettuce and coins from one Chinese bazaar to another. There will be no parade of Chinese children in gay native costumes shouting 'Happy New Year' in Chinese to their elders." The article ended by publicizing an upcoming China Relief event that readers could attend. By the eve of the Second World War, the decision not to celebrate Chinese New Year was portrayed as a loss, while at the same time China war relief was portrayed as a just cause.

The changing coverage of Chinese New Year in the city's papers offers an interesting way of tracking both the continuing interest in the Lunar New Celebration by the city's press and also the subtle and not so subtle ways in which broader opinions about the Chinese American community in Los Angeles shifted. At the same time this coverage also provides historians and genealogists with an important reminder that we must approach all historical sources with a healthy amount of suspicion, remembering that all sources reflect the biases both of their producers and the periods in time in which they were produced.

William Gow is currently a doctoral candidate in Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley where he is writing a history of Los Angeles Chinatown in the 1930s and 1940s. He has been a CHSSC member for more than a decade. He invites feedback, suggestions, or questions about this column and his academic work. William can be reached by email at wgow@outlook.com

New Chinatown, China City, and Hollywood Cinema:

*An Oral History of Los Angeles
in the 1930s and 1940s*

Do you have memories of Los Angeles
Chinatown in the 1930s and 1940s?

Have you heard stories from parents
or relatives from the period?

Would you like to have your oral history archived
at UCLA's Center for Oral History Research?

Graduate student William Gow, working with faculty advisor Professor Shari Huhndorf, is looking for community members to participate in recorded oral histories as part of his dissertation research in the Ethnic Studies Department at UC Berkeley. If you are a US-born adult who has memories about the Chinese American community in Los Angeles in the 1930s and 1940s, or if you are an adult who has heard stories about the Chinese American community directly from those who lived in Los Angeles in these decades, you may qualify to take part in this project.

To find out more information, email William Gow at williamgow@berkeley.edu or call William at 310-795-4730.



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Help us save paper and postage, email us for your online newsletter at chssc@hotmail.com

Community Calendar

Wednesday, February 1, 2017 7:00pm
**TYRUS- Film Screening presented by CHSSC
and Chinese Family History Group of So. Cal**
Castelar Elementary School
840 Yale Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012
Free parking - enter via College Street
Refreshments will be served
This event is free and open to the public

Friday, February 3, 2017 7:00
Finding Cleveland Experience - Thousand Oaks, CA
Chinese Christian Church Thousand Oaks
www.findingcleveland.com

Saturday, February 4th, 2017 at 1:00pm
118th ANNUAL GOLDEN DRAGON PARADE
www.lagoldendragonparade.com

Thursday, February 9, 2017 6:30pm
Author Talk & Book Signing
Meet Karen Ishizuka
El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument
Biscailuz Gallery
125 Paseo de la Plaza
(across the plaza from CAM)
Karen Ishizuka is an award-winning documentary film producer
and museum curator whose talk coincides with CAM's new exhibi-
tion, *Roots: Asian American Movements in L.A. (1968-1980s)*.

Saturday, February 11 to 12, 2017
Los Angeles Chinatown Firecracker Run
www.firecracker10k.org

Friday, February 17, 2017 6:00 pm
Finding Cleveland DIM SUM Experience
Bowers Museum 2002 N Main St, Santa Ana, CA 92706
Cost of admission is \$15 and includes food.

Save the Date



Golden Spike Awards
Saturday, May 20, 2017