



## Jan/Feb

CALENDAR OF CHSA  
EVENTS & EXHIBITS

### Jan. 15, 2005

CHSA Annual General Meeting & Volunteer Recognition Luncheon. Gold Mountain Restaurant, 644 Broadway, San Francisco, 11:30am.

### Jan. 29 Chinese New

Year Celebration marking release of *Good Luck Life: The Essential Guide to Chinese American Celebrations and Culture* by Rosemary Gong. CHSA Museum and Learning Center, 1pm.

**Feb. 1** Mostly Mississippi: Chinese Restaurants of the South, an exhibition by artist Indigo Som based on her recent travels through the south. CHSA, 'til March 27.

**Feb. 19** In celebration of Chinese New Year, Grace Young, acclaimed food writer and author of *The Breath of the Wok*, will speak about the wok as a way of life in China. CHSA Wells Fargo Learning Center, 1pm.

**Feb. 20** Lantern Making Workshop. Make a Chinese lantern from *lay-see* red envelopes to decorate for New Year! Taught by CHSA volunteer Doris Lum. Proceeds go to CHSA's educational programs. CHSA, 11am, \$15 for CHSA members. Reservations required: (415) 391-1188 x 101, mlouie@chsa.org.

**'til Feb. 27** Parade in the New Year, an exhibition of the history of the San Francisco Chinese New Year Parade. Sponsored by the San Francisco Chronicle and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, Philip P. Choy Gallery.

**All CHSA events are free to members, except as noted.**

For more information, call (415) 391-1188 or visit our website at [www.chsa.org](http://www.chsa.org).

## PARADE IN THE NEW YEAR

by Marisa Louie

What involves hundreds of yards of silk, thousands of participants and the delight of millions more? That could only be the San Francisco Chinese New Year parade, now in its 47th year under the direction of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. In honor of this tradition, CHSA presents "Parade in the New Year: A History of the San Francisco Chinese New Year Parade," running now through February 27, 2005 in the Philip P. Choy Gallery.

Beginning in the 1880s, Chinese American settlements around the nation observed Chinese tradition by fashioning their own New Year parades. In the 1950s, as the Chinese American community in San Francisco grew and acculturated, local business leaders began to organize the parade into a multi-day festival. By involving those outside of Chinatown, the festival would promote the community economically and politically, attempting to address Cold War era concerns and suspicions of Chinese communism.

As Chinese Americans began to move outside of Chinatown's borders, so did the make-up of the parade's participants. Now highly competitive, the parade includes many non-Chinese American marching bands and dance troupes from around the nation. The parade committee judges each group's pageantry and gives out coveted awards to the best performances. However, despite the diversity of the parade, each group must develop costumery or a program related to the holiday, Chinese mythology, or the zodiac animal of the year.

As San Francisco Chinatown prepares for the Chinese New Year Parade, scheduled for February 19th, CHSA invites the public to take a glimpse into the history of this incredible event. Thanks to the support of the exhibition's official spon-



Chinese New Year Dragon circa 1948, courtesy of Benjamin Chinn

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HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY OF  
AMERICA**

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**THOMAS WU**  
**Man With a Mission**

*by Philip P. Choy*

IN MEMORY OF  
THOMAS WAI SUN WU, D.D.S.  
(1915-2004)  
CHSA CO-FOUNDER



Most people will remember Thomas Wu as a prankster, full of humor. He also was a talented musician who played the piano with a passion. In the more serious moments of his life, he gave time to his community and to public service.

Born in 1915, Thomas grew up in the True Sunshine Episcopal Mission in San Francisco, where his father Reverend Daniel Wu was Vicar. Like many of his generation growing up in a segregated society, Thomas' actions and activities were rooted in ethnic dignity and pride. He was recently honored at our 2004 gala event for playing piano with the 1930s dance band, the "Chinatown Knights."

During his fifty years of dental practice in Chinatown, Thomas served on many boards, including the Eng Family Association, On Lok Senior Services, Northeast Medical Services, and the Chinatown YMCA. His service on the California Republican State

Central Committee as President of the SF Library Commission, Chair of the Board of Permit Appeals, and as a member of the SF Arts Commission gave the Chinese visibility and a voice at a time when the Chinese were emerging as a political force.

In late 1962, Tom met with Thomas Chinn, H.K. Wong, Ching Wah Lee, and C.H. Kwok to discuss the founding of the Chinese Historical Society of America. While generations grew up accepting a history that excluded the role of the Chinese in building the West, these five men had the vision of establishing a historical society to promote knowledge about the history of the Chinese in America.

On December 19, 2004, Thomas Wu passed away peacefully, his mission accomplished. His imprint is forever in the history of San Francisco's Chinese community. ✨

## “RICE SACKS FOR MY SIBLINGS”

### Flo Oy Wong's Visual Narratives

**B**ay Area conceptual artist Flo Oy Wong, creates visual narratives about the extraordinary stories that happen to ordinary people. She will exhibit two works, “Rice Sacks for My Siblings” and “1942: Luggage From Home to Camp.” in the San Francisco Quilters' Guild Quilt Show on March 5 & 6. “Rice Sacks for My Siblings” features filled, embellished rice sacks inspired by a near-tragic incident in her family when her father was shot 64

### PARADE

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sor, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, CHSA has gathered dozens of photographs, memorabilia, and actual props and costumes used in the parade. These items and artifacts document the colorful history of a community celebration which has become the largest event of its kind in the country. In late January, the exhibit will feature even more photographs and items from the archives of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, as well as audio interviews with parade participants.

A free brochure featuring parade photographs and “The Making of San Francisco's Modern Chinese New Year Festival” by professor Chiou-Ling Yeh complements the exhibition.

Please visit [www.chsa.org](http://www.chsa.org) for more information on “Parade in the New Year,” or call (415) 391-1188 x101. ❧

From  
Rice  
Sacks  
for My  
Siblings,  
Flo Oy  
Wong



years ago. “1942: Luggage From Home to Camp” is a collaboration with the Japanese American Museum of San Jose (JAMsj). The exhibit uses the suitcase as a symbol of the internment experience and is accompanied by a quilt sewn by members of the San Jose Japanese American community. For more info, visit [www.flo-oy-wongartist.com](http://www.flo-oy-wongartist.com).

Among over 400 textile works in the show will be that of several award-winning Bay Area quilt artists. “Celebrate the Year of the Dragon” by Letitia Chung is handmade with multicolored dupioni silk. Anna Chan presents a contemporary piece, “Randon Color Play.” The character in “The World of Sun-bonnet Sue” by Jeanie Low is a whimsical departure of a classic.

“Symphony of Color” Quilt Show, Saturday, March 5 (10am-5pm) and Sunday, March 6 (10am-4pm). Concourse Exhibition Center, 635 8th St. at Brannan, San Francisco. For more information: [www.sfqg.org](http://www.sfqg.org) or [wongyen@juno.com](mailto:wongyen@juno.com). ❧

## MOSTLY MISSISSIPPI: CHINESE RESTAURANTS OF THE SOUTH

Exhibit by Indigo Som

Feb. 1 - Mar. 27



Hunan Chinese Cuisine, Natchez, Mississippi  
(Indigo Som, 2004)

**C**HSA announces an exhibition of artist Indigo Som's new work, *Mostly Mississippi: Chinese Restaurants of the South*, part of her ongoing Chinese Restaurant Project that investigates the relationships between Chinese restaurants and “American” identity.

The artist explains, “Chinese restaurants are so ubiquitous throughout the U.S. that they constitute an integral part of American life. They are the most pervasively visible manifestation of Chinese American presence in this country.” The exhibit's free public reception will be held on Feb. 3 from 5:30-8pm. For more info about the artist or the exhibit, visit [www.chsa.org](http://www.chsa.org) or [www.indigosom.com](http://www.indigosom.com).

This project is supported by the Creative Work Fund. ❧

## THE CHINESE CANADIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Excerpted from a paper by Him Mark Lai, November 12, 2004

**T**he Chinese Canadian Historical Society (CCHS) of British Columbia (BC) was formally established with two events at the Vancouver Public Library in November 2004.

Increased awareness of the relevance of Chinese Canadian history had started in Canada during the same period as interest in Chinese American history grew in the US. An early historian was David T. H. Lee, principal of Chinese school at Victoria's Chinese Benevolent Association (CBA). His *A History of the Chinese in Canada*, published in Chinese in 1967, was written from a China-oriented perspective, which was soon eclipsed by the growing sense of Chinese Canadian identity that had been developing since the end of World War II. Representative of this new perspective was Vancouver's Chinese Cultural Centre (CCC) that new community leaders with Chinese Canadian perspectives and Chinatown organizations worked together to begin planning in 1972. In 1977 CCC and a coalition of community organizations also wrested control of the Vancouver's CBA from Kuomintang supporters to successfully remove the two-China issue as a major factor in community politics.

In the meantime other groups interested in the Chinese Canadian heritage emerged. In 1974 young local-born Chinese

began publishing the English language tabloid *Gum San Po*. In 1976 came the English language program Pender Guy, which also produced a number of historical documentaries. There were also informal efforts by various groups to collect oral histories and documents.

An important publication on Chinese Canadian history told from the Canadian perspective, *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada*, was published in 1982. This work funded by the Multiculturalism Directorate of the Canadian government was a major collaborative effort with Chinese Canadians Harry Con and Ronald J. Con collecting the materials and conducting interviews, and University of British Columbia (UBC) professors Graham Johnson, Edgar Wickberg, and William E. Willmott doing the editing and writing. Soon afterward, a young Canadian-born Chinese, Anthony B. Chan, published *Gold Mountain: The Chinese in the New World* (1983), which one commentator described as "a loving and angry look at his own community." In 1986 Chinese Cultural Centre further explored the Chinese Canadian perspective when it mounted the exhibition *Salt Water City* to celebrate Vancouver's centennial. This project provided the basic materials for Paul Yee, another young Chinese Canadian to write *Salt*

*Water City: An Illustrated History of the Chinese in Vancouver* (1988), a work which was enlivened with the liberal use of oral interviews. In succeeding years there were also a number of academic works on specific topics relating to the Chinese in British Columbia, such as David Chuenyan Lai, *Chinatowns: Towns within Cities in Canada* (1988); Patricia E. Roy, *White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1856-1914* (1989); Kay J. Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980* (1991), and Wing Chung Ng, *The Chinese in Vancouver, 1945-80* (1999). However, in spite of all these efforts, much of the history of the Chinese in BC still remains untold. This became the motivating force to formally establish a CCHS, which finally occurred in 2004 after two years of planning.

The CCHS founding president is Edgar Wickberg, retired UBC professor of modern Chinese history. Larry Wong (curator and historian, Chinese Canadian Military Museum Society) is vice president and director, Hayne Wai (active on boards dealing with issues of diversity, human rights, multiculturalism and anti-racism) the secretary, and Colleen McGuinness (BC Guangdong Business Council and Vancouver

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## MAKING THINGS RIGHT LOCKE TRIUMPHS OVER DISCRIMINATION

Editorial, Sacramento Bee, December 17, 2004 (author????)

**S**acramento County remedied a shameful part of California's history with a small, symbolic gesture December 11.

Residents of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta town of Locke, built by Chinese for Chinese who were forbidden by California law from owning land, will be able to buy the land on which their homes and businesses sit.

This gesture comes too late for many who have passed on, but for 81-year-old Connie King, it fulfills a lifelong dream. Only about nine of the 90 people living in Locke now are Chinese.

For a century, California went out of its way to enshrine anti-Chinese sentiment in law. Even *The Bee* promoted that disgraceful agenda, a part of our history for which we feel shame and sorrow today.

California's 1879

Constitution declared that Chinese were "dangerous to the well-being of the State." Among other things, it called for removal of Chinese from city limits. Californians lobbied Congress to pass the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, which blocked Chinese laborers from the United States, the first U.S. law to limit immigration by race. California then passed the Alien Land Law of 1913, prohibiting Chinese from buying land or leasing it for longer than three years.

By 1943, Congress had repealed Chinese exclusion laws. But California pressed on. In 1943 and 1945, new laws strengthened powers to seize property. Only in 1952 did things change. The California Supreme Court found the 1913 Alien Land Law unconstitutional. Voters repealed all alien land laws in 1956. Locke embodies

that history. Chinese came to the Delta in the 1860s to build levees and stayed on. After fire destroyed the Chinese section of Walnut Grove, Chinese merchants who couldn't buy land approached George Locke in 1915 to ask if they could build on his land along the east bank of the Sacramento River south of the city of Sacramento. That's how Chinese residents built houses and businesses, but didn't own the land.

Locke entered the National Register of Historic Places in 1971. In 2001, the Sacramento County Housing and Redevelopment Agency bought the land. Now Locke residents have first shot at buying that land.

Today, Locke stands as a living reminder of California's virulent anti-Chinese past and the tenacity of people to make things right. ✎

### CCHS

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Guangzhou Friendship Society) the treasurer. Others on the board include Jan Walls (Asia-Canada Program and David Lam Centre for International Communication, Simon Fraser University), Henry Yu (UBC/UCLA professor of history), Jean Barman (writer on issues of racial diversity), Linda Joe (retired head UBC Asian Library), Howe Lee (Chinese

Canadian Military Museum), Imogene Lim (anthropologist, Malaspina University-College), David T. H. Wong (e-Atelier Inc.; RICEPAPER Magazine). Mailing address of the society is CCHS, 1829 McDonald St., Vancouver, BC V6K 3X7. Its website address is <http://www.cchsbc.ca>.

It is of interest to note that CHSA had published the following essays pertaining to aspects

of Chinese Canadian history in *Chinese America: History and Perspectives*: Wing Chung Ng, "Scholarship of Post-World War II Chinese Societies in North America: A Thematic Discussion" (Vol. 6. 1992); Lisa R. Mar, "Remember Us: A Search for Chinese Roots in Canada" (Vol. 7. 1993); Edgar Wickberg, "Overseas Chinese: The State of the Field" (Vol. 16, 2002). ✎

# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

by Sue Lee



The CHSA *Bulletin* is published monthly. To contribute articles about Chinese American community and historical news and events, please submit articles to [suelee@chsa.org](mailto:suelee@chsa.org).

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