



March/April

CALENDAR OF CHSA EVENTS & EXHIBITS

March 3 Screening of "Chinatown Files," a film that explores the legacy of McCarthyism on Chinese Americans. Co-sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee. Meridian Gallery (545 Sutter, SF).

March 5 "Cantonese Opera: Its Introduction and Influence in America" lecture by Dr. William Hu, Chinese performing arts scholar. In conjunction with "Painted Men: Chinese Opera Backstage" at the SF Performing Arts Library & Museum. CHSA Learning Center, 10am.

March 9 Welly Yang and the creative team of the San Jose Repertory Theatre will talk about the Asian American musical "Making Tracks," debuting March 19. Tickets for the April 2 performance benefit CHSA. CHSA Learning Center, 7pm.

March 12 Artist's Talk with Indigo Som about her work "Mostly Mississippi," showing through March 27. CHSA Learning Center, 3pm.

March 13 Screening of "A Conversation with Him Mark Lai," filmmaker Evan Leong's documentary on Chinese American historian and CHSA board member Him Mark Lai. SF Int'l. Asian American Film Festival, AMC Kabuki (1881 Post, SF), \$10, tickets @ www.naatnet.org.

April 2 "Making Tracks" benefit performance for CHSA. "Meet'n'Greet" pre-show reception at 2pm, performance at 3pm. San Jose Repertory Theatre (101 Paseo de San Antonio, SJ). For tickets, (415) 391-1188, x101 or events@chsa.org.

April 5 Marie Rose Wong, author of *Sweet Cakes, Long Journey*, will lecture on her research on the history of the Chinatowns of Portland, Oregon. CHSA Learning Center, 7pm.

April 13 "The Art of Win Ng" showcases ceramist Win Ng, who fused commercial art with artisanship. Meet curator Allen Hicks and members of the Ng family at a reception. CHSA Museum, 6:30pm. RSVP (415) 391-1188, x201.

☛ **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.

CHSA HONORS CALVIN FUNG WITH THE 2005 SPIRIT AWARD



Calvin Fung (ctr) receives the 2005 Spirit Award from outgoing CHSA board president Lorraine Dong (l) and executive director Sue Lee (r).

The success and survival of the Chinese Historical Society of America depends on volunteers and their selfless dedication. Hence, the **CHSA Spirit Award** is one of our highest honors. It was established to acknowledge volunteers and unsung heroes, excluding current staff and board members, who never fail when called to duty and for whom the word "compensation" does not exist. Previous honorees were: **Stanley Tom** (1998), **Annie Soo** (1999), **Ted S. Wong** (2000), **Sarah Choy** (2001), **Emma Woo Louie** (2002), **Laura Lai** (2003), and **Bruce Chin** (2004).

The 2005 Spirit Award honoree is **Calvin Fung** who received his award at CHSA's 2005 Annual Membership Meeting and Luncheon held on January 15. Calvin has been an active CHSA member and volunteer since 1992. Elected to the board in 1995, he has served as Secretary, 2nd Vice President, and three times as Treasurer. In 1996, Calvin was one of two CHSA representatives who signed the loan agreement with the City and County of San Francisco to acquire the YWCA building for our headquarters.

**CHINESE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY OF
AMERICA**

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CHSA'S NEW BOARD MEMBERS

PAUL FONG is a tax manager and supervisor with Burr, Pilger, and Mayer in San Francisco. A native of San Francisco, he was part of Cameron House's youth programs. Strongly believing in giving back to the community and supporting nonprofits, Paul will offer his expertise in accounting and finance to help CHSA accomplish our goals. Serving on the board will also allow him to get in touch with his background as a Chinese American.

KEN LOUIE was born in China and moved to Hong Kong when he was five. He has lived in San Francisco since 1970, now residing in the Sunset District with his wife and three children. Ken is an accountant with the State of California and also has a small accounting practice in Chinatown. He has worked with Community Education Services, a Chinatown nonprofit, providing accounting services for free. He currently assists the Asian Pacific American Community

Center, a nonprofit in the Bayview neighborhood, with free payroll and accounting services.

In the past year, historical archaeologist **ANNA NARUTA** has become an active CHSA member. She helped provide historical context to aid the successful fight against a plan to seize the property of Gim's Chinese Kitchen, a long-established business and the last remaining building of Alameda's 19th century Chinatown. She has assisted with efforts to encourage new developments that promote rather than destroy our cultural resources. As a founding member of UptownChinatown.org, she is working with the community and the City of Oakland to ensure that a redevelopment project preserves the archaeological remains of a recently rediscovered Chinatown dating back to the 1860s. Anna is a resident of Oakland currently completing her Ph.D. in anthropology at UC Berkeley. ☘

WANTED: Chinatown Survivors of the 1906 Earthquake and Their Descendants

CHSA is preparing an exhibition for the next year commemorating the **100th anniversary of the 1906 earthquake**. We are looking for survivors or their descendants to interview for the oral history component of the show as well as anyone with photographs or artifacts to share. It is an opportunity to participate in preserving a significant event in the history of San Francisco.

If you have information for this project, please contact Jeannie Woo at (415) 391-1188 x103 or email chinatown-earthquake@yahoo.com or contact Irene Poon Andersen at email andersen@sfsu.edu. ☘

Making Tracks

at the San Jose Repertory Theatre

CHSA will mount an exhibit at San Jose Repertory Theatre to celebrate the California premiere of **Making Tracks**, a rock musical exploring the Asian American historical experience.

Drawn from CHSA's extensive visual collections, the exhibit's elements will connect with the various historical moments in *Making Tracks*. To demonstrate the severity of interrogations at Angel Island, reproductions of interview transcripts will be on display alongside the personal stories of each immigrant. As *Making Tracks* was developed from stories of the community, the exhibit will highlight individuals and families who persevered despite the harsh conditions of the Exclusion Era. Of particular

interest will be photos and objects from CHSA's Kublai Khan collection, from the San Francisco Chinatown nightclub of the 1930s. By peering into the lives of railroad workers, Angel Island detainees and nightclub dancers alike, guests to the San Jose Rep will begin to grasp the rich history and culture underlying *Making Tracks*.

Developed by actor/producer Welly Yang of Second Generation Theatre Company with co-writer Brian Yorkey and composer Woody Pak, *Making Tracks* chronicles the journey of a young rock musician uncovering the stories of his family's past. On the railroads in the 1870s, under inter-

rogation at Angel Island in the early 20th century, and in WWII internment camps, *Making Tracks* brings these places to life in an engaging and moving portrait of

what it really means to be American.

In conjunction with this partnership, on March 9,

CHSA is also hosting a discussion about *Making Tracks*' significance and meaning to the community. Welly Yang and Timothy Near, San Jose Rep artistic director, will lead a discussion and Q&A session on what progress has been made in Asian American musical theatre, and what lies ahead. Tickets for the April 2nd matinee of *Making Tracks*, benefiting CHSA, will be available. ☘

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BUY YOUR TICKETS FOR THE APRIL 2ND BENEFIT SHOW TODAY!
\$45 ORCHESTRA, \$35 BALCONY. CALL (415) 391-1188 X101 OR EVENTS@CHSA.ORG.

TRADING ON FEAR: CHINESE IMAGES IN AMERICAN TRADE CARDS

A new exhibition, "**Trading on Fear: Chinese Images in American Trade Cards,**" will open March 15 and run through July 31 in the Philip P. Choy Gallery. Trade cards were early forms of product advertisement popular from the 1880s to the early 1900s. The exhibit will showcase main themes in the Daniel K.E. Ching Collection of trade cards, looking at the early images of Chinese in this print medium. The following is an excerpt from the exhibition booklet on one of the infamous trade cards in the collection.

"The 'Rough on Rats' signature piece shows how the Chinese were perceived during a time period when the Chinese were excluded and unwelcomed in America. This trade card was an advertisement for a pest control product. The suggestion is that the Chinese eat rats, therefore they are ideal rodent exterminators. The card's caption, 'They Must Go,' ostensibly refers to rats, but it is also a play on words referring to America's exclusionary policies against the Chinese." ☘



**LOOK WHAT CHSA HAS BEEN
UP TO SINCE THE START OF 2005**



January 15 CHSA's 2005 board and staff at the Annual General Meeting & Volunteer Recognition Luncheon.



January 29 Chinese New Year Celebration marking the release of *Good Luck Life: The Essential Guide to Chinese American Celebrations and Culture* by Rosemary Gong.



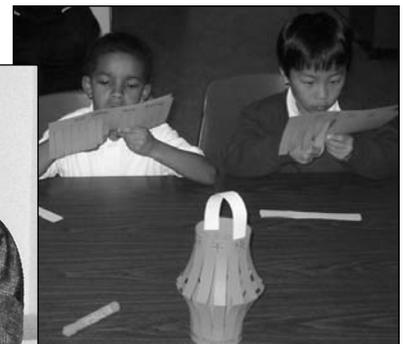
February 1 Reception for "Mostly Mississippi: Chinese Restaurants of the South," an exhibition by artist Indigo Som.



February 7 Yellow River Drummers at the reception for the Chinese New Year Parade exhibit.



February 19 Grace Young, author of *The Breath of the Wok*, talks about the wok as a way of life in China.



February 10 Students from ER Taylor Elementary School make lanterns during their visit to CHSA.

PROJECT SCRIBE

Oral History Project Takes Students Out of the Classroom

By Sarah Choy

What an innovative way to introduce students to Chinese American history!

Under staff member Leonard Shek, CHSA initiated a program February 4th to execute one of our Society's missions—to expose Chinese American history to students. This one day field trip was extended to two history classes from Balboa High School. The program examined the relationship between history and growing up in Chinatown.

Students were given a background of Chinese American and Chinatown history and independently crafted their own questions to determine "What was life like or what is life like growing up in Chinatown?" Classmates paired up to interview persons

who grew up in Chinatown during the 1930's and '40's.

There were about 10 interviewees, including our dedicated volunteers Jessie Yip, Dorothy Leong, and George Lai. Also participating were former Chinatown kids who hadn't seen each other in a long time, like Shirleen Leong Nakano, Ernita Pon, Arnold Low, and Judy (Wong Sing) Bratten. Students also gained a deeper perspective from longtime community members Rev. Norman Fong, former Cameron House social worker Diana Ming Chan, and our very own board member

Alex Locke. I was also interviewed, and found the experience very stimulating. With the diversity of experiences from each interviewee it will be a fantastic learning experience to review the transcripts.

The sessions after lunch when students shared experiences on what they learned were equally stimulating and meaningful. This outreach/educational program is worthwhile and should be continued with as many student groups as possible. It takes history out of the classroom and into the community where history comes to life.

I commend Leonard for his leadership and staff members for organizing Project SCRIBE. ☘

Dear Mr. Shek

Thank you for having us at your museum. I had a great time. At first when we got there I thought it was going to be boring because we had to interview people in their fifties and sixties. I thought to myself that the people we were going to interview were going to barely be able to talk or that we weren't going to understand them. When we started the interview it went pretty good because nothing of what I was thinking was true.

After lunch we went for a walk through the alleyways. We went to an alley that had a small barber shop. That small barber shop had so many celebrities that gotten their hair cut there!

Sincerely, Tirzo Junior Alcaraz

Dear Mr. Shek and CHSA,

Thank you for taking the time out of your day to educate us about the history of the Chinese in America. I really learned a lot about the culture, religion and values by seeing the many greatly preserved artifacts in the museum you work in; I was able to really get a better look and understanding of what many, if not all Chinese endured while coming to the United States.

I believe that the interview that was held was also a great way for the students to actually engage and interact with the Chinese people that were raised in Chinatown. Because of this interview, I received a stronger understanding of life back in her childhood days in Chinatown.

Sincerely, Violet Lopez

Dear Leonard Shek and Staff,
I personally had a great time exploring the fascinations of my heritage in your museum. I have learned so much about my roots by just looking at the artifacts that date more than a century. Our interviewee Alex was a great person. I was most happy when one of our questions about the appearance of China lit a spark: he actually traveled to China before. Of course, the food that you and your staff provided was generous. Thank you so much for giving my class the opportunity to learn about another heritage even if my class is not all Chinese.

Sincerely, Alex Chan

MR. WONG'S MINIATURES

by Diana Siu, CHSA 2003 Summer Intern

Chinetown is definitely one of the most unique, complex, and lively communities in the world.

Mr. Frank Wong captures these amazing qualities in his meticulously detailed miniatures. Mr. Wong is a very prominent Chinese-American role model. Born and raised in Chinatown, he attended Galileo High School and became a set designer for numerous movies and plays in Hollywood. One of his most famous jobs was for "Magnum PI." Through his career he spent much of his time working in Hawaii. Now retired and back in Chinatown, he lives on Commercial St., which is close to his childhood home on Grant Avenue next to the Golden Gate Bakery. The steel door that leads to his old home still exists, yet it is painted over with a peach-toned color to blend in with the bakery. In the same building is also an old Chinese theater for traveling Cantonese opera singers. Mr. Wong now creates miniatures of familiar rooms and places from his childhood to capture those precious memories.

As Mr. Wong described his seven different miniatures, I was in awe as I saw the one about Christmas. In the little living room was an extremely decorat-

ed Christmas tree with tiny little presents, See's candy on the ottoman, and a mahjong set laid out on the table as well as the distinctly Chinese rosewood furniture. He told us how he and his grandmother had to walk past the tunnel to Woolworth's in order to buy a Christmas tree,



Two of Frank Wong's miniatures are currently on display in the CHSA lobby. CHSA staff notes that they see new details in the miniatures every day!

which they had to drag all the way back to Chinatown, up the narrow stairs in his apartment building, and into the living room by the large window. Not only did they drag it home, Mr. Wong would carefully decorate the whole tree.

He also reminisced about how See's candy was the most sought out among the grown-ups, but the children would

"I'm astounded by people who want to 'know' the universe when it's hard enough to find your way around Chinatown."

WOODY ALLEN

receive the cheap candy and if they were lucky, a little piece of the precious See's. He playfully told the Teenzine members, "Give a lady See's candy and she'll love you forever." His memories immediately made me think of my childhood in North Beach. Even though there was no Woolworth's in my childhood, I remember dragging a huge Christmas tree into my apartment and decorating it with my mom and brother. I also remember the endless boxes of See's candy wrapped in shiny gold foil, which my mother constantly told me to stay away from. Mr. Wong's miniatures were so unique while at the same time familiar. These memories are quite like those of many Chinese Americans today except with less tra-

dition and a greater touch of technology and modernization.

Mr. Wong is one of the nicest and most influential people ever, so willing to share with us his childhood as we laughed along. Through these miniatures, Chinatown and its long lost places can never be forgotten. The little bits of interesting history live on in these little worlds of color. ☺

FIDDLETOWN CELEBRATES CHINESE HERITAGE

By Elaine Zorbas, Fiddletown Preservation Society

One hundred and fifty years ago, the skies of Fiddletown were filled with the sound of firecrackers and the music on Chinese New Year. Sadly, as we enter the Year of the Rooster 4703, there are no Chinese residents in Fiddletown to celebrate the festive occasion. The Fiddletown Preservation Society, however, is reclaiming the town's lost Chinese legacy by holding a special Chinese Heritage Celebration during the seasonal opening of the Chew Kee Store, an historic Chinese herb shop that has been converted into a museum. The celebration will be held Saturday, April 2 from noon to 4:00 pm. in the Chinese District of Main Street Fiddletown.

Fiddletown is a small area of unincorporated Amador County

40 miles east of Sacramento.

The Chew Kee Store is an adobe rammed-

earth building built by the Chinese in the 1850s with thick walls made by packing soil between wooden molds.

The Chew Kee Store has been open since 1980 as a museum under the auspices of the Fiddletown Preservation Society (FPS). The FPS is currently in the process of restoring two additional pieces of Fiddletown's Chinese District—the Gambling Hall and the Chinese General Store. The group has formed a committee—the Restoration of Chinese Structures (ROCS) project—to help raise funds and generate

The Fiddletown Preservation Society is reclaiming the town's lost Chinese legacy by holding a special Chinese Heritage Celebration during the seasonal opening of the Chew Kee Store.

interest in restoring these significant pieces of Fiddletown's lost cultural identity. The California Heritage Fund

awarded the ROCS project \$203,000, which must be matched by December 2006 with donations of funds and labor.

Volunteers interested in helping with the Chinese Heritage Celebration may contact Gwen Johnson via email at fiddletown_rocs@yahoo.com. Financial contributions for the ROCS project may be made to Fiddletown Preservation Society, Inc., PO Box 53, Fiddletown, CA 95629. All donations are tax deductible.

For information, view the FPS's Web site at www.fiddletown.org.

SUPPORT CHSA'S WORK!

CHSA would like to thank members and donors for their ongoing support of our exhibitions, programs, publications, and operations. During Chinese New Year, our dedicated crew of volunteer docents pitched in to host over 500 students from schools across the Bay Area. CHSA would like to expand our school and public programming, so that experiencing "The Chinese of America" will be even more insightful. With your donations, ours work will reach broader audiences.

If you know of members who have forgotten to renew their membership for 2005, please remind them! They'll receive the 2005 *Chinese America: History and Perspectives*, featuring the generational saga of the Wen family, early Chinese American entrepreneurs and activists.

Membership and donations are tax-deductible, to the extent allowed by federal law. Make a donation today! ☛

2005 Spirit Award

CONTINUED FROM FIRST PAGE

Calvin's biggest contribution came in 1997, when he voluntarily resigned from the board to become CHSA's interim administrator for 18 months. He put his career on hold and was paid minimally during this crucial period for CHSA. As the only staff, Calvin managed the day-to-day operations of the office, museum, and its volunteers and provided support for the capital campaign. He also coordinated the museum move from 650 Commercial Street to 644 Broadway Street. ☛

MESSAGE FROM THE OUTGOING PRESIDENT

By Lorraine Dong

Hello Everyone,
It has been a challenge and honor to be elected six times as your president. I joined the board in 1991 and served during one of CHSA's most exciting stages of development. Working together with extremely dedicated board members and fund-raising volunteers, we were able to fulfill the dream of establishing a permanent home for the Society to preserve and promote Chinese American history. Many thought we went astray the past decade because we were so immersed in fund-raising activities. But we managed to maintain our mission with our *History and Perspectives* annual journal, the monthly lecture series, many special public events, and a national conference in 1993. Even our galas (and some luncheons)

stayed true to our mission by focusing only on historical themes. And now, we are moving forward with new museum exhibitions, a learning center, new programs, and a small, but paid staff.

We were notorious for our dissension, long meetings, and sleepless nights, but ultimately our common goal prevailed and we worked together as a diverse and strong team. It would be impossible to list and thank everyone who played a role in the Society during this time period, but being the unsung, selfless volunteers that we all are, we know deep in our hearts who we are. However, I do want to take this opportunity to personally thank some individuals who influenced my role in CHSA: Judy Yung for recruiting me to serve on the board, Enid Ng Lim for having the confidence to ask me to be

an officer, and Phil Choy for believing and trusting in me to call me out of retirement from the board. I thank Him Mark Lai and Phil (again) for nurturing my intellectual growth, and I thank Hazel Louie and Gerry Wong for mentoring me on the ins-and-outs of fund-raising. Most of all, I thank all my fellow board members and committee members who had to put up with my informal and "crazy" ways throughout these years. A lot of sacrifices were made and everyone should be commended for helping our community and country to have a better understanding of our history.

As CHSA moves into the 21st century facing different challenges, we will do so with new spirit and passion, for we must remember that we have unfinished history yet to be told.

Have a happy 2005! ☺

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.

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