



November/ December 2006

CALENDAR OF CHSA
EVENTS & EXHIBITS

November 5

**Flower Drum Song
Revisited** discussion
& performance.
Samsung Hall, Asian
Art Museum. 2:00 pm.



December 7

**A Thousand Miles of
Dreams** reading with
Sasha Su-Ling Welland.
Books Inc., Opera Plaza,
San Francisco. 7:00 pm.



Holiday closure

The CHSA Museum and Learning Center will be closed to the public from **Tuesday, December 19, 2006 to Friday, January 5, 2007**. During this period, we will be preparing for new exhibits, reorganizing our offices, and celebrating the holidays. Our office phone lines and e-mail inboxes will still be open.

SAVE THE DATE!

**CHSA Annual Members &
Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon**
Saturday, January 20, 2007
Empress of China Restaurant

All CHSA events are free to the public

For more info, call (415) 391-1188
or visit www.chsa.org

Miss Chinatown USA Exhibit Preview

Since 1958, young Chinese American women hailing from Los Angeles to Chicago to New York City have traveled to San Francisco during Chinese New Year to compete for the Miss Chinatown USA crown and sash. As queen, they have reigned as official representatives of Chinatowns and Chinese communities across America.

In 2007, the Chinese Historical Society of America looks back at

Miss Chinatown USA invites visitors to explore the history and culture of the pageant event.

the history of this popular, long-standing, and often controversial tradition through the exhibition **Miss Chinatown USA**. When the pageant was adopted by the Chinese

Chamber of Commerce as part of the New Year celebration five decades ago, it was the social event of the year. Major newspapers featured the contestants and the eventual winner, who were feted by Chinatown leaders and San

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Chinatown Rising

CHSA 2006 Gala Dinner and Dance



Guests dance to the Elsa Denton Band after the gala dinner & program.

On Saturday, September 30, 2006, over 450 community members and their guests gathered for "**Chinatown Rising**," a celebration of the tenacity of those who struggled to rebuild Chinatown and reinvent it as a new international icon of San Francisco.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

**CHINESE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY OF
AMERICA**

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Miss Chinatown USA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Francisco politicians alike. The pageant, followed by a coronation ceremony, ball dance, and fashion luncheon, was a venue to showcase the cultural talents, tastes, and fashions of Chinatown.

As the movement to improve living standards and social conditions in Chinatown grew in the 60s and 70s, so did protests against the pageant and its portrayal of Chinese American women. Amidst this criticism and the challenge of adapting to a changing Chinese American demographic, organizers tried to modernize the pageant while staying true to the traditions of the past.

Today's pageant still draws women from across the country, but how has its meaning and significance to Chinese America changed? **Miss Chinatown USA** invites visitors to explore the history and culture of the pageant event through interviews, photographs, and historical memorabilia. The exhibit will open January 30, 2007 in the Philip P. Choy Gallery. 🐼



Sandra Wong, Miss Chinatown USA 1973.
Photo by Harry Jew.

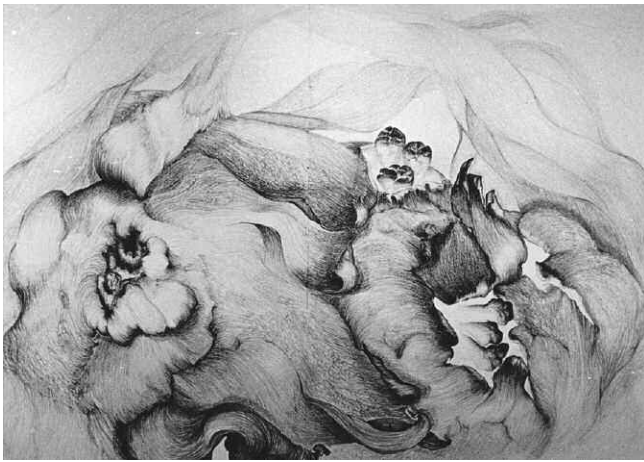
Were you a Miss Chinatown USA contestant, escort, or pageant volunteer? Do you know someone who was? CHSA is gathering stories about the pageant and reflections of those who were or are part of the event. Please contact Exhibitions Coordinator Marisa Louie at (415) 391-1188 ext. 104 or mlouie@chsa.org to share your experiences! 🐼

Correction

We regret a significant error published in the *Free China* documentary piece in the September/October 2006 *Bulletin*.

Filmmaker Robin Greenberg clarifies the role of American vice-consul Calvin Mehlert in this historic journey:

"After issuing the visas and getting to know the crew, the American vice-consul, Calvin Mehlert, decided that this was a once in a lifetime opportunity and asked if he might go along. The crew needing a sixth member and impressed by Calvin's modest abilities in Mandarin agreed. Although never having filmed before, he bought a 16mm camera, scrounged a box of film and captured the voyage brilliantly on film." 🐼



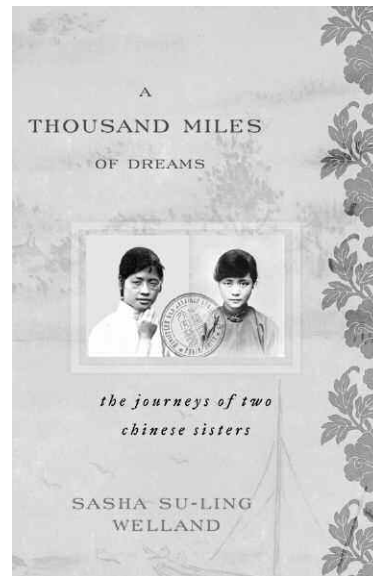
Flowering Energy, 1978

Alice Fong: A Retrospective

Opens January 16, 2007
CHSA Frank H. Yick Gallery

Alice Fong, a Sacramento-based artist and arts educator, has worked for over thirty years with themes of nature, family, and Chinese American cultural tradition. This show is her first solo in San Francisco, showcasing her prints, paintings, sculpture, and fiber art in a three-month rotation. Fong favors vivid colors and familiar subjects, making her art accessible to all ages. Her work has been particularly sought by the UC Davis Health Care System, which commissioned pieces for its Children's Hospital.

The opening of **Alice Fong: A Retrospective** will be accompanied by a comprehensive exhibition catalog. The exhibition and catalog are generously supported by Grants for the Arts and by donations from Alice Fong's family and friends. 🍀



A Thousand Miles of Dreams: The Journeys of Two Chinese Sisters

Reading & Q&A with author Sasha Su-Ling Welland
Thursday, December 7, 2006 7:00 pm
Books, Inc. Opera Plaza
601 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco

A *Thousand Miles of Dreams* recounts the evocative and intimate story of two rivalrous Chinese sisters, a writer and a doctor, who took very different paths in their quest to be independent women. In 1925, Ling Shuhao arrived in Cleveland, Ohio, to study medicine at Western Reserve University, in the midst of a U.S. crackdown on Chinese immigrant communities. At the same time, her sister, Ling Shuhua, became the darling of the Beijing literary scene. They were Chinese "modern girls" who sought to forge their own way during a period of social revolution, following professional trajectories unimaginable to their parents' generation.



Biographer **Sasha Su-Ling Welland** stumbled across their remarkable stories while recording her grandmother Ling Shuhao's oral history. Interwoven with Welland's own narrative about documenting and researching the sisters' stories, *A Thousand Miles of Dreams* spans

the twentieth century and three continents in a saga of cultural exchange and personal struggle.

Welland will read from her book, speak with the audience, and sign books at this free event. A portion of the proceeds from this reading will be donated to the Chinese Historical Society of America. 🍀

Chinatown Rising

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

With the 2006 gala, CHSA set the stage for guests to be immersed in the vision of Chinatown's early marketing mavens.



Shirley Fong-Torres and emcee Look Tin Eli, played by Charlie Chin.



The Chinatown Rising video is accompanied by Jon Jang's live performance.



CHSA supporter Raymond Huang and San Francisco's Chinatown author-historian Judy Yung.

In 1906, **Look Tin Eli** and other Chinese merchants planned for a rebuilt Chinatown that would be welcomed by the city as an attractive asset. They commissioned leading San Francisco architects to fulfill their vision for a new "Oriental" city built of "veritable fairy palaces." With the 2006 gala, CHSA set the stage for guests to be immersed in the vision of these early marketing mavens. Guests arrived at the San Francisco Marriott's ballroom and mingled around a silent auction evoking the turn-of-the-century flash of Look Tin Eli's internationally-known "Sing Chong Bazaar."

At precisely 7:00 pm the ballroom doors opened, and Chinese lion dancers and drums beckoned all inside. Guests made their way to tables elegantly lit with historic scenes of San Francisco Chinatown. Black-tie favorite **Lewis Sykes** provided design.

Look Tin Eli himself (played by CHSA Artist-in-Residence **Charlie Chin**) was the guest emcee, welcoming guests and announcing his vision of the new Chinatown, "our fascinating new Oriental City." CHSA Executive Director **Sue Lee** and Board President **Calvin Fung** expressed their thanks for support and previewed what CHSA has in store for 2007.

Following dinner, the long-anticipated program began. Look Tin Eli called other "special guests" up to the stage—aviator **Katherine Cheung**, actress **Anna May Wong**, and vaudevillian **Hugh Liang**, all played by members of CHSA's new **History Alive!** program. As early pioneers of their respective fields, these guests spoke of the meaning of being Chinese American in their time.

During the culmination of the program, jazz pianist **Jon Jang's** graceful improvisation paired with a specially commissioned video presentation of "Chinatown Rising." Evoking the grandeur of silent film, the coupling of Jon's music and the montage of rare historic images created an atmosphere celebrating Chinatown's post-quake century. Each guest received autographed souvenir copies of the work that inspired the video piece, **Judy Yung's** new book, **San Francisco's Chinatown**.

Programs from "Chinatown Rising," which includes the extensive 1906-2006 timeline of Chinatown history, are still available. Call the CHSA office to purchase: (415) 391-1188 ext. 101. 🐼

Accessioned Donations, August 11–October 12, 2006

SUBMITTED BY ANNA NARUTA, COLLECTIONS CONSULTANT

Philip P. Choy: 20 color photos of 1848 Chinese prefab house, Double Springs, Calaveras County, where it at one time served as the county courthouse. Photos taken during preservation-oriented site visit, August 10, 2006.

Irene Poon Andersen: 10 black and white photos of the 1932 Julia Morgan-designed Chinese YWCA, 965 Clay Street, San Francisco, as it is being remodeled to serve as the museum and learning center of the Chinese Historical Society of America. Photos by Irene Poon Andersen, and attributed to c.2000.



(Above) An Irene Poon Anderson photo documents the process of converting the gym of the 1932 Julia Morgan-designed Chinese YWCA into CHSA's main exhibit gallery. CHSA maintains the building as a city landmark. (Gift of Irene Poon Andersen, 2006.42.4)

Philip P. Choy: Digital video cassette copies of the six-episode TV documentary series *Gam Saan Haak* that aired on KRON-TV, created by Phil Choy, Randy Choy, Him Mark Lai, and Ken Wong. Photocopies of two San Francisco *Chronicle* articles on aviator Tom Gunn, 3/19/1916 and 12/6/1917.

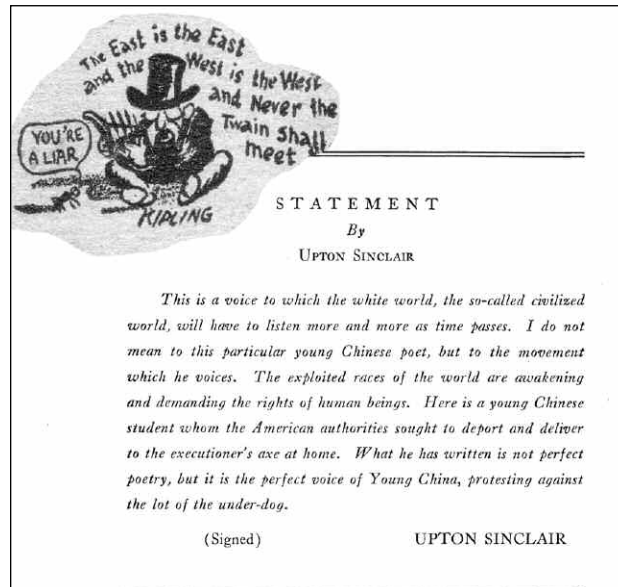
Gloria Brown: Three brochures and one newspaper feature related to exhibits of Chinatown photos by donor's father, Mervyn Silberstein, from the collection of Gloria Brown, exhibited in 1980, 1992, and 1993.

Edith Robbins: Copy of 1870 newspaper clipping from the *Platte Valley Independent*, Grand Island, Nebraska, July 9, 1870.

Lillian Stein: 1929 poetry pamphlet, *Poems of the Chinese Revolution*, by H. T. Tsiang, with Statement by Upton Sinclair (New York: published by the author), kept by the donor since she was a young teen.

CHSA [transferred from office material into archives]: Two reprints of Judy Yung and Him Mark Lai, "Him Mark Lai:

(Below) H.T. Tsiang's 1929 booklet *Poems of the Chinese Revolution* opens with a statement by crusading journalist Upton Sinclair. A back cover detail skewers the Rudyard Kipling statement notoriously employed in justifying British colonial governing structures. (Gift of Lillian Stein, 2006.48.1)



Reclaiming Chinese American History," *The Public Historian* 25(1): pp.50-69 (Winter 2003), Berkeley: Regents of the University of California and the National Council on Public History.

Him Mark Lai: Donor's tabulation of census data for Chinese popula-

tion per U.S. state or territory for the years 1850-2000; printout from computer file for CHSA research use. Oct. 4 version of donor's ongoing English-Chinese glossary of names of people, organizations, institutions, and localities; printout from computer file for CHSA research use. ♪

Membership Renewal Appeal

CHSA members should have now received membership renewal letters in the mail, along with remit envelopes for ease of mailing. We encourage you to renew your membership,

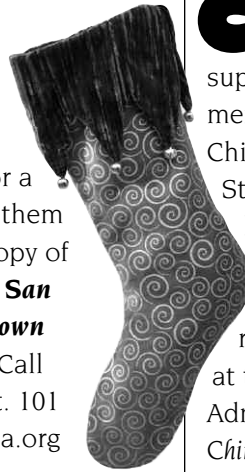


to continue your subscription to the Bulletin and to receive the 2007 *Chinese America: History & Perspectives*. Next year's "H&P" is a research gem, containing the proceedings of the 2005 Chinese American Studies conference.

Thank you for supporting the work of the Chinese Historical Society of America! 🐼

A Perfect Holiday Gift

Need a great Christmas gift or stocking stuffer for a San Francisco native or a history buff? Give them an autographed copy of the pictorial book **San Francisco's Chinatown** (\$19.99 plus tax.) Call (415) 391-1188 ext. 101 or email info@chsa.org to purchase. 🐼



In Memoriam

CHSA notes the passing of **Dr. Edmund Jung**, longtime CHSA supporter, volunteer, and board member. Raised in San Francisco Chinatown, Dr. Jung attended Stanford University and received his doctorate at UCSF. He served during World War II with the US Army Medical Corps, and returned to practice for 32 years at the Oakland Veterans Administration Hospital. In the 1995 *Chinese America: History and Perspectives*, he and Him Mark Lai co-published the article "A Tale of Two Brothers: Jung Oi-Wan and Ming S. Jung," on the culturally divergent paths that Jung's father and uncle chose in being Chinese American. 🐼

The CHSA *Bulletin* is published bi-monthly. To contribute articles about Chinese American community and historical news and events, please submit articles to mlouie@chsa.org.

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