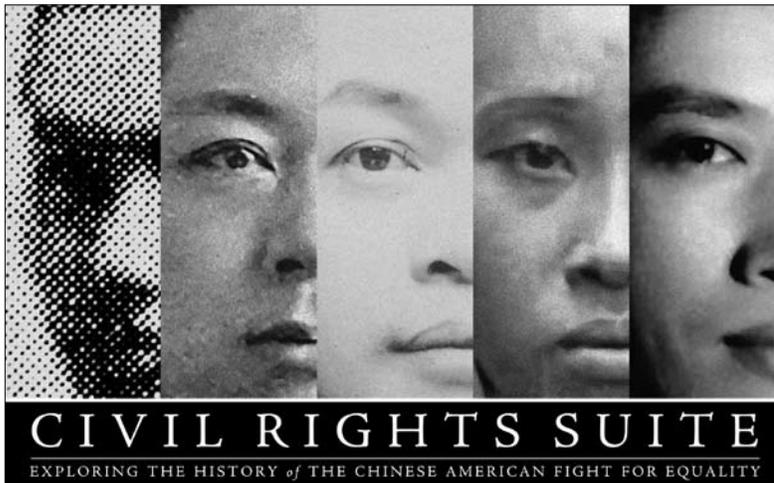




Civil Rights Suite

Exploring the History of the Chinese American Fight for Equality



In celebration of Asian Pacific Heritage Month, the Chinese Historical Society of America presented the *Civil Rights Suite*, a trio of exhibits comprised of *The Chinese of California*, *Remembering 1882*, and *To Enjoy and Defend Our American Citizenship*. This triumvirate is a first voice institution representing the Chinese American fight for equality.

To kick-off this presentation, a reception was held at CHSA on May 12, 2008 for 150 attendees. Notables that evening included Historian Him Mark Lai; Laureen Wu McClain, daughter of CHSA founder Thomas Wu; and 2008 Annie Soo Spirit Award Honoree Dorothy Leong, who was lauded for her many years of volunteerism. Artist-in-Residence Charlie Chin also gave a rousing performance of Chinese American songs.

In 1882, Congress passed the nation's first immigration law—the Chinese Exclusion Act. As legislation removed the constitutional guarantee of equal protection, discrimination and violent attacks against

people of Chinese descent intensified, defining the fight for basic human rights and the very existence of Chinese Americans.

The *Civil Rights Suite* is a summation of many issues stirring within the current social conscience. From 1882 to now, immigration, civil liberties, and democracy have been highly contended matters—and will prove to be more relevant in the future as the American popu-

lation evolves. With the presentation of the *Civil Rights Suite*, CHSA is at the forefront of this social movement.

“The *Civil Rights Suite* links the fight for equality to every immigrant group in America,” Sue Lee, CHSA Executive Director, said. “Many years ago, Chinese immigrants were commonly referred to as ‘Chinamen’ because they were seen as nameless and faceless, without a past nor family. But we have had an extraordinarily rich history, a strong current presence, and are creating an even more promising future.”

The Chinese of California: A Struggle for Community

This groundbreaking exhibit, through a unique collection of artifacts, images, documents, and personal stories, explores the complex history and unique challenges of Chinese Americans in their fight for civil rights.

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Chinese Historical Society of America's Annual Gala: Glamour & Grace 2008

You are invited to an extravagant social and cultural event: CHSA's dinner fundraiser to be held **Saturday, September 20, 2008**, 6 pm at the Four Seasons Hotel in San Francisco.

Celebrating CHSA's pivotal role as a touchstone for Chinese America, the Gala will feature original performances, dynamic presentations, and colorful displays. Special guests include: Mistress of Ceremonies Cynthia Gouw, Composer/Pianist Jon Jang, and Saxophonist Francis Wong.

6 pm Reception, 7 pm Dinner, Black-tie Optional. For more information, call (415) 665-1150 x1 or email gala@chsa.org.

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Upcoming Events

Three Major Events Co-sponsored by CHSA

The following presentations by the University of San Francisco, Center for Pacific Rim will take place at the USF Main Campus, Fromm Hall, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco. Please RSVP at (415) 422-6828.



Ming Masterpieces

☉ **Thursday, August 28, 5:45 pm**

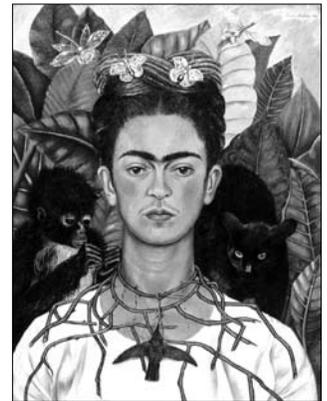
Eight years in the making, the Ming dynasty exhibit currently at the Asian Art Museum shows Chinese treasures seldom seen in the West. A presentation and power-point lecture by **Michael Knight**, Senior Curator of Chinese Art, will feature these objects and other items.

Fabulous Frida

☉ **Tuesday, September 2, 5:45 pm**

Frida Kahlo is a unique treasure among Mexican painters, as evidenced in a new exhibit at the SF Museum of Modern Art. **John Zarobell**, Coordinating Curator for the Kahlo exhibit, will explore her art in a power-point lecture.

CHSA is proud to co-sponsor both *Ming Masterpieces* and *Fabulous Frida* with the World Affairs Council of Northern California, Asia Society of Northern California, and Fromm Institute for Lifelong Learning.



The Bonesetter's Daughter Opera



☉ **Wednesday, September 24, 5:45 pm**

The world premiere of this opera is based on Amy Tan's best-selling novel. Excerpts will be presented by Composer **Stewart Wallace** and **Clifford Cranna**, Director of Music Administration at the San Francisco Opera.

Cranna will show a 10 minute documentary while Wallace will discuss his music before introducing a special performance.

CHSA is proud to co-sponsor *The Bonesetter's Daughter Opera* with the Performing Arts Department of USF, the Asia Society Northern California, the World Affairs Council of Northern California, the San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum, and the Fromm Institute for Lifelong Learning. ☯

Canton Footprints: Sacramento's Chinese Legacy

by Philip Choy

Chinese Americans have long contributed to Sacramento's diversity and been an integral part of Sacramento's rich history.

CHSA Board Emeriti and historian Philip Choy brings more than 150 years of Chinese American history in Sacramento in *Canton Footprints: Sacramento's Chinese Legacy*.

Through more than 40 oral histories, Choy shows the role and influence that the Chinese American community has had in shaping the Delta area.

The Chinese American Council of Sacramento (CACCS) is publishing *Canton Footprints: Sacramento's Chinese Legacy*. "This book is true to the mission of CACCS," said CACCS Past President Joyce Eng. "We are confident that readers will come away with an appreciation of how the Chinese American community overcame distance, economic challenges, and legal barriers to establish a meaningful presence in Sacramento."

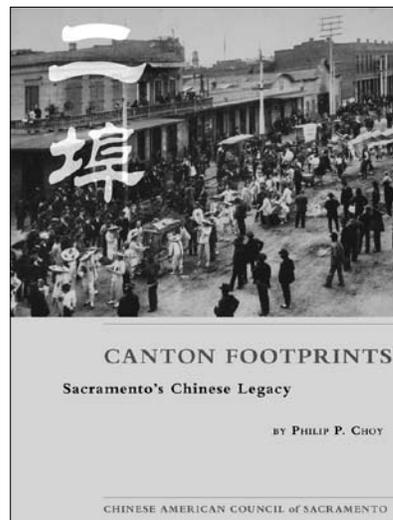
CACCS Historical Chair Doug Yee said, "*Canton Footprints* preserves the contribution of the Chinese to Sacramento's history like no other previous work. It was a book conceived out of love for the Chinese American community and Sacramento."

To illuminate the history, *Canton Footprints: Sacramento's Chinese Legacy* includes 178 historical photographs. Said Jeanie Lee, CACS President, "The photographs from the Anna Wong Lee Collection and 19th century lithographs and engravings from Philip Choy's private collection give a visual impact to the important part the Chinese American community has played in Sacramento's history."

"Seeing how the Chinese American history in Sacramento has ranged from the Transcontinental Railroad, to agriculture, to the medical profession, to politics is a compelling and impressive story," said Choy.

About the Author

Philip P. Choy is a renowned historian and authority on Chinese America. He is co-editor of *A History of the Chinese in California* and *The Coming Man: 19th Century Perceptions of the Chinese*. He has served on the California State Historical Resources Commission and the China Cover Historical Advisory Committee. In 1969, Choy and Him Mark Lai taught the nation's first Chinese American history class at San Fran-



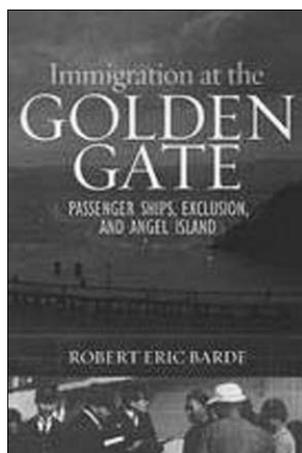
cisco State University (SFSU). Choy, along with Lai, received the 2005 SFSU President's Medal for their pioneering work in Chinese American history and education.

About Chinese American Council of Sacramento

The Chinese American Council of Sacramento is a non-profit organization established to serve the needs of Sacramento's Chinese American Community and is committed to building a stronger Chinese American presence through leadership in advocacy, civic, and cultural activities. ☯

Immigration at the Golden Gate: Passenger Ships, Exclusion, and Angel Island

by Robert Barde



Angel Island is both an important piece of American history and a metaphor for the immigration process on the West Coast.

With *Immigration at the Golden Gate: Passenger Ships, Exclusion, and Angel Island* illuminating the many facets of the Chinese immigration experience in California in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Robert Barde follows the various threads of one Chinese female immigrant's 20-month detention on Angel Island.

Her experience was extraordinary—not only in being the longest known detention at the Immigration Station, but in its connection to so many important events and characters. Her tale is chillingly relevant to today's debates over exclusion and detention.

About the Author

Robert Barde is Deputy Director of the Institute of Business and Economic Research at University of California, Berkeley. He is also co-author, with Susan Carter and Richard Sutch, of the "International Migration" chapter for the Millennial Edition of *Historical Statistics of the United States*. ☯

Civil Rights Suite

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(left) CHSA Board President Paul Fong presented the Annie Soo Spirit Award to Dorothy Leong; (above left) Laurene Wu McClain, daughter of CHSA co-founder Thomas Wu, spoke during the program about the enduring legacy of CHSA's annual journal; (above right) Vin Pan, Sue Lee, and Eddie Wong (respective Executive Directors of Chinese for Affirmative Action, CHSA, and Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation) discuss amongst themselves. Photos by Leland Wong.

Remembering 1882: Fighting for Civil Rights in the Shadow of the Chinese Exclusion Act

Remembering 1882 explores the historical debate around the Exclusion Act from its origins through its full repeal in 1968, as well as the civil rights struggle of Chinese Americans and their allies, and the historic importance of *habeas corpus* in the Chinese American community.

To recognize the passage of this law, CHSA's *Remembering 1882* is an exhibit that: CELEBRATES the long-term positive impact of Chinese immigration on California's economic, social, and cultural status; HONORS the vigilance of those who fought tirelessly against Exclusion while upholding democracy for Chinese and other disenfranchised communities; and EXAMINES the complex issues and conflicting interests surrounding Exclusion.

"Under a mantle of insecurity, the United States government categorized Chinese as second class citizens. Then, in a strange twist, after a hundred years of humiliation, the popular conception of Chinese became that we were good, well-behaved citizens," Phil Choy, CHSA Board Emeritus and civil rights activist, said. "But for a long time

after exclusion, bigotry still existed. Even after defending the country on war battlegrounds, Chinese Americans were not allowed to buy or live in properties outside the four square blocks of Chinatown. We could die in the same foxhole, but we couldn't live in the same neighborhood."

To Enjoy and Defend Our American Citizenship

In *To Enjoy and Defend Our American Citizenship*, CHSA explores the experiences of C.A.C.A. in its groundbreaking work alongside groups such as the NAACP to challenge discriminatory laws while creating the support systems necessary for survival in a segregated United States. In recent years, C.A.C.A. has carried on its civil rights legacy with its opposition to anti-immigration policies, racial discrimination, and hate crimes.

"We have yet to learn the lessons from history. Pandering to xenophobia in the 19th century is repeated in the 21st century. Only the targeted group is different," Choy said. ☯

Please visit the recently launched site <http://CivilRightsSuite.org> for more information.

A first-ever collaboration of The Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley, California Historical Society, and Chinese Historical Society of America, *The Chinese of California* challenges preconceptions about the Chinese immigrant experience by telling the story through the voices of Chinese Californians themselves as they join countless other immigrants in defining what it means to be a Californian and an American.

"Partnering with The Bancroft Library and California Historical Society is a milestone," Lee said. "A collaboration between all our institutions recognizes this relevant topic. Beyond the discrimination, this exhibit is a humanizing story about people who are struggling to survive and succeed—concepts that every immigrant arriving in America strives for."

Remembering 1882's Everlasting Impact in 2008 and Beyond



(left) CSUEB President Mo Qayoumi and Student Sye-Ok Sato, stand in front of the Legacy Wall; (above) Professor Colleen Fong presides over books on Chinese American history at the Student Symposium on May 22, 2008. Photos courtesy of Colleen Fong.

California State Capitol

The astounding success of CHSA's *Remembering 1882* traveling exhibit continues as the exhibit was presented in Sacramento at the California State Capitol during an afternoon reception on May 21, 2008.

In attendance at the standing-room only event were State Senator Leland Yee, Chair of the Senate Select Committee on Asian Pacific Islanders Affairs; Assemblymember Ted Lieu, Chair of the California API Caucus; Assemblymember Mike Eng; Assemblymember Warren Furutani; and many Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs Association (APAPA) members, as well as community leaders and media.

Senator Yee, Assemblymember Eng, and APAPA founder C.C. Ying gave particularly moving speeches about how the exclusion act impacted their experiences growing up. The audience listened in rapture as Assemblymember Eng recounted a childhood story of how his father, following World War II, was searching for a place to live for his family in the San Francisco Bay

Area. With his wife and two kids in tow (including the young Mike Eng), the elder Eng knocked on the door of a gorgeous house for rent. As the mistress of the house came to the entryway, she had in her hands a trash can, the contents of which she proceeded to dump on him while screaming, "Go back to China, Chinaman!" Eng emphasized through this personal anecdote the importance of him and other Asian Americans to serve in civic affairs so that laws such as the Exclusion Act will not be repeated.

This very impactful evening was made possible through the support of APAPA and the C.C. Yin/McDonald's Foundation. Special thanks also goes to Steve Yee for his assistance.

California State University, East Bay

At Cal State University East Bay, The Student Symposium, the first event of *Remembering 1882* at the university, was held May 22 in the Biella Room of the Library.

Organized by former CHSA Board Member Dr. Collen Fong, a professor at CSUEB's Department

of Ethnic Studies, in conjunction with the Department of History, the evening featured the presentation of five student projects against the backdrop of the *Remembering 1882* exhibit banners. Ranging from spoken word to historical research to an analysis of Anna May Wong's silent film, "The Toll of the Sea," a couple of students also drew parallels between 1882 and the current immigration situation in the U.S.

David Woo of the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies presented posters on contemporary Asian immigration. A "wall" was also featured that individuals could add their immigration stories or thoughts to; for additional outreach, this wall was available outside of the university union in the days leading up to the event. *Remembering 1882* will be featured at CSUEB Library Entrance in the fall through early 2009.

Until then, the exhibit will tour the east coast this summer and fall with stops at the OCA Annual National Convention in Washington, D.C., the Chinese Community Center, and public libraries in Virginia. ☯

Heinlerville Archaeological Excavation Open House

A Perspective from Historian Connie Young Yu

A public open house for the excavation currently taking place at the site of San Jose's major historic Chinatown, Heinlerville, took place on Saturday, March 15, 2008. Participants wandered through the field lab, viewed material on Heinlerville history, and spoke with archaeologists about the process during hourly tours.

Archaeologists from the Anthropological Studies Center, Sonoma State University and local San Jose historians are collaborating with the the City of San Jose's Redevelopment Agency to unearth selected areas of Heinlerville and early Japantown.

The following account of the excavation open house is by Historian Connie Young Yu. In addition to serving as CHSA Board Vice President, she is also author of Chinatown, San Jose, USA.

“The community event was on the 5th day of the rotation, and there was no telling how many people would show up, especially in weather that suddenly turned inclement. While the team was setting up that morning, there was intermittent rain. This ‘open house’ was more like an ‘open field day,’ with the team out there draining ditches of water.

In the whipping wind, Annita tacked down her ‘exhibits,’ moving easels with photos and maps and improvising alternative set-ups. Archaeologists are unfazed by anything and ready for everything, I’ve learned. An hour before the start, as our team of guides and site interpreters gathered for a briefing, there was already a crowd gathering at the gate on Taylor Street.

Then they came in, wave after wave. Families with young children, elderly residents from the neighborhood, many an official ‘V.I.P.’,

reporters and a boy scout troop; from the South Bay, but also Oakland, Lafayette, Mendocino, and Sacramento. People responded as if it was truly a unique, once in a lifetime event. A history area set up by Leslie was a source of orientation and information. Each group was taken on a guided tour on a route that went to each of the open trench sites. Field Director Mike Meyer had

“I wanted to express how I felt about the spirit of the people who lived here...and how they had a home base here for 44 years because of the courage of John Heinlen.”

marked in color Cleveland Ave. and store sites so visitors had a sense of the imprint of Heinlerville.

Tour leaders explained the layout of the town and narrated the community's unique history as well. The archaeologist stationed at each trench site gave an authoritative but friendly presentation to each rotating group. Over and over. And answered question after question. (‘Is that the Great Wall of China,’ asked a tiny kid who was showing the

brick foundation at 34 Cleveland.) The first trench was at the site of the store of May Wah (head of Hop Sing Tong) where pig bones were found.

Children were thrilled for the chance to find artifacts—a hands-on archaeological experience for all ages.

“Down the street was the site of my Grandfather's store, Kwong Wo Chan, now with an easel in front with a picture of the store, photos of my dad, John C. Young, biking down Cleveland, and my grandmother with her neighbors. At the trench of the restaurant, Ken Ying Low, I noticed that people wanted to handle the porcelain pieces, and Mike S. said, ‘go ahead, touch it, it's survived a hundred years.’

The last stop, where I was stationed most of the time, was the site of the Ng Shing Gung Temple, center of the Chinese community and heart of its culture. There at the corner of Taylor and 6th I had the expansive view of Cleveland Avenue and people walking towards me. The clouds had scattered and the sky was big and bright. This is the same



Historian Connie Young Yu at the site of her grandfather's store, holding a piece of a soy sauce jar unearthed during the excavation. Photo courtesy of Connie Young Yu.

CONTINUED AT TOP OF PAGE 7

fung swei my ancestors felt in 1887. When the visitors gathered around, I was inspired to tell them of the scene my father described: how on the eve of every feast day, the Lunar New Year or *Dai Jui*, people would come out of their stores with pots and bowls to go to the *mui* (temple) for their share of the “*jai*” prepared by the caretaker and blessed by two Taoist priests. People seemed fully engaged in the tour and impressed by the significance of what they saw.

I wanted to express how I felt about the spirit of the people who lived here, their struggle against exclusion, and how they had a home base here for 44 years because of the courage of John Heinlen, but I think they had already gotten it by now.

For me, as a historian and descendant of this Chinese community, it was a deeply involving per-

sonal experience, with even some surprising revelations. Folks told me stories—they shared their memories. A Filipino couple who used to live in the area said they had been in the temple as curious children, and described how dark and mysterious it was, with incense burning.

I guided two elderly men, Ed and Vince Chin, cousins who met up for the first time in ten years—at this Open House—to the site of my grandfather’s store. I pointed to the photos and learned more than I expected. Ed Chin used to live on 6th street and knew my grandparents and dad. Vince lived at his family store next to my grandfather’s. He walked silently and slowly with a cane, but the place evoked his memories. He suddenly told of how he used to peek through the wooden cracks of the walls and watch my grandmother. I asked cautiously,

what was she doing? He responded vigorously, ‘Making whiskey!’

At the end of the Open House, working without a break, everyone on the team was hoarse, parched, hungry and exhausted, but smiling and up because of the enthusiastic turnout. Many visitors expressed their enthusiasm and gratitude upon leaving. One guest told me, how wonderful the tour was, that it was ‘like a PBS experience!’

‘Come and See Archaeology in Action’ said the announcement and 540 people came and did just that. It was an amazing day. I want to say thank you to Julia, Adrian, Charlene, Annita, Mike M., Mike S., Mark, Charlie, Chelsea, Erica, Sandra, Bryan, Maria, Leslie, Rut, Erin, Elaine-Maryse, Bryan and Anna, every single one of the crew and volunteers who made this day happen! Well done!” 🐼

Congratulations to Connie Young Yu!

CHSA is proud to honor Board Vice President Connie Young Yu as a recipient of the KQED & Union Bank Local Hero Award celebrating the APA experience on May 7, 2008 at the KQED Public Broadcasting Center in San Francisco.

As a lifelong historian, Young Yu has made local history accessible and relevant to the Bay Area community through articles, presentations, and books recounting the early experiences of Chinese Americans.

Working to ensure that local Asian American historical sites are recognized, restored, and made available to the public, Young Yu’s efforts have been instrumental to launching projects across the Bay Area, including the restoration of the Immigration Barracks at Angel Island; exhibits of the Ng Shing Gung building at History Park in San Jose; the Chinese Walls in Woodside; and the archeological excavation on the Chinatown site in San Jose.



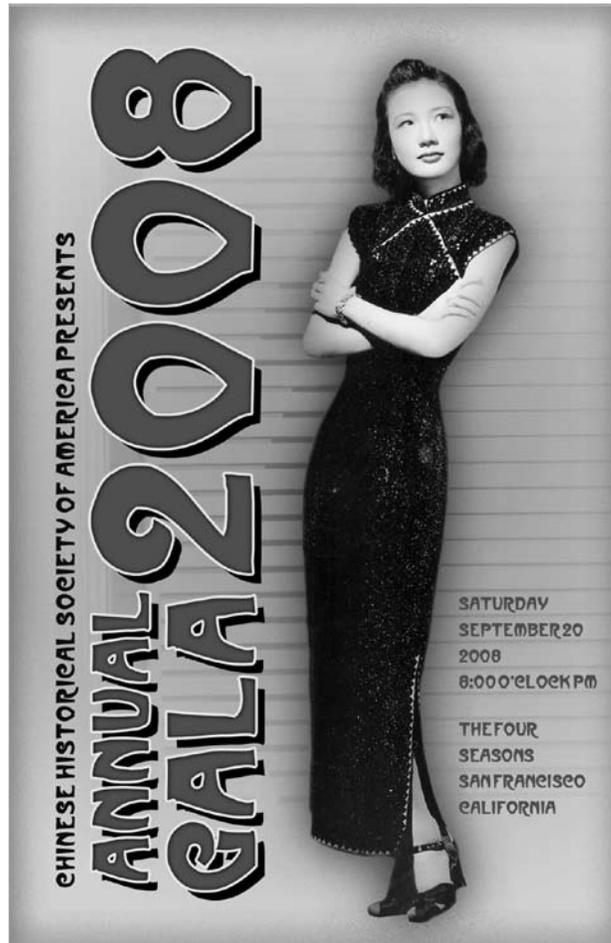
Connie Young Yu (left) accepts her KQED/ Union Bank Local Heroes Award from a Union Bank representative on May 7, 2008. Photo courtesy of Frank Jang.

This work and passion draws on years of research, oral histories, and even Young Yu’s own family background. Her paternal grandfather, Young Soong Quong, was among the first merchants in San Jose’s Heinlenville Chinatown and her maternal grandmother, Lee Yoke Suey, was detained on Angel Island for 16 months while the Chinese Exclu-

sion Act was in effect. Just last year, while commemorating the 125th anniversary of the passage of this legislation, Young Yu was a member of CHSA’s *Remembering 1882* symposium, as part of a panel of legal and historical experts.

Young Yu is the author of *Chinatown, San Jose, USA*. In addition to serving as Vice President of the CHSA Board, she is on the Advisory Council of Asian Americans for Community Involvement and is a Trustee of the Hakone Foundation. Young Yu is also a former trustee of her alma mater, Mills College in Oakland.

Other honorees of the KQED/ Union Bank Local Heroes Award are: Regina Clewlow (Engineers for a Sustainable World); Rev. Norman Fong, (Chinatown Community Development Center); Cathy Inamasu (Nihonmachi Little Friends); and Christina Mei-Yue Wong (Chinese for Affirmative Action). 🐼



Please note that the CHSA *Bulletin* is now published quarterly rather than bi-monthly. To contribute articles about Chinese American community and historical news and events, please submit articles to judy@chsa.org.

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