

Chinese American Citizens Alliance  
Salinas Lodge Newsletter  
May 2009

Twenty-one members and one guest attended the 4/13/09 CACA monthly meeting. President Ira Katz opened the meeting by producing two correspondence items, the Grand Lodge newsletter and a letter from the Monterey Peninsula Foundation-along with a check, reflecting our communal fundraising efforts for the AT&T Pro-Am Golf Tournament. All volunteers for this event were once again gratefully acknowledged. Financial Secretary, Clara Chan presented the current financial report. There was no Grand Lodge meeting report but Carl Chan was unanimously elected to continue his tenure as the Grand Lodge representative from Salinas.

Old Business: The March '09 'meet and eat' was discussed and deemed a success. Details were reviewed in the April '09 newsletter. Ira Katz, Richard Ng, and Albert Fong provided an update on the status of the highly anticipated CACA banner. It should be ready in two weeks, in time for the Asian Festival on 4/25/'09. A public and well-deserved acclaim was offered to Candice Chin for once again overseeing the annual essay contest. She makes it seem so easy, surely a sign of high competence.

The annual Easter Egg hunt drew a crowd of approximately 150. There was enough food to go around and all eggs seem to have been discovered. Thanks to the Chinese Christian Church for donating and dyeing the eggs. Richard Ng and Albert Fong are heading up the Mother's Day dinner and request appearance confirmations as soon as possible. The dinner will be at the Cathay House and will cost \$15.00 per person. Six o'clock p.m. is the start time. The upcoming Asian Festival will also include an informational membership table manned by Connie Katz.

New Business: Louis Lee proposed a possible new revenue source. The upcoming Cours D'elegance is seeking a group to sell beverages at Laguna Seca on Friday, August 14<sup>th</sup>. Anyone who has questions or comments are requested to contact Louis Lee. Louis also advised that van drivers are needed for the 2010 U.S. Open Golf Tournament in June. This prestigious event was last held in Pebble Beach in 2000. Volunteers must purchase a US OPEN uniform at \$125.00. Again, the contact person is Louis Lee. It was decided that the applications for the Walter Lum/Walter Ng, Chao Suet Foundation scholarships will be given to Linda Low as a representative of the scholarship committee already formed to review and submit its choice(s) for this opportunity. Jerry Cheang proposed that an eight course dinner be held as part of the Eddie Fung-Judy Young presentation, to be held on June 27, '09 beginning at 5:30 p.m. The cost will be \$50.00 per person. Jerry also proposed that CACA involve itself in the Chinese Historical Society/National Steinbeck Center Proposal as a means of presenting CACA as a positive community presence. Two delegates were approved to represent the Salinas Lodge in the 50<sup>th</sup> Biennial Convention this year. They are Ira Katz and Richard Ng. Funding for their attendance was also approved to help offset convention expenses. As part of the convention, a Salinas Lodge brochure will be prepared. Photographs of the 2009 Board of Officers, Board of Associates, and Past Presidents are needed for this brochure. A photography session will be held on Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup> prior to the regularly scheduled monthly 7p.m. meeting. All CACA members in the above categories are requested to

appear, in formal attire, (suit/sport coat, slacks, and tie for men, appropriate dress for women) at least a half hour before the 7p.m. meeting on Monday, May 11, 2009. There, did I get everyone's attention that needed getting??? Sil Yeh is scheduled to be provided by Clara Chan, per the yearly sil yeh schedule published in the January '09 newsletter. The convention brochure deadline is May 31<sup>st</sup> so it is imperative that everyone involved make every effort to be photographed on Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup>.

Other News: The highly regarded Oyster Trading Company opened its doors on Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup> to a waiting crowd of people lined down the sidewalk. 'First come-first serve' and 'early bird gets the worm' was the order of the day. A unique selection of worldly treasures awaited the inquisitive throng of shoppers and exclamations of surprise and glee echoed the showroom. The store will only be open through Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup> so don't dawdle, just toddle down to oldtown Salinas, the corner of Gabilan and Main for tempting treasures from afar.

The Chinese Golf Club held its first 2009 tournament at Salinas fairways on Sunday, April 26. Anyone interested in playing in the monthly tournaments, regardless of skill level, is encouraged to contact CACA members John Gong, Phil and Lola Lee, or Vic Blea. No clubs? No problem. There are extras to lend and use.

#### Chinatown Renewal Project-April 17, 2009

Approximately 70 Salinas community members and assorted planning people attended this latest edition of the Chinatown Renewal Implementation Workshop held at the Salinas Confucius Church from 1-6p.m. Mayor Dennis Donohue provided opening comments and then the various planning agencies each presented a review of or projection of future Chinatown redevelopment. This was not unlike a similar event initiated in 2007-08. The chairmen of the Salinas Downtown Community Board were acknowledged as well as the redevelopment agency members and the local government commission. An update of the 2007-08 plan was also presented. The five action teams were also acknowledged and updates given. Consultant Fe Tom from Arizona presented his ideas of the proposed cultural museum, the old Republic Café. Seifel Consulting Inc. provided detailed demographic information graphically demonstrating the economic impact of the present and possible future of Chinatown. Of the 70 businesses in Chinatown, they encompass 65 employees. A depressing statistic was presented; Salinas population of 153,000 people, 43,000 housing units, 49,000 jobs. Chinatown population of 200-250 people, 70 housing units, 65 jobs. That comes out to less than 1% of the total Salinas economic picture. Nearby Steinbeck Center attracts 60,000 per year. What's wrong with this picture? Chinatown remains relatively inaccessible, isolated, and undesirable, all within a stone's throw of a popular tourist attraction. What will it take to incorporate Chinatown into a viable economic base? Two questions posed by Seifel Consulting were; who is here? who is coming? (to Chinatown) Perhaps other questions can be posed such as why should people come and how to draw them into Chinatown? The second part of this event involved breaking into work groups, facilitated by 25 urban design students from Cal Poly. Aerial projection maps were provided and each group was asked to plan the future of Chinatown and mark lots according to group suggestions. This was very disturbing in a singular manner. Discount the 25 Cal Poly students. Then

discount the many and varied agency members. What remained was a woefully and pitifully few actual community members to make suggestions. Although there was a small contingent of Chinese community members at the beginning of the presentation/workshop, very few remained to participate in the planning exercise. Conclusion? It would appear that the people immediately impacted by future Chinatown redevelopment...the Chinese community, seem to not be interested enough to have a say in the future of Chinatown. Yes, we may not see significant changes in our lifetimes. But is that any reason to be apathetic to the grass roots beginnings of positive change? Be the change you want to see.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Asian Festival Chinatown, Salinas April 25,2009

Build it and they will come. Believe, achieve, and receive. Oh, what a glorious day for Salinas CACA Lodge and the community. Thanks to the leadership of Jerry Cheang and Louis Lee the Chinese-American community was well represented in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Asian Festival on Saturday April 25 from 11-4pm. UNITY was the theme and it was lived out by the three main Asian communities: Chinese-Japanese and Filipino. Many citizens gathered in Salinas Chinatown to hear Mayor Dennis Donohue and community leaders share the dream of a renewed Salinas Chinatown like a phoenix rising from the ashes and coming alive. The building dream is to have the old neon Chop Suey sign on the Republic Café lit up again. And the light of knowledge will be present in that very building as the future home of the Salinas Asian History and Cultural Museum. This dream can only be achieved with UNITY and support from all of us in the comm.-unity. The opening ceremony was awesome.

The weather was cool but bright as we listened to the welcoming beat of Japanese Taiko drums from the Salinas Buddhist Temple. This was followed by our own Lion Man- Albert Fong and company treating the crowd to a powerful lion dance. The final act was from the Filipino community demonstrating a form of marital arts with sticks. One of the leaders showed that even the disabled and aged could defend themselves if they were skilled in these self-defense techniques. After the opening ceremonies we went back to the Salinas Confucius Church where there was a full compliment of cultural and culinary opportunities for the festival participants.

Among the events at the hall there were Tai Chi demonstrations artfully done by May Mah and Susan Cho, ping pong games, Chinese painting and scrolls, Uncle Wenson Louie's Chinese calligraphy demonstration where you could get your name done in calligraphy, delicious luncheon and desert possibilities, souvenir t-shirts and buttons and a very green, organic and tasty food demonstration by Chef Henry Gong and friends. Healthy and nutritious and very educational. We were entertained musically by our Chinese school students as well. Ted Pontoon had a slide show of his trip to China and Salinas memorabilia at his Glass shop. Connie Katz, our Membership Director had a welcome table with the new CACA brochure to encourage folks to learn more about CACA and join us in the dream. Carl Chan prepared this marvelous membership brochure. We were able to interest about a dozen people. Thanks in part to the donation of the "Mayor of Chinatown" and member Ted Ponton we now have our own Salinas CACA beautiful banner. Albert Fong was able to make that light go on with help from another CACA member in Southern California who help get the banner done in time for the festival at a good price too. Thanks again, Ted and Albert. One of the most powerful

and popular exhibits was a pictorial walk through Salinas Chinatown history by our own Wally Ahtye. Priceless photos of times past gave the participant a feel for what it was like growing up in the old Salinas Chinatown. Fortunately many of the faces seen are still CACA members today. The original Chinatown fire pump from 1927 was also present. Wellington Lee conducted guided tours of the historic Chinatown throughout the day.

Will the neon lights go back on in the new Chinatown and preserve the heritage of the old? YES, it can! See you next year at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Festival where with all the help with our visionary partners the best days of Salinas Chinatown will be visible and bright.

Ira Katz- President- Salinas Lodge CACA

Parker 'Russian' Chin received a letter from CACA member, Richard Yee, now living in Arizona. He gets the monthly newsletter via email and seems to be impressed with our many and varied CACA activities. He wishes he could be here to both help and enjoy our activities. He and his wife, Roberta also stay busy and enjoy their own activities. Richard has been a CACA member since 1981 and wishes to convey his fond greetings to all who remember him. Thanks, Richard and Roberta, for remembering the Salinas CACA, staying interested in our local lodge, and remaining a loyal member for almost thirty years! We wish you luck and good fortune and good health as you enjoy your new life.