



唐府

TANG
FU

Issue No. 11 / Fall 2025



FEATURED CHARACTER

Written by Mi Fu
(米芾, 1051-1107)

秋 [Qiū] Autumn

秋天 [Qiūtiān] Autumn

秋收 [Qiūshōu] Autumn
harvest

秋高氣爽

[Qiūgāoqìshuǎng] Cool
autumn weather





Mi Fu as depicted in a 1107 CE painting by Chao Buzhi 晁補之 (1053-1110)

COVER CALLIGRAPHER

Mi Fu 米芾 (1051-1107) was a Chinese painter, poet and calligrapher who was born in the Song dynasty. He became known for his style of painting misty landscapes. This style would be deemed the "Mi Fu" style and involved the use of large wet dots of ink applied with a flat brush. His poetry was influenced by Li Bai and his calligraphy by Wang Xizhi. Mi Fu is regarded as one of the four greatest calligraphers of the Song dynasty, and he developed unique traits of his own. As a personality, Mi Fu was noted as an eccentric; including a mania of cleanliness.

COVER IMAGE

Jewish refugees in Shanghai look at a list of names to find relatives and loved ones

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SDCHM MISSION BUILDING

404 Third Avenue
San Diego, CA 92101

DR. SUN YAT-SEN MEMORIAL EXTENSION BUILDING

328 J Street
San Diego, CA 92101

MUSEUM HOURS

Saturday - Sunday
12 pm to 4 pm

Second Sundays Free

Interim Director's Letter:



Almost 30 years ago, our museum opened to the public as a Chinese cultural and historical spot for the community. Throughout the years, many dedicated people donated time, money and artifacts to enrich our community. Visitors praise that our museum is a jewel in downtown San Diego. We continue relying on all your support. Lately, we have had several new volunteers join us

in the areas of collection management, Docent team, front desk reception, and special events. We are still in the process of hiring an Education Coordinator to reinforce our team in coordination with school and community groups, especially when they plan to visit.

Part of looking ahead of our 30th anniversary of the museum opening is our facility renovation. When the Mission building was wheeled in over 30 years ago, everything of the original church was renovated plus new addition of the garden, restrooms, kitchen and office. After 30 years of weathering and usage, the place is visibly aged. We have started many steps to revamp the gallery space, and replace the roof, doors, windows and garden gate. We still need to renovate the kitchen and restore the pond with water, which was turned into a dry pond during Covid shutdown. Next year, we hope to celebrate the 30th anniversary with a refreshed look of the museum and memorabilia for people to keep for the future.

We are updating our museum in the digital world as well. You can see us on social media more frequently. Our exhibition labels are adopting QR codes for people to view more data on their cell phones. We look forward to more visitors and continuing support from you.

With my deepest gratitude,
Lily Tou Birmingham
Interim Director

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Lily Bjc".

Message from Our Chairperson:



Greetings! I want to take this opportunity to thank each and everyone of you for being so supportive to the San Diego Chinese Historical Museum. We have provided monthly wonderful Zoom lectures and hundreds of people around the globe have joined the Cheng Chinese American Experience and Beyond lecture series. We have received positive comments from

viewers who represent a diverse audience.

Our current exhibition on the China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater has also gained a lot of traction. We are celebrating the 80th Anniversary of the WWII victory in 2025. This exhibition showcases the art by Liu Rong whose works depict the important battles and peoples. Most people know about the Pacific Theater and the Atlantic Theatre of the Second World War, but very few know about the China-Burma-India route where many US pilots flew planes with Chinese flags over the Himalayan hump. The exhibition retells the stories about the Flying Tigers, Merrill's Marauders and the Ledo road construction.

It was more than 30 years ago that the Museum broke ground. How time flies! We will be celebrating our 30th anniversary in 2026. To celebrate this very important occasion, we are planning to build a brick donor wall. This campaign aims to solicit donors to buy bricks in the Chuang Garden. The campaign will start very soon. We hope you will be willing to participate and support this historical project. Our spring festival banquet was well attended. Thanks to all our members, our YPAC members, our docents, our volunteers and our friends for your unwavering support to make this event a memorable one. Our former executive director Jacinta Wong has been going through medical treatment and we wish her the best of luck.

Please drop by and let us know how we can serve you better!
Enjoy your summer!

Lilly Cheng
Board Chairperson

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Lilly Cheng".

Shanghai, Homeland Once Upon A Time - Jewish Refugees in Shanghai

February 2026 to September 2026

LILY TOU BIRMINGHAM

"On the bustling streets of Hongkou, Shanghai, on an ordinary day in May 2016, an extraordinary scene unfolded. Seated in a wheelchair, an 87-year-old woman named Susi Sambor, hailing from Australia, found solace in a simple pleasure. As tears streamed down her face, she savored the warmth of a freshly baked sweet potato, its steam swirling in the air. Little did passersby know that within those tears lay a profound story, a tale of resilience and survival...It brought memories of a cherished birthday gift from her parents, a symbol of hope during those arduous times."

Above is part of the preface of the exhibition that will be open in February 2026, following our current exhibition CBI Victory, celebrating the 80th anniversary of WWII victory. This upcoming exhibition was originally curated by the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum (SJRM) for the New York exhibition at Fosan Plaza in 2023. We are fortunate to receive permission from SJRM to show this travel exhibition. We will adapt the content to fit our gallery space and supplement with actual artifacts and memorabilia from the local Jewish community. It tells another story from WWII that many people don't know.

The Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum was initially established in 2007 to better preserve the history of Jewish refugees. In 2014, after the establishment of the Wall of Names in the museum, more refugees and their descendants came to visit to search for their own names and those of their relatives. As a result, more materials were donated from them. In 2020, the museum underwent an expansion, with the exhibition area expanding tenfold, allowing more stories of Jewish refugees to be told.



Wall names of Jewish refugees in Shanghai during the 1930s to 1940s

This exhibition will cover the period of 1938, when 180,000 Jews in Austria were faced with imminent Nazi persecution, and the only way to survive was to leave the country. During that time, it was very difficult for a Jew to get a visa from any of the consulates in Vienna. The Chinese Council-General Dr. Ho Feng-Shan and his colleague Zhou Qixing managed to issue numerous visas to the Jews. These "visas for life" saved about 20,000 Jews. Hongkou was part of Shanghai where Jews settled.



Jewish refugees fleeing Europe

Starting in 1938, about 1,000 refugees per month entered Hongkou, while Japan invaded Shanghai in August 1938 and took over the control of the city in November 1938. Under this tumultuous time, in order to start a new life, Jews built schools, opened business, issued newspapers and periodicals, and created arts and sports events for the community.



A class of Kadoorie School



Musician Alfred Wittenberg



Musician Alfred Wittenberg as an elder and his students in Shanghai

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), established in the U.S. in 1914, became one of the largest and most resourceful relief organizations in the world. JDC set up an office in Shanghai in 1938 and delivered aid to the troubled Jewish refugees. Chinese people who survived the Japanese invasion and control in Shanghai, helped Jews. *"Thank God, most of us survived ... The wartime experience we shared with the Chinese people in Shanghai made us all aware of the love and respect which had developed between us. Our friendship will remain 'rock solid' for as long as we live."*



Refugees waiting in line at a soup kitchen, 1939

"More than 80 years later, this city still bears the imprints of their past lives. In Shanghai, especially in Hongkou where a large number of refugees were located, you can often see older Jewish people who had previously lived here strolling the streets with their families, seeking their roots in their "second homeland" and expressing gratitude for the kindness they received."

As stated in the original exhibition, we hope people will be "interested in this story, can revisit this history together and experience the warmth of humanity and power of justice within it, and work together to build a community with a shared future for mankind." If you visit Shanghai, please visit the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum. The once thriving community for Jewish refugees is now called the North Bund, a hub for financial businesses and shipping industry, which offers a window into the city's, rich historical landscape, and vibrant culture.

CBI Victory! The 80th Anniversary Retrospective (1945-2025) of the WWII China-Burma-India Theater

Present to January 2026

LILY TOU BIRMINGHAM

This retrospective exhibition is very popular and the exhibition period will be extended through the Holidays. Visitors will learn the overview of the 2nd Sino-Japanese war, which started in 1937, and more events about the China-Burma-India Theater from 1941 to 1945. We focus on the rarely told stories about the contributions of the Chinese Americans and the impact WWII had on them. Accompanying these stories are the artifacts in five large display cases that have been collected by Montgomery Hom, and most of them are shown in the public for the first time.



Current exhibition in gallery 1

Selected from *Fighting on All Fronts* by Montgomery Hom is one amazing story about the San Francisco Chinese Aviation School, which produced three volunteer fighter squadrons from 1936 to 1939. John Chu, Sr. graduated in the first class of the flying school in 1933 and stayed to train future pilots. His son, John "Angel" Chu, began his flight training at the age of 14. He would soon become the youngest Chinese American fighter pilot of the squadron. He and 14 of his fellow pilots from San Francisco would graduate from the Chinese Air Force. With no support from the United States, flying obsolete aircraft against



John "Angel" Chu

a modern superior enemy force, they were the first team of American volunteers, who held the line, before General Chennault's Flying Tigers which helped turn the tide of air power in the China skies. Angel flew an incredible 100+ missions during the war, had an honorable career as a pilot, and died at the age of 102 in 2025 as the last Chinese-American Flying Tiger hero.

Elsie Seetoo was born in California. When she was 12 years old, her father closed his grocery store during the Great Depression and moved the family to China. In October 1938, she started nursing training at Queen Mary Hospital in Hong Kong and joined the Chinese Red Cross Medical Relief Corps. In 1944, Seetoo joined the U.S. Army Nurse Corps in Kunming and became the first Chinese American to join the U.S.



Elsie Seetoo

Army Nurse Corps as a first lieutenant. She was discharged from the Army in 1946. Using the G.I. bill, she received her bachelor's degree in nursing. Later, she became a translator and worked as a technical publications writer and editor for the Naval Medical Center and the National Institutes of Health. In 2021, Seetoo represented all Chinese American WWII Veterans at the Award Ceremony for Congressional Gold Medal in the U.S. Congress. She is 108 years old now. Please come to the exhibition and explore many more fascinating stories.

ELIZABETH HENSLEY C.

Since January 2025, we've held six lectures as part of the series, hosting diverse speakers who presented before hundreds of interested community members from around the country and the globe. For example, at the start of the year, Bernice Ng recounted the process of recording her mother's struggles as a child in the care of her grandparents and later reconnecting with her nuclear family as an adult. Bernice published this family history as a book titled "Never Go Hungry Again." During February, Li Chin spoke on her work with community members and town officials in Carlin, Nevada, to properly bury and memorialize the remains of Chinese railroad workers that had been discovered and removed from an unmarked burial site. Li's efforts would become the subject of Susan Zhou's documentary, *Going Home*. In March, we coordinated a panel of speakers from Hawaii, who spoke from different angles on the legacy of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of his death. We were later joined by retired Major General William S. Chen in April, who shared his research on central actors of the China-Burma-India Theater of WWII, highlighting the important contributions of countless Chinese Americans.



Bernice Ng's cover for "Never Go Hungry Again"



Li Chin and Susan Zhou reveal images of the long-awaited burial ceremony in Carlin, Nevada that was the subject of Susan's documentary, *Going Home*

Upcoming Lecture Series Schedule

July 19, 2025

"A Willow Tree Becomes a Forest"

Dr. Russell Low

August 16, 2025

"My China Roots"

Huihan Lie

September 20, 2025

"Quon Mane, Ah Quin, and Early Chinese Leaders of San Diego"

Dede Huang and Susie Lan Cassel

October 18, 2025

"Museum of Jewish Refugees in Shanghai"

Keira Li and 李念慈 (Li Nianci)

November 15, 2025

"John Lennon and May Pang"

May Pang

Great-Grandson of Dr. Sun Yat-sen: Leland Kuo-Hsiung Sun (孫國雄)

LILLY CHENG

On a beautiful, warm spring afternoon in March 2025, I had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Leland Kuo-Hsiung Sun, the great-grandson of the Father of the Nation, Dr. Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925). This year, 2025, marks the 100th anniversary of Dr. Sun's passing. Leland Sun was one of the speakers for the March 2025 Cheng Chinese American Experience and Beyond Zoom Lecture Series.

To learn about Dr. Sun's past, one can gain valuable historical insights through a conversation with his great-grandson, Leland Sun, and get a glimpse into Dr. Sun's legacy as well as the current lives of his descendants.



In March 2025, Dr. Sun Yat-sen's granddaughter, Pearl Sun (孫穗英), passed away. She was the last of Sun Fo's (孫科) four children. Leland Sun is her nephew — the son of Tse-Ping Sun (孫治平), who was Sun Fo's eldest son.

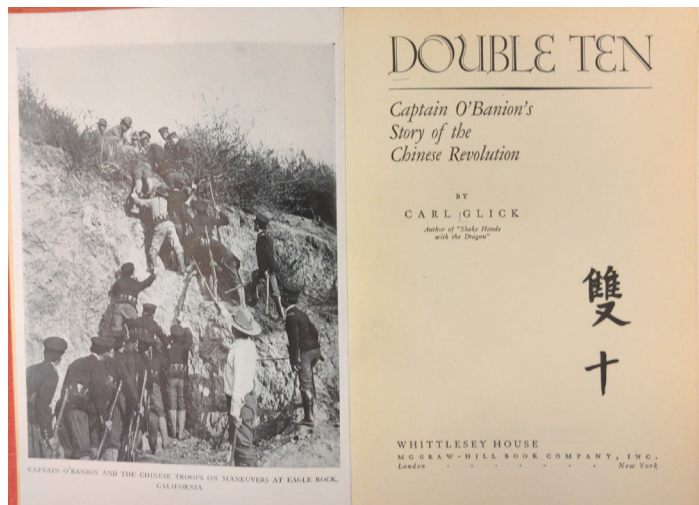
Leland Sun was born on June 7, 1950, in New York City. At the age of one, he returned to China, lived for a while in Shanghai and Guangdong, and then moved with his mother to Hawaii. He grew up in Hawaii and later moved to Los Angeles, California. As a child, he had no idea that his great-grandfather was the Father of the Nation, Dr. Sun Yat-sen. At age 17, when asked to write a paper for school, he wasn't sure what topic to choose, so he asked his teacher for guidance. His teacher suggested he write about his grandfather. Not knowing what kind of figure his grandfather was, Leland began searching for information at the USC library near his home. This began his journey of rediscovering his roots. A librarian told him that there were over 300 books about Dr. Sun Yat-sen. He started reading, page by page, slowly uncovering the greatness of his great-grandfather.

After graduating with a major in chemistry, Leland began working in a chemistry lab. Finding the work dull, he sought a career change and was introduced to Hollywood, where he embarked on a 37-year career in the entertainment industry as an actor. He became known for his roles in *Big Trouble in Little China* (1986), *Beverly Hills Ninja* (1997), and *Showdown in Little Tokyo* (1991). In addition to film and television, he frequently coordinated stunt work, and notably played a recurring role in the TV series *M.A.S.H.* Leland shared many interesting stories with me. Due to his smaller frame, he often worked as a stand-in for surgery scenes on *M.A.S.H.*, lying on the operating table. He was active in the Hollywood acting guild and had close contact with many directors and actors, including numerous Chinese-American actors.

During his high school years, his grandfather Sun Fo (1891-1973) lived near Los Angeles, allowing them to spend a lot of time together. Leland recalled that Sun Fo lived a simple life in California, occasionally visited by old acquaintances from the mainland. Sun Fo seemed weary of politics, living reclusively and quietly in Southern California. He spent his days reading at a local library and lived modestly with his wife Chen Shuying and his second son Tse-Chiang Sun's family. They did all the household chores themselves—Mrs. Sun did the cooking, and Sun Fo washed dishes and cleaned. This lifestyle continued until 1965.



Leland recounted that Wei Tao-ming (魏道明, 1899–1978) once visited Sun Fo to invite him to Taiwan. Sun Fo visited Taiwan and attended the centenary celebration of Dr. Sun Yat-sen's birth. In 1964, the Chinese Cultural and Educational Foundation was established in the U.S., with Sun Fo appointed as chairman. He traveled to Washington, D.C., for the annual meeting. On October 29, 1965, Sun Fo returned to Taiwan from the U.S. and was warmly welcomed by over 2,000 people at Taipei's Songshan Airport. The visit was a success. Sun Fo accepted a position as President of the Examination Branch, later becoming Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Soochow University (東吳大學) in 1967. He passed away from heart disease in Taipei in 1973 at age 82.

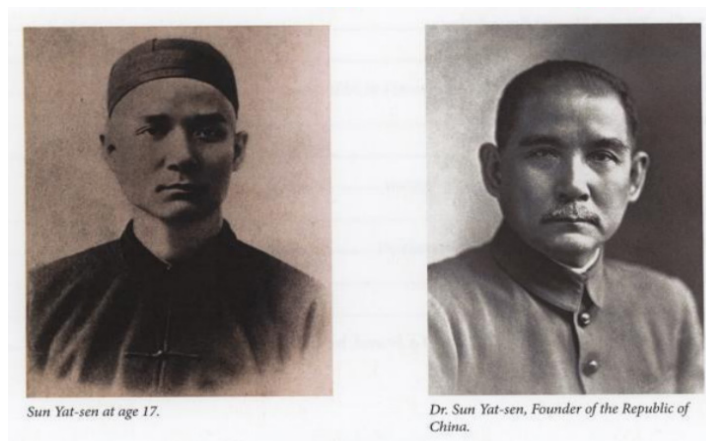


Leland spoke passionately about a book entitled *Double Ten: Captain O'Banion's Story of the Chinese Revolution* by Carl Glick, which details the involvement of American military figures such as General Homer Lea and Captain Ansel O'Banion in training revolutionaries. The book offers vivid and factual accounts, including how Dr. Sun was smuggled into the U.S. and the critical role of overseas Chinese in the revolution. Indeed, the phrase "Overseas Chinese are the mother of the revolution" is well justified.

The book describes the 300-year struggle in China between the Manchus and remnants of the Ming dynasty. Captain Ansel O'Banion swore a blood oath to join the Bao Huang Hui (Protect the Emperor Society) and began training Chinese revolutionaries in 21 U.S. cities. He was introduced to the secret society, helped bring Sun Yat-sen into the U.S. covertly, secured Japanese war plans for General Homer Lea, and helped form the foundation of Lea's book *The Valor of Ignorance*. Chinese officers trained in the U.S. were smuggled back into China to serve as foot soldiers in the Manchu army, prepared to seize control when the revolution began. The 1911 Revolution (October 10th), known as the Double Ten Day, became one of the world's first nearly bloodless revolutions.

Leland also shared an interesting anecdote: when Yuan Shikai became provisional president and Dr. Sun stepped down, Yuan Shikai's grandson later became the best man at the wedding of Sun Tse-Ping, Dr. Sun's grandson.

Besides his entertainment career, Leland also invested in real estate across the U.S., especially in Los Angeles and Hawaii. In retirement, he frequently visits China and has met with top Chinese leaders on multiple occasions. In 2027, he plans to organize a major conference to commemorate his great-grandfather.



2025 Annual Banquet

Elizabeth Hensley C.

The museum returned to Jasmine Seafood restaurant, a cornerstone of the Convoy District, for the second year in a row, where we hosted our Spring Banquet.

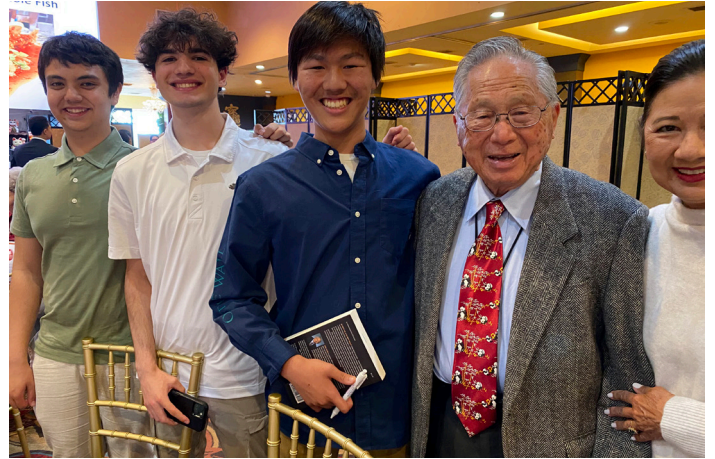
The event was an opportunity to reconnect with museum friends of all stripes. We are grateful for the help of our Young Professionals' Advisory Council, who very graciously supported event registration. A big shout out to Lillian and Kevin for helping at the registration booth and to the Quach brothers for their assistance leading guests to their tables!

As part of the event program, we were proud to be able to recognize the important work that members of the Falcon History Club (Torrey Pines High School) have been able to advance, since they started volunteering with the museum in early 2024. At the event, Board Chairperson, Lilly Cheng, was joined by former County Supervisor of District 1, Ron Roberts, to bestow the President's Volunteer Service Award to Christopher Kam, Eli Davidovich, Chase Clabo, Josh Holtzman, Arthur Chang, and Brian Wong. These awards evidenced the hundreds of hours dedicated by each one to the trilingual object label project for the museum permanent exhibition.

We express thanks to all who contributed to the event's silent auction; particularly to staff, Joseph Ahlstrom, Stephanie Garth, and Mu-Ting Huang, who each dedicated many hours to procure, receive, and package the auction goodies that were available for bidding to guests at the banquet. We are grateful to the attendees who bid on items and who will be able to enjoy trips to local museums and restaurants; a watercolor painting by the artist, Lan Wang; and even a vacation in México during the coming months!

Thanks to the event organizing team, which included Lily Birmingham, Lynn Chou, Lilly Cheng, and the staff; and everyone who supported this annual event. As the SDCHM arrives at its thirtieth anniversary of being open to the public, we look forward to celebrating many more milestones to come!





SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Elizabeth Hensley C.

Since the start of 2025, we've been able to host 22 different programs for schools and community groups in San Diego County. These include eleven field trips, from grade schools like Barnard Elementary and Tierra Del Sol Middle School to homeschool groups and community colleges, through which we reached hundreds of students, parents, and teachers. We were able to provide presentations and workshops for nine different public libraries; exploring Pre-20th Century Chinese Contributions to Science and Technology, Zodiac crafts, and Traditions of the Chinese Lunar New Year. We were also able to celebrate the Chinese New Year by tabling an event organized by our friends at the House of China and at Paul Ecke Elementary School's California Days event, where we provided a display and hands-on activity that reflected on the significance of the Chinese fishing industry in San Diego.



San Diego Gulls Community Spotlight (January 18)

For the second year in a row, the SDCHM was invited to be featured as part of a “Community Spotlight” at a San Diego Gulls hockey game. Our Young Professionals Advisory Committee, along with colleagues from the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association represented our community in celebration of the Chinese Lunar New Year. We’re grateful to the team for keeping us in mind and look forward to participating in future



Flavors & Stories (January 19)

In coordination with distinguished restaurateurs of San Diego’s Convoy Pan-Asian Business District, our Young Professionals Advisory Committee (YPAC) took community members on a culinary journey along Convoy Street. The tour started at Jasmine Seafood Restaurant, where we were met by Dr. Allen Chan, the restaurant’s owner. Jasmine is best known for its Hong Kong-style dim sum. Food crawl guests enjoyed several signature items including beyond meat lettuce wrap.

When we went to Flama Llama, a restaurant known for chifa, a Chinese-Peruvian culinary tradition based on Cantonese elements fused with traditional Peruvian ingredients, the restaurant manager, Abner spoke to the group.

Then, we walked back North to Crab Hut, which was founded by the Phans. It is known for cajun-style seafood boils, brought by the family from Houston, where they arrived in the 1990’s. This is the second time that Flavors and Stories has stopped at the Crab Hut. We also ate a cajun classic-jambalaya.

Our next stop was at Cake de Partie, an Asian-fusion dessert cafe. We met with chef and owner, Molly Rattana, and enjoyed the entry, finishing with one choice of three varieties of crepe cake: original, mocha, ube. From Cake de Partie, we walked another three minutes to our last stop: Sunday Ice Cream for the second round of desserts.

- recap by Lillian Chu of YPAC

42nd Annual San Diego Chinese New Year Fair (February 8 and 9)

The museum celebrated the 42nd Annual San Diego Chinese New Year Fair, with free admission to everyone at the fair who wished to visit; over three thousand people were able to during the 2025 fair! In the Mission building, museum docents engaged with guests in the permanent exhibition. In the Chuang garden, visitors enjoyed a zodiac craft activity, led by volunteers from the Falcon History Club. They were also able to engage with SDCHM Docent and Calligraphy Professor, Jack Meng, who interpreted their names as traditional Chinese characters on fans available for purchase. Our friends from the SDSU Chinese Cultural Center were also present, providing another calligraphy activity at a table to the side of Jack.



An officer attempts the Skittles challenge. How many Skittles do you think you could pick up with chopsticks?

Chinese New Year Fair at House of China (February 16)

At the invitation of our friends at the House of China, the SDCHM was present at the Chinese New Year Fair in Balboa Park. We spanned three tables in the House of Pacific Relations, providing hands-on workshops, including a snake puppet activity and a lantern-making workshop. We are enormously grateful for our docents, Cathy Jones, Vivian Biely, and Ginna Olsen; as well as to Julianna Chang, plus the Falcon History Club, who supported these activities. Jack was present, with the ever-popular interpretation of visitors' names on fans, as was YPAC member, Lu Liu, who interpreted music on the pipa, providing a soothing backdrop to the day. The Skittles challenge, which involves moving individual Skittles candies with chopsticks, was particularly popular. It's not as easy as it looks!

Peoples Mortgage Tour (March 20)

Earlier this spring in the evening (pictured right), Board Chairperson Lilly Cheng delivered a private tour and talk to representatives from Peoples Mortgage Company. A tea service was also provided for them in our garden. Leah Bentley (who is Business Development Manager from the company) remarked on the high pedigree of hospitality, stating that "it was an absolute treat and pleasure" to be given a tour by Dr. Cheng.



Mamie Takes a Stand: Book Presentation & Calligraphy Workshop with author Marie Chan (May 24)

Marie Chan, author of *Mamie Takes a Stand: A Chinese American Girl's Fight for School Rights*, presented her book at the museum to let our audience understand the importance of the lesser-known history of Mamie Tape. In 1884, eight-year-old Mamie was denied entrance to her public elementary school in San Francisco, because she was of Chinese descent. Her parents, Joseph and Mary, stood up to the school officials who treated their daughter unfairly, despite the potential for severe repercussions in the era of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. The presentation was combined with a calligraphy workshop for families in the Chuang Garden. Participants experienced the art of writing calligraphy, learning to write Chinese words and phrases from *Mamie Takes a Stand* on magic cloth with a brush and water.





DRAGON BOAT RACE

J. DIEGO GARTH

May 17th, 2025. The Dragon Boat Festival. An overcast day wrought with chilly winds and mild precipitation. A day so downtrodden by the weather puppet masters that applying the colloquial term 'May Grey' would have been a mockery of the very term itself. While the gloomy weather persisted throughout the day, team members of the Musing Dragons were not deterred from their goal of absolute and utter victory. With only a few seasoned paddlers - the rest comprised of novices in the art of a perfect paddle stroke - triumph would come only through sheer grit and determination. A stubborn, willful spirit. The tale of an underdog. David vs Goliath. Whichever cliché or lore you decide to picture as you read this, the Musing Dragon members encapsulated every bit of this essence to their advantage. Other teams 'elite' in their physical representation of experience through identical uniforms, hats, gloves, and expensive lightweight carbon paddles, overestimated the resilience of the Musing Dragons merely deeming them a rat pack lot of inexperienced paddlers equipped with heavy wooden paddles. While other teams began warmups early like a boxer shaking off the dust with various combinations directed at the face of an invisible opponent, the mood at the Musing Dragons tent was lighthearted and jovial. Relaxed to the point of casual. The opponents mistook happiness for immaturity and they paid for it gravely.

Before diving further into this tale of unwavering fortitude, you, the reader have probably already asked yourself: "What, precisely, is a Dragon Boat Festival, what are its origins?" Duan Wu Jie, the pinyin form of the traditional Chinese name for the Dragon Boat Festival, is a Chinese holiday observed on the fifth day of the fifth month of the Chinese calendar. The festival commemorates Qu Yuan, considered by scholars as the father of Chinese poetry. Qu Yuan, born into a noble family in 340 BCE, achieved success at a young age and attained a high position in the court. Born with a silver spoon in his mouth, he was ahead of his time acknowledging the strife of commoners, pushing for political reform. Being a pioneer of any time period comes with its consequences. Qu Yuan was exiled by King Huai of the Chu State; his words of reform an apparent attack on the elite's stranglehold of the empire. "Treason." During his exile Qu Yuan wrote a poem comprised of over 370 sentences, called "Li Sao" or "The Lament." Just as Hamlet is an epic tragedy in English literature, a trademark classic, "Li Sao" is an equal taken one extra notch; Qu Yuan out of a deep grief for the road his country is paving - one headed towards absolute repression fueled by pervading greed among those in power - drowns himself in a river. A symbolic gesture that transcended dynasties. The poem, through the use of metaphors was a subtle attack against the King; a time in which no one





could directly criticize the ruler. “With thoroughbreds under your reins, you could drive at full gallop,/Come, let me guide your chariot on the road ahead!” Leading a horse implied governing the country through reforms. The Dragon Boat Festival is to commemorate Qu Yuan’s symbolic fight for reform, a man whose freedom from an oppressive regime was only met after the final beat of his heart. I hope this mild tangent was helpful, as we dive back into May 17th, 2025: Dragon Boat Festival. Location: San Diego, California.

The Musing Dragons had to face 11 other competitors in their division. The first heat at 11 a.m was, to put it mildly, a sad affair. To put it gravely, an absolute failure. Coming in at 3rd out of 4th place with a time of one minute and thirteen seconds, the Musing Dragons were a full 3 seconds behind the winners of the first heat. A new strategy was in dire need of being implemented or the overall race result would be as gloomy as the weather. In the second heat two people sat out while fresh hands took the paddles; the drummer switched places with someone else and the results were astounding. The Musing Dragons wiped out their competitors in the second heat, beating its closest rival by a full 10 seconds with a time of one minute and seven seconds. A six second improvement from the first heat. An impressive feat given the short distance sprint. With a drastically improved overall time, the Musing Dragons now were in full control of their destiny. Two hours passed before their 3rd heat, a time in which the body grew cold from wind and light rain. Full from Mongolian beef, fried rice, and dumplings. Yet again the Musing Dragons, stomachs cramped and mind sleepy from the overzealous consumption of good food, prevailed. The time of one minute thirteen seconds was identical to the first heat. Yet the lapse between heats and distractions therein disseminated from such a prolonged wait affected the other three heat competitors far more as their race times suffered. Particularly the final boat that made its way lethargically over the finish line a full fourteen seconds behind the Musing Dragons. Ouch. With the win, the Musing Dragons made it into the finals.

The fourth heat. Oh boy. A Rocky motion picture moment of glory encapsulated in a little over one minute of pure unabated adrenaline. With victory so close at hand, the Musing Dragons did not want this moment to slip away into the history books, another winless season for the San Diego Chinese Historical Museum. Instead of having to polish up failure and say “we did a great job, the effort was astounding, maybe we will have a shot next year” I have the pleasure of writing this article from the perspective of winner. Yes. We WON! The finals were a true display of competitive impulses for all four boats that participated. The difference between boat times was determined by milliseconds. The Musing Dragons quite literally edged out the competition, winning by 34 milliseconds. An Olympic Final finish in the once quiet and sleepy seaside town of San Diego, California. The first win for the San Diego Chinese Historical Museum. Now in the history books with more wins to come in future seasons. Each person that participated was an integral part in this momentous victory and we can all look forward and know the best has yet to come.



MU-TING HUANG

We're excited to share several recent updates to our facility, all aimed at enhancing the experience for both our members and visitors while ensuring the long-term preservation of our space. Over the past few months, we've made significant improvements, starting with the removal of the old, weathered Dr. Sun Yat-Sen wooden gate. This was replaced with a new fence and secure entrance leading to the Chuang Garden. This upgrade not only enhances security but also creates a more welcoming and visually appealing entrance for all.

In the garden area, we focused on functionality and preservation by installing durable plastic doors on the storage closets and raising the thresholds to prevent water from entering. These upgrades help maintain a safe and dry environment for our facilities. To further improve the beauty and accessibility of the garden, several trees were trimmed, ensuring it remains easy to clean while looking vibrant and inviting.

Inside the museum, we made the space more accessible and enjoyable by replacing a large display case with two smaller ones, offering more room for exhibits and enhancing visitor flow. Finally, we upgraded our internet to high-speed fiber, providing faster and more reliable service, ensuring a seamless experience for both staff and guests.

JOSEPH AHLSTROM

It's an amazing time to come visit the museum! We have several new objects on display in our mission exhibit that are sure to spark your curiosity. One of our most captivating objects is the new snuff bottle cabinet, which is located beside our folk art exhibit. The cabinet contains over a dozen unique and beautiful snuff bottles, each with a breathtaking design. These bottles became popularized during the Qing Dynasty as the Chinese believed the inhaling of tobacco to have healing properties. Here we'll highlight one of the most impressive bottles in our display. This is a wonderful piece made from pink rose quartz. This bottle has an image of a young person riding on the back of a fish, a very auspicious symbol! We hope you come by and speak to our incredible docents about our new objects!





Abalone Journey Mural

“The Intersection Mural at 3rd Avenue and J Street, titled Abalone Journey, is a collaboration between local artists Janelle Louie and Thao Huynh French, alongside the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA). This project is part of the Downtown San Diego Partnership’s efforts to enhance public spaces through art while celebrating the cultural and historical significance of San Diego’s Asian Pacific community.

The mural pays tribute to the early Chinese fishermen of the 1800s who helped develop San Diego’s abalone fishing industry. Their stories of perseverance and the community’s contributions are captured through vivid imagery, including traditional fishing junks, abalone symbolism, and elements of Chinese ink art.” - *Excerpt from Downtown San Diego Partnership website*

Through collaboration with Lilly Cheng, our museum Board Chairperson, the mural clearly shows a 9-hole abalone, the most valuable abalone. The opening ceremony was conducted on April 11 with the ribbon cutting by Betsy Brennan, president of Downtown San Diego Partnership.

Letter from a Visitor

One of our board of directors, Lynn Chou, received a letter from a visitor named Alice Lum. Below is an excerpt.

Dear Lynn,

"...I was quite surprised to have viewed ancient Chinese artifacts at the museum as well as a diverse and broad scope of articles that much larger museums elsewhere would have exhibited. The collection is amazing and the integrity and authenticity as a museum is kept at such a high standard. You have a great foundation and the efforts of your docents, volunteers, and staff play an important role to the history of Chinese in America, to the community and our art and history/ historians everywhere. I thank the donors for their contributions and enjoy its legacy. I hope you and the museum continue on this important journey.

You have both the machinery and magic to keep the museum going; the collections, lectures, school tours, docent guided tours, bookstore, and cultural and historic events.

Please continue to exhibit contemporary artists as well, [since] you bring joy and appreciation to their art. I am excited for your upcoming event, CBI Theater WWII."

Thanks again, a happy visitor,
Alice Lum

Introducing New Staff: Julianna Chang, Social Media Specialist and Graphic Designer

Julianna is thrilled to join the SDCHM team this season, having been a volunteer for the museum at events over the past few years. Julianna currently manages and creates content for the museum's social media platforms and website, in addition to doing graphic design, photography, and videography for the museum. Her first time working for a museum, she finds the opportunity to see her design work (like this publication!) out in public exciting. With an advertising degree from the University of San Francisco, Julianna has worked as a professional in marketing for several years. She brings her expertise to clients in the non-profit sector and those driven by a social good purpose. As a third-generation Chinese American, Julianna is proud to be a part of an organization that highlights and celebrates her culture.



Blue Star Museum

We are pleased to participate in Blue Star Museums, a program that provides free admission to currently serving U.S. military personnel and their families during the summer months. Those that are eligible include Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, Coast Guard—including Reservists, National Guardsman (regardless of status), U.S. Public Health Commissioned Corps, NOAA Commissioned Corps, and up to five family members. The 2025 program began on Armed Forces Day (Saturday, May 17, 2025), and ends on Labor Day, (Monday, September 1, 2025). Learn more and find the list of participating museums by visiting: arts.gov/BlueStarMuseums.

Bricks Fundraising

As part of the museum's 30th anniversary celebration, we plan to do bricks fundraising to increase the museum fund for sustainability. The Mission Building requires constant maintenance and the museum operation requires the presence of paid staff. The plan is to install donors' bricks on the wall in the Chuang Garden as shown in the mockup photo. The proposed text will be the donor's name or "In Memory of " a person's or a couple's name.

Donors will have options for the size and number of bricks, as well as font size and color. Donor bricks will start in \$K increments, with larger amounts spreadable over 5 years.



LILLY CHENG

Mr. Andy Chun Yiu Lam, a respected leader in the Chinese community of San Diego and a pioneer in the restaurant industry, sadly passed away on March 25, 2025, due to illness, at the age of 85. The news of his passing has deeply saddened fellow community members and left them with a profound sense of loss.

In 1957, he relocated from Guangzhou to Hong Kong and joined the workforce at the young age of 16. He began working in a restaurant, washing dishes by day and sleeping on the shop floor by night. Despite the hardship, he persevered and eventually achieved success. At the age of 20, he took a long journey to Brazil, where he began running his own business in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. There, he made his mark in the local Chinese community.

In his thirties, Andy moved with his family to the United States. He managed Chinese restaurants in New York, Los Angeles, and San Diego. Eventually, he settled in San Diego and ran four successful restaurants: Golden Boat, Three Stars, Canton, and Mong go. His superb culinary skills and savvy business acumen established him as a leading figure in the industry, known far and wide.

Alongside his restaurant career, Andy dedicated himself to serving the local Chinese community and promoting social justice. He sponsored numerous community service initiatives and supported political campaigns at the city, county, and state levels in California. He played a key role in advocating for the establishment of Rady Children's Hospital in San Diego.

Mr. Lam held numerous leadership and advisory roles throughout his life: Chairman of the Bing Kong Tong in San Diego, Senior Executive Advisor of the San Diego Guangdong Association, Advisor to the San Diego Chinese Association, and Board Member of the Los Angeles Lam Sai Ho Tong. He also made significant contributions to the founding of the San Diego Chinese Historical Museum and the Lian Hua Music Society. In the 1990s, the Overseas Community Affairs Council of the Republic of China (Taiwan) appointed him as Overseas Affairs Advisor and later as a Commissioner for Overseas Chinese Affairs.

We honor his remarkable journey, thank him for his help and we will miss him!



Pictures of Andy Lam and his wife

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!

From June 1, 2024 to June 1, 2025

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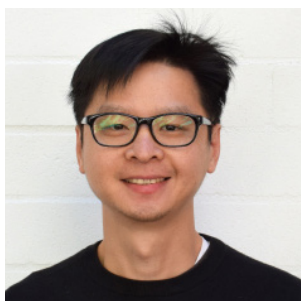
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