

# LANTERN

July 2009

## SICHUAN REPORT: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

by Delwyn Wong

On the afternoon of May 12, 2008, a massive 7.9 magnitude earthquake struck Sichuan province in China. The losses were staggering. Nearly 70,000 people were killed, 375,000 injured, and another 18,000 were missing. It was estimated that the total damages from the earthquake exceeded \$20 billion. The force of the earthquake was so powerful that tremors were felt as far away as Russia's Tuva Republic.

The Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Hawaii was so moved by this tragedy that it offered its support to the earthquake victims. In cooperation with other Chinese community groups, the Chamber raised \$115,000.00 for the earthquake victims in less than one week. However, raising money was only the first hurdle. The Chamber also wanted to be sure that the donation was properly used. Last month, in June, past president **Reuben S.F. Wong** and his wife **Vera** flew to Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province, escorted by **Martin Zhang** of the China Association for International Friendly Contact. They subsequently travelled three hours over a bumpy country road to "Jiang You", a small rural town. There, piles of rubble marked the site of what was once Yung Sheng Elementary School.

At the school site, an architect's rendering depicted 23 classrooms for 1,200 students, offices, a dormitory for 430 students, and an athletic field, but no library or computer center. The school principal explained that the school had no money for such facilities. However, thanks to Hawaii's \$115,000.00 donation, the school now has sufficient funds to construct a new two-story building (about 5,000 sq. ft.), which will house a library, reading room, computer center, conference room, and student exhibition area.

Madam **Ge Xiu**, Deputy Secretary General of the People's Government of Jiang You, expressed deep gratitude that children living in Jiang You and neighboring towns will soon have access to the technology and training necessary to be productive in the modern world.

While Hawaii's donation cannot erase the



### *A Chinatown Celebration*

The Chinatown Business & Community Association will be holding "A Chinatown Celebration" on Saturday, August 29, at the Smith-Beretania Park. There will be food booths, arts and crafts, and for the kids, face painting and *keiki* IDs. There will also be a health fair where you can get your blood pressure and vision checked. Best of all, the 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. event is FREE, with no admission charge. So come one, come all.

### **BONE MARROW DONOR NEEDED**

**Bradley Wong**, a longtime Kaiser Maui doctor of internal medicine, is in need of a bone marrow transplant. He has had chemotherapy for acute lymphocytic leukemia, a blood cancer. His two siblings were a match for each other, but not for Brad, so an unrelated donor is needed. Nationally, Asians, Hawaiians and other Pacific islanders, and people of mixed races are especially needed as bone marrow donors. If you are between 18 and 60 years of age and want to get involved, you can explore the Web site of the National Marrow Donor Program, starting with the following link: <http://www.marrow.org/HELP/Events/index.html>. There are five marrow donor drives between July 28 and August 6, and volunteers are needed at six events between August 1 and 18. If you have questions or want more information, contact Brad's Punahou classmate, **Ronda Ching Day**, at 387-1474.



夏威夷中華總商會

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**NARCISSUS QUEEN GOODWILL TOUR  
— Adventure, Fun and Business**

On June 7, 2009, the 60th Narcissus Goodwill Tour left Honolulu on China Airlines to begin a tour of the major highlights of China—Shanghai, Beijing, Xi’an, Jiuzhaigou, Chengdu, Guilin, and Hong Kong. The tour planned was ambitious, but the members were ready for an adventurous and fun time, filled with terrific scenery, wonderful architecture, and the meeting of many new friends, both on the tour and in China.

It was also a hectic tour and after one night of hearing, “bags outside the door by 11:30 p.m. and wake-up call at 5:00 a.m.,” I turned to my wife Rena and said that the tour members are going to revolt. Yet every day, they rested like happy campers on the bus or plane, and I thought they are either very flexible or having a very good time. Actually it was both. After the tour, one member stated, “the tour was wonderful, actually the best trip I have been on!” Another stated, “the tour was awesome and we had a great, great time.... If you’re traveling that far and spending all that money, you might as well see and do as much as you can, ... and we did!” One other mentioned that they had the time of their lives seeing all the major provinces, having the abundant and diverse food, and making life-long friends were all a person could ask for.

I can say that the Queen **Lisa Wong** and her court, 1st Princess **Tina Ng**, 2nd Princess **Dan Yuan**, 3rd Princess **Kacie Pang**, and 4th Princess **Kristine Duong** were wonderful representatives for the Chamber and mixed perfectly with the tour members. They were always ready to meet the dignitaries or participate in the activities.

There were many, many highlights of the tour. Starting with Shanghai, the city was abuzz as they were preparing for the World Expo, beginning on May 1, 2010. On the Lupu Bridge, we could see the construction site for all the amazing venues, as we climbed over 300 steps to the top of the lookout. Shanghai TV interviewed Queen Lisa, several members of the Court, and me as we promoted goodwill and Hawaii.

In Beijing, tour members were amazed at the Great Wall, Summer Palace, Forbidden City, Bird’s Nest (or Olympic Stadium), and riding pedicabs in the Houhai District. Most significant was that they were all invited to the Great Hall of the People in celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Narcissus Festival.

The rest of the tour was equally exciting, and our national guide **Jan** would say there were many “wow” moments. In Xi’an, we were treated to a ceremony at the North Gate of the city, and later we marveled at the *terra cotta* soldiers. At Jiuzhaigou, which is on the Tibet Plateau, we saw the many colored lakes that reflected the mountains and tree tops perfectly. That night, the local folk dance show was so interesting, with the colorful costumes as well as the enthusiasm and expressions of the Tibetan people. While in Guilin, we took a boat ride along the Li River and saw the spectacular lime-



Discussing Foreign Exchange with Vice Chairman Lu Yong Xiang of the National People’s Congress



Goodwill Tour Ready to Leave for Adventure on China Airlines

Jumping for Joy - Tina Ng Leaping Over the Birds Nest



Beauty in Jiuzhaigou - Reflections on Lake Frame Queen Lisa Wong

Posing with Panda in Chengdu



stone peaks that have been an inspiration to many artists. Despite all the highlights, it was almost universal agreed that the tour members enjoyed visiting and holding the pandas in Chengdu the most. Some of the tour members held the baby panda, others posed with the two-year old panda, and still others with the rare red panda.

Equally important for the tour was that it was a mission of goodwill and exchange. With all the dignitaries, our message was universally the same: “the Chinese Chamber is seeking increased exchange in the areas of goodwill, business, culture, education, and science. In all cases, the response was the same: “China is looking for increased exchanges, so send us your proposals.” We explored the potential for an appearance by the 61st Narcissus Queen and Court at the World Expo in Shanghai. We delivered a letter from Mayor **Mufi Hannemann** on establishing a sister city relationship with Chengdu. We will continue to have military exchanges, thanks to the work of Past President **Wes Fong**. Our donation for earthquake relief to Sichuan province is being well used for a library because of the work of Past President **Reuben Wong**. All of these efforts are very important and validate the importance of trying to establish a Center for Foreign Relations within our new Chinatown Community Development Center.

Our mission was aided by the presence of President-Elect **Jeff Lau**, Board member **Daniel Lau**, Executive Vice President **Wen Chung Lin**, and Past Presidents **Vernon Ching** and **Reuben Wong**. Much of the credit for the tour goes to the organizers, Skyway Express and China Travel Service, both the head office and Hong Kong. I encourage you to reserve June, 2010 to go on the equally exciting 61st Narcissus Goodwill Tour with Jeff Lau, especially if you have never been to China!

The May 30 *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* (which misspelled his first name as “Tranh”) briefly reported that on May 29, award-winning Ba-Le Inc owner **Thanh Quoc Lam** and a partner closed on the \$20 million purchase of the former Weyerhaeuser box plant on North Nimitz Highway. The June 1 *Pacific Business News* provided much more details on Thanh Quoc’s ambitious plans in a front page story, “Ba-Le moves on to its second course”: a healthier and more upscale new bakery line, LaTour Bakehouse; three or four shops on Oahu selling the LaTour products and made-to-order foods; getting some products into Costco (where some products have been shown to members during a “road show” in June and July); moving Ba-Le’s main bakery and offices into the new building; and renting out five to seven restaurant spaces there. Some renovations have already been made to the building and the move should be completed in time for Ba-Le’s 25th anniversary in December.

**Gail Chew** has been executive director of the Hawaii Restaurant Association since 2005, and like successive recent Chamber administrations, has been concerned with increasing membership. According to **Erika Engle’s** “The Buzz” column in the June 10 *Star-Bulletin*, while at the May National Restaurant Association convention, “Social-media and social networking dominated many of the conversations Gail had there.” As a result, HRA had “Social Networking for Beginners” panels on June 22 at Morton’s. HRA members had a choice of 90-minute sessions in the morning or afternoon. According to Gail, however, those panels just scratched the surface since the Maui HRA chapter has already held a one-day symposium and is planning a follow-up. (For those who aren’t quite up-to-date with technology, social networking includes Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. Twitter is a means of bringing up-to-the-minute news (or ads) to people as has been happening in the aftermath of the June 12 Iranian elections, and *Time* had a June 15 cover article on Twitter).

Former Chamber president Dr. **Ming Chen** was pictured in the June 17 *Midweek* with fellow ophthalmologist Dr. **Tyrie Jenkins** in advance of their participation in a medical mission to Savaii, Western Samoa. Ming is president of the Hawaii Ophthalmological Society and will be in American Samoa from July 19-25 while Dr. Jenkins will be there earlier in the month. Their work will be part of the Aloha Medical Mission’s efforts in various Asia-Pacific countries over the years.

As reported previously in the April issue of *The Lantern*, 2009 Narcissus Queen **Lisa Wong** and her court, as well as Chamber president **Ted Li**, president-elect **Dennis Hwang**, former Chamber president **Wesley Fong**, and Narcissus Queen Pageant and Coronation Ball chair **Michele Choy** were invited to the April 2 House session by state Representative **Corinne Ching**. Princesses **Dan Yuan** and **Kristine Duong** were also able to attend. All of them were pictured together with House Speaker **Calvin Say** in a photo published in the June 17 *Midweek*.

**Edwin Gum’s** Siam Garden Cafe, located on North Nimitz Highway, was quite favorably reviewed in **Nadine Kam’s** “The Weekly Eater” column in the June 24 *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*. Out of a possible four stars for Food, Service, Ambience, and Value, Ms. Kam gave the restaurant 3.5 stars in each category. Dishes specifically mentioned and described by Ms. Kam included “Floating Market Noodles,” fried fish patties, roasted eggplant salad, and Thai tea. Ms. Kam concluded her review with “If I had known about the treasures hidden behind the restaurant’s unassuming facade, I would have dropped in sooner.” And Siam Garden’s food has also been a finalist in the Thai food category in the *Honolulu Advertiser’s* Hawaii’s Best Restaurants in 2006, 2007, and 2008.

U.S. Representative **Neil Abercrombie** turned 71 on Friday, June 26. To mark the occasion, he held a birthday party at the Hilton Hawaiian Village attended by around 1,100 of his friends, according to the June 30 *Star-Bulletin* article. And while U.S. Senator **Daniel K. Inouye** intro-

duced a bill (S.359) on January 30 for the establishment of a Hawaii Capital National Heritage Area, Neil introduced a similar bill (H.R.1297) on March 4. (There are about 40 other such areas, corridors, and routes across the United States). For more on the two short (ten sections), related bills, start with the Library of Congress Web site: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c111:H.R.1297>). In addition, general information is available from the National Park Service (<http://www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas/>) while specific information on the proposed Hawaii Capital NHA and a map are available from the Hawaii Capital Cultural Coalition (<http://www.hawaiicapitalculture.org/03-plan-process.ph>). Then on July 24, Neil introduced H.R. 3333 that would increase the deduction for business-related

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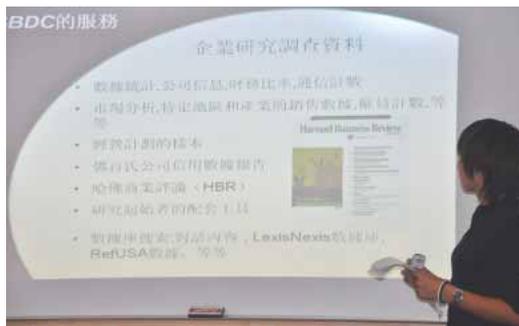
meals and entertainment. According to the July 25 *Star-Bulletin*, the legislation would restore the pre-1993 80-percent deduction, up from the current 50-percent deduction.

A smiling **Eileen Tokita** was pictured in the July 2 *Honolulu Star-Bulletin's* Today section. The article mentioned "her bejeweled Fabergé-style egg creations and purses studded with Swarovski crystals." Eileen teaches walk-in classes every Wednesday and Sunday at Bella Beads at 1001 Dillingham Boulevard, across from Honolulu Community College. Sessions are from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and cost \$35.00, plus the cost of materials. She recently had a class on decorating Bluetooth devices, but if you missed it and only want to learn to decorate your tech gear, come to one of the sessions and the cost for that is \$20.00, plus materials. Eileen also sells already decorated Bluetooth ear pieces. She can be reached at [eilentokita@gmail.com](mailto:eilentokita@gmail.com).



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Aug 18	Tue	<b>Executive Board Meeting</b> Chamber's Office – 12:00 noon
Aug 25	Tue	<b>Board of Directors Meeting</b> The New Empress Restaurant 12:00 noon



Small Business Development Center class at Chinatown Community Development Center



## NEW MEMBERS

At its June 30 meeting, the Chamber board of directors approved the membership applications for **Chantel Ching**, 2008 Narcissus Fourth Princess who is currently an insurance adjuster (recommended by **Gerald Chang**); **Yilu He**, a junior at the University of Hawaii Manoa majoring in finance and minoring in economics (recommended by **Jeffrey Lau**); **Jessica Lau**, 2007 Narcissus Queen who will be starting her first year at Fordham University Law School this fall (recommended by **Michele Choy**); Dr. **Yan Zhang**, a graduate of Beijing University who specializes in internal medicine and primary care (recommended by **Gerald Chang**); and **Hui Ming Zhong**, owner of H&H Gift Shop (recommended by **Jeffrey Lau**). Welcome to the Chamber and we look forward to meeting you at the next general membership meeting.

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