

LANTERN

August 2014



Chinese Chamber of Commerce Dragon Boat Team
at the 2014 Hawaii Dragon Boat Festival

General Membership Meeting

On Thursday, October 30, there will be a lunchtime general membership meeting, featuring Chamber President-Elect **Eddie Flores, Jr.** Better known as the President and CEO of L & L Hawaiian Barbecue, a perpetual entrepreneur, and a real estate continuing education (CE) lecturer, Eddie will be speaking on "Understanding Chinese Buyers." He will cover types of Chinese buyers, their expectations, and their cultural influences. Lunch and the program at the Empress Seafood Restaurant will begin at 12:00 p.m. The cost for Chamber members is \$20.00, \$30.00 for non-members. Seating is limited, so contact the Chamber to reserve a seat for yourself (and your guests) by calling 533-3181. The presentation promises to be both informative and entertaining, given Eddie's sense of humor, so don't miss it.

Hawaii's Best 2014

Last month, the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser's* published its annual "Hawaii's Best 2014" tabloid. A number of Chamber members have restaurants that made the listing in at least one food and dining category: Best Chinese Food – #2 – Panda Express (**John Zhang**, regional director); Best Fast Food – #1 – McDonald's (**Victor Lim**, owner of 6 franchises); Best Italian Food – #1 – Assaggio (**Thomas Ky**); Best Manapua – #2 – Royal Kitchen (**Kwock Nam Lau**); Best Plate Lunch – #2 – L & L Hawaiian Barbecue (**Eddie Flores, Jr.** and **Kwock Yum "Johnson" Kam**); and Best Vietnamese Food – #2 – Ba-Le Sandwich and Bakery (**Thanh Quoc Lam**). Congratulations to each of you and may your businesses continue to prosper. NOTE: While Panda Express doesn't seem to have any coupon specials on new dishes, the newest Hawaii store in Kamehameha Shopping Center has a bubble-tea bar, which will also go into some, but not all, of the other PE stores.

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UPCOMING SMALL BUSINESS EXPORT EVENT

On Thursday, September 18, there will be an SBA/DBEDT export event, "Riding the Global Wave," in Room 216, McKinley Community School for Adults, 634 Pensacola Street, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Appointments to meet with business counselors, local lenders, freight forwarders, and others are on a first come, first served basis from 8:30-8:45 a.m. To register or for more information, contact the Small Business Administration's **Mary Dale**, who can be reached by telephone at 541-2990, ext. 211 or by e-mail at Mary.Dale@sba.gov.



Chinese Tea-pairing Dinner
(L-R): Chamber President Robert Yu,
Sponsor Donna Walden, Tea Master
Andrew Lau and Event Planner Joan Sato.

LANTERN ADVERTISING RATES

Chamber members wishing to publicize their services or goods to our 300-plus members should be aware of the following rates: \$150.00 full-page, \$75.00 half-page, \$40.00 quarter-page, and \$25.00 for business card-size ads. To run your ad, contact the Chamber at 533-3181.



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THE
CHINESE
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE
OF HAWAII



President
Robert Yu

One of the Executive Board's goals this year is to come up with programs and services that create value for our members. To achieve this, we asked members for their input and incorporated it into the Chamber's plans. Some ideas

have already been put in place and others will follow in the coming months.

At the end of August, we will be co-hosting an event with the Korean and Filipino Chambers of Commerce to meet and get to know members from the other organizations. The three Chambers will also try to host a gubernatorial forum so that members can learn more about the candidates.

We are currently working on a new layout for the Chamber's Web site, based on members' feedback. When finished, the site will have more information on members, allow members to post information about their business and profession, and much more.

We are also looking at freshening up the Chamber's newsletter. Some of the ideas being considered are providing space for members to promote their businesses and for posting notices of upcoming Chinese society events. We will report back to you next month with our progress.

As we enter and begin to plan our 66th year of the Narcissus Festival, the work and financial resources required to ensure its success are just as immense as in years past. I want to thank our volunteers and sponsors in advance for their dedication and support of our festival.

In closing, we have received many positive comments on the tea-pairing event and the Dragon Boat race in July. A huge thank you to member **Joan Sato** for organizing the tea-pairing seminar and dinner, to associate members **Megan Muramatsu** and **Selina Qiu** for organizing the race team on short notice, and to Third Vice President **Gifford Chang** for waiving the team's registration fee.

C H A M B E R N E W S & A C T I V I T I E S

Dragon Boat Festival and Races

by Megan Muramatsu

The 2014 Hawaii Dragon Boat Festival was held at Ala Moana Beach Park on Saturday, July 26. The Chamber's dragon boat team did a great job with race times of 90 seconds in the first race and 95 seconds in the second race. Under the direction of team captains and associate members **Jessica Chen** and 2014 Narcissus Queen **Brittany Lee** and steersman **Ed Lee** (Brittany's father), the team of mostly first-time paddlers perpetuated the Chinese dragon boat tradition this summer. We all had a great time practicing, paddling, playing games, and eating together. Thank you to all our donors and supporters who helped to make this event successful, including Chamber President **Robert Yu**, **Gifford Chang**, **Leighton Chong** (loan of cooler), **Wen Chung Lin**, **Lucia Liang**, **Vinny Lim** of McDonald's Hawaii (water coolers and ice), Associate Member chair **Jasmine Nip**, state Senator **Suzanne Chun Oakland** (loan of tables and chairs), and **John Zhang** of Panda Express (discount on food). Thank you to all our paddlers and volunteers as well: **Barbie Prine**, **Bonnie Grubb**, **Brian Goo**, **Brittany Lee**, **Chris Timko**, **Colleen Smith**, **Doug Ibarra**, **Eula Chu**, **Howard Pahed**, **Ina Chiang**, **Jessica Chen**, **Jinsong Riles**, **Kimberly Yuen**, **Kyle Williams**, **Leighton Chong**, **Michael Lam**, **Michelle Wong**, **Mike Young**, **Rey Urbano**, **Richard Finlayson**, **Sean Nathan**, and **Simeng Qu**. Thank you again to everyone who came out to participate on race day! We look forward to seeing you at next year's Dragon Boat Festival, **Yue (Selena) Qiu** and **Megan Muramatsu**, 2014 Dragon Boat Event Coordinators and Associate Members.



continue from Hawaii's Best 2014 on p.1...

While on the subject of food, you may want to take a look at "America's Best & Worst Fast Food" in the August 2014 issue of *Consumer Reports*. Food (and consumer retail) tastes and preferences have been changing in recent years, partly due to the recession, loss of many well-paying jobs, and a "gig" or part-time employment economy. Members may want to take a look at a couple of books that may tell where we've been, where we are, and where we may be going food-wise: *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal* by **Eric Schlosser** and *Salt Sugar Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us* by **Michael Moss**. Both books are available in paperback.

2014 Hawaii Dragon Boat Festival
Chinese Chamber Associates Team

Foreign Relations Committee

by Jeffrey Lau

Honolulu's Sister City Team has just returned from Chengdu after extending their stay because of the warm welcome they received from the Foreign Affairs Office and also because of the wonderful friends they made with the Chengdu University volunteers as well as the other Americans and other international performers, from Sweden, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Indonesia, Japan, Australia, and South Korea. They had the opportunity to perform on the Grand Stage of the Eastern Memory Music Park, visit the Jin Sha Museum, the Panda Breeding Research Base, DuJiangyan Water System, and the Global Center, with its surfing wave beach, reputed to be the largest building in the world, anchored by Lotte and J & M department stores. Thanks also to the Foreign Affairs Office for allowing us to visit the Flying Tiger exhibits at the Jianchuan Museum, which has a special relationship with the Pacific Aviation Museum.

During our stay, we developed quite a following, with the medical team, event photographer, and many other student guides volunteering to travel on our tour bus to assist us. Perhaps it's because we were also accompanied by our two year student guides, **Angela Zhang** and **Sherry Wu** from South West Jiaotong University, as well as three of our Honolulu Student Ambassadors, **Shirley Ling**, **Tiffany Luo**, and **Samantha Yu**, who had visited us in Honolulu last year. Our entire group was also hosted by our new Chamber member **Jun Wei**, who is president of the China Hawaii Chamber of Commerce, on several occasions during our stay.

Deputy Director General **Zhong Laizhao** honored us, allowing some of us to sit at the head table at the closing dinner, and the following morning, we had a specially arranged meeting with Director General **Lu Sheng** to discuss in detail further opportunities for cooperation between Honolulu and Chengdu. These discussions included possible visits by both mayors in the near future and possible participation in Splendor of China this year.

I want to thank and express a big *mahalo* to **Leilani Soon**, **Taj'a** and **Tiana Wong**, **Crystal Lin**, and **Christopher Loo**, who



Director General Lu Sheng of the Chengdu Municipal Foreign Affairs Office, Yu Ran USA Specialist and Si Beibei Chief of Staff of Chengdu Municipal Foreign Affairs Office discussing further cooperation between Honolulu and Chengdu including Mayoral visits, student exchanges and participation in Splendor of China.



The Grand Stage at Eastern Memories Music Park

Sister Cities Museum Honolulu Display



accompanied me on this mission. They were simply exemplary in representing Honolulu and the Chinese Chamber in their performances, professionalism, friendliness, and protocol. I was so proud of them and their display of the *aloha* spirit that became contagious wherever we went. We are already planning our return visit next year. If you are interested, please let us know. We will be having a second "Night in Chengdu" to share with our Chamber members the wonderful experiences we had there. Contributions to help defray our expenses are still welcome.

Finally, we have received inquiries from a number of our sister cities about participating in Splendor of China this year.

Puna Relief: Neighbors Helping Neighbors

As everyone knows (or should know), the eastern portion of the Big Island, particularly Puna was particularly hard hit earlier this month by Hurricane Iselle. For those wanting to donate money to those affected by the storm, the following agencies are helping our neighbors in Puna: The Food Basket — Hawaii Island Food Bank, 40 Holomua St., Hilo 96720, Tel. No. (808) 933-6030, (www.foodbaskethi.org); Hawaii Foodbank, 2611 Kilihaui St., Honolulu 96819, Tel. No. 836-3600 (www.hawaiifoodbank.org); Aloha United Way (100% of donations passed on), 200 N. Vineyard Blvd., Honolulu 96817, Tel. No. 536-1951 (www.auw.org); and Hawaii Island United Way, 142 Kinooale St., Hilo 96720, Tel. No. (808) 969-3236 (www.hiunitedway.org).

In any disaster, "relief efforts" spring up, but some of them are not *bona fide* and are just scammers. Before donating, you can check out "relief" organizations through either Charity Navigator (www.directrelief.org) or GuideStar (www.guidestar.org).



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NEW MEMBER

At its July 29 meeting, the Chamber board approved the applications for **Brenda Foster**, executive-in-residence, Shidler College of Business, University of Hawaii Manoa (recommended by **Eddie Flores**); **Anna Heil**, an account manager with Hawaii Coffee Company (recommended by **Eddie Flores, Jr.**); and **Wilson Lau**, territory manager, Bristol Meyer Squibb (recommended by **Gifford Chang**).



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- | | | |
|--------|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aug 20 | Wed | Homeownership & 3 Chamber Networking
Koolani Condominium Conference Room – 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. |
| Aug 21 | Thu | Executive Board Meeting
Chamber Office – 6:00 p.m. |
| Aug 26 | Tue | Board of Directors Meeting
Empress Restaurant – 12:00 p.m. |
| Sep 1 | Mon | Labor Day |
| Sep 3 | Wed | 2015 Narcissus Queen Pageant Orientation
Hilton Hawaiian Village Coral II
7:00 to 8:30 p.m. |
| Sep 8 | Mon | Mid-Autumn Festival |

Social Security is Alive and Well

Seventy-nine years ago, on August 14, 1935, President **Franklin D. Roosevelt** signed the Social Security Act. (Another name for the Social Security program is “Old Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Program” or OASDI). Today, there are some politicians and pundits who claim that Social Security is “broke,” but if not, benefits should be cut because such “entitlements” add to the deficit. On the contrary, according to the annual report of the Trustees of Social Security and Medicare, released on July 28, for the least three years, the Social Security trust fund has had and has nearly \$2.8 trillion, enough to pay 100% of benefits until 2034.

According to Barron’s *Dictionary of Finance and Investment Terms* (9th ed. 2014), solvency is the “state of being able to meet outstanding obligations as they come due.” Those are earned benefits, prepaid by workers through payroll deductions of FICA taxes – 12.4% for Social Security and a separate 2.9% for Medicare Part A (hospitalization). Being self-funded, Social Security has nothing to do with the deficit (which, in any event, has been decreasing each year since 2009). In fact, funds from the “Social Security lockbox” are loaned to the federal government and earned \$103 billion last year, a 3.75% annual rate of return for Social Security, according to the Trustees’ 2014 report.

Even if nothing is done by Congress, Social Security will still be able to pay 77% after 2034. However, last summer, Senator **Brian Schatz** was the first co-sponsor of Senator **Tom Harkin**’s Strengthening Social Security Act of 2013 (S. 567), which would (1) increase the monthly benefit for low and middle income beneficiaries; (2) expand Social Security by utilizing a cost-of-living index (CPI-E) that better reflects the expenses of older Americans, who spend more for healthcare, compared to the broader cost-of-living index for all Americans (CPI-U); and (3) eliminate the arbitrary annual taxable income cap on FICA taxes (\$113,700 in 2013, \$117,000 in 2014). The FICA tax is regressive since, among other things, it is not collected on any earnings above the income cap or on investment income.

So Happy Birthday, Social Security, may you be safe and secure from those who want to cut benefits through a “chained-CPI” and increasing the eligibility age for Americans not yet receiving Social Security. (Every month increase in age is equal to at least a \$1,240 annual loss of Social Security benefits, double that for higher-wage earners).

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