



THE CHINESE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF HAWAII

夏威夷中華總商會



LANTERN

NEWSLETTER

Oct/Nov/Dec, 2021

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Chinatown Outreach Task Force Update

by Wesley Fong

Created in July, 2021, the Chinatown Outreach Task Force (COTF) has shown that the Chinese Chamber cares about Chinatown. We want to take back Chinatown and make it a vibrant, safe, and secure destination for both residents and visitors to enjoy.

Since its inception, the COTF has initiated an ongoing Chinatown cleanup and paint-out of graffiti, passed out free vaccine flyers in Chinatown, and created a flyer in partnership with the City with 911- and 311- numbers to call to report a crime, an emergency or homeless problems. We passed out over 300 flyers to Chinatown merchants.



A new initiative is being created for a guide to Chinatown in partnership with the City to highlight the historic and special and popular sites of Chinatown. It is tentatively going to be called "Discovering Honolulu Chinatown." Mahalo to COTF members Wesley Fong (chair), Elvira Lo (vice chair), Yu Shing Ting (secretary), John Chang, Mona Choy, Cy Feng, Patrick Graham, Angie Shiroma, Michael Young and ex officio members Russell Lau and Jonathan Cook.

Upcoming Events

No sooner are Christmas and New Year's over than Chinese New Year will be upon us. The date coincides with the year's first new moon, which can occur between January 21 and February 20. This year, Chinese New Year begins on Tuesday, February 1, and the Tiger's run continues until January 21, 2023. Traditionally, the New Year observances begin with a family dinner and reunion on New Year's Eve and continue until the Lantern Festival on the 15th day of the new year (February 16).

Unlike years past, due to concerns about COVID-19, this year there will be no Chinese New Year celebration in Chinatown or the Chamber's two-day celebration with booths and on-stage entertainment at the Chinatown Cultural Plaza. We can only hope that the traditional celebrations, including the Choy Cheng appearance of many physical culture clubs' lions appearance at the Chinese Chamber building, can resume in 2023, a Year of the Rabbit. Much depends of course on the difficult to predict appearance of COVID variants, but let us hope that a year from now will be a more auspicious time. Meanwhile, there is the new Year of the Tiger beginning on February 1. Gong xi fa cai, Xin nian kuai le (Mandarin) or Gung hee fat choy, Sun nin fai lok (Cantonese)



President  
Russell Lau

This past fall and winter have been a busy and challenging time for the Chamber. Our biggest challenge was striving to hold various Chamber events while the rules for COVID were constantly changing according to different government mandates. Planning events became an extreme challenge, and we had to create multiple scenarios on how we could conduct events, depending upon what the rules might be at the actual time of the event. Nevertheless, our planning committees struggled on and to our pleasant surprise, were successful beyond our most optimistic forecasts. We credit the creativity, ingenuity, the willingness to try and do things that have never been done before, and the absolute hard work of our volunteers. The entire Executive Committee stepped up to the plate to help get the job done and I really appreciate their efforts.

Our fall activities began on Wednesday, September 29. We held a virtual, in-person Quad Chamber Event with the FBI in the executive offices of Finance Factors. The FBI wanted to reach out into the community to inform us of the types of services they provide.

Then on Thursday, October 14, we held an incredibly successful Chinese Chamber Golf Tournament fundraiser chaired by Third Vice President **Michael Young**. The net revenues were more than double our past tournaments, and we put on the event entirely by ourselves, without having to partner with any other organization.

On Monday, November 1, I videorecorded and sent a congratulatory message on the 40th anniversary to the *Zhongshan Overseas Chinese Journal* with the help of video specialist and Chinese Secretary **Cy Feng**.

On Friday, November 12, the Chinatown Outreach Task Force, headed by **Wes Fong**, passed out flyers for the Honolulu Police Department’s emergency phone number 911. Wes generously hosted a lunch for the volunteers – **Elvira Lo, Yu Shing Ting, John Chang, Mona Choy, Cy Feng, Patrick Graham, Angie Shiroma, Jonathan Cook**, and me – at the end of the effort.

Then on Saturday, November 20, Yu Shing Ting chaired the outreach effort for painting over graffiti in Chinatown, in cooperation with the City and County of Honolulu. The City & County of Honolulu, has requested that we continue our volunteer efforts and the Chamber has agreed to help for the next year.

On Thursday, December 2, we held our big installation, awards and holiday party, chaired by **Sarah Moy**. (Her report is elsewhere in this issue of *The Lantern*). It was an incredible success as we were able to hold the event two days after Governor Ige and Mayor Blangiardi eased restrictions on social gatherings. We would never have been able to accomplish this event if the regulations hadn’t been eased. Attendees were delighted to have the opportunity to visit with their friends, many whom they hadn’t seen in person since the start of COVID pandemic in March, 2020. This event netted the Chamber approximately ten times the normal expected net revenues.

Then on Saturday, December 4, Jonathan Cook attended the United Chinese Society of Hawaii installation banquet while I attended the Filipino Chamber installation banquet.

On Monday, December 6, **Frances Goo** volunteered to chair the Chamber’s Personnel Committee, composed of Jonathan Cook, **Michele Choy**, Mona Choy, Elvira Lo, **Vernon Ching**, and myself. We have much to be thankful for Frances for taking on this difficult task as it is very difficult to be able to find a replacement for Executive



Chinese Chamber Golf Tournament fundraiser

Vice President **Wen Chung Lin**, who will be retiring later this year in May. There will be much to do for this committee if it will be successful in the job search.

On Saturday, December 11, the Associated Chinese University Women (ACUW) held their installation luncheon at the Honolulu Country Club, which I attended.

On Saturday, December 18, we had a group of about 16 volunteers to help clean up the damage in the basement of the Chamber building due to flooding from the heavy rains earlier in the month. This was a major undertaking as the basement, like most basements, become repositories of a lot of “stuff”, including over 1,400 very heavy 100th year anniversary of the Chamber books produced in 2011. Mike Young and his pickup truck were there to save the day as the truck was used extensively to haul loads of debris to the waste dump. Wen Chung Lin, **Tina Ge** and her husband, Cy Feng, **Dean Sakamoto**, **Gordon Au**, Michele Choy, Jonathan Cook, **Michael Young**, **Chris Loo**, **Thomas Wong**, **Robert Yamane**, **Joanna Mak**, **Jack Zhang**’s two staffs and many others did the hot and sweaty work of hauling the stuff up the stairs. In fact, I’ve never seen Jonathan sweat more. His face was completely dripping.

On Sunday, January 2, 2022, Michele Choy held her first meeting for the 2022 Narcissus Pageant contestants, which

kicked off the start of Narcissus Festival process. We now have six contestants for the Pageant.

Then on Sunday, January 9, Michael Young and Cy Feng assisted Wen Chung with an additional clean-up and debris removal from the basement of the Chamber building. We have not yet fixed the problem of the water as we have yet to identify the actual location of the where the water leak comes from. We will have to wait for the next heavy downfall to try to track where the leaks come from.

Lastly, in spite of our various attempts to hold the Chinese New Year *Choy Cheng* events, our efforts were in vain as the City and County of Honolulu would not assist us with closing the streets and temporarily rerouting the buses through Chinatown. Their reasoning was sound as the police department was having staffing shortages due to COVID, their budget was limited, but the biggest reason was they did not want to be involved with an event that could bring thousands of attendees to a concentrated location, like Chinatown, just as the Omicron variant was spiking in Honolulu. I can’t blame them.

In spite of all the challenges we have been having, I am proud to be working with all the volunteers of the Chamber. Our people are hard-working, dedicated and real leaders of our community.

## Chamber Paint-Out in Chinatown

On the morning of November 20, 2021, members of the CCCH Chinatown Outreach Task Force (COTF) (Yu Shing Ting, Cy Feng, Jonathan Cook and Wes Fong) along with Chamber members (Michele Choy and **Michelle Wong**) and friends of the Chamber joined the Honolulu Police Department (HPD) in painting over the graffiti in Chinatown. With three team consisting of HPD, City and Chamber members, the graffiti in store windows, city utility boxes and the walls on Kekaulike Mall were painted over. It was an initiative chaired by Yushing to help the HPD rid Chinatown of graffiti. Because of her helping to organize the event, the HPD presented her with an official HPD certificate of recognition. It was another Chamber initiative that showed that the Chamber does care about Chinatown.





## Installation Banquet

by Sarah Moy

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting, often changing national and local health restrictions, in-person Chamber activities have been few and far between. As a result, the Chamber had its first formal social event, the Installation/Awards/Holiday banquet at the Jade Dynasty Seafood Restaurant on Thursday, December 2. It was a very successful and well-attended event with 190 guests, and the Chamber was able to net a \$10,000 profit from the event even though the initial projected profit was only about \$1,000. Pre-COVID, our installation banquet guest count is normally about 300 attendees, but with the social distancing rules at the time of the event, Jade Dynasty was limited in its table capacity. Additionally, the Banquet committee had to price the event higher than in previous years to cover the higher banquet costs as well as help to alleviate the current budget deficit that the Chamber is facing in this COVID environment.

President **Russell Lau** was the master of ceremonies and ran a full-packed agenda, recognizing the 2020-2021 Narcissus Queen and Court, two Executive Committees, two years of awardees (current year and previous year) as well as two past Presidents (**Elvira Lo** and **Michele Choy**). Unfortunately, because of COVID, we were not able to include the governor, the mayor or other dignitaries and society presidents. It was mainly an event for Chamber members to celebrate the various recognitions and to mingle with each other. Guests were treated to a delicious Jade Dynasty banquet dinner, accompanied with premium bottles of wine in a festive holiday setting.



The saying ‘It takes a village’ surely applied to the planning that went into making the event a reality. Planning efforts started in June and the Banquet committee had to keep changing the set-up of the event as social distancing rules evolved. We initially planned a virtual live-streaming event, then a hybrid virtual/live event, and finally, a live-only event just a month prior to the banquet, to be in compliance with the COVID rules. Though the tickets were priced significantly higher than in previous years, there was such an overwhelming response from Chamber members that table tickets were sold out in just two days!

My heartfelt appreciation to the Banquet committee for all its hard work and perseverance and to President Russell Lau for encouraging us to ‘think out of the box’ that made the event possible. Most of all, I thank all the Chamber members who came out to support the Chamber and to connect with other members. Hope to see all of you soon at our future Chamber events!

## COVID-19 Update

Since January 2020, the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 has shown medical experts and the public that viruses have the ability to mutate due to infecting a large pool of unvaccinated victims. As the experts have pointed out, if everyone in the world was vaccinated, there would be no new mutations and variants. In July, 2021, with the widespread rollout of vaccines from Johnson & Johnson (one-shot) and Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech (two-shots), things were looking good, then along came the Delta variant that became the dominant strain during the summer and fall, then in late November, the even more highly transmissible Omicron variant appeared. In about a month's time, it became the dominant variant across the U.S. It appears that areas in the northeast U.S. where Omicron first appeared are having fewer cases, and the lagging indicators of hospitalizations and deaths are lower than with Delta. Nevertheless, Omicron is still ravaging other areas of the U.S., especially where many people are foolishly unvaccinated, all too often by choice, willing to risk serious illness, hospitalization and even death.

At present, according to the authoritative Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center, only 64% of Americans are fully vaccinated, far from the number needed for herd immunity. In addition, 884,260 Americans have died from COVID-19 or underlying illness. (That number is likely an undercount because during the initial surge in the spring of 2020, the dead were filling the morgues, refrigerated trailers were needed to hold the overflow, and there was no time for pathologists to determine the exact cause of death.)

As we have learned over the last two years or so, COVID-19 is transmitted by droplets and far smaller aerosols through the air. In either case, that transmission occurs as we exhale, cough, sneeze, sing or cheer/yell. The CDC initially downplayed masks

due to shortages and the available ones were needed for frontline medical personnel and first-responders, but it failed to inform the public that was the basis for their no-mask advisory. With masks readily available now, the CDC began recommending during the summer that people "may" want to wear masks, especially in public. However, with the advent of the Omicron variant, CDC now recommends that people start using N95, KN95 or KF94 masks, which are 95% effective in preventing the wearer from possibly spreading the virus and inhaling the virus that others may be spreading. As might be expected where money is involved, there are companies selling fake N95/KN95/KF94 masks. Bona Fide Masks (<https://bonafidemasks.com>) is the exclusive U.S. and Canada distributor for Powecom KN95 and Harley KN95 masks, both companies manufacturing their masks in Guangzhou and are FDA-approved. Since some N95/KN95/KF94 masks can be somewhat expensive, you may want to check **Tara Parker-Pope's** *NY Times* article on how long you can use those masks.

And the best protection is to get vaccinated. (Those anti-vaxxers who have school children have forgotten or overlook the requirement that in order to attend a public or private school, each child is required to take as many as a dozen inoculations against tetanus, typhoid, etc. and that after thousands of years, smallpox was finally eradicated in 1977 by a global vaccination program). At present, the CDC recommends an additional shot of the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna mRNA or Johnson & Johnson vaccines for those 65 years or over as well as those 50-64 who have underlying medical conditions and has approved the Pfizer vaccine for the 28 million children 5-11 years old. If you are eligible, do yourself and your loved ones a favor and get vaccinated or boosted.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Feb 15 • Tue

**Executive Committee Meeting**  
Chamber Office – 6:00 p.m.

Feb 21 • Mon

**Presidents' Day**

Feb 22 • Tue

**Board of Directors Meeting**  
Google Virtual Meet – 12:00 p.m.

Mar 4 • Fri

**General Election of Board of Directors**

Mar 22 • Tue

**Executive Committee Meeting**  
Chamber Office – 6:00 p.m.

Mar 25 • Fri

**Election of 2022-2023 New Officers**

Mar 29 • Tue

**Board of Directors Meeting**  
Google Virtual Meet – 12:00 p.m.

Apr 2 • Sat

**72nd Narcissus Queen Pageant**  
Mamiya Theatre – 7:30 p.m.

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## Member News

Located in the historic Yong Sing building on Alakea Street in downtown Honolulu since its opening in 2006, **Linda Chan's** The Mandalay restaurant has relocated to 3008 Waialae Avenue on the edge of Kaimuki. In addition to its regular menu for dine in, for take-out only, there is a *dim sum bento* box for \$8.00 and a much larger *dim sum* platter for \$55.00. They also have *xiao long bao*, five soup dumplings for \$9.95. So for reservations or information or to order take-out, call 1-808-525-8585, Wednesday through Monday, closed Tuesday.

In late November, HEI announced via PRNewswire that **Elisia Flores**, CEO of L&L Franchise, Inc., had been named to the HEI board of directors. (She was already a member of HEI subsidiary American Savings Bank's board – and will continue to serve – as well as several other local community organizations). Congratulations, Elisia, and one might say that you've just added to your very full plate.

Chamber board member and retired major general, former Hawaii adjutant general **Robert Lee** was featured in a half-page, above-the-fold article in the Sunday, January 23 *Star-Advertiser*. As many Chamber members and directors know, Bob was heavily involved in the effort to get a Congressional Gold Medal to honor the thousands of largely unsung and unknown Chinese-Americans from Hawaii and the mainland who volunteered to serve in the five branches of the U.S. military during World War II. What isn't as well known is that according to the article, back in 2010, he worked with the late Sen. **Daniel Inouye** and retired General **Eric Shinseki** to get authorization for a Congressional Gold Medal for *nisei* (second generation Japanese-Americans) from Hawaii and the mainland who served with the 100th Battalion, the 442nd Infantry Regiment or the Military Intelligence Service in World War II. Thanks to that experience, Bob was readily able to help the Chinese American World War II Veteran Congressional Gold Medal effort and he served as co-chair for the WWII Hawaii Chinese American Congressional Gold Medal Committee. Due to COVID-19, the Hawaii regional presentation ceremonies were postponed. However, at long last, the Chinese Chamber of Hawaii Foundation and the Chinese American WWII Veterans Project will hold a sold-out luncheon on Thursday, February 6, at the Hilton Hawaiian Village Coral Ballroom and Bob will be one of the speakers.



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