



## **GSGV Lodge Installed Board Officers and Associates for 2021**

During the January 11 Greater San Gabriel Valley Lodge virtual meeting, the new Board of Officers and Associates were installed by Brother Paul Wong, past Lodge president and past National VP on Planning. Hon. Yvonne Yiu, Mayor of Monterey Park, and her husband Albert Young, both GSGV Lodge members, also attended the meeting.

The list of installed Lodge Officers are: John Y. Wong, President; Tak Charles Mau, Vice-President; Dean Ng, Secretary; Sam W. Gee, Assistant Secretary; Jason Dhing, Treasurer; Hollie Luong, Financial Secretary; Shirley Hwong & Angela Lai, Compliance Officers; Alice Mah, Marshall; Scott Kwong, Sentinel; Valerie Lee, Collector; and Sharon Wong, National Representative.

The Board Associates consist of 15 members, listed in alphabetical order: Shirley Chan, Stuart Chan, Larissa Lam Chiu, David Lau, Margaret Leung, Wendy Lo, Alex Ly, Jessica Mei, Craig Miller, Jack Orswell, Paul Perez, Nancy Quon, Judi Wong and Hungzhe Zhao.



Appearing in GSGV Jan. Installation Meeting, from L to R, from top : John Wong, Shirley & Stuart Chan, Nancy Quon, Sharon Wong, Dean Ng, Hon. Yvonne Yiu, Valerie Lee, Pek Chan, Jessica Mei, Hollie Luong, Charles Mau, Jason Dhing, David Lau, Larissa Lam Chiu, Paul Perez, Scott Kwong, Paul Wong, Shirley Hwong, Angela Lai, Craig Miller & Alice Mah, and Pete Chinn.

Outgoing President Sister Sharon Wong reported on the accomplishments of the Lodge during her 2019-2020 tenure at the helm, including, among others, leading a team to attend the 2019 C.A.C.A. National Convention in Boston, and hosting Dr. Russell Lowe's "Three Coins" Book Lecture at the Monterey Park Library in Nov. 2019.

Incoming President John Wong began his inauguration address by stating that C.A.C.A. was started 125 years ago as a Chinese civil rights organization expanding to over 19 lodges throughout these United States of America. He stressed that C.A.C.A. was no longer just a civil rights organization, as our local lodges have expanded to cover other concerns of our local communities, including on issues concerning our Chinese heritage and culture. The GSGV Lodge will advocate for any special concerns in its community, such as continuing to get US Congress to apologize for the passage of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and contributing to getting the Congressional Gold Medal for the WWII Chinese American Veterans legislation passed in 2019. He said this year of the Ox would be a very full and busy year for the GSGV lodge. The first and foremost task is to coordinate with National, local military officials and our Lodge members to locate and get the medals to our veterans in Southern California as soon as possible, due to the advancing age of the recipients. Time and circumstances permitting, the Lodge will plan its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, which was postponed last year because of the pandemic. Last but not least, on behalf of the membership, he thanked Sister Sharon Wong for the last two years of service and leadership as President of our Lodge.

## **2021 GSGV Lodge Working Committees**

President John Wong appointed Chairs to a number of working committees for the coming year. After soliciting for members in the various committees, the following committees with their members were formed:

**Membership: Dean Ng** (Chair), Valerie Lee, Sam Gee, Alex Ly, David Lau, Nancy Quon.

**Finance: Jason Dhing** (Chair), Hollie Luong, Shirley Hwong, Angela Lai, Stuart Chan.

**Citizenship: Paul Perez** (Chair), Shirley Chan, Qiang Byornbak, Craig Miller.

**Ways & Means: John Wong** (Chair), Larissa Lam Chiu, Jack Orswell, Nancy Quon, Alex Ly, Judi Wong.

**Newsletter: Charles Mau** (Chair), Margaret Leung, Shirley Chan.

**Website: Paul Wong** (Chair), Jason Dhing, David Lau, Larissa Lam Chiu.

**Veterans Affairs: Stuart Chan** (Chair), Tony Wong, Paul Perez, Jack Orswell, Margaret Leung.

**Events & Social: Shirley Hwong** (Chair), Sharon Wong, Nena Calica, David Lau.

**Youth Outreach & Scholarship: Scott Kwong** (Chair), Jessica Mei, Alex Ly, Alice Mah, Qiang Byornbak, Judi Wong, Wendy Lo, Angela Lai.

## C.A.C.A. 56<sup>th</sup> Biennial National Convention is Now Open for Registration

Brother Davace Chin, National Convention Chair and Past National President, recently sent out a notice informing us that the 56<sup>th</sup> National Convention, August 7-14, 2021 is now ready for online registration. He stated, “Mindful of our responsibility to our members, family, friends, communities and supporters, we have taken the decision to change the in-person national convention, previously slated to take place in Portland, Oregon, to a wholly online and digital-based convention using Zoom Video Conferencing.” “The convention will span a period of one week,” he continued, “with the opening plenary/business session scheduled for August 7 and the closing plenary/business session scheduled for August 14, 2021. Throughout the week, the national convention team will organize and offer a diverse

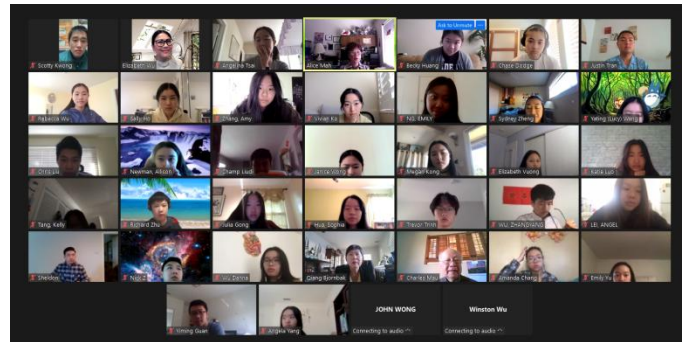


collection of online programs, educational sessions and guest speakers. Highlights of the convention will include celebrating Portland Lodge’s Centennial Anniversary and the observance of the 100th anniversary of the dedication of the national headquarters building.” Prospective delegates and non-delegates can now register free by visiting the national webpage or click on the link below to register through EventBrite, <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/caca-56th-biennial-national-convention-registration-146692805129>. Members of our Lodge are encouraged to participate in this Convention remotely because it is a rare and free opportunity to be a part of the proceedings of the meeting.

To prepare for the meeting, Sister Qiang Byornbak was appointed Chair of the Resolution Committee to coordinate the collection of ideas and writings for the resolutions to be submitted for deliberation in the National Convention.

## Joint LA/GSGV 2021 Essay Contest Completed

On Saturday, March 6, the 2021 National Essay Contest was held successfully on a virtual platform due to health measures imposed by the pandemic. The local Essay Contest, jointly run by the LA and GSGV Lodges, was carried out at the same time. As a tradition, this year’s 32 essay entries at this contest will automatically be entered in the National Contest with the same essay topic and prompt. The essay topic this year is “Facing the Covid-19 Pandemic” and asks the students to write their experiences and lessons learned at the personal and community levels.



Snapshot of the LA/GSGV jointly-run local essay contest

The GSGV Youth Committee members, led by Chair Scott Kwong, participated in outreach to the surrounding high schools that resulted in a significant increase in participation in the local contest this year. The entire effort was spearheaded by Sister Elizabeth Wu from the LA Lodge, who set up the remote platform on which the Contest was conducted. Members of our Youth Committee volunteered as proctors monitoring the competition, also including President John Wong and NVP Education Charles Mau. Some would also serve as judges for the contest essays.

We received a lot of positive feedback from the local coordinators and proctors on the virtual format that was adopted. Participating students did need to make a pledge not to use materials available online and not to have another person write the essay for them. The format will also allow students living far away to participate remotely, thus help broadening awareness of the work of C.A.C.A.

## Sister Larissa Lam’s Los Angeles Times Op-Ed Article Reflects on Race Relations between Chinese and Black Americans

On April 4, LA Times published an Op-Ed article authored by Sister Larissa Lam Chiu titled “**Bonds of community forged in the Delta generations ago**”. In it, she described how, while visiting Mississippi with her husband Bro. Baldwin Chiu, she discovered that, 2-3

generations ago in the Deep South, “The Chinese and Black families had a shared experience because both were pushed to the margins of society and had to figure out ways to survive together in a white society.” Reflecting on the on-going wave of anti-Chinese and anti-Asian hate incidents, Sister Larissa wrote: “People talk about the importance of solidarity and genuine community. But it’s the lack of these things in recent decades that has allowed hate to rise to fatal heights. Racism hasn’t been eradicated, and tensions can exist between various communities.” She concluded the essay with “In the Mississippi Delta nearly a century ago, bonds of community were formed among unlikely neighbors. We should remember those bonds so we can improve the world we live in today.” In times of pent-up racial tensions in our communities, these words are very thought-provoking and should motivate us to take actions to help improve life for Chinese and Asian Americans, and to also work with and form friendships with other communities in this Nation. Anyone interested in the full text of the article should contact Sister Larissa for a copy.

### **“Far East Deep South” to Debut on Public Television on May 4, 2021**

The award-winning documentary “FAR EAST DEEP SOUTH”, co-produced by Bro. Baldwin Chiu and Sister Larissa Lam (Director, Writer) will have its broadcast premiere on Tuesday, May 4, 2021 on World Channel Series “America Reframed”. The autobiographical film, a sequel to “Finding Cleveland”, follows a Chinese-American family’s search for roots in the Mississippi Delta, where they uncovered the complex history of Chinese immigrants in the segregated South. The broadcast will be part of the Celebration of Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month. For Lodge members living in Southern California, you may tune in at PBS SoCal World Channel at 5:00 PM or 9:00 PM, Tuesday, May 4, 2021. The Digital TV Channel number is DTV 50.4.

### **California’s “De-Criminalizing Robbery” Senate Bill SB-82 was put on Backburner**

A Senate Bill, SB-82, introduced by State Senator Nancy Skinner (CA-09) on Dec. 15, 2020, caused an uproar among the Chinese- and Asian-American communities here in California. This bill, nicknamed “Theft is Not Robbery”, “*would define the crime of petty theft in the first degree as taking the property from the person of another or from a commercial establishment by means of force or fear without the use of a deadly weapon or great bodily injury.*” It thus affords the perpetrators the possibility of escaping with a much lighter or no sentence for crimes previously defined as robberies. This is troubling to the Asian American communities as

their older and vulnerable members are often targets of robbery where the victims are threatened with harm and end up giving up their belongings to the perpetrators. The implications of this bill, if passed, would raise further insecurity and fear into the community right in the middle of the on-going waves of anti-Asian hate crimes caused by insensitive comments on the origin of the Covid-19 virus and by the over-the-top language used against China in the formulation of foreign policies by the previous and present administrations.

Local assembly and senate members, alarmed by the fierce community opposition to SB-82, either cautioned Senator Skinner to be mindful of the voices of the Asian American community, or simply expressed opposition to the bill. At the April 5 Senate Appropriations Committee meeting, perhaps heeding the outcry, the members voted unanimously to place the bill in suspense file and schedule a hearing again in late May. This means that the bill is now put in the backburner, and likely is dead. But members of the Asian community must be vigilant and track the status of this bill so it will never be brought back to life. Our Lodge members are encouraged to voice their concern about this bill to the assembly members and state senators in their districts.

### **GSGV Lodge Mourns Passing of Sister Jane Gee**

In our March Lodge meeting, Sister Valerie Lee reported that Sister Jane Gee, a beloved member, passed away late last year at the age of 63, shortly after discovering she had stage-4 brain cancer. For the past few years, Sister Jane has rarely attended our meetings. About two years ago, our Lodge received a generous gift of \$2000 from her, qualifying her as a lifetime honorary Lodge member. Jane had a 30-year professional career with the Department of Water and Power in downtown LA, and was a member of the First Chinese Baptist Church in Chinatown. Sister Sophie Wong, who was friendly with her for a few years, remembers Jane as a great person who was involved at one time in supporting veteran affairs. Before she joined C.A.C.A., Brother Charles got to know her through his wife Tammy. He vividly remembered her to be a helpful and energetic lady who provided him with ample information on renewable energy upon request. Sister Jane will be dearly missed by all in our Lodge. She was survived by her son Ryan, her daughter Karina, and her parents.



**Our next Lodge Meeting will be Monday, May 10, 2021, at 8:00 PM via Zoom conference.**