

IMAGE



SPRING/SUMMER
2015

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN
ADVOCATES



K.L. Wang
(1925-2015)

Alex Mark
(1925-2015)

IMAGE

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spring/summer 2015

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About OCA- Asian Pacific American Advocates

OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates is a national membership-driven organization of community advocates dedicated to advancing the social, political, and economic well-being of Asian Pacific Americans.

To fulfill its mission, OCA has established the following goals:

- to advocate for social justice, equal opportunity, and fair treatment
- to promote civic participation, education, and leadership
- to advance coalitions and community building;
- to foster cultural heritage

Founded as Organization of Chinese Americans in 1973, OCA has since grown to a robust national advocacy organization to advance the civil rights of Asian Pacific Americans and aspiring Americans. The organization presently has over 100 chapters, affiliates, and partners, impacting more than 35,000 individuals all across the country through local and national programming. While the organization's headquarters remains in Washington, DC, allowing OCA to directly engage in critical public policy issues on a macro level, it continues to largely remain as a grassroots constituency of lay advocates from all walks of life and diverse ethnic identities addressing uniquely local level issues impacting over 19 million Asian Pacific Americans across the country.

OCA takes no collective position on the politics of any foreign country, but instead focuses on the welfare and civil rights of Asian Pacific Americans.

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Message from the President

MICHAEL W. KWAN | OCA National President

As we commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the March from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, to secure voting rights, we must reflect on what we have done and what we will do to honor the sacrifices made to ensure the principle of “One Man, One Vote” is upheld for all Americans. While we, as a community, have increased our voter participation in each of the last four Presidential elections, we still remain far behind other race/ethnic groups. In fact, of the reported groups, Asian Americans finished dead last in voter turnout. Pacific Islander participation was so small that it was deemed statistically unreliable and excluded from the U.S. Census report.

Today there are a record thirteen AAPI officials in Congress, but this is only 2.2% of Congress when AAPIs make up 4.8% of the population. New data from the UCLA Study for the Center for Inequality and the Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS) shows that the Asian American electorate will more

than double by 2040. However, this increase in political potential will all be for nothing, if our community does not turn out to vote in elections. To honor those who were abused, beaten and killed to secure equal voting rights; people like Vincent Wu and Todd Endo, two Asian Americans who participated in the 1965 March; we must cherish this important opportunity to shape our communities. We must work to increase voter registration and voter turnout within the APA community. In partnership with APIAVote and the Coulter Foundation, OCA has been working to do just that. OCA chapter representatives at Convention will undergo training to increase the number of APA registered voters and the number of APA voters who turn out at the polls. Exercising our right to vote is perhaps the easiest and most effective way to bring positive change to our world.

We can see the power that voting holds in the election of recent AAPI candidates to Congress including Delegate Aumua Amata Coleman

Radewagen (American Samoa), Rep. Ted Lieu (CA-33) and Rep. Mark Takai (HI-01). The brave souls in Selma marched so that one day, people who were representative of the diversity of America could be elected. One cannot underestimate the importance of AAPI political role models for our young people, because it makes it that much easier for young people to aspire to that office themselves one day.

As we strive towards a political future with more Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in political office, we honor the struggles of the past in order to have fair and equal representation for our community. Those marchers gave us the gift of a democracy that must listen to us when we vote and what is at stake is a government that understands our needs, supports our dreams and works for us. We cannot squander this opportunity.



Message from the CEO

KENNETH LEE | OCA National CEO

Of life's many truisms, the one I find most often repeated and also most often neglected is, "if you give, you get". However you like to call it, volunteerism, paying it forward or giving back, what is really important is dedicating your time to a cause that you care about, because the personal rewards are overflowing with generosity.

Years ago when I worked at UPS, the Community Relations Manager asked me to attend a board meeting in Los Angeles because he felt that OCA was a worthwhile organization that I might enjoy working with. When I went to that meeting, I was surprised to see the passion of the board. It was inspiring and very comforting to know that there were others like me that got together to speak on topics that mattered to the community. It was gratifying to see so many people who volunteered their time and energy to contribute to a great common cause: social justice and the betterment of our community.

I was hooked and needed to do more. I was elected President of OCA-Georgia

Chapter, and then moved on to the Executive Council and eventually, National President. Michael Lin, a past National President, was my mentor and he inspired me to do more at every turn. Seeking to build more positive mentor-mentee relationships like ours for others within our community, we later met with the CEO of UPS and were able to secure a grant to start the Mentoring Asian American Professionals, or MAAP program.

What a rush, what a great feeling. I was now leaving my own personal mark on OCA in the form of this program. My first mentor-mentee relationship was a learning experience, where I felt I learned as much, or perhaps even more, than the mentee I was working with. It was giving at its best because when I dedicated my time, it paid me back immediately with more knowledge about how to be a good mentor and guide a young person towards success.

I also found that the more I invested in my mentee, the more my own professional development flourished. I noticed that I became a better

communicator with my colleagues, and was more adept at conveying ideas and getting my points across. As a result, I became a better boss and a better leader at UPS, something I am eternally grateful for.

Even now, as Chief Executive Officer of OCA, I find that being able to contribute my time and experience continues to be a fruitful experience for me. Every day, I get to interact with bright young people on the OCA National staff who are still at the beginning of their careers. Being able to continue helping young people succeed in both personal and professional arenas is a true gift that I cherish, and one that I hope I can continue as life goes on.

The truth is that we are not self-made. Along the way we have all had inspirational guides and mentors who have helped us get to where we are today. I invite you to think back on those experiences and think about how you can pay it forward this year. I promise; it's worth it.



Message from the Editor

MIRIAM YEUNG | OCA VP of Communications

B ANTI- BULLYING

bullying is not new. It can happen anywhere, whether the community is a city, suburb, or rural town. It can happen at home, school, or work. It can happen to anyone, male or female, young or old. Anywhere people are perceived as different from their peers, they are at risk of being bullied.

As an educator with decades of experience, I can confirm that most bullying occurs in school. Anywhere kids gather in the community can be epicenters of bullying. Transitions in the hall, the bathroom, the cafeteria and on the school bus can all be stressful experiences for a bullied child, and with the emergence of cyberbullying, it is often even harder to identify the places where it happens and also the steps that administrators and parents can take to prevent it.

Unfortunately, this means that Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) youth are often bullied in disproportionate numbers because of appearance, language and cultural differences with their peers. According to a 2009 survey from the U.S. Department of Justice, 54 percent of Asian American teenagers said

they were bullied in the classroom, compared with 31.3 percent of white students, 38.4 percent of black students and 34.3 percent of Hispanic students. The disparity is even greater when it comes to cyberbullying: while 62 percent of Asian Americans surveyed reported being harassed online once or twice monthly, only 18 percent of whites indicated the same.

What happens to us in early life has a huge impact on us in later life. Depression, difficulty with relationships and an increased likelihood of substance abuse are all possible long term effects of bullying. According to some research, bullying can even contribute to the development of heart problems later in life. Students can become withdrawn and become reluctant to attend school as a result of bullying, impeding their chances at success. Yet despite all these negative outcomes, only 20 to 30% of students report bullying when it happens.

That is why it is crucial that we confront this problem head on by raising awareness and starting a dialogue in our community. OCA has been involved in anti-bullying efforts at the national level by promoting the National Asian American Pacific

Islander Mental Health Association's (NAAPIMHA) Anti-Bullying Poster Contest. This contest aimed to highlight bullying within the Asian American and Pacific Islander community through the language of art. Additionally, some of our chapters have taken the initiative to try and combat bullying in their own local community, such as OCA – Sacramento's "Stand Up, Speak Out!" Youth Rally Against Bullying that had its second annual convening last October with over 100 attendees.

I invite you all, OCA members and community advocates, to look within your own community and help start the conversation. Find out about the anti-bullying or safe school climate procedure at your child's school and notify administrators immediately about any bullying your child experiences. Establishing a supportive and safe school climate where all students are accepted and keep lines of communication open with adults is key to making sure all students are able to learn and grow in a safe, nurturing environment. The more we talk about bullying the more comfortable our youth will feel about coming out about their experiences. As a community, we cannot allow bullies to affect our children's future, especially when so much is at stake.



TODD ENDO | Civil Rights Pioneer

This article is a transcript of the program East Meets West, a public television show hosted by Past National President Ginny Gong. This transcript has been edited down for publication in IMAGE. To view the entire interview, visit <http://bit.ly/toddendointerview>

GONG: Welcome to Ginny's, where East meets West and a slice of eastern philosophy becomes a part of western thinking. I'm your host Ginny Gong. My guest has dedicated more than 50 years of his life to addressing racial inequities in America. His participation in the Selma marches and the March on Washington, along with his leadership roles in public education were life changing. Today, retired from

full time work, he continues to believe, if we ever feel we have achieved the dream, then the dream wasn't big enough. Join me in recognizing a truly remarkable civil rights advocate, Todd Endo.

Welcome Todd.

ENDO: Well thank you Ginny.

GONG: You know, particularly the Selma marches, what was that like? What was it like to be marching and probably one of a handful of Asians Americans?

ENDO: I mentioned a minister from Minneapolis that was there. And I mentioned another Japanese American that was hurt in Montgomery. But I don't remember other Asian...And I didn't go because I was Asian American.

GONG: Sure, of course not, right, but what was it like?

ENDO: I went after Bloody Sunday, that march that made Selma infamous. And I left before the judge gave the court order to allow the march from Selma to Montgomery.

So the marches I participated were in the town, from Brown's Chapel to the courthouse, and it was the march that they did a lot, prior to the TV cameras coming. It was the march that the Selma residents went down to try to register to vote.

In one respect, it was common place. My memory of [the march] though, are the two women who marched on either side of me, and they are the real heroes of Selma. You see them in the history books that I'm reading again now, or some for the first time.

They were ordinary people, doing extraordinary things. The one on my left is one of these women that says, I tried to register 16 times, and I've been turned down 16 times, and I'm gonna keep on marching and going down and trying to register until I can do that. And the one on the other side said that she was gassed at the march over at the Pettus Bridge and she's going to keep marching until they win their freedom.

And these are people that could've and maybe did, these two, lost their jobs, lost their homes. They're heroes to me because they were there and they're going to live there. And they're going to stay knowing what could happen to them. Whereas, I come, stay a while, I go back to school. I leave, but they stayed.

GONG: At some point, were you scared for your personal safety?

ENDO: No. I don't know whether it's the grandiosity of youth or the fact that there was such a team spirit, a

community spirit, in the people that surrounded us in the marches itself.

GONG: You didn't feel afraid?

ENDO: No... no, but it's hard to put that up against some of the facts. It [depends] on the marches, we were on three weeks before, four weeks before, or three months before people were beaten on that march or arrested on that march. I mean we could see Sherriff Clark and the deputies standing there, knowing that what you saw on the film is they came out and pushed everybody away and started beating on them, well that could happen, could have happened, it didn't.

GONG: Now let's switch to the march on Washington. You participated in the original one in '63, and you participated in it 50 years later. How has it changed, or how did it change for you, or what are thoughts about that march?

ENDO: The biggest for me, was the greater diversity of the groups represented and that was highlighted by the fact that in '63, the Japanese Americans Citizens League, under whose banner I marched, and my mother and three dozen others. That was the only Asian American group that was officially represented and was on the planning committee.

You come in 50 years later, and there's a dozen or more different Asian American groups in there, and then even the subset of the a LGBT Asian Americans are marching as a separate group.

And then you see women's groups, and you think, "Yeah, in 1963, I don't know whether there was a major women's group," but, and you know, and now there is.

GONG: Even in 1995 30 years later, I was the National President of OCA and I represented OCA at that march and I saw already at that time, a diversity of Asian American groups participating. So I can only imagine.

ENDO: Sure.

GONG: Well, certainly you know, look at what you've accomplished so much in your life, thank you for sharing some of your thoughts with us.

ENDO: Sure, happy to be here, it was great.



Remembering the Fall of Saigon

The Fall of Saigon: *New Faces in Asian Pacific America*

This article was published on April 30, 2015 in a letter to OCA's supporters and advocates.

Dear Advocate,

Today we remember the 40th anniversary of the Fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975, as it marks the historical beginning for many Southeast Asian Americans in the United States. Among those brought to America by this event was OCA Civil Rights Fellow Tong Thao, whose experience, while uniquely his own, speaks to the re-occurring stories of many of those coming to America's shores.

FEATURE ARTICLE

In the aftermath of the Fall of Saigon, Tong's family fled from Laos to Thailand to escape violence against the Hmong people. After arriving in Thailand, his family was forced into rundown refugee camps where Tong and his older siblings were born.

Shortly after arriving in Thailand, Tong's family was continually relocated from one refugee camp to another. In these refugee camps, cardboard paper was all that separated the living spaces of the Hmong families, while barbed wire fences enclosed the camps. Obtaining simple essentials like underwear was near impossible except by trading with passing salesmen, who often took advantage of the predicament of the refugees. For food each family of refugees was given a number of sardines depending on the size of the family, not much more than to keep them teetering on the edge of starvation.

Like other Southeast Asian Americans, Tong's family was forced by circumstance to move to the United States. Though they always hoped to return to Laos, after waiting in vain for seventeen years in horrid conditions in Thailand, Tong's family packed their belongings and took a leap of faith in starting a new life in Bakersfield, California in 1992.

Prior to the Fall of Saigon, the number of Southeast Asians residing in America from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia was small; with annual immigration numbers barely in the hundreds. However immigration from this region exploded overnight after the war ended, with the influx of approximately 125,000 refugees from Vietnam in the spring of 1975 alone. Almost 2 million more were to follow in the coming decades through refugee channels at first, and then through sponsorship and family reunification channels, with each wave reflecting increasingly diverse peoples.

As hundreds of thousands fled their home country, the diversity of communities across our nation was forever enhanced by these new migrants in places such as Los Angeles, Orange County, San Jose, Houston and Minneapolis. Some came by plane and some by boat; some were from rural areas and some from city centers. They were of many different ethnicities, including the Vietnamese, Cambodian, Hmong, Lao and Chinese. Many were like Tong's family and came through a circuitous route, relocating many times before being able to settle in a place they called home.

As refugees, Southeast Asian Americans like Tong and his family were forced to leave behind family, friends, and most of their belongings to live in America. This harsh displacement to the United States has been a challenge for

many of these immigrant families, with an extreme lack of both financial and social support to help them transition to American life. The lack of adequate training, educational programs, and culturally competent healthcare continues to create disparities in income, educational attainment, and health outcomes in Southeast Asian American populations.

Tong describes his experience with displacement as a "historical trauma" where "poverty is always in the back of your mind." He added, "this idea of escaping poverty is a driving force for many Hmong Americans to excel academically and financially."

However, though his family was able to transform the stress of displacement into a drive towards success, he also notes that Hmong families experience disparities in health, education, and income. "Hmong students resort to other forms of social support such as gangs and drugs to provide for themselves when their family cannot", said Tong. "Older generation Hmong experience extreme forms of mental illnesses as a result of the war, while younger generation Hmong are experiencing new problems in America that they can't convey to their parents."

Tong's desire to enlighten others about issues affecting Southeast Asians drives him forward in his work at OCA, and he uses his experience as a refugee and Southeast Asian American to be an advocate for important Asian American issues. "Southeast Asian stories are a new, but big part of American history. We need to be inclusive of these stories because they help enrich policy discussions and provide a deeper understanding of how new policies affect the AAPI community."

As Asian Pacific American advocates, we value our diverse backgrounds and recognize our common destiny in the struggle to thrive in America. By being different but recognizing our struggles as the same, we become stronger and more compassionate. Today, Tong and other Southeast Asian Americans like him are adding much to the credibility of the unified Asian American identity. These recent migrants have built businesses, launched careers in politics and media, and ultimately positively influenced how Asian Pacific Americans are perceived: as a diverse and culturally rich community. So we remember the fall of Saigon, as a turning point in Asian American history, where new waves of Asian Pacific Americans are enriching the diversity, strength and influence of our community.

With Best Regards,

*Michael W. Kwan
OCA National President*



In Memoriam: K.L. Wang and Alex Mark

These past few months have been hard on OCA, as our organization has had to mourn the loss of both of our founders, K.L. Wang and Alex Mark. With the help of many others, they conceived of OCA at the first National Convention on June 9, 1973, with three founding chapters in Washington, D.C., Detroit and St. Louis. Through tireless campaigning, networking and travelling to meet other influential Chinese Americans around the country, they recruited more and more members to OCA and slowly built it into a successful organization. Over the course of four decades, these three original chapters grew into over 100 chapters and affiliates and became OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates.

FEATURE ARTICLE

Many are familiar with the broad strokes of this story, but what is often lost is the significance of their vision. What they set out to do was to give a voice to a community that had always been spoken for, but never had the opportunity to truly speak for themselves. In 1973, there was the NAACP for Black Americans, the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) for Japanese Americans, but no organization that represented Chinese Americans. K.L. and Alex knew that Chinese Americans needed a voice because they realized that if nobody within the Chinese community spoke up for themselves, somebody else would speak for them. This much is evident from legislation like the Chinese Exclusion Act that denied citizenship to the Chinese Americans even though they were born and raised in America.

They made sure to let others know that Chinese Americans would not suffer in silence in the face of discrimination. Just one example was K.L.'s dogged efforts to change the name of the Pekin, Illinois High School basketball

team from "Chinks" to "Dragons". After six years of constant lobbying, the superintendent finally agreed to change the racist name. While this victory may seem small in the scope of the civil rights movement, symbolic victories like this one let the entire country know that Chinese Americans would no longer take discrimination sitting down and they were the only ones who could truly speak for their community.

After successfully uniting Chinese Americans, K.L. and Alex's vision of a unified voice proved too strong for simply one community. Shortly after the founding of OCA, they pushed for the first Asian Pacific American Heritage month to celebrate the struggle of all Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. From Japanese internment, to the denial of citizenship to Filipino veterans, to the struggle to preserve the language and culture of the Hawaiian people, all the people under the moniker Asian Pacific American had been historically silenced by the majority. This was to be no longer; K.L. and Alex



were generous with their vision and shared it with them all.

When one passes on from this world, they take no possessions or wealth. All one has is what they leave behind. In this case K.L. and Alex left behind a treasure, an organization that has given and continues to give back immensely to the community and a voice for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. To help continue on their legacy of providing a unified voice for Asian Pacific Americans, please visit www.ocanational.org/?Donate.





Chapter Corner: OCA - Greater Seattle *Past and Present*



JACQUELINE WU | Chapter President

OCA-Greater Seattle was established in 1995. Most of the founding members were Boeing employees, who were concerned about what they perceived as a “glass ceiling” regarding Chinese working at that company. While much of the chapter’s attention was focused on that issue in the early years, the chapter has evolved into a sustainable, community-based organization heavily involved in securing social justice and fair treatment for Asian Pacific Americans and promoting their legacy and heritage.

Some of our more notable activities over the years were:

- The chapter was a key player in organizing the API community against State Initiative 200, which outlawed affirmative action based on race and ethnic in employment and contracting in the public sector and enrollment in public colleges and universities.
- The chapter’s annual “Chinese New Year and Golden Circle Awards” celebration and fundraiser helps us recognize APIs who have made a significant contribution to the community while generating enough revenues for the chapter to operate efficiently.

- Pressuring King County to hire two bi-lingual Chinese to implement its requirement to provide bi-lingual Chinese material and language assistance under Section 204 of the Federal Voting Rights Act, and demanding the County have a Chinese speaking representative on its Election Oversight Committee.

- Sponsorship of free workshops for the community on legal matters and hate crimes.

- Playing a lead role in organizing API groups to support two Asian Americans who were charged with murder at Ocean Shores, Washington, and turning around this incident so that it was looked upon as a hate crime in which the two were victims.

- Organizing local protest companies and others that portrayed negative stereotypes of API such as the protest against Abercrombie and Fitch for their offensive t-shirts.

- Organizing API groups over the racial harassment of an Asian female student at Washington State University.

- Building coalitions with other local API groups as well as other racial minority groups.

- Maintaining a chapter membership of well over 100 and keeping them informed of our activities.

This past year, OCA-Greater Seattle has been active in protecting and preserving the city’s Chinatown/International District cultural jewel and advocating for the API community. Thus, OCA-Greater Seattle served as the community sponsor of the International Examiner, the longest running API non-profit newspaper. As sponsors, OCA-Greater Seattle prepared and secured a \$13,000 grant for the Examiner in creating The Best of the Examiner, a collection of articles highlighting the dynamic API community locally and nationally. Board member Doug Chin prepared and secured another grant of \$25,000 in creating a video documentary in collaboration with the Examiner that explores the Asian American community of Seattle. Furthermore, we helped transform the Examiner into a financially viable, multi-media educational, arts and culture, and heritage organization. Our members were key supporters in writing articles and op-ed pieces, designing projects, and garnering grants for the Examiner.

Over the past year, board member, Bruce Huang, became involved with the King County elections operations and attended Election Observer training. Bruce introduced himself at Asian Pacific American Coalition for Equality board meeting and garnered their support. He reached out to King County's Citizen's Election Oversight Committee Chinese speaking representative Susanna Chung, and met with King County Elections Section

were thrown at Asian and Asian American females. OCA-Greater Seattle met with Seattle Mayor Ed Murray, Police Chief Kathleen O'Toole, and other administrators to discuss solutions to hate crimes and the harassment of Asian student at the University of Washington. Furthermore, board members Francisco Irigon and Willon Lew, continue to collaborate with the Asian Pacific Directors Coalition and JACL in pressuring Chief O'Toole to diversify

In addition, OCA-Greater Seattle has been collaborating with the Chinese American Citizens Alliance, Seattle Chapter in drawing up a resolution that pays tribute to the contributions of early Chinese in the development of the city while expressing regret for the expulsion of Chinese immigrants in 1886. Chinese immigrants in the 19th century contributed to the development of Seattle and the U.S. through grading many of Seattle's roads such as (Pike, Union, Jackson, and Washington Street), working in canneries and sawmills, and constructing the railroads. Since their arrival, Chinese immigrants were targets of racial animosity and discrimination that were often times manifested in unjust legislation and violence. On February 7, 1886, anti-Chinese sentiment in Seattle peaked when



203 staff Colleen Kwan for background and advice on this position as the Chinese representative. He then worked with King County Councilperson Rod Dembowski's staff to come up with creative ways to expand limited English proficiency services beyond languages that are currently covered by Section 203. Bruce also attended the National Commission on Voting Rights' Pacific Northwest hearing and provided testimony on the success of King County Elections and the shortcomings of upholding Section 203, a section requiring bilingual ballots. OCA-Greater Seattle continues working with the Asian Pacific Islander Coalition and APACE and other organization on securing Voting Rights.

Issues that OCA-Greater Seattle are currently invested in are hate crimes that target APIs, lack of API representation in the Seattle Police Department (SPD) command staff, and the preservation of Chinatown-International District from city projects. Board member, Francisco Irigon, spearheaded a campaign in pressuring SPD to conduct an investigation regarding a hate crime incident near the University of Washington. In this incident, racial slurs, cigarette butts, and beer bottles

her command staff to reflect communities of color in Seattle. Despite APIs being the largest minority group in Seattle, Chief O'Toole's command staff does not represent the API community and created a sense of distrust with civilians and police force.

Another issue that OCA-Greater Seattle has been involved with is the Seattle City Light's plan to build an electrical transmission line that will transverse through the Chinatown-International District. The construction of the electrical transmission line is due to the increase demand in the South Lake Union area by companies like Amazon. If the line is approved, there will be 30 weeks of construction at the Chinatown-International District. Construction of the electrical transmission like will affect small businesses, elders, and residents of the area - the majority of which are low income. Seattle Mayor Ed Murray, recently came out with a commitment to Race & Social Justice and launched his Environmental Equity Initiative. However, the Mayor and the City of Seattle continues to marginalize and disregard the welfare and communities of the Chinatown-International District.

white citizens entered the city's Chinatown to roust out residents onto wagons down to the harbor and on a steamship headed for Portland.

Upcoming events that OCA-Greater Seattle will host, includes the 3rd Annual Pre-Indigenous Cultures and Aftermath (PICA) Conference that explores the convergences and differences among Asian and Pacific Islander, Native American, and Latino Americans. This three day conference is annually held in the month of November in remembrance of Carlos Bulosan and Andres Bonifacio, celebration of Native American Heritage Month and Dia de los Muertos. PICA is a partnership between UW-American Ethnic Studies Department, Heritage University-Yakima, Haida, South Shore School PTSA, and OCA-Greater Seattle. The theme for this year is the 50th Year Celebration of the 1965 Immigration Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act, the 40th Commemoration of the Fall of Saigon, and the 30th Year Anniversary of the creation of American Ethnic Studies at the University of Washington. Each year, PICA draws over 200 people from the Pacific Northwest region and its success is due to the leadership and organization of interns.



Give to OCA's Internship Program

“The OCA Internship Program played a significant role in my transition from a student to a young working professional. I participated in the program during the summer after my graduation from UC Irvine, and I was placed at the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in Washington, D.C. It was my first time working in a government agency and I gained insight to the skills necessary to succeed as a public servant. This experience would prove worthwhile as I interviewed for a district representative position for a California state legislator soon after my internship. During a time when the economy was recovering and employers were still hesitant to hire new employees, I strongly believe my participation in the OCA Internship Program gave me the competitive edge as a candidate who was eventually hired.”

- Jacqueline Wu, Class of 2011

“Being from the South, I never could have envisioned a year ago that I would be living in New York City with a great company dedicated to diversity. Today I work with Nielsen, and the OCA Summer Internship Program and my experience at the White House Office of Management and Budget was invaluable. The OCA Internship Program has been, and its legacy continues to be, an integral part of my life. Interning for a summer in our Republic's capital opened my eyes to the tremendous possibilities and the immense opportunities that big cities provide. Working in OMB provided critical real-world experience and formed a cornerstone in my search for my first post-college job. Above all, the friendships that were made that summer with both my fellow OCA classmates and the mentorship of the National Center staff are relationships which I continue to cherish. I know irrefutably that my path would be radically different today were it not for the grace and blessing that I had to be a part of the 2012 Summer Internship program. I think often of the people that were placed in my life, the rich experience, how thankful I am to the staff and donors, and my dedication to continual involvement in the APIA movement as well as the need to pay it forward in support for the future group of interns.”

- Michael Satyapor, Class of 2012

“As an individual deeply committed to social justice and advocacy, I was very excited when I learned I had been accepted to the OCA Summer Internship Program in 2013. I learned a great deal from my experience in this program. As the Development Intern, I gained valuable experience in organizing a large-scale event, such as the OCA National Convention, and further insight into how nonprofit organizations operate most effectively. I was very lucky to have two supportive supervisors that both guided me so I could complete my tasks efficiently, as well as trusted me to be responsible for myself and my work. Through living in Washington, DC for three months, I was able to network and build deep connections with my intern cohort, other nonprofit organizations, and community leaders. Because of the OCA Internship Program, I believe I am now more capable and confident in myself as an advocate.”

- Ariana Yang, Class of 2013

Since its establishment in 1989, OCA's Internship Program has provided over 460 students with personal, professional, and mentorship opportunities, to become productive global citizens in the United States. The program includes active learning of transferable life skills that touch professional development topics such as networking, social etiquette, communications and self-awareness; along with exposure to APA social justice issues.

Generously sponsored by the Walmart Foundation, the Coca-Cola Foundation, the Comcast Foundation, the William & Sinforosa Tan Kaung Internship Endowment Fund, and the Mary Ann & Paul C. Yu Internship Fund, the OCA Internship Program brings college students to Washington D.C. year round for a ten-week internship.

Interns are placed in congressional offices, federal agencies, corporate partners, and national non-profits and get first-hand experience in the working world to help develop their professional development skills.

Participants of the program are also influenced to continue their commitment to the APA community long after the completion of their internship. The OCA Internship Alumni are a superb resource to new and old alumni, providing a supportive network. Interns go on to pay it forward and are having an impact in the local APA community and nationally including several who have become Executive Directors and community leaders.

To donate to the OCA Internship Fund, visit our giving site at www.ocanational.org/?Donate and list "Internship Fund" in the comments section.

Mambo in Chinatown

Book Review | STAN LOU

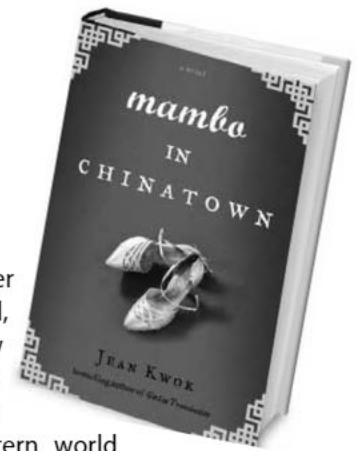
The state of Asian Pacific American literature seems to be on the rise, as more writers are becoming bolder in expressing the personal narrative that is so rich, yet not widely known, in our APA communities. This is what is needed in order to distinguish APA literature as a distinct and discreet genre and not one that simply blends in as another piece of the literary world. Recently I attended a book reading that featured young APA writers. They expressed a view that they are telling personal stories of our communities because “the stories need to be told and they need to be heard.”

There are many writers who are telling compelling stories that relate experiences that are similar to what many of us have lived through or know about from our own families and friends. One such writer is Jean Kwok. She has firmly embedded the overarching theme of the often agonizing decision making processes of immigrant families and their ABC (American Born Chinese) children into her well-developed storyline of her latest novel, *Mambo in Chinatown*.

The protagonist in Kwok’s novel is Charlie Wong, a twenty-two year old young woman who has hardly ever left her Manhattan Chinatown neighborhood and works as a dishwasher. She shares a small apartment with her widowed father and her academically gifted eleven year old sister Lisa. She is devoted to making her father and sister’s lives better, while subordinating herself and her own ambitions. She copes with the practices and nuances of this community – tai chi instruction and practice, Eastern medicine, well-meaning but busy-body relatives and neighbors, rivalries with peers from school, local witches, matchmakers, and much more. Memories of her mother who was a premier ballet dancer in China before migrating to America and her deep friendships with peers Zan and Mo Li keep her grounded and aware of her own being and needs.

When Charlie lands a job as a receptionist at an uptown ballroom dance studio, she is discovered by her employer

to have talent as a dancer. Her talents emerge as she is trained, and she moves into this new world for herself. However, she does not tell her father who does not trust the Western world and would certainly not approve of dance as an appropriate career. In the meantime, Lisa takes a test and is accepted to attend a school for gifted students that will take her away from Chinatown. To compound matters, Lisa develops a strange, but serious illness. Father does not trust Western medicine, but wants to rely on his brother who has an Eastern medicine practice, and as a backup, the local witch and her spells. Charlie has to reconcile how to deal with all that is going on in her life that spans two worlds. She is intoxicated with her newfound environment, but she is conflicted with honoring her father’s will, which she knows has helped them survive. It becomes a precarious balancing act.



The story of *Mambo in Chinatown* is fascinating and makes for a page-turning book. In addition, the strong emphasis on the duality that our APA community members constantly face resonates with the readers and makes the book an authentic “APA Genre” novel, in my opinion.

Jean Kwok has expertly captured this deep feel for the soul of the Chinese American community. The characters are well-developed, and when we get to know them, we can see those same characters from our own lives - the older generation, the professionals, the emerging young adults, the school children, and the relatives. On a personal note, I was honored that Jean Kwok consulted with me as she was writing this book for my thoughts on behavioral patterns of senior Chinese Americans. See “Acknowledgements” at the end of the book! I hope that you enjoy the book as much as I did.

The thought that our community has stories that need to be told and shared became clearer after reading *Mambo in Chinatown*, and it is reinforced when I read many other books of this genre. In this regard, I urge you to support our APA writers, such as Jean Kwok, as they tell our stories in clear and authentic voices that demonstrate our identities.

The Past Six Months at OCA





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