



TACT

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THE ASSOCIATION OF CHINESE TEACHERS

*The dreams of tomorrow are shaped
by the teachers of today...*

President's Message By Christina Jung

Welcome back! Our 40th Annual Scholarship dinner held on May 30, 2009 at Four Seas Restaurant in San Francisco's Chinatown was again a great success. The Tact awards dinner honored 16 outstanding students from the SFUSD's high schools in recognition of their academic and impressive community service. The Association of Chinese Teachers initiated its scholarship dinner in 1974 to encourage students to take an active role in the community. The scholarship dinner is made possible by the donations from the Robert Louie Foundation, Imelda Leung Memorial Fund, and others. Thanks to everyone who attended, contributed, and overall helped make TACT's scholarship dinner so successful.

Over the last 40 years, TACT has been an organization built on the idea that it is our willingness to give our time and energy to the community to sustain and thrive. TACT strives for educational excellence and equity for all students through advocacy and outreach, professional development, parent involvement, community collaboration, and participation in the educational policy making process. TACT has also been instrumental in addressing concerns and in shaping policy in the following areas: affirmative action, bilingual education, cross-cultural curriculum, and teacher issues. As we have grown and changed over the years, TACT has never lost sight of its focus. TACT continues to strongly strive to give all of our students the greatest education possible and with that the self worth to know they can use that education to realize their potential and dreams. Even in the midst of uncertain times, we remain committed as ever to provide children with an unforgettable life changing education. If you have any issues, or concerns that need to be addressed, please let us know. TACT board meetings are scheduled for the first Thursday of each month. We would greatly value your input.

IN THIS ISSUE

- Visitation Valley's Murals — p. 2
- API History Resolution — p. 2
- Fall Kickoff Flyer (Insert)
- High School Update — p. 3
- Membership Info — p. 4
- Dates to Remember — p. 4

Fung Joe Guey's Historic Flight By Irene Collier

On September 21, 1909, Fung Joe Guey (1883-1912) flew a biplane 800 meters over the Oakland Hills. Today a century later, we might wish to remember his historic flight, the first on the Pacific coast. According to the *San Francisco Examiner*, September 23, 1909, Fung Joe Guey took off from a hill above Piedmont and flew one half mile, fifteen feet above the ground.

Newbery Honor Book winner Laurence Yep fictionalized this event in his groundbreaking 1975 book, *Dragonwings*: "Suddenly the wind blew even harder up the hillside. The grass all over the hill hissed even louder, like one giant snake. The nose of Dragonwings suddenly tilted up like some bird scenting the wind that would carry it home. The wind roared over the hilltop, seeming to gather beneath the wings. The canvas of the wings bellied upward, taut and swollen and eager. Dragonwings seemed to leap into the air about five feet and hang suspended. I held my breath. I saw Father twist his hips to the right, and the wings began to curl and the rear rudder curved to the right. Slowly, ever so slowly, father

began to bank in that direction. He had controlled his flight! He was free in the sky."

The biplane soared off the hill for about twenty minutes and almost circled back to its point of origin, but a bolt holding the propeller snapped (*The Call*, September 23, 1909). The biplane crashed and Fung was thrown clear of the flying machine. Undaunted by the first plane crash, Fung Joe Guey set out to build an even better plane which he flew in 1911. Dr. Sun Yat-sen, China's Revolutionary hero, was present at Fung Joe Guey's second flight. He persuaded the airman to return to China to start its aviation industry. Fung Joe Guey agreed, although he had grown up in America. Upon his return to China, he built the country's first plane and staged air shows to popularize aviation. He was hailed as a national hero and is regarded as the father of Chinese aviation. On September 19, 2009, at Laney College in Oakland, California, a bronze bust was unveiled to commemorate his historic flight.



The Murals By Irene Collier

Sometimes TACT members wonder why we need to be concerned about stereotypes. Why can't we just let things be?

A case in point is a recent mural at Alpha and Leland Avenues. The storefront had been a constant eyesore because of graffiti and vandalism. A neighborhood group applied for a small grant to install a beautiful mural. Its intent was to represent different stores and communities within the Visitacion Valley area, an admirable goal.

An artist was hired and worked very hard for very little compensation to create something that would bring pride to the neighborhood. Unfortunately, the Chinese characters were not written as real characters, but as pseudo-Chinese characters. After many weeks and assistance from Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA), teacher Marlene Tran was able to get enough paint and find a student to correct the calligraphy.

Of greater concern was a bright yellow face on an Asian girl. Yellow faces have been used to insult Chinese people at critical junctures in American history. The term "yellow peril" was used to create negative images of Chinese people. The term stirred up enough resentment to pass the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

For forty years, TACT railed against the bright yellow buck-toothed "Five Chinese Brothers" and the nonsensical "Chinese" rhymes of "Tikki Tikki Tembo". These were classic battles. But then, there were unexpected images, which blindsided us. It was so disappointing for many teachers to find that our beloved Dr. Seuss, the author of such great books as *Green Eggs and Ham* and *Horton Hears a Who*, had depicted Asian Americans as a "fifth column" during World War II.

Even we as a community seem to have collective amnesia, as we see yellow faces and slanted eyes



popping up everywhere—on signs, on dolls, and on toys made in China and Japan. Have we forgotten our history? Did we think that these issues were passé? But then, the eye-pulling stunts by the Spanish team during the recent Beijing Olympics were a smack in the face that such caricatures were not dead.

In contrast, the mural in Visitacion Valley started out as an honorable gesture, with many people working hard for their community—but with different perspectives about yellow faces. Many hurt feelings linger from the experience for all concerned. We all wish that such incidences would never happen, but they do, and they will continue to confound us. TACT as an organization can only keep plugging away and hope we have the energy to continue to meet these challenges.

Asian Pacific Islander History in School Curricula By Gale Ow

At the recent Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA) in July 2009, as a member of AFT Local 61 Gale Ow, former TACT President, submitted this resolution, which was passed unanimously. The history of Asian Pacific Islanders and labor has been fraught with conflict; yet the search for just wages and working conditions were common threads. This resolution will be a major step toward presenting our histories with honesty and candor. Gale's resolution appears below:

RESOLUTION TO INCLUDE ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER HISTORY IN SCHOOL CURRICULA

WHEREAS: Asian Pacific Islanders history is rich with mighty struggles of workers for justice; and,
 WHEREAS: this history is hidden even within Labor Studies curriculum; and,
 WHEREAS: knowledge of the struggles of APIs and API workers empowers students to fight for a better future,
 (Continued on facing page)

It's That Time of Year Again... for High School Seniors...

3

By Nathan Cho and Galen Lew, Lowell High School Class of 2010

"November 15? That's in two weeks! I knew I should have started my personal statement this summer..." Does this sound like you? Well, have no worry, because you are not alone. For many of students, the college admissions process is a very intimidating and stressful experience. Most colleges post deadlines from early November to late December. This is a very small window of time for most students and the need to turn in applications becomes a frantic rush for the submission button. For example, on average, a student might spend six hours a week looking over an application, revising the personal statement, and continuously talking to a counselor about future plans. By the time a student finishes the application, a total of 72 hours on his college admission process will have been spent.

In our experience, college applications require a substantial amount of time because there are many different stipulations on the application. Many private

colleges require multiple essays, short answers, and recommendations from teachers and counselors. For a Stanford application with music, I was required to submit an arts supplement along with my application, and a live audition in January. Many of these supplements and requirements are found on the common application website, <http://www.commonapp.org>.

From our point of view, some students tend to be very obsessive and anxious about writing the perfect personal statement, in addition to applying for numerous amounts of scholarships. Don't allow this to freak you out! Start early and manage your time, and everything will go by smoothly. Be organized and use your resources wisely. Meet up with your counselor and go over the whole application process with him or her.

So plan your time wisely, be organized, and most of all, get some sleep! Good luck!

Ethnic Studies Course for SFUSD's 9th Grade Students

By Pete Hammer, History/Social Studies Content Specialist, Office of Learning Support & Equity

Our efforts to implement the 9th Grade Ethnic Studies course are not moving forward as quickly as we had hoped. Although last year the district provided funds to hire teachers to teach the course at two schools (Lincoln and Balboa), that funding was discontinued this year. We did not receive the funding we requested for summer 2009 professional development, and we have only recently received funding to support after-school meetings of the current teachers of the course at Marshall, Mission and Washington high schools (where the schools are paying the teachers' salaries from school budgets without support from the central office).

We were allowed to present the program as an informational item to the school board's Curriculum Committee on October 5. The board members in

attendance responded favorably to the proposal, and Assistant Superintendent Francisca Sanchez confirmed that the program will be submitted to the district's resources and allocation committee for funding for the 2010-11 school year. If this program is to move forward, we need to mount a campaign that will convince the resources and allocation committee to include it in the 2010-11 budget. We would like to invite you to a meeting Wednesday, November 4, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., in Room 345 at Mission High School to begin organizing that campaign. We will provide more details about the developments in the last year and brainstorm actions for the campaign. Our proposed campaign slogan is "Celebrate 40 years of Ethnic Studies at SFSU by institutionalizing Ethnic Studies in the SFUSD!"

(Continued from facing page)

Therefore, be it resolved to:

- Push to include in the curriculum of labor studies and Asian American studies the mighty history of API workers and further resolved that
- APALA continues to build a movement where activist students and labor studies departments continue to bring on, mentor and incorporate students in the movement and further resolved that
- APALA investigates establishing a scholarship to support API activists who plan to enter the labor movement and further resolved to
- Work with organizations such as the NEA, AFT, CTA and other such organizations and unions on the inclusion of curriculum in school history books regarding our API history and be it further resolved that
- Flyers about any organizing campaign should be in two languages: English and the dominant language of the workers and the surrounding communities.

TACT Membership

By May Choi, TACT Treasurer

TACT relies on its membership dues in order to provide the education community with the exceptional and generous programs. We have just completed our Scholarship Program, providing 16 students each with a \$2,000 scholarship for college. We are currently preparing for a workshop during Asian Heritage Month for our members. In the meantime, the officers have been meeting with school board members, as well as the superintendent to discuss the needs and concerns of our teachers, counselors, students, parents and community.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT IN ORDER FOR US TO CONTINUE OUR MISSION. PLEASE JOIN TACT. OUR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE ONLY \$40.00 for certificated teachers, free for first year teachers, and \$20 for retired teachers. Please send your check made payable to "TACT" to our treasurer May Choi at Lowell HS or directly to our TACT P.O. Box (see below for address). You are invited to attend our kickoff on Saturday, November 14, and network with other teachers and share free lesson plans and ideas. Thank you in advance for your participation. Join today!

2009 TACT Fall Kickoff!

Saturday, November 14, 2009
11:00 am – 2:00 pm
Sunset Elementary School
1920 41st Ave., San Francisco, CA
(see flyer inside)

Editor's Note:

Welcome to TACT for 2009-2010.
We need your support this year.
Watch for upcoming newsletters
and our website at www.tactsf.org
for current information about TACT
events.

2009-2010 TACT Executive Board

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