



EMBRACING THE HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS OF CHINESE AND ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICANS

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MISSION STATEMENT

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**PHOTOS COURTESY OF
THERESA CHAN, DAVID
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IN THIS ISSUE

- Recent Events Recaps
- Upcoming Events

LINKS TO INTERESTING ARTICLES/VIDEOS AND EVENT INFO BELOW

[OCA National News](#)

[Fresh-off-the-Boat
Spinoff Reportedly in
the Works](#)

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Sunday, April 28, 2019

ASIAN WOMEN'S CONFERENCE AT PACE COLLEGE



A day of workshops on important life issues impacting Asian American women and their communities was held at Pace College on Sunday, April 28. The event was organized by the 4 chapters (Long Island, New Jersey, New York and Westchester/Hudson Valley) and FCC-NY (Families with Children from China). With panelists, about 130 were in attendance. Workshop tracks included Law, Professional Development and Identity.

Law topics ranged through Immigration, Family, Landlord-Tenant and Wage Theft/Employment Discrimination. All law presentations were provided by the Asian American Bar Association of New York (AABANY). A pro bono clinic was also available and provided by AABANY.

Professional Development topics included APA Women in Leadership, APA Women Business Owners in Chinatown, Women Giving Back, and Women in Government.

The workshop that this writer attended was the one on Leadership. Panelists were Yiting Shen (Citigroup), Joyce Moy (AARI), Jennifer H. Wu (Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison) with moderator Jay Mitra (Zuber Lawler & Del Duca LLP). A very interesting discussion on what one can do to further one's career occurred. Ms. Wu's suggestion was to invite senior management members to lunch to discuss upper mobility. While this may have been successful for Ms. Wu, this may not be as positive for those who are more bashful. A more favorable approach that was mentioned is to ensure that one is always prepared in their presentations and that quantified statistics be specified.

Mixed Heritage, Developing Cultural Connections, South Asian Women, #MeToo Movement, and Queer and Asian Voices comprised the Identity track. This writer attended the South Asian Women workshop. Prior to the conference, a lot of buzz surrounded this panel. Dhara Shah and Amisha Patel, organizers of this panel, were excited to be included in this conference. Palak Patel, a food and lifestyle internet blogger, was in this group. Her blog is called "The Chutney Life." What I noticed about the discussion in this group was that they appeared to be decades behind the East Asian communities. The cultural norms of the South Asians are undergoing major changes regarding marital expectations. For example, the roles of husband and wife related to household duties, interracial dating and marriage, and the assumptions of arranged unions.

To celebrate and acknowledge prominent Asian Women, a slideshow was presented during the beginning of the conference. A wonderful compilation of talented Asian women that ranged through the arts, business and STEM. Among the twenty-one named well known Asian women were Anna May Wong, Lea Salonga, Ali Wong, Chloe Kim, Sumita Basu, and Fei-Fei Lee.

To further empower and educate, a resource fair was also held in the main assembly room. Community organizations that were invited to table included Q-Wave, New Women/New Yorkers, AABANY, UEAA (United East Athletics Association), and CANA (Chinese American Nurses Association). Instructive and cultivating material was disseminated to the attendees.

We received positive feedback generating a sense of a productive, effective conference that we can be proud of. Thank you to all organizers.

May 8-11, 2019

150TH GOLDEN SPIKE CONFERENCE, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH



OCA NJ Chapter President, Laura Lee, and board members, Theresa Chan, Lillian Gee, Henry Lee, Virginia Ng, and John Tan, had the distinct honor of attending the paramount occasion of the 150th Golden Spike Celebration held in Salt Lake City in early May 2019. OCA NJ founding members, Steve and Terri Chan, were also present. This conference was organized by the Chinese Railroad Workers Descendants Association. A momentous event marking the anniversary of the Transcontinental Railroad completion in Promontory Summit, Utah, on May 10, 1869. The completion of the Transcontinental Railroad is recognized as one of America's biggest achievements and one of mankind's biggest accomplishments. But for many decades, the contribution of Chinese workers has been overlooked, their courage and strength left out of the history books. Everyone knows of the famous photograph where the last spike is hammered in and no single Chinese is seen in it. This conference served to educate, appreciate and celebrate the sacrifices and contributions of Chinese pioneers to the United States.

On Day 1 of the conference, attendees had the opportunity to travel via FrontRunner train to Ogden where **Big Boy** No. 4014 and **Living Legend** No. 844 recreated the iconic photo where the Central Pacific and the Union Pacific Railroads met. Many railroad enthusiasts were on hand to witness this re-enactment. A special lunch and entertainment, featuring railroad themed songs, was arranged for conference attendees at the Ogden Railroad Museum. Nearby Ogden Golden Spike Street Fair afforded souvenir shopping and photo ops.

That evening, the Community Leadership Dinner was held. Secretary of Transportation, Honorable Elaine Chao, was in attendance and showing her support. We were fortunate to be included in a photograph with her. Her speech included comments regarding the long overdue accolades to the Chinese workers that would be presented at the Transcontinental Railroad ceremony. She also made a joke about having her flight delayed even though she's the Secretary of Transportation.

Day 2 was May 10, the 150th anniversary of the nailing of the Golden Spike. A special event after so many decades of being overlooked. Fifty years ago, in 1969, railroad worker descendants were prepared to receive belated recognition of their ancestors' contributions. A special plaque was fashioned for the commemorative event. Unfortunately, those who represented the Chinese railroad descendants were bumped from the ceremony due to the unexpected addition of the actor, John Wayne. And to make matters worse, then Secretary of Transportation, John Volpe, orated at 1969's ceremony, the following:

"Who else but Americans could drill ten tunnels in mountains 30 feet deep in snow? Who else but Americans could chisel through miles of solid granite? Who else but Americans could have laid 10 miles of track in 12 hours?"

Exclusion from history and left out of the Golden Spike picture is why Chinese were shut out of the official ceremonies at the Centennial Ceremony in Promontory Summit that year.

But 2019 was different. News organizations around the world were involved in publicizing the expectations of Chinese communities at this year's 150th Golden Spike Ceremony. Thousands of visitors were expected to attend. And they did. The CRWDA was noticeably thrilled to receive the long-awaited recognition. Many podium speakers

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mentioned the overdue remembrance. And significant most of all, the Honorable Elaine Chao, was there to support and represent.

On Day 3, many workshops and film presentations were available to attend. The topics included: Chinese Exclusion Act, Genealogy Resources and Railroad Worker Family Stories. This writer attended a workshop on Carlin, the Nevada town where the remains of 13 caskets from a forgotten Chinese cemetery were discovered. The finding gained attention because there have been only a few professional archaeological excavations of Chinese cemeteries in the United States. Most early Chinese immigrants requested that their remains be sent back to China after their deaths. The men were buried with artifacts like coins, matches, dishes and an opium pipe. The remains and artifacts were sent to the state museum for examination by physical anthropologists from the Smithsonian Institution. The remains were eventually sent to the anthropology department at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. After two decades and a long tedious process, the Carlin community were able to bring the remains back to Carlin for burial.

That evening, the CRWDA gala was held. Gala honorees were: Gordon Chang, PhD, Corky Lee and Wilson & Esther Lee. You may recall that Corky Lee hails from Queens, NY. His work chronicles and explores the diversity and nuances of Asian American culture overlooked by mainstream media. His interest in photojournalism was sparked in junior high school when he saw a well-known photograph that commemorated the 1869 completion of the Transcontinental Railroad. Lee was struck by the fact that there were no Chinese workers in the photo even though thousands worked and sacrificed their lives in the construction. In 2002 and since 2014, Lee has co-led a “flash mob” in the recreation of the photograph during the annual Transcontinental Railroad celebrations.

OCA members were fortunate to pose for a group photo that included actor Tzi Ma. He was there as a special gala guest. Ma appeared as Tao on AMC’s Hell on Wheels, a rare mainstream television series dedicated to a historical part of Chinese history. He brought period costumes from the show for CRWDA members to wear to the Transcontinental Railroad ceremony.

The next day, Board members, Lillian Gee, Henry Lee, Laura Lee and Virginia Ng, were rewarded for early bird registration with a guided automobile tour of Transcontinental Railroad Grade and Chinese Settlements & Towns. We visited the town of Terrace, a ghost town where you can see the foundations of some houses and some graves. In 1869, half of the 1,000 population were Chinese. Of course, Terrace’s Chinatown was some distance removed from the main portion of town. After the railroad route was moved, the town became a little-used branch line. The railroad line through Terrace was finally abandoned in 1942. As we wandered through the flat, desolate landscape, we could see not much was left. Remnants of broken bottles, dishes and pottery. A sad reminder of how the history of the Chinese railroad workers have been removed from American history. Park rangers warned us that we were not to remove any material from the site as it was considered a historical, archaeological location. Most of the important finds had already been removed by souvenir and treasure seekers.

The conference was both educational and rewarding. Educational as historical data was disseminated and railroad worker families’ stories told. To finally acknowledge the significance the Chinese railroad workers contributions have made to American history. Rewarding for these contributions to be finally remembered and commemorated at the annual Transcontinental Railroad ceremony at Promontory Summit.

Sunday, May 19, 2019

OCA-NJ APA HERITAGE LUNCHEON SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS



This year’s luncheon was held on Sunday, May 19th, at Flaming Grill & Supreme Buffet in Riverdale, NJ. A number of OCA NJ board members and scholarship recipients and their families were in attendance. NJ Chapter President, Laura Lee, made welcoming remarks which included board member and scholarship sponsor introductions, and the recent 150th anniversary of the Golden Spike ceremony held in Salt Lake City, Utah. The ceremony commemorated the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad. She highlighted its historical significance for Chinese Americans.

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We then proceeded to play a game about the 150th anniversary of the Golden Spike. Game created by Virginia Ng.

PLAY GAME

The keynote speaker was Englewood Cliffs Councilman, William Woo. Besides his governing responsibilities, he is President of the Kam Man Market in East Hanover, NJ, and a franchisee for Orangetheory Fitness in the tri-state region. He spoke about the representation of Asians in all arenas and how we need to increase these numbers. He reminded us of the impact that Jeremy Lin has on our community. He praised the successes of the recipients and noted that winning these scholarships would be so meaningful in their life experiences.

Then the Scholarship presentations began. The following are the Honorable Mention awardees: Fumika Hasegawa, Yun Lee, Casey Morren, Moira Ng, Therese Patrosio, and Dana Yaptangco. OCA-NJ Gold Award went to Ranen Miao. OCA-NJ Silver Award went to Daniel Hu. OCA-NJ Bronze Award went to Davin Lui.

The three memorial scholarships were awarded, prefixed by a brief description of each one. First, the Edwin & Aurora Len Memorial Scholarship was presented to Jason Lam by Victor K. Len. Jason Lam, 18, a third-generation Chinese American, will be attending Harvard this fall. When asked what he thought was one of the deciding factors in Harvard's acceptance, he responded with his participation as chair in his high school's affiliation of High School Democrats of America. A student-led group, their chief goal is to mobilize young people and the election of Democrats. While not completely decided, Mr. Lam is considering a double major; Government and Statistics. He is interested in public policy and how statistics can be used to inform about various community needs and how they can be used to perpetuate racial biases.

This year's Essay Scholarship topic was: "Should Asian American History be taught in the Public Education System?" Mr. Lam's grandmother, Irene Lam, was in attendance at the luncheon and she was instrumental in his acquaintance with the scholarship opportunity. She has a Sino Monthly magazine subscription and reads all the articles. She noticed a small article about the OCA-NJ Scholarship awards which she forthwith sent to her grandson. She can be quoted as "so proud. He is first to go to Harvard."

SEE EXCERPT

Second, the Linda Lee Memorial Scholarship was awarded to Morgan Eng by Ray Lee. Morgan Eng, 18, a 2D/3D animation major, will be attending The Savannah College of Art and Design. Even though she was accepted by ten other art colleges, she picked The Savannah College of Art and Design because she had previously attended their 2018 summer program and she felt the accepting environment was right. Ms. Eng's essay supports having Asian studies in the curriculum.

SEE EXCERPT

At the luncheon, Ms. Eng's mother, Ingrid Eng, noted that it was a "wonderful surprise" that her daughter won the scholarship. She described her as determined person who was always into art even as a young child. She expressed that she was pleased that her daughter was embarking on an educational journey that would provide her with an appropriate livelihood. Mrs. Eng also mentioned that parental support was important in helping her daughter figure out what her future career would entail.

Thirdly, Julia Fong was the Robert E. Wone Scholarship, presented by David Lai-Len.

SEE EXCERPT

It should be noted that we were unable to interview Ms. Fong or her family as they had to leave due to a family emergency.

Thursday-Sunday, June 27-30, 2019

OCA NATIONAL CONVENTION, HOUSTON, TX



Houston, TX hosted this year's national annual OCA conference at the end of June. OCA NJ board members Lillian Gee, David Lin, Virginia Ng, and Alyson Yee, along with Chapter President, Laura Lee, were in attendance.

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The tagline was “Building Strong Advocates” for this year. Many of the workshops and presentations reflected this point. Besides Youth Track, College Track Orientation, B3 Professional Development, General Advocacy, and Women’s Track, there was the Chapter Development Track. Topics for the Chapter Development Track covered Program Development, Tips for Nonprofit Financial Success, Do You Know Your Membership?, Grant Writing Funds Development, Voting Laws and Nonpartisan Civic Engagement, State Voices VAN Training, Non-Profit Governance and Organizational Behavior, Media Training and Fact or Fiction: College Admissions, Affirmative Action, and AAPI Community. As one can see, it was quite an extensive list. This writer only went to three out of the nine available.

The first offering that was attended was a Program Development rendition that discussed ways one could implement youth programs. A broad example from the San Mateo Chapter, titled “Speak & Lead With Pride” was given. Developed in response to the challenge of engaging high school through college youth with the intention of maintaining continual connection after graduation. A six-week program that has been in existence in San Mateo for 11 years. It’s a public speaking skill improvement plan that ends up with 4 finalists vying for scholarship funds. It builds confidence by introducing students to APA leaders, educates them about APA role models and current issues.

Second was the Chapter Surveys workshop. OCA National is developing surveys that chapters can send to their members in the hope of receiving data that can be used in program development and member retention. Greater Cleveland was the test chapter with about 40 members. They obtained 65% or 26 responses. Here’s hoping we can implement a NJ chapter survey too.

The final workshop that was attended on Day 1 was the Grant Writing Funds Development. Two documents used in the workshop were prepared by OCA National VP of Finance, Virginia Ng, called, “Fund Raising From Scratch” and “Grant Writing & How to Raise Funds For Your Chapter.” The most important point that was heard in this presentation was that whatever goals that you state you will achieve in the solicitation, you must ensure that they are completed. Otherwise the funder will not look favorably upon any future requests.

That evening, the conference’s opening reception started by celebrating the 15-year partnership of OCA Houston and Houston Asian American Pacific Islander Film Festival (aka HAAPIFEST). “Seadrift”, a documentary feature about the trials of Vietnamese refugees rebuilding their lives on the Gulf Coast in Texas in the late 70’s was shown later that evening. The main storyline is that of strained tensions in the fishing community and the successful landmark lawsuit that is brought against the KKK. After 4 decades, how does the town recover and heal after this turbulent period.

Day 2 Opening plenary: Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner made opening remarks that included comments on the Supreme Court ruling on Census 2020 citizenship question and Houston diversity data. Spokespersons from the United States Census Bureau, Advancing Justice/AAJC, and Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund discussed major issues regarding Census 2020. Please see [Census sidebar](#) for details.

One of the highlights of the Youth Leadership Recognition Lunch was the keynote speaker Meta Sarmiento, Filipino poet and rapper from Guam. The lunch also afforded the opportunity for the 2019 OCA summer interns to present their version of the National Internship Video. Sarmiento also performed at the Community Arts Night Performance held later that evening at the local community center. Dinner was catered by Blood Bros. BBQ and consisted of a hearty Texan meal.

On Day 3, a few Book Talks were held. The following details the two that were attended by this writer, “Last Boat Out of Shanghai” by Helen Zia and “Murder Mystery Series” by Henry Chang.

Helen Zia, a New Jersey native, is a Chinese-American journalist and activist for Asian American and LGBTQ rights. She is best noted for the crucial role she played in bringing federal civil rights charges against Vincent Chin’s killers and igniting an Asian America response. For the first time, then-separate Asian ethnic communities came together at the grass roots to stand up for civil rights and against racist violence. Zia launched her talk with a few sentences on her background and how difficult her start in writing was. She talked about how she wrote two articles under another name on Vincent Chin at the same time as she was an activist on the case. At the time, Asian women writers were not considered acceptable.

Zia has authored four books on the Asian American experience. The latest, “Last Boat Out of Shanghai” is an epic story of Chinese fleeing Mao’s revolution. She was inspired by her mother’s story in which her mother described the worse day of her life. A story of parental abandonment and her subsequent adoption. Interviewing about 150 people (friends of friends of friends) over 12 years, the average age of the interviewees was 80. Those that were 70 years old would have been 10 years old at the time of the 1949 revolution. Age 80 was considered the best chance of getting their stories as they would have been 20. Zia commented that many of the people she spoke to appeared to be suffering from a type of PTSD.

In composing this book, Zia recounted a need to honor their stories, how their telling was like part of their healing process, and she wanted to acknowledge what a whole generation went through. “Last Boat Out of Shanghai” features 4 dramatic real-life stories of young people caught up in the mass exodus.

Henry Chang is an Asian-American detective story author from New York City. Born and raised there, he still lives in Manhattan’s Chinatown. His series focuses on the violence and poverty in Chinatown which he witnessed as he grew up. The five books focus on Detective Jack Yu whose authority ranges over the Lower East Side. They occur primarily in Chinatown with references to its locations and streets. Chang sprinkles Chinese phrases throughout his works, giving them a familiar, insider feeling.

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After a short reading from his last book, "Lucky", a Q&A started. Not only did he answer the questions, but in response, he began to tell amusing, funny, personable stories. Here are the questions that this writer asked. Did you use the names of real people for some of your characters? Yes. One of Detective Yu's boyhood friends named Wing Lee (who dies in a gang fight) is also the name of one of Chang's real-life friends. This character naming was perceived by another friend who asked for his name to be used in an upcoming book. Chang agreed but cautioned that the character could be killed off.

I saw that the name Gee Mun was used. Did you know him? The name was really Gee Man who was a real person. Both the book character and real person, Gee Man, was a car service driver.

You mentioned that the books are under consideration for a possible television series. Who do you think would be the best actor for the role? Daniel Wu, of the "Into the Badlands" fame. He's the right age and he is now available since the "Badlands" series has been cancelled.

Later that evening, the OCA National Achievements Awards dinner was held. Winners of this year's UPS Gold Mountain Scholarships were announced: Cindy Kaung, Chan Lim and Betty Ngo. Accolades were presented for the OCA Unsung Hero Awards – Tina Hwang (Detroit), Jaclyn C. Liu (Westchester/Hudson Valley), Dorcas Yee (Sacramento), Johnny Poon (Colorado), OCA Pioneer Awards – Brian Ching, Dr Paul C.W. CHU, Hoyt Zia, OCA Community Builder Award – Mei Lum, and OCA Lifetime Achievement Award – Stewart Kwoh. Another honor that requires mentioning – 2019 Chapter of the Year was announced at Saturday's luncheon. OCA Chapter Sacramento took first place.

The National Conference is always an opportunity to initiate and renew friendships with OCA members that come from all over the United States. A wonderful window in which one can meet people with like goals and experiences. And the educational options are a plus. Attendance at a conference is highly recommended.

More Census information:

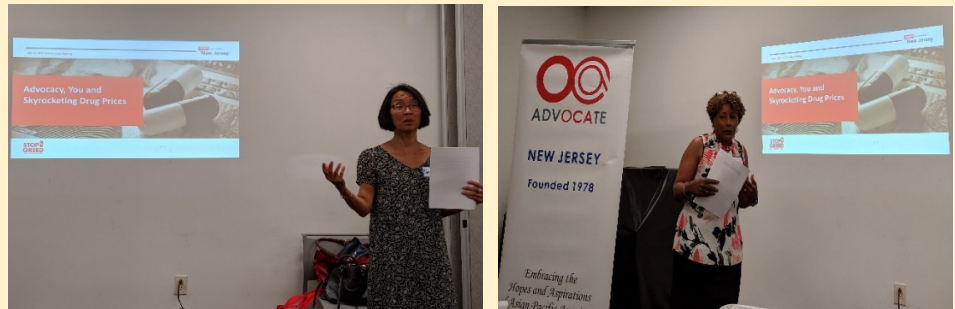
[Asian Americans and the Census – NJ](#)

[AAF Testimony on 2020 Census Outreach](#)

[AAF NJ 2020 Census](#)

Saturday, July 13, 2019

Advocacy, You & Skyrocketing Drug Prices



Hosted by OCA-NJ; Presenter: India Hayes Larrier, AARP NJ Associate State Director – Advocacy Group

The Merriam Webster dictionary definition of advocacy: the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal. And in our daily lives, we do exactly that; we advocate for our children, our parents, our friends and colleagues so that their views and wishes are considered when decisions are being made that impact their lives.

On 7/13/19, OCA-NJ members learned about advocating on public issues. Ms. India Hayes Larrier, AARP NJ Associate State Director – Advocacy, shared background and guidelines for developing strategies for group advocacy campaigns. With high drug prices impacting individuals and families, the attendees practiced types of advocacy actions including signing petitions and writing letters to their local government representatives with personal stories about their drug costs.

It was an engaging and educational afternoon, and a very timely event as OCA-NJ moves into its focus and action for the 2020 Census and the 2020 Elections. More to come about OCA NJ's 2020 focus areas and how you can participate in our advocacy efforts!

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, September 8, 11AM-4PM

FCC/OCA 4 Chapter Picnic Hosted by FCC Greater NY, Van Saun Park, Paramus, NJ

Saturday, October 19, Stevens Institute of Technology, 1 Castle Point Terrace, Hoboken, NJ

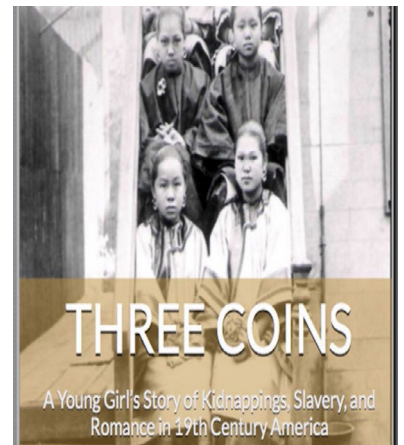
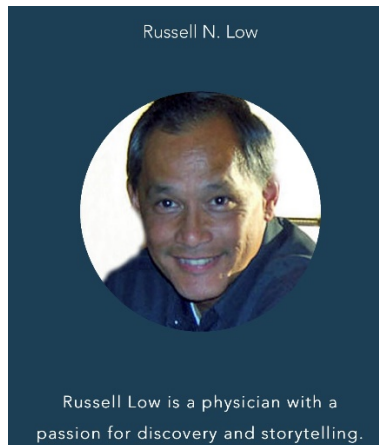
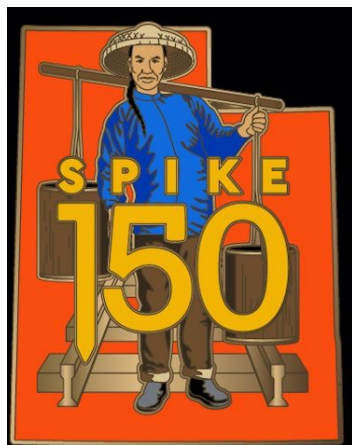
OCA-NJ Board Meeting (10AM-1:30PM)

OCA-NJ General Membership Meeting and Board Elections (1:30PM)

OCA-NJ Member Appreciation Luncheon (immediately following General Membership Meeting and Board Elections)

Following the Member Appreciation Luncheon, beginning at 3:00PM, there will be an interesting and informative program:

*******RESERVATIONS REQUIRED*******



In the spirit of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad 150 Anniversary, OCA, NJ & Steven's Tech Chinese Student's Association Presents:

Dr. Russell Low, a radiologist in La Jolla, California, poignantly writes about the real tale of blossoming romance between Ah Ying and Gee Sung, his great grandparents. Gee Hung was a Chinese railroad worker during Transcontinental Railroad from Toishan (Taishan) of Kwangtung (Guangdong).

To reserve seats, Contact: Henry Lee findhenry26@gmail.com

Saturday, December 7

OCA-NJ Holiday Ball, The Bethwood, 38 Lackawanna Avenue, Totowa, NJ

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chinese American Nurses Association 2019 Scholarship Announcement

Advocacy comes in many forms. As a nurse, and even a nursing student, you are your patients' greatest advocate for their health and well-being! Chinese American Nurses Association (CANA) is excited to announce our 2019 Scholarship is open to nursing students of Chinese heritage who are currently matriculating at an American nursing school. Please visit our website to find out more information on how to become one of our 2019 \$1,500 Scholarship recipients at <http://www.cana-usa.org/scholarship/>.

Please check our website at www.oca-nj.com and your email for the most recent updates.

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