

## N.Y.C. CHINATOWN REUNION NEWSLETTER

March 22, 2011

We want to offer our condolences to Marian Thom and family in the passing of her husband, Tommy Thom. Service information is as follows:

in lieu of flowers the family asks that donations be made to:

Visiting Nurse Service of New York Hospice Care  
In Memory of Thomas K. Thom  
1250 Broadway - 7th floor  
New York, NY 10001

### WAKE -

Friday 3/25 - 3-7pm

Wah Wing Sang Funeral Parlor -  
26 Mulberry Street  
NY, NY 10013  
(212) 962-0273

### BURIAL -

Saturday 3/26 - 10-11am

Wah Wing Sang funeral parlor -  
Evergreen Cemetery - Wing Lok section - in Brooklyn, NY

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### NEW YORK

March 22, 2011

#### **PAID SUMMER INTERNSHIP WITH OCA-NY**

**Applications are due on Monday, April 11, 2011 at 11:59 p.m. EST**

OCA-NY is a civil rights organization that protects and promotes the rights of Asian Americans. We are looking for a college or recent college graduate for a full-time summer internship position to work on OCA-NY's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Hate Crimes Prevention Art Project. For more background about the history of the project, please go to [www.oca-ny.org](http://www.oca-ny.org). Applicant must be available during the week of April 18<sup>th</sup> for phone or in-person interviews. Intern will receive a \$2,000 stipend for working from May 18-August 10, 2011.

#### Qualifications:

- Commitment to social justice issues
- Experience in facilitating youth projects
- Leadership experience in student organizations
- Ability to work independently and be a self-starter
- Flexible schedule; some weekends and nights are required
- Must work well with diverse student groups (ethnic, economic, social)
- Excellent organizational skills
- Knowledge of issues affecting New York City under-represented communities

Please e-mail a cover letter, current resume and essay (500 words maximum) on why you should be selected for this position. Include names and contact information of two references: one from someone who is knowledgeable of your character and leadership skills and one from a professor that has taught you within the last year.

E-mail cover letter, resume, essay, and references to Ed Lin at [ed.lin@oca-ny.org](mailto:ed.lin@oca-ny.org). Indicate in the subject line: "OCA-NY Hate Crimes Project Summer Internship-Your name".

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**CALIFORNIA**

**Chinese Laundries radio documentary**

There may not be too many Chinese laundries left today, but the memories that the children who grew up working in their family laundries hold are still vivid. A radio documentary producer for the Canadian Broadcasting Company in Vancouver, Yvonne Gall, interviewed John Jung, author of *Chinese Laundries: Tickets to Survival on Gold Mountain*. They also visited one of the few fully operational Chinese laundries left in the area, Sam Sing Laundry, to interview Albert Wong, a third generation owner of this West Los Angeles landmark.

Gall's documentary is complete and scheduled for mid-April airing.

"Chinese Laundry Kids" will air on April 18th at 9:00 p. m. and repeated on May 9th at 1:00 p. m. It will be the program's featured podcast for the week of May 2<sup>nd</sup> and also be available for streaming on the website: [www.cbc.ca/ideas](http://www.cbc.ca/ideas)



Albert Wong, owner of Sam Sing Laundry in W. Los Angeles, interviewed by Yvonne Gall, CBC-Radio, Vancouver, Canada.

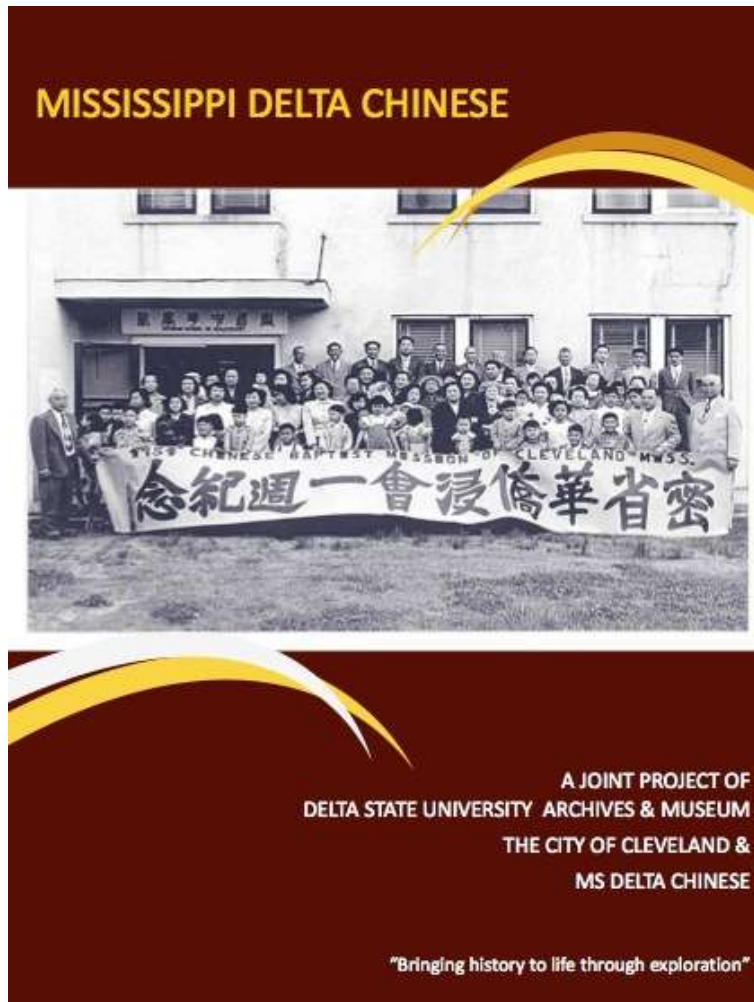
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**MISSISSIPPI**

**Mississippi Delta Chinese Museum Plans**

Plans are underway to create an historical museum about the contributions of Chinese grocers to the Mississippi Delta for more than a century. It will present a balanced history through interpretive

objects, photographs, written and spoken words to tell the story of the lives of the dispersed community of Chinese immigrants and their descendants that lived throughout the region. It will be located in Cleveland, Ms., under the auspices of Delta State University Archives, the City of Cleveland, and Delta Chinese organizations. Anyone with information, personal stories, and memorabilia about the Delta Chinese may contact the organizers at: DSU Box 3137/Capps210 Cleveland, MS 38733



### The Willie Joe Yung Story

One moving story that emerged during the planning is about Willie Joe Yung, an immigrant Chinese grocery store owner for close to 40 years who lived alone in Rena Lara, separated by the Chinese exclusion law from his family in China, which survived through his support of regular remittances. Yung was well-respected in this tiny rural community. Like many other Chinese grocery men, Yung often extended credit to customers short on cash. He even once loaned travel money to a young man needing to go to Indianapolis for a job interview because he had faith that he would be repaid. That beneficiary, James Porter, got the job, repaid the loan, and years later wrote a tribute to Yung in which he also described aspects of Yung's isolated life of hard work.

"He stayed open for long hours including Sunday, but not during services at the Baptist Church right across the railroad, where he became a supporting member. Joe lived in the store, which provided a small bedroom and an even smaller room where he cooked his meals.

We never knew of a family; only some friends who were store keepers in Cleveland and Rosedale with whom he would visit a couple of times a year usually around the holidays when stores might close for a few hours."

Many years after he died, some of his family that now lived in the United States, a grand daughter and her family, made a pilgrimage in 2001 to the site of his store to pay tribute to him for the sacrifices and support he provided for them. This visit by his family created strong local interest and recollections of the contributions that Willie Yung made to Rena Lara, and led to a belated celebration in his honor. Willie Joe Yung was the only Chinese to have a day, July 27, 2002, named in his honor by a Proclamation by the Governor of Mississippi.

The Museum Planning Committee organized a new celebration on March 14, 2011, "Rena Lara Day, Honoring Willie Yung."

For more info about Willie Joe Yung and the full Proclamation:

<http://mississippideltachinese.webs.com/lifestories.htm>

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**MISCELLANEOUS**

**JAPAN**

With the danger of radioactive contamination from the Fukushima power plant, there could be a possibility of wiping out the population of Japan. Vegetables from nearby farms, milk and water supplies have been contaminated. If this becomes widespread, how many thousands of people will be affected?

This is the worst natural disaster in modern history and yet the people of Japan are acting with dignity and perseverance. Hollywood was right there with telethons and fundraisers for the Haitian people, where are they now for the Japanese people?

These people need the help of the world and right now, so please donate to any one of the charities that is helping. Just be sure they are the legitimate ones.

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**CHINA**

**China's youngest elected village chief eyes future**

Fresh-faced Bai Yitong appears to be an average 21-year-old young woman living in a rural village in China's mountainous Shaanxi province.

It is dawn in Gaojie Village and like everyone else, Bai has a big day of work ahead of her. Sitting at the edge of her hard "kang" bed, a slab of heated stone she shares with her aunt and young cousin, Bai stretches and yawns before slipping her cold feet into her sneakers. She brings herself to sit up in a small coal-heated room that triples as the family bedroom, living room and kitchen. Bai trudges over to a plastic bowl of water, cold from last night's frost, to wash her face and brush her teeth.

Before the toothpaste lands on her toothbrush, Bai's cell phone pierces the morning quiet with a shrill ring that sounds vaguely like an Avril Lavigne song. She picks it up and in a surprisingly strong voice says, "Good morning, how can I help you?"

The villager on the other end of the line asks, "So did my water problem get on the agenda for today's village government meeting?"

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Bai doesn't skip a beat. In her pajamas and sneakers, she cheerfully chats with the villager, advising how he should present his irrigation issues to the village government that afternoon. She hangs up and resumes her morning routine. Her aunt who minds the porridge on the stove doesn't bat an eye.

The villager on the other end of the line was Bai's constituent. At an age when most Chinese are still interns, Bai is two years into her three-year term as the youngest village chief in the country, part of a fledgling democracy permitted in China.

But make no mistake, Bai is not just another Chinese Communist official. For one, she was directly elected by the people at the age of 19, unseating a male incumbent who held the office for several terms. She is the youngest and most educated village chief Gao Jie has ever had.

"I ran for office without being a member of the Communist party at first actually. I joined afterward," she tells CNN. "The experience as village chief has been tremendous. I am humbled daily."

It's an uncommon story in a country where the vast majority of young people seek high-paying jobs in large cosmopolitan cities like Shanghai and Guangzhou. Raised in one of the richest families in her county, Bai left her comfortable home in the city to move back to her ancestral village that lacks running water and still uses open pit toilets. She is virtually the only person her age who lives in the village as most have gone off to cities to seek factory work or white-collar jobs.

My friends ... all of them have moved away into big cities, mostly working in big companies and going to graduate school," Bai says. "We compare our experiences when we chat online...it's surreal how different my life is from theirs, but I think I'm doing what I am meant to do."

With her father's encouragement, Bai ran for village chief on a platform of eliminating corruption and making villagers richer.

"My father told me I could do it," Bai tells CNN. "I never had thought about doing this until he planted the idea in my head and I realized, yes I can."

After the election and backed by her father's money, she paved a new 48-kilometer road and constructed a sprawling village square. She often drives four hours to the nearest city hall to aggressively campaign for more government funding to bring running water to Gao Jie. To date, she has brought in workers to improve conditions at the local school, built more than 10 greenhouses for vegetable growing, constructed two dams for water storage and restored the village theater outdoor stage, which was first built in the Ming dynasty.

But it wasn't easy at first. She gave up the modern amenities of city life and conveniences from her childhood. "It was really hard to adjust. I didn't even have a place to wash my face or take a shower. But I eventually got used to it," she says. "And at first, my villagers didn't trust me," Bai tells CNN. "Working as a village head means you have to think the way villagers think, and see the way they see things. That took time for me."

Today, Bai navigates the village like a local, while finding respite from the exhausting schedule by listening to her favorite Avril Lavigne song, playing online games and watching Spongebob Squarepants.

"There are times I'm frustrated, I think maybe I should quit, but then I go outside and hang out with my villagers, and I realize this is completely worth it," Bai says.

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Villagers agree. They see Bai as fresh alternative and as a bridge to the future. Even her 46-year-old opponent agrees. "I was upset when I lost, but in the short time she has been here, she has been very impressive," says Bai Zhijia, who is unrelated to Bai Yitong.

Watching Bai interact with villagers is like observing a beloved granddaughter interact with doting grandparents ... or in this aging village, hundreds of grandparents. She jokes with locals, kisses babies, and sings a solo at the village's Chinese New Year celebration. For Bai, pressing the flesh comes naturally. Her genuine, young, and personal touch won over more than 1,200 villagers.

The election was just the first step, Bai tells CNN. "My biggest priority has also been my biggest challenge...how to increase my villagers' incomes on a permanent basis," she explains. "But I'm figuring it out."

Bai has settled in well in Gaojie's dry hilly areas which are especially conducive to growing the date-like jujube fruit. Since she took office, she has opened a factory that employs villagers to manufacture dried jujubes, jujube tea and jujube snacks that are distributed across China. She giggled as she compared her jujube ambitions to Bubba Gump Shrimp Company in the movie Forrest Gump.

Bai plans to run for reelection this fall and she believes she may pull off another victory. "I feel more ready than ever," she says with a smile.

At this rate, could Bai Yitong one day be president of China? Her father thinks so. "With all the changes in China...going in a democratic direction, she could do it," father Bai Yanling says over dinner.

His daughter, who looks up to Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, bristles at the compliment as any polished politician would. But her focus is on the future. She combs the internet to see what other leaders and party secretaries are doing to improve their villages, and has attended trainings in Xian to "improve my understanding of how it all works," she says.

Bai hopes that the attention she receives as a young leader will bring more reform to China's political system. Indeed, Bai is a part of an emerging new trend of younger officials in China. Last year, more than 100 provincial officials in their 40s were named to office.

"I really hope there will be more elections in the future and yes, I think there will be," she says. "I also hope I can help more women get elected. The number of women in the National People's Congress has decreased over the years. Perhaps I can start a new trend."

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Did you know the Chinese played a major role in the development of the [arts](#), [sciences](#), [philosophy](#), and [mathematics](#) throughout [history](#). In ancient times, the scientific accomplishments of China included [seismological detectors](#), [matches](#), [paper](#), [cannon](#), flare, continuous flame throwers, [fire arrow](#), [paper-printed money](#), [chain drive](#), [escapement](#), [pendulum](#), [silk](#), multistage rocket, [landmine](#), [quilling-wheel](#), odometer, [sluice gate](#), the [canal lock](#), [flash lock](#), [rudder](#), [pontoon bridge](#), [gimbal](#), [South Pointing Chariot](#), water-tight compartment, [blast furnace](#), [porcelain](#), belt drive, [dry docks](#), sliding [calipers](#), the double-action piston pump, carbon suspension, [cast iron](#), metal stirrups, [civil service](#) examination system, paddle wheels, the iron plow, the multi-tube seed drill, the wheelbarrow, rotary winnowing fan, collapsible [umbrella](#), [toothbrush](#), [trip hammer](#), [trebuchet](#), kites, [Su Song](#) water-driven astronomical clock tower, grand canal, horse collar, [chain pump](#), [pound lock](#), the [suspension bridge](#), the [parachute](#), [natural gas](#) as fuel, the [magnetic compass](#), the [raised-relief map](#), the

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[propeller](#), [inoculation](#), the [crossbow](#), [gunpowder](#) and [printing](#). Paper, printing, the compass, and gunpowder are celebrated in Chinese culture as the [Four Great Inventions of ancient China](#). Chinese astronomers were also among the first to record observations of a [supernova](#).

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**Read this and make a copy for your files** in case you need to refer to it someday. Maybe we should all take some of his advice! A corporate attorney sent the following out to the employees in his company:

1. **do not sign** the back of your **credit cards**. Instead, put '**PHOTO ID REQUIRED**.'
2. When you are writing checks to pay on your credit card accounts, **DO NOT** put the complete **account number** on the 'For' line. Instead, just put the last **four numbers**. The credit card company knows the rest of the number, and anyone who might be handling your check as it passes through all the check processing channels won't have access to it.
3. Put your work phone # on your checks instead of your home phone. If you have a PO Box use that instead of your home address. If you do not have a PO Box, use your work address. **Never** have your **SS#** printed on your checks. (DUH!) You can add it if it is necessary. But if you have it printed, anyone can get it.
4. Place the **contents** of your **wallet** on **photocopy machine**. Do both sides of each license, credit card, etc. You will know what you had in your wallet and all of the account numbers and phone numbers to call and cancel.. Keep the photocopy in a safe place. I also carry a photocopy of my passport when I travel either here or abroad. We've all heard horror stories about fraud that's committed on us in stealing a Name, address, Social Security number, credit cards..
5. We have been told we should **cancel** our **credit cards** immediately. But the key is having the toll free numbers and your card numbers handy so you know whom to call. Keep those where you can find them.
- 6.. **File a police report** immediately in the jurisdiction where your credit cards, etc., were stolen. This proves to credit providers you were diligent, and this is a first step toward an investigation (if there ever is one).

But here's what is perhaps **most important of all**:

7. **Call the 3 national credit reporting organizations** immediately to place a fraud alert on your name and also call the Social Security fraud line number.. I had never heard of doing that until advised by a bank that called to tell me an application for credit was made over the Internet in my name.

The alert means any company that checks your credit knows your information was stolen, and they have to contact you by phone to authorize new credit..

Now, here are the numbers you always need to contact about your wallet, if it has been

stolen:

1.) Equifax: 1-800-525-6285

2.) Experian (formerly TRW): 1-888-397-3742

3.) Trans Union: 1-800-680-7289

4.) Social Security Administration (fraud line): 1-800-269-0271

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NYC Chinatown Website and Newsletter Archive

<http://aditl.com/chinatown/>