



# CHINATOWN RENEWAL

## NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2011

“CREATING A THRIVING COMMUNITY”

IN ASSOCIATION WITH SDCB

### 4<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ASIAN FESTIVAL - APRIL 30

Come to 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Asian Festival in Salinas' Chinatown on April 30<sup>th</sup> from 11 am – 4 pm. This celebration of history, culture, and renewal is organized by the Asian Festival team of the Salinas Downtown Community Board as part of the Salinas Chinatown Renewal Project. We are pleased the Korean community will join the festivities this year.

Opening ceremonies begin at 11 a.m. on the lot next to the old Republic Café, 37 Soledad Street, the future site of the Asian Cultural Center and Museum. The ceremonies include taiko drumming, martial arts, lion dancing, and a welcome from Salinas Mayor Donahue. The Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino communities have lived and worked in



*(Asian Festival cont. on page 2)*

### STATE HISTORICAL RESOURCES COMMISSION TO CONSIDER SALINAS CHINATOWN REQUEST

Following a five month process that included no fewer than 6 rewrites our application to the State Historic Preservation Office (SPHO) has been accepted and is on the agenda for the May 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the State Historical Resources Commission. To be listed in the National Register of Historic Places is to first be considered by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The SHPO can take

one of several options: reject the property, ask for more information, list the property just with the state, or send the forms to the US Department of Interior for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. You can read more about the process at: [http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/national\\_register\\_fundamentals.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/national_register_fundamentals.htm) ✪

### CHINATOWN HISTORY

*Over the next three issues of the SDCB Newsletter we will share information on the history of Chinatown. In this issue we look at Chinatown's beginning (1872-1920):*

The first Salinas Chinatown was established in 1872 and was destroyed by fire in June 1893. Within four days of the fire, Chinese merchants re-established a new Chinatown on Soledad Street between E. Lake and E Market Streets. This time the Chinese purchased and stored 450 feet of fire hose, in case of fire. In its early days Chinatown consisted

mostly of men, without families. Salinas' Chinatown began as small service community for seasonal Chinese laborers and the white community. The 1880 census showed that of the 91 residents in Chinatown, over half were laborers, including agricultural laborers; nearly one quarter were cooks, and the rest comprised a multitude of service

positions including merchants, prostitutes, barbers, interpreters, physicians, etc. Chinatown demographics changed after 1910, as Japanese farm laborers arrived to settle in Chinatown. The population of Chinese merchants increased while Chinese farm laborers decreased. Factors contributing to this

*(History cont. on page 2)*

### SDCB MEMBER PROFILE - MARGARITA ZARRAGA AND RUBEN CORTES



Margarita has been a resident of Salinas for the last 30 years. As a member of the Salinas Downtown

Community Board, she Chairs the Community Relations Committee and represents the Department of Social and Employment Services. She started her career in Social Services in 1984. Since 1999 she has been assigned to the Community Action

*(Zarraga cont. on page 2)*



Ruben is a long-time business owner of the Chinatown Area. He owns

and manages the Cortes Truck Center which is both a dealership and a truck service business on the corner of Market Way and Sherwood Drive. Ruben and his family own a total of five adjoining parcels in Chinatown. He is in Chinatown area 24/7

*(Cortes cont. on page 2)*

## CHINATOWN HISTORY

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transformation included --- immigration restrictions where Chinese farm laborers faced tougher immigration laws than Chinese merchants and students; Chinese laborers faced increasing difficulties in getting settled and Chinese merchants had some freedom to travel back and forth between China and the U. S. to continue their business and to bring their wives to the U. S.; as Chinese merchants had U. S. born children, they were able to purchase lots under their children's names and become further established.

Most Chinese farmers unable to get established returned to China. Chinese merchants who flourished continued to serve other farm laborers --- first Japanese, then Filipinos, and later braceros. The Chinese strengthened their presence in Chinatown by erecting stores, restaurants, laundries, and other businesses to respond to the needs of incoming non-Chinese immigrants. The Chinese preserved their identity in the process of maintaining a livelihood and by continuing to serve the Chinese



Lion dance performance on April 15 & 16, 1961 in front of the Republic Café.

with some cultural services, including the Joss House where children attended Chinese School and adults worshiped various gods. Chinese tongs and their leaders maintained order within Chinatown. The two largest tongs (Bing Tong and Suey Sing) offered protection for those Chinese without papers, helped them obtain jobs, represented them in court, and assisted many financially. The tongs each had a hall where colorful rituals and conventions were held, along with fraternal projects and mahjong games.



## SDCB MEMBER PROFILE

(Zarraga cont. from page 1)

Partnership. She currently holds the position of Community Affiliations Manager and works closely with a network of community based organizations. In addition to the SDCB, Margarita serves on the following local boards and committees: Central Coast Energy Services, Social Services

Transportation Advisory Committee, Coalition of Homeless Services Providers, and the Local Homeless Assistance Committee. It is Margarita's dream to see Chinatown area restored and converted into a favorite visitor's location in Salinas. Her father once an immigrant with the bracero program holds vivid memories of the once vibrant Chinatown area.



(Cortez cont. from page 1)

because he resides in one of his properties, the Royal Hotel building. Ruben is the Secretary/Treasurer of the Salinas Downtown Community Board and also the Chair

of the Safety, Social Service Provider and Sanitation Team. Ruben looks forward to the Chinatown renovation because eventually would allow him to expand his businesses as well as

improving his place of residence. He is involved with the Chinatown Renewal project because he hopes to make a difference in making this area clean and free of crime.

## EVENTS



### First Friday Art Walk, 5-9 pm

April 1, May 6  
19 Soledad Street,  
(831) 455-5964  
[bvthtree09@yahoo.com](mailto:bvthtree09@yahoo.com)



### Beautification Day

April 16, 2011  
(831) 770-1770  
[kfeske@csumb.edu](mailto:kfeske@csumb.edu)



### 4th Annual Asian Festival

April 30, 2011  
11 am - 4 pm  
[www.salinasasianfestival.com](http://www.salinasasianfestival.com)

## ASIAN FESTIVAL

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our Chinatown as far back as 1872. These communities will open their centers to the public, offering ethnic foods and free cultural entertainment, history exhibits, and walking tours. A Festival souvenir program booklet will also be available for sale. Food and programs will be offered at: Salinas Confucius Church, 1 California Street  
Buddhist Temple of Salinas, 14 California Street  
Filipino Cultural Center, 250 Calle Cebu (You will also find Korean food/programs here)  
Other Festival events such as demonstrations, tours, and exhibits will be held at:

Chinatown Community Garden at 5 Soledad Street  
@risk Gallery at 19 Soledad Street  
Dorothy's Place at 30 Soledad Street  
CSUMB Community Learning Center at 22 Soledad Street  
Ted Ponton's Glass Shop at 141 East Lake Street.

Chair of the 2011 Festival is Orly Jimenez, president of the Filipino Community Center of the Salinas Valley. More information about the Festival is available at

[www.salinasasianfestival.com](http://www.salinasasianfestival.com).

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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[www.salinasdcb.org](http://www.salinasdcb.org)



**About Us** - The Salinas Downtown Community Board, SDCB, is a nonprofit agency whose mission is to provide advice and recommendations to local government, government agencies and other community stakeholders on issues focused on improving the quality of life for individuals and businesses located in the downtown Salinas area. **The Chinatown Renewal Project is a collaborative effort of the City of Salinas, CSUMB, and the SDCB.**