



CHINATOWN RENEWAL

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2011

“CREATING A THRIVING COMMUNITY”

IN ASSOCIATION WITH SDCB

ORAL HISTORIES OF SALINAS CHINATOWN PROJECT RECEIVES CSUMB MARIAN PENN PARTNERSHIP AWARD

On May 19, 2011 the ongoing oral history work carried out by CSUMB students and the Asian Cultural Experience (ACE) received the highest honor of the Service Learning Institute. The Marian Penn Partnership Award honors partners who make service learning possible and powerful. The

Award recognizes community partners (ACE) and faculty (Dr. Rina Benmayor) who have demonstrated exceptional commitment, communication and success in strengthening communities through service learning.



Photos Courtesy of Elmer A. Dolera

(Marian Penn Award cont. on page 2)

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROGRAM

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources.

The National Register of Historic Places is a treasure trove for professional historians, scholars, and anyone curious about American history.

- The more than 80,000 properties listed in the National Register represent 1.4 million individual resources - buildings, sites, districts, structures, and objects.

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CHINATOWN HISTORY

Continued from the SDCB Spring 2011 Newsletter. In this issue we look at Chinatown's history from 1920-1950:

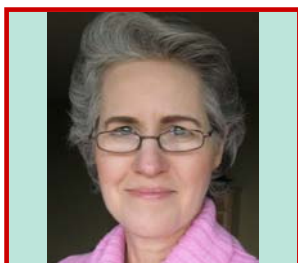
In the 1920s and 1930s, Chinatown reached its peak. Soledad Street and the surrounding few blocks flourished with cigar stores, cafes, hotels, bars, and pool halls. In addition, there were illegal gambling and opium houses, which were periodically raided by law enforcement and shut down briefly. The Wallace Ahtye family moved from San Francisco to Salinas in the

1920s looking for business opportunities. Ahtye and his friend Bow Chin purchased various properties and soon embarked on the hotel, gambling, and restaurant business. Chin was not a U.S. citizen at that time so he could not own property. His partnership with Ahtye was based on trust without any legal contract.

The Republic Hotel, on the corner of Market Way and Soledad Street was one of the first businesses of Ahtye and Chin. There was a gambling hall on the ground floor and a hotel on the upper level. The Ahtye family lived in the back of the gambling hall. In 1939, Ahtye and Chin purchased 37 and 39 Soledad Street from Wing and Ming

(History cont. on page 2)

SDCB MEMBER PROFILE - JILL ALLEN AND JAMES BARNES



Jill is currently the development director for

Franciscan Workers of Junipero Serra (whose programs include Dorothy's Place Hospitality Center) and a development consultant for the Salinas Public Library. Immediate past experience includes capital campaign administration for Monterey High School's Field & Track

(Allen cont. on page 2)



I am a graduate of North Salinas High School, Hartnell Community

College, San Francisco State University, and Golden Gate University. I have a Masters degree in Taxation. I have been an Accounting Instructor at Golden Gate University, Brandman University Hartnell Community College, and Monterey

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CHINATOWN HISTORY

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Gee, and began to replace the existing wooden structures by constructing the Lotus Inn, now Mi Cantina. Two years later, they started building the Republic Cafe and subsequently began operating the area's largest Chinese restaurant. In 1942, Wallace Ahtye and his family started residing above the newly built Republic Cafe. The Cafe served as the venue that kept the Chinese community a close-knit. The Cafe was a place where people gathered to celebrate Chinese New Years, birthdays, weddings, after-funeral gatherings, and sometimes the ritual of shaving a month-old baby's hair. In addition to hosting banquets for Chinese families and



Photos Courtesy of Elmer A. Dolera

organizations, luncheons and dinners were served to Filipinos, Japanese, Caucasian, Hispanics, and African Americans. The Republic Cafe was one of the few places where families and friends could hold large gatherings. The Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino communities frequently held gatherings of up to 150 people in the Republic Cafe. ✨

MARIAN PENN PARTNERSHIP AWARD

The oral histories will constitute a permanent archive for Chinatown, to be housed in the anticipated Salinas Chinatown Cultural Center and Museum in the historic Republic Café. Each year since 2008 oral history students have been interviewing, recording, and archiving memories of Chinatown among the Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Mexican and Homeless communities who throughout the twentieth century have called

Chinatown home. To date, students have recorded more than 60 audio and video interviews and will continue the project for the next two years. The goal is to have a rich body of interviews that can be used in the future for public programming (documentaries, walking tours, and exhibitions), research, and conference presentations. The Chinatown project has offered students a unique applied learning experience. ✨

NATIONAL REGISTER

(Continued from page 1)

- Almost every county in the United States has at least one place listed in the National Register – the Republic Café will be the 7th structure in Salinas!
- Listing in the National Register is the first step towards eligibility for National Park Service administered [federal preservation tax credits](#) that have leveraged more than \$45 billion in private investment and National Park Service grant

programs like [Save America's Treasures](#) and [Preserve America](#).

On July 14, 2011 the Director of the National Park Service notified us that the Republic Café was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. As a result the property was also listed in the California Register of Historic Resources. Placement affords a property the honor of inclusion in the nation's official list of cultural resources. ✨

EVENTS



First Friday Art Walk, 5-9 pm

August 5, September 2, October 7
19 Soledad Street,
(831) 455-5964
bythtree09@yahoo.com



Make A Difference Day

October 22, 2011
[Kfeske@csumb.edu](mailto:kfeske@csumb.edu)

Visit the SDCB website!

www.salinasdcb.org

ALLEN AND BARNES (CONTINUED)

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Renovation Project, fund development with Monterey Bay Area Council, Boy Scouts of America, and proposal writing for Learning Is For Everyone, a faith-based collaborative that provides after-school programs to under-privileged youth in Salinas. Prior to her experience in the public benefit sector, she devoted fourteen years to service in the United States Air Force, Military Airlift Command. Jill is a member of the California Air National Guard. ✨

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Peninsula College. I am proud to share that our five children have their undergraduate degrees from different colleges and different majors. Needless to say I am a strong advocate for education and its rewards. I currently serve as the Chief Financial Officer at Sun Street Centers. My commitment to non-profit organizations include being past president of Salinas Rotary Club and a coach for Colt baseball teams. I am a U. S. Naval Security Group veteran from the Vietnam Era and I am currently the treasurer of the Monterey Coast Guard Auxiliary. My family includes my wife, JuneAnn, 5 children, and 5 grandchildren. My hobbies and pastime include spending time with my family, fishing, and gardening. ✨

CONTACT INFORMATION

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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.**