

# The AACP Newsletter

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## Asian Pacific American Heritage Month and TV An Evaluation of Local Broadcasting

By Leonard D. Chan

On a Monday night in May, black and white movie footage of what appears to be a recreation of the May 10, 1869 commemoration of the Transcontinental Railroad in Utah is being shown on NBC. Is this an Asian Pacific American Heritage Month (APAHM) special on the Chinese American workers that helped build the Transcontinental Railroad? No, it's a GE commercial and to make matters worse, much like the original photos taken of the event, there's not a single Chinese worker to be seen in the frame.

A recent study commissioned by the *National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium* states that the CBS network doesn't even have any regular Asian American cast members in any of its 2004-2005 season's programs. Not surprising then that no special APAHM programming was planned by any of the major networks.

Another APAHM is here and still the only national television network that appears to take notice is PBS. So, just how well is KQED, the local San Francisco PBS station, holding up with their APAHM programming? Upon evaluation of their website page for APAHM programming, you will find approximately 106 "special" programs for the month.

Sounds like a lot, right? But upon closer examination you will discover that only nine programs are in the prime time slot from 7-11 pm and only two can be considered to be about the true Asian Pacific "American" experience. (You could count three if you include a show about the possibility of 15th century Chinese explorers making it to North America.)

In this case, the "American" experience means anything having to do with the experience of Asians in American. This may include Asian Americans interacting with people in other countries or immigrant stories of how they made it to the United States. The list should not include regularly shown programs, programs about Asian cooking, programs about the history or current situation in Asian countries, travel programs, or even a music variety show taking place in China. KQED include all of these types of programs in their list. Although these programs may be of great interest to Asian Pacific Americans and the general public, APAHM was created to honor the achievements of Asian Pacific "Americans" and to recognize their contributions to the "United States."

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## Two Special Events

### Asian Heritage Spotlight Program

On May 21st, 12:30-4pm, a joint effort by the San Mateo Public Library Foundation, the Organization of Chinese Americans, the Asian Pacific Fund, AACP, and numerous other sponsors will be hosting an *Asian Pacific American Heritage Month Celebration Event* at the San Mateo Library. Authors Rosemary Gong, Kimi Kodani Hill, and Charlie Chin will be in attendance. Plus artist Amy Da-Peng King and a Wushu Martial Arts group will be on hand too. For more information go to <http://www.smlibraryfoundation.org>.

### The California Conference on the Internment of Japanese Americans

On June 2-4 the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program (CCLPEP) and the Japanese Cultural

and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC) are holding a conference at the Radisson Miyako Hotel in San Francisco. As a former CCLPEP grant winner, AACP will be in attendance and will be taking an active role in this event. CCLPEP helped fund many interesting projects and many of these grant winners will be in attendance.

The early registration rate (a \$15 discount) has been extended till May 13. Please check the conference website for more information <http://www.cclpepconf.org>.

Note that there will be free documentary screenings all day on June 3rd and 4th. For more information about the films that will be screened, go to <http://www.cclpepconf.org/screenings.html>.

## Give Us Your Feedback

Please feel free to send us your reviews, comments, and book suggestions. You can contact us at - [aacpinc@asianamericanbooks.com](mailto:aacpinc@asianamericanbooks.com)

### Up Coming Events

Here are some events that AACCP will soon be attending. Invite us to your events.

Date/Time	Event	Location
May 19-21	NAAPAE Nat. Assoc. for Asian and Pac. Am. Educ.	Marriott Hotel Burlingame, CA
May 21 12:30-4pm	Asian Heritage Spotlight Program	SM Public Library San Mateo, CA
June 2-5	State of CA Conference on the Internment of Japanese Americans Sponsored by CCLPEP	Radisson Miyako Hotel San Francisco, CA
Other Event of Interest that AACCP May Not Attend		
June 4-5	Foster City Art and Wine Festival	Foster City, CA
June 18 11am-6pm	Japanese Cultural Fair	Mission Plaza Park Santa Cruz, CA

## Editor's Message

Hello everyone.

Sorry for the delay on this newsletter. We've been working hard on a number of things, including the events highlighted in our "Two Special Events" article.

First of all thank you to Jaime and Philip for contributing to this newsletter.

Second, we need more help. If you have time or if you know of someone that needs valuable work experience for the summer, we'd be very glad to have your help. You can choose to volunteer on a one or multiple time basis or on a regular schedule as an intern.

Some of the things that we need help on include help with this newsletter, grant writing, publishing projects and functions, miscellaneous special projects, sales (especially at some of the events we go to), and a whole variety of store and office functions. Please write to us, come in to the office, or just call. We'd be happy to talk with you.

To our past interns, we'd be glad to hear from you. Even if you don't have time to help, let us know what you're up to. Perhaps you can write about it and we can place it in a future newsletter.

Leonard Chan  
**Executive Editor**

### Asian Pacific American Heritage Month and TV

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In fact, May was chosen to commemorate the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad and the first Japanese to arrive in the US (both of which happened in May).

Here are some of the numbers to be considered -

- 28% of the 106 programs can only be seen on HDTV or digital cable
- 17% of the 106 programs are repeated showing of programs already in the list
- 37% of the programs are about the Asian Pacific "American" experience

- 22% of the 106 programs on the Asian Pacific "American" experience are shown between 9am-7pm
- 12% of the 106 programs on the Asian Pacific "American" experience are shown between 11pm-9am
- 3% of the 106 programs on the Asian Pacific "American" experience are shown between 7pm-11pm
- 0% of the other national networks have any APAHM programming

We invite you to do your own research on your local television channels - let us know how they stack up to KQED. We'd love to hear what you find out.

### Links for Asian Pacific American Heritage Month and TV

KQED's APAHM web page

<http://www.kqed.org/topics/history/heritage/apa/index.jsp>

National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium (NAPALC)

<http://www.napalc.org>

Summary Article on the NAPALC Study on Asian In Television

[http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20050502/ap\\_en\\_tv/tv\\_asian\\_representation\\_9](http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20050502/ap_en_tv/tv_asian_representation_9)

PBS's APAHM website

[http://www.pbs.org/aboutpbs/news/20050408\\_apa2005.html](http://www.pbs.org/aboutpbs/news/20050408_apa2005.html)

National Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA)

<http://www.naatanet.org/heritagemonth/2005/home.html>

# An Idea for Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

## Let's Move It

An Editorial by Leonard D. Chan

Last year we had an editorial (see the June 2004 newsletter) that was critical of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month (APAHM) and to my surprise the biggest negative response came from our past intern Jaime Young. Here are some of the points that Jaime made (Jaime, please excuse my paraphrasing) -

- There is a thriving interest in APAHM. Lots of groups and individuals (including myself) do celebrate the month with various activities.
- There does not appear to be any dearth in TV programming.
- APAHM is not being squeeze out of the school system, because it was never a part of it.
- Accentuate the positives - don't sit around complaining about the lack of publicity, get involved and help publicize the events that are taking place.
- It is hard to get the Asian Pacific American community to get involved - partly because the community is so diverse.

First of all I apologize to anyone in the trenches diligently trying to make APAHM more relevant. We did not mean to belittle your efforts and we do not wish to do away with APAHM. Last year's editorial was meant to incite others to take notice of APAHM, join in, and make it work. This year, with this newsletter, we continue a debate that will hopefully help make APAHM better.

Maybe it's just my perception, but I think APAHM may be losing some interest. Our article on the lack of good APAHM TV programming is meant to prove the point that there is a dearth in this area. I'm not sure whether TV programming is a good gauge of the public's interest or whether it is contributor to APAHM's diminishing status. If TV

programming is a reflection of the public's interest, then perhaps APAHM does need help.

Here is my proposal - let's move African American Heritage Month to January and APAHM to February.

Timing is everything and from an educational standpoint, I don't think May is that good of a month for APAHM. If an event or tradition is to be carried on, then you need active participation from the youths in the community. For many school age kids, May is the end or near end of the school term. Do students and educators have time for APAHM when they have finals, graduation, and all of the other concerns that go along with the end of the school year? If APAHM is meant to be an educational event, shouldn't we have the full attention of students and schools?

Speaking of which, are the historical reasons for why May was chosen for APAHM significant to the current demographics of the Asian Pacific American community? May was chosen to highlight achievements of the Chinese Transcontinental Railroad workers and the first Japanese immigrant to America. Although I am proud of my ancestors' participation in the building the railroads, perhaps this achievement is not that important to other Asian Pacific American ethnic groups. The settling of the first Japanese immigrants in the US definitely seems to have limited appeal and relatively minor significance - almost every group in American has a similar "first to come" experience.

February would be a better month for Asian Pacific Americans for a number of reasons. First of all, February is usually the month in which the Lunar New Year is celebrated. For many different Asian ethnic groups the Lunar

New Year's celebration is the biggest cultural event of the year.

The Lunar New Year sometimes falls in January, but many of the events surrounding this celebration take place after the actual Lunar New Year date. The San Francisco Lunar New Year parade is one of the oldest held ethnic events in the country and usually falls in February. A Lunar New Year parade has even become a tradition in Hawaii.

The Lunar New Year is a historical and cultural event that helps to reconnect many Asian Americans with their Asian heritage. There are many schools that spend time in February to learn about the Lunar New Year and Asian American culture. Why not use the Lunar New Year celebration time to also promote Asian Pacific American heritage?

February is also the anniversary month of Executive Order 9066, which was the presidential command, that sent many Japanese Americans to internment camps during World War II. Although February 19th is a sad historical date for the Japanese community and all civil liberty loving Americans, this is a date that is commemorated every year with Day of Remembrance events. In a way, the Japanese internment of World War II and the fight to gain reparations aided in the galvanization of the Japanese and Asian American communities, and started the yellow power and Asian American studies movements of the early 1970s.

As Jaime had pointed out in her rebuttal to me, the one thing that is being taught in most US schools is the subject of the Japanese American Internment. Why not use this historical anniversary in conjunction with learning about the total Asian Pacific

American experience in the United States?

Both the Lunar New Year and the Day of Remembrance are events that are unlikely to diminish with time.

An interesting side note to this is the Marysville Bok Kai Festival in Northern California. It's an event that takes place approximately one month after the Lunar New Year and brags of having the longest continuously held Chinese parade in America. Two years ago when I went to this event, I discovered that even though the Chinese community had dwindled the non-Chinese members of the community actively helped to carry on the traditions of this event. I saw this

as an interesting metaphor for what was great about America – America was not ethnically monolithic and that all of us can learn to celebrate its diversity. Perhaps a vibrant APAHM month in February can further this cause.

Okay, here's the hard part - can we get the African American community to agree with this move? I picked January for their new month because the apparent fit with the celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday and the end of Kwanzaa on January 1st, but perhaps my thoughts are faulty and misinformed. Perhaps the African American community really prefers February or may even like to choose another month. There may be many

reasons, that I don't know of, for why African American Heritage Month is best in February. As far as I know, January is not being used by any other major groups. Perhaps I am wrong about this. If a pope can arbitrarily change our whole calendar system a few hundred years ago, why should it be so hard for us to make this move?

Let me know what you think and maybe we can pass the ideas on to our legislators and other community leaders. Let's carry on this debate every year so that we can make some positive changes for APAHM. I'll try to do my part and I hope you stay with us for part three next year.

### ***Links for An Idea for Asian Pacific American Heritage Month***

AACP's June 2004 Newsletter article on APAHM

<http://asianamericanbooks.com/newslets/nl0604.htm#apahm>

Good article on the history of APAHM by The University of Kansas Medical Center

[http://www3.kumc.edu/diversity/ethnic\\_relig/apahm.html](http://www3.kumc.edu/diversity/ethnic_relig/apahm.html)



Marysville Bok Kai Festival

<http://www.bokkaifestival.com/>

U.S. Census Bureau's APAHM fact sheet

[http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts\\_for\\_features/001627.html](http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features/001627.html)

The following books are discounted an additional 20% from the listed price for subscribers to our newsletter. The discounts on these books end June 7, 2005.

	<p><b>Chinese Heart of Texas</b>          The San Antonio Community 1875-1975          By Mel Brown          2005, 222 pages, Paperback.</p> <p>This book is well illustrated with fascinating pictures of the Chinese community of San Antonio, Texas from 1875 through 1975. The text covers aspects of a community whose history isn't very well known, such as the story of Chinese American air-mail pilots during the 1930s. That story among many others traces the course of immigration, discrimination, struggle, and finally acceptance, is told in this well-received book.</p> <p>Item #3291, Price \$10.95 - for newsletter subscribers <b>\$8.76</b></p>
	<p><b>I, Doko</b>          The Tale of a Basket          By Ed Young          Illustrated by Ed Young          2004, 32 pages, Hardback.</p> <p>Based upon a traditional Nepalese fairy tale, this story emphasizes the point that every generation owes a duty of care to the elderly because one day, if they are lucky, they too will be elderly and will depend on the care of others. This is an excellent book for intergenerational lessons and discussions through the simple text and attractive illustrations.</p> <p>Item #3279, Price \$15.95 - for newsletter subscribers <b>\$12.76</b></p>
	<p><b>Aloft</b>          By Chang-rae Lee          2005, 384 pages, Paperback.</p> <p>This is award winning author Chang-Rae Lee's new book about a middle-aged man and his ethnically mixed Asian American family. The main character ruminates over family history, contemporary culture, and family problems as he regularly escapes into the air in his small plane. In the process he becomes closer to his family as they all struggle to deal with their flaws.</p> <p>Item #3297, Price \$14.00 - for newsletter subscribers <b>\$11.20</b></p>
	<p><b>Kaleidoscope</b>  <b>A Multicultural Booklist for Grades K-8</b>  <b>Fourth Edition</b>          Edited by Nancy Hansen-Krening and the National Council of Teachers of English          2003, 118 pages, Paperback.</p> <p>This updated 4th edition of <i>Kaleidoscope</i> is a valuable resource guide to fiction and non-fiction books highlighting issues of diversity and multiculturalism for K-8 educators and librarians.</p> <p>Item #3299, Price \$30.95 - for newsletter subscribers <b>\$24.76</b></p>
	<p><b>The Love Wife</b>          By Gish Jen          2004, 379 pages, Hardback.</p> <p>Author Gish Jen tells the often-humorous story of an ethnically mixed Asian American family that receives a new addition to the family - a nanny from China. Or wait, is she to become a second wife? Read this book to find out what happens.</p> <p>Item #3296, Price \$24.95 - for newsletter subscribers <b>\$19.96</b></p>

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