



Mai Wah Society
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MAI WAH NEWS

Montana Young Ambassadors Program

Montana Young Ambassadors Program will bring together high school students from Butte and China and immerse them in activities designed to enhance cultural understanding and to create friendships. We hope to initiate MYAP during the summer of 2008.

Recently, China's Consulate General in Los Angeles invited MYAP organizers and Mai Wah volunteers, Jim Masker and Winston Li, to travel to Beijing to discuss MYAP program with the deputy director of the Dongfang International Center for Educational Exchange. Masker and Li are colleagues at the Cate School, an independent residential high school near Los Angeles. The two helped us to bring the Los Angeles-based Hope School dance troupe to Butte to celebrate the 2006 Chinese New Year.

Masker and Li report that the International Center is interested in forming a cooperative relationship that will see the creation of matching programs in both China and Montana. If successful, Montana students will be able to travel to China to interact with students there, while Chinese students will simultaneously travel to Butte to interact with students here.

Masker and Li also report that while MYAP has considerable support in China among the government officials and school administrators with whom they met, there are significant financial hurdles to overcome. While China is experiencing an economic boom, the vast majority of China's 1.5 billion citizens do not have sufficient disposable income to be able to send their children to America for a travel-study program such as MYAP.

Masker and Li hope that by partnering with Dongfang International Center for Educational Exchange that this highly visible government agency will be able to locate those families who have the resources and desire to provide their children with MYAP's unique cultural experience.

Jin Xiaojun, Deputy Director of the International Center, Jim Masker, and Winston Li discuss MYAP.



Montana's Cultural Trust Funds Mai Wah Improvements



The Mai Wah Society, Inc. has embarked on a \$70,000 capital renovation of the Mai Wah buildings and have been granted \$17,500 from the State of Montana's Cultural Trust. Authorized by the 2007 legislature, the funds will be released as a match to funds raised by the Mai Wah Society.

After nearly 15 years in our hands we will make long lasting improvements to the buildings and improve visitor services and experiences. A new plumbing and heating system will allow us to hold events and programs in the buildings year round.

Exterior brick work and window repairs will not only improve the buildings' overall appearance but will increase our energy efficiency.

The Mai Wah Museum has become an integral part of the Butte's cultural community and in order to represent the diversity of our city we must have a center that can be enjoyed by all. We want our building to represent Butte and our Chinese heritage and community in a positive light.

For every \$1000 contribution, the Cultural Trust will grant \$333. Our fundraising goal is \$38,500.

Support Our Building Project

...a message from the president, Jim Griffin

The Society has for many years anticipated a time when we would be able to rehabilitate and restore our most important artifacts, our buildings, the Wah Chong Tai Co. and Mai Wah Noodle Parlor buildings. Now, with your help, we will be able to launch this long-awaited project!

The list of projects is extensive. Our first priority is to improve services for visitors and the museum board and staff (e.g. plumbing and heating). These improvements give us the opportunity to use the facility throughout the year and expanding our museum hours.

Other parts of the buildings that need attention include its many windows and sills, brick repair and redesign of the roof downspout.

Each of these separate projects will come together to form a facility that will house a viable institution for generations to come.

The Mai Wah has become the face of our Asian past and must be a face of respect and friendship for



Deteriorating Sandstone Sills

the future. We need to make this investment for our community. Please consider making a meaningful donation to support this effort.

There has never been a greater opportunity to support the Mai Wah than there is right now!



Big News - BIG DIG p. 2

Sponsored by the Mai Wah Society



Butte Chinatown's Big Dig



The Big Dig Site

60 years ago and according to the Sanborn maps contained some 16 Chinese buildings on the north end of the lot and was identified as Chinatown. These maps showed two Chinese druggists, the Chinese Baptist Mission and other shops selling Asian goods along Mercury Street. On the south end of the lot, houses occupied by persons other than Chinese comprised this neighborhood along Silver Street and an investigation will be done in order to compare the findings from both sites.

Mitzi Rossillon the principle investigator from Renewable Technology Inc., says "the purpose of the work is to archaeologically investigate the lot so that important artifacts and scientific information about Butte's historic population will not be irreversibly lost when the site is redeveloped in the

The Mai Wah Society, Inc. has long envisioned an archaeological dig in Butte's Historic Chinatown.

Now, thanks to funding from Butte's Urban Revitalization Agency (URA), it is a reality. Initial fieldwork started on July 16 and will be completed by the August.

The dig site, across the street from the Mai Wah buildings, was razed some

next few years".

Funded entirely by the URA, this scientific study will also supply the Mai Wah Society with a collection of artifacts that will be available to future researchers and may enhance the Museum's artifact collection for exhibition.

This event will also give the Mai Wah the opportunity to do educational outreach about the dig and Butte's Chinese community. Sabrina Holland, our public information officer will be available on-site to answer questions about the dig and lead scheduled tours of the site for tourists and locals alike. Harriet Schultz, the Mai Wah Museum manager, will be on hand to describe the dig artifacts as they are cleaned, examined and cataloged in our Mercantile Room.



Prepping the Dig Site

A special web site dedicated to the dig is available with weekly reports and information about the current findings along with articles and links to other archaeological websites that tell of the lives of Chinese in the time.

Visit maiwahdig.org
for frequently updated Big Dig Info!

Mai Wah Speaker Series

The Mai Wah Society's Speaker Series will be launched with a talk by Jim Griffin at the Lewis and Clark Caverns on July 20th at 8:00 PM. Jim will speak about the history of the Chinese in the region and the Wah Chong Tai Co. and Mai Wah Noodle Parlor building and its relevance to this history. George Everett, of Mainstreet Uptown Butte, will offer two vignettes on interesting figures from Montana history.

On August 8th Erik Hammerstrom will present a program "Buddhism in Modern China" at the Mai Wah Museum. Erik is a Doctoral candidate studying early modern Chinese Buddhism at Indiana University, Bloomington. Erik has spent several years living in different parts of East Asia, most recently spending a year in mainland China. He has been studying Buddhism for close to two decades and this fall he will be doing research in Taiwan on a Fulbright Grant.

In connection with the Butte archeological dig, Priscilla Weggars, Ph.D., of Archaeological Research Consultants and the volunteer director of the Asian American Comparative Collection, Moscow, ID, will devote a full day of presentations at select Butte schools and public venues, focused on her knowledge about Chinese living in the Pacific Northwest during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. She will share information gathered from Butte's archaeological excavations.



Janet Sperry, Mai Wah board member, spent the morning of June 30th with teachers from Vermont and New Hampshire as they learned about the lives of New England emigrants who came to Montana in the 1860s. The teachers were attending the Rivendell School of Vermont's Summer Institute "Exploring the Westward Movement", as a part of History Harvest, a Teaching American History-funded program.

Janet shared her knowledge of the Chinese in Montana, having learned much about the many Mai Wah artifacts on display in Nevada City during her visits the past two summers. The teachers were able to see them close-up and learn about the Chinn family who owned and operated the Mai Wah Noodle Parlor and Wah Chong Tai Co. building.

Our Signboard Comes Home

Recently, Janna Norby of the Montana Heritage Commission contacted the Mai Wah Society with great news. The Montana Heritage Commission recently voted unanimously to remove the transportation clause in the loan agreement that covers the Wah Chong Tai signboard.

The signboard, prominently displayed in a 1906 photo of the Mai Wah Chong merchantile is owned by the Heritage Commission and loaned to the Mai Wah Museum the last three visitor seasons, will now reside in the Mai Wah Museum through 2010.

"What great news and a significant step in our relationship with the commission," said Mai Wah Society President Jim Griffin. "This should be celebrated. Thanks so much to Janna and George Everett, Mainstreet Uptown Butte, for doing the driving the last few years to carry the sign back and forth." Now, the annual shuttle will no longer be necessary.

"Oh well," said George Everett. "I have looked forward to

the drive to Virginia City each May except for this year when it was through a spring snow blizzard." Perhaps in 2010 the Mai Wah can make the case that the artifact belongs in Butte permanently.

Janna has long been a friend of the Mai Wah Museum and we look forward to working with her in the future as we explore returning other Mai Wah artifacts now housed at Nevada City for display in the Mai Wah Museum.

Many Thanks Janna!



Signboard in the Mercantile Room

Mai Wah Museum Draws International Interest



Commissioner Margaret Fong with Mai Wah Board members Dori Skrukud, Jim Griffin, Deb Bishop, Herb Keating, and Jana Faught

The Mai Wah has hosted distinguished visitors from Beijing and Hong Kong recently. Our Hong Kong visitor was Margaret Fong, Hong Kong Commissioner to USA, along with Doris Cheung, Director and Betty Ho, Deputy Director of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in San Francisco.

The Mai Wah was pivotal in providing a connection with these officials who were here looking for ways to build relationships based on mutual respect and cultural understanding.

Ambassador Wang Yunxiang, who is Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs Vice President came to Butte with a trade mission headed by Senator Max Baucus. He visited our museum on a very cold day along with the First Secretary from the Embassy of the people's Republic of China, He Zhigeng.

As economic development becomes more and more an issue tied to globalization and foreign markets, more visitors from China and other countries will be visiting.

We are happy to be a part of these visits and thank Senator Max Baucus and his staff and the Butte Chamber of Commerce.

Noodle Parlor Becomes Phantom Gallery



The Mai Wah will host the Copper City Artists on August 3rd for the Phantom Gallery Art Walk from 5-10 p.m. In the true spirit of the "Phantom" gallery the Mai Wah will open the Noodle Parlor space for the very first time for a public event. The art walks were started to stimulate economic development in the Uptown by using abandoned or otherwise unused buildings or spaces in historic Butte and turn them into "Phantom" galleries for one night a month. This is a great opportunity to showcase the Noodle Parlor and will provide a unique gallery experience for the artists that will participate in the art walk. The following artists will be featured:

Don and Marcia Watts, sculpture/photography, Butte
Janice Bogy, watercolor, pastel, colored pencil, oil, Whitehall
Sharon Wells, oils, pastels, Butte
Pat Danks, watercolor, Butte
Ray Mattix, oils, watercolor, pastel, leatherwork, Butte
Mary Creech, oil, clay, Butte
Mark Dahl, watercolor, Butte
Mary Larkin, watercolor, Butte
Marie Marinovich, oil, watercolor, pastel, Butte
Vonnie Nuthak, oil, pastel, Butte
Patricia Rittravato, floral design, Butte
Carol Stromseth, oil, pastel, scratchboard, floral design, Butte
Leslie Doyle, mosaics, Butte
Doug Monson, mosaics, Butte
Cindy Betka, oils, Butte