



# NACA NEWSLETTER

March 2009

[www.naca-atlanta.org](http://www.naca-atlanta.org)

## President's Message



By Andy Wong

Happy Chinese New Year 4707, Year of the Ox to one and all!

It has been quite a busy and exciting past couple of months. NACA hosted another grand Chinese New Year Fundraising Gala at the Canton House Restaurant! We would like to thank Kam and his staff for the wonderful job they did at the restaurant, Judge Ai Wong for graciously serving as this year's Master of Ceremonies, and of course, the traditional lion's dance for kicking off the event for us! We at NACA are again very delighted to have presented program support to Good Shepherd Services and our wonderful partner, Georgia Perimeter College!

Other recent, continuing, and upcoming activities include:

- 1) The High Museum's wonderful The First Emperor: China's Terracotta Army Exhibit. Please be sure to catch it, running through April 19<sup>th</sup>!
- 2) The Center for Puppetry Arts and NACA present "A Weekend of Chinese Culture" featuring Dragon Art Studio's Old Man and the Monkeys & other Chinese Tales March 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>!

*continued on page 2*

## Event Updates

\* Visit **The First Emperor: China's Terracotta Army** exhibition at the High Museum of Arts in Atlanta from November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2008 through April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Please go to <http://www.high.org/> for exhibition details and related events. For volunteer opportunities, please contact NACA's Jung Mar ([jungm565@comcast.net](mailto:jungm565@comcast.net)) and Bing Zeng ([bingzeng@gmail.com](mailto:bingzeng@gmail.com)).



\* Center for Puppetry Arts and National Association of Chinese Americans present **A Weekend of Chinese Culture** on March 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>. Performances of **Old Man and the Monkeys** & other Chinese tales, by Dragon Art Studio (Tigard, OR) run from March 3<sup>rd</sup> through 15<sup>th</sup>.

\* The Center of Puppetry Arts also features ongoing **Create-A-Puppet** workshops on Saturdays, 10 am - 5 pm and Sundays, 12 pm - 5 pm. For more information, please visit <http://www.puppet.org>.

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 President's message
- 2 Chair Lani Wong's Interview with China Daily
- 3 NACA Supports GPC and Local Communities
- 4 Chinese New Year Celebration

*continued from page 1*

As always, NACA continues to promote cross-cultural exchange and friendships here in Metro-Atlanta, the Great State of Georgia, and across the Ocean! We cannot thank enough, everyone who continues to support and work with us in our mission to “Bridge Cultures, Build Leaders, and Benefit Communities”.

NACA offers a great many opportunities for community involvement and member volunteer support; but what are missing is YOU! NACA is always searching for writers, web content managers, website developers, graphic designers, and China-related subject matter experts. Whether it is business, culture, food/cooking, art, music, fashion, or the like, we have a place for YOU! If you would like to cultivate stronger friendships through community service and volunteerism, please contact me at [wong.andy@comcast.net](mailto:wong.andy@comcast.net) and let me know your areas of interest, talent, and availability to get plugged in.

In conclusion, whether you are a Corporate Sponsor, Individual Sponsor, NACA Volunteer, or special friend such as China’s Consulate General Office (Houston), I extend to you on behalf of NACA, my heartfelt gratitude and wishes for a joyous and prosperous new year. Thank you also for the privilege of serving as your President. Gong Xi Fa Cai (Happy New Year)!

**Andy**

*Editor’s Note:* the feature article in this issue of newsletter originally appeared on the inaugural U.S. edition of China Daily on February 23, 2009

## **Lani Wong: Delivering China to the Peach State**

**By Maggie Lee**

ATLANTA – For more than three decades Lani Wong has been on a mission to make the state of Georgia the destination of choice for Chinese companies.

"I've lived in Atlanta, Georgia and I feel this is my home and my loyalty is here, so I want to see more Chinese companies coming here and being successful," says Wong, 61, chairwoman of the Atlanta chapter of the National Association of Chinese-Americans (NACA).

Her method in fulfilling this mission is constant networking – more than three decades of it – with people in both in Georgia and more than 7,000 miles away in China.

At a recent NACA gala dinner to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Normalization of US-China relations, Wong's guest list of 300 included China's ambassador to the US, the chairman and CEO of UPS, a delegation from Shaanxi province, plus politicians, academics, media and others from both sides of the Pacific.

Wong, who is fluent in both Mandarin and English, guides visiting Chinese delegations through the headquarters of Georgia companies. She chaperoned Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin's first



**Lani Wong: I want to see more Chinese companies come here and being successful.** File photo

*continued on page 3*

continued from page 2

trade mission to China as well as a similar mission with Georgia Governor Sonny Purdue.

She was also honored in November by a resolution from the Georgia House of Representatives that recognized her efforts to forge closer ties between government and business officials in Atlanta and China. According to the resolution, the cultural and business ties between Atlanta and Georgia are due "largely" to her. Though the modest Wong insists the claims are exaggerated, it is not unusual for her to be answering e-mail at two in the morning, according to State Representative Charlice Byrd, who sponsored the honorary resolution.

One of Wong's success stories in bring Chinese business to Georgia was helping Fayette County, just outside of Atlanta, attract an investment from Hunan province. Sany Heavy Industry, which makes concrete pumping equipment, is building an office, assembly line and research center in the county, and is expected to add 600 jobs to the area.

Born in Indonesia, and educated in Taiwan, Wong was living in Georgia in the late 1970s when she joined NACA – an organization formed to advocate US diplomatic recognition of Beijing.

"At that time, China started to send scholars... and when they came here it was really a challenge for them because of the language and culture barriers," says Wong. "A lot of them are middle-aged professors and you know they miss home and the allowances were very small," she recalls.

With the China-US diplomatic opening in 1979 and the growth of self-sustaining university Chinese communities, the NACA turned to business bridge building, plus empowering the Chinese-American community in politics and commerce. And that goal has not changed since.

"We still want to do this because eventually we make some small changes and they go back and make some changes and even more Americans know about China and that is great."



*Ambassador Zhou Wenzhong (middle) and NACA Chair Lani Wong (right) received Georgia House of Representatives Special Resolutions awards respectively from Georgia State Representative Charlice Byrd (left)*

## **NACA Gives Back to Community Through Scholarship Programs**

**By Christina Liao**

As part of its mission to benefit communities, NACA continues its long tradition of supporting the Georgia Perimeter College (GPC) and Good Shepherd Services.

NACA partnered with GPC to create the Center of International Studies for the development of future talents critical to Georgia's international relations. This year, NACA continues its support of GPC by giving \$12,500 to the Center of International Studies as well as the Mandarin-speaking Nursing Scholarship at the School of Nursing. NACA has increased its funding for GPC over the past several years.

NACA also continues supporting Good Shepherd Services, a non-profit organization, for its work on the Asian refugee youth development and after-school programs. This year's funding is \$5,000, an increase

continued on page 4

continued from page 3

from past years.

The funding ceremony was held during the annual NACA Chinese New Year Gala Dinner on January 26, attended by more than 300 VIPs, guests, and friends, including leaders from government, business, and community organizations. GPC President Dr. Anthony Tricoli and Sister Christine from the Good Shepherd Services were both present to accept the donations from NACA. They each expressed their appreciation for NACA's continuing support of their programs and commitment to worthy causes in the community.



*GPC President Dr. Anthony Tricoli (middle) pictured with NACA Board*



*Sister Christine (middle) of Good Sheperd Services pictured with NACA Board*

## Out With the Rat, In With the Ox: Chinese-American Community Celebrates New Year

By Jennifer Escalona

Page 14A, the Champion Free Press, February 6, 2009

Metro Atlanta's Chinese-American community is celebrating the start of the Chinese Lunar New Year this month by spending time with family and friends, eating traditional foods and participating in customary festivities such as the lion dance and the giving and receiving of money in decorative red envelopes. Greetings of "Happy New Year" filled the Canton House Restaurant on Buford Highway on Saturday, where DeKalb County State Court Judge Alvin Wong served as master of ceremonies at a banquet hosted by the National Association of Chinese Americans' (NACA) Atlanta chapter. There, members of metro Atlanta's Chinese-American community gathered with friends and colleagues – from local business leaders to Miss Georgia USA KimberlyAnn Gittings – to ring in the Year of the Ox.

Yu Boren, deputy consul general of the People's Republic of China, spoke at the banquet. He explained that the Year of the Ox represents "prosperity, fortitude, and hard work." Several attendees expressed their wish that the New Year would bode better than the previous Year of the Rat, which is sometimes regarded as unlucky in Chinese



*Photo credit: the Champion Free Press*

continued on page 5

*continued from page 4*

culture.

Wearing a traditional Chinese hand-embroidered dress she bought in Beijing, Lei Shan, a senior vice president at Merrill Lynch, praised Atlanta's Chinese New Year festivities. After leaving her home in Xian, home of the Terra Cotta Warriors, Shan lived in two American cities with no Chinese New Year celebration. "I am happy to have found such a wonderful celebration in Atlanta," she said. But while Chinese New Year here in metro Atlanta is a lavish affair, with banquets, parties and festivities at the Chinese Culture Center in Chamblee, it can't hold a candle (or fireworks) to the celebration back home. "In China, New Year is like [American] Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year all rolled into one," remarked banquet attendee and NACA Board Member Steven Gu. "There are so many fireworks you find yourself driving under them."

NACA Vice President Jian Ouyang detailed some of the traditions that occur in the 15 days of festivities. "It is traditional to eat fish," he explained, "because in Chinese the word for fish sounds like the word for 'extra.'" Much like the American tradition of eating black eyed-peas and collards on New Year's Day, Chinese celebrants, too, search for luck in traditional dishes. Ouyang also explained why New Year, also known as the Spring Festival, is a favorite of younger generations. "When they say 'Happy new year' to the older generation, they often receive envelopes full of money."

These red envelopes, decorated with gold characters symbolizing good luck, made an appearance at the banquet in the traditional lion dance. Two athletic young men dressed in oversized, richly colored lion costumes cavorted around the dance floor to the sound of fast-beating drums. Under the guidance of a kung fu instructor, they acrobatically mimicked a lion's movements, coming together and retreating, posing majestically and sometimes approaching audience members who proffered those lucky red envelopes.

The spectacle won loud cheers from the audience, as did the ladies of the Cathay Atlantic Art Ensemble after performing a traditional Chinese dance.

The Atlanta Chinese New Year celebration promises to grow in popularity and draw metro Atlanta's Chinese American community back year after year. Said Wei Hu, a NACA past president, "Let's put it this way, I first attended this celebration in 1997, and I haven't missed a year since."



*Photo credit: the Champion Free Press*

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