Michelin-starred restaurant finally coming to town?

depends on which “town” you’re talking about! Where is this restaurant and what good eats is it known for? See p. 8.

Community

US China Peoples Friendship Association-MN Chapter held annual meeting-banquet

By Greg Hugh

The Minnesota Chapter of the US China Peoples Friendship Association recently combined its annual meeting with a special nine-course banquet at Peking Garden in St. Paul.

Members and guests were checked in during the social hour by USCPFA-MN Chapter Board Member Margaret Wong. At the end of the social hour, Ralph Beha, president, announced that, after a two-year hiatus, he was glad to welcome everyone at a live, in-person meeting to vote on board members and share ideas on the organization’s future.

Beha then introduced another board member, Ken Lau, to review other items on the agenda and the election process for board of directors’ positions. The following slate was unanimously elected: Ralph Beha, Karlynn Froncek, Walter Graff, Brian Hammer, Ken Lau, Kent Lee, Susan Weerts and Margaret Wong.

The following board members are continuing the second year of their two-year terms (no voting required: Danling Cai, Barbara Harrison, Glynis Hinschberger, Justin Lipsky, Melinda Wellvang and Melody Zhou.

Ralph Beha was also unanimously re-elected president.

Unfortunately, the sound system was acting up, but Beha said that he would send out a recap about the survey that was completed by members as to the type of activities the organization should consider in the future, etc. The evening ended on a positive note with a drawing for a number of dinners donated by Peking Garden.

For more about US China Peoples Friendship Association-MN Chapter, visit https://uscpfa-mn.org/.

USCPFA-MN board members
Celebrate Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month

By Greg Hugh

The month of May is traditionally a time to celebrate, recognize and pay tribute to the heritage of Asian Pacific American people who have enriched our country’s history and culture.

When you look at the histories of these communities in America, you learn that many of them faced racism, colonialism, and horrific acts of violence simply because of their cultural identities. It is important that we remember and recognize this.

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month began back in 1978 when a joint congressional resolution established Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week. The first 10 days of May were chosen to coincide with two important milestones in Asian/Pacific American history: the arrival in the United States of the first Japanese immigrants (May 7, 1849) and contributions of Chinese workers to the building of the transcontinental railroad, completed May 10, 1869.

In 1992, Congress expanded the observance to a month-long celebration that is now known as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. Per a 1997 U.S. Office of Management and Budget directive, the Asian or Pacific Islander racial category was separated into two categories: one being Asian and the other Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.

Asian and Pacific Islander cultures are tough to encapsulate in a brief message such as this one, firstly because those two terms include such a large and diverse pool of people. The term “Asian American” alone encompasses a broad array of cultural back-grounds as well, including Bangladeshi, Burmese, Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Hmong, Indian, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Latvian, Nepalese, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Taiwanese, Thai and Vietnamese.

When you add Pacific Islander Americans to that list, then we also add many more regions with rich histories and cultures, including Hawaiian, Melanesian, Micronesian and Polynesian.

While many Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (AANHPI) communities will be celebrating in more traditional ways, many in the Chinese community will be hosting or writing about anti-Asian racial topics as a result of the origins of the pandemic. In this May issue of China Insight, we have included various points of view regarding immigration and a book review dealing with early Chinese labourers and their experiences.

Also, be sure to participate in the May Forum that will be held on May 7 during which you can hear stories and conversations of heritage, innovations and engagement from a distinguished panel. See page 4 for details.

While AANHPI communities may be struggling to assimilate into American society, we occasionally battle demons within our own culture, which is now a situation faced within the Hmong community over a dialect controversy. See page 13.

As usual, China Insight would like to extend an invitation to anyone who is passionate about sharing the Chinese culture and viewpoint and who wishes to contribute articles for our consideration. It can be on any topic that has a China connection, whether it be in history, culture, business, travel, arts, food or whatever. We would love to have you join us as a volunteer contributor, so please feel free to contact Elaine Dunn or me with any ideas you may have.

The staff of China Insight would also like to honor all mothers as they get a special day on May 8, so don’t forget to recognize your mother for all that she does.

Finally, Memorial Day is celebrated on Monday, May 31. This is a day in the U.S. when tribute is paid to the fallen men and women who served in the U.S. armed services. This is a day for all of us to pay homage to the soldiers who died to protect our nation and its people so we can enjoy the freedoms we have.

As always, thank you for reading China Insight and please don’t hesitate to contact me if you have any suggestions as to how we can better serve the community. We continue to seek your input as to the future course of China Insight. Please read previous pronouncements or contact me at ghugh@chinainsight.info.

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Lam out

Current Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam will not be seeking a second term. She also plans to end her 42 years of public service at the same time her current term ends June 30. Lam made the announcement April 4. Her successor will be selected in May and speculation is it will be current No. 2 man, the hardline security chief John Lee.

Lam’s 64-year-old career civil servant’s term as the top dog of Hong Kong politics has been rough and rocky. Under her watch, Beijing encroached upon the autonomous power of Hong Kong’s self-governance, enacting the ubiquitous and vague National Security Law, which is largely responsible for obliterating the former British colony’s pro-democracy movement. The failed extradition bill caused long mass protests in 2019, which resulted in many protesters being arrested and sentenced to multyear prison terms.

The chair of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong said Lam’s achievements “should be left to history to judge.” Meanwhile, the Democratic Party chair said Lam’s decision not to seek re-election would be welcomed by the people of Hong Kong across social class lines. The pro-establishment New People’s Party chief said she “appriciated Lam’s work such as implementing the HK national security law and improving the electoral system.”

Known as a “good fighter” for her tough stance and refusal to back down in political battles, Lam’s popularity declined precipitously during her five-year term.

Hong Kong’s next leader will be decided on May 8 by the mostly-government-designated pro-Beijing 1,462 members of the Election Committee – another sore point for the pro-democracy movement.

Few deaths

Shanghai reported its first COVID-19 death for its current outbreak on April 18. There’s open speculation whether Chinese authorities had obscured the true virus toll in a city of 7.4 million and infected some 1.2 million.

Associated Press examined the death toll reported by the Chinese authorities during the current COVID outbreak in Shanghai. Three people, including one Chinese public health official, told AP “Health authorities have only considered virus cases where lung scans show a patient with evidence of pneumonia as ‘symptomatic.’ All other patients are considered ‘asymptomatic’ even if they test positive and have other typical COVID-19 symptoms such as sneezing, coughing or headaches.

“In most countries, including the United States, guidelines stipulate that any death where COVID-19 is a factor or contributor is counted as a COVID-related death.” But, according to an epidemiologist at the University of California, Los Angeles, Chinese health authorities count only those who died directly from COVID-19, excluding those whose underlying conditions were much cheaper.

Watsons has thousands of stores across Asia and Europe. However, since the pandemic, many other brands are muscling in on its markets and, according to a mainland Chinese luxury brand publication, it may be losing relevance with the younger Chinese consumers. Watsons 180-year history many not mean much to the younger crowd who respond to more dynamic retail spaces and experiences.

Sold-out

Selling out of an item is not always a good thing. Watsons, one of Hong Kong and China’s oldest health and beauty retail chains, found itself in hot waters recently.

Watsons’ predicament came about when it offered a face mask dirt cheap, which sold out in no time. Disappointed customers complained during Watsons’ live-streaming session. Unfortunately, its livestream host, instead of apologizing for the inventory situation, decided to insult the complainers! This resulted in #watsonsapologies garnering 350 million views on Weibo.

Total PR fail!

Watsons is not the first to run into trouble with Chinese customers. L’Oreal ran into its own trouble (accused of false advertising) during November 11, 2021, and took its time in offering an explanation and apologizing for running out of stock of its face masks as well. L’Oreal blamed the incident on “complexities of Singles Day promotions” and offered discount vouchers to customers who should’ve gotten the masks much cheaper.

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New reactors

At the April 20 State Council executive meeting, it was noted that energy is needed to support economic and social development as China works toward its plan of peaking carbon emissions by 2030 and reaching net-zero emissions by 2060. The council approved the construction of six new nuclear reactors to the tune of, approximately US$18.6 billion.

A statement from the State Council indicated three existing power plants at Sanmen county, Zhejiang Province; Haiyang, Shandong Province and Lufeng, Guangdong Province will each get two new reactors.

Under the National Development and Reform Commission’s 14th five-year plan, it set the goal for the country’s share of non-fossil energy consumption to increase to about 20% by 2025. Under that same plan, the government proposes “the steady construction of coastal nuclear power projects with an emphasis on safety.” Installed nuclear generating capacity will reach 70 GWe by 2025.”

Death sentence

On April 22, a Chinese court in Ningbo sentenced U.S. national Shadeed Abdulmateen, a former English teacher at the Ningbo University of Technology, to death for the June 2021 murder of his former 21-year-old girlfriend. The two had met in 2019. Reports said the Chinese victim wanted to end the relationship when she found out Abdulmateen was still married, not divorced as he told her. The court concluded Abdulmateen plotted a “revenge” killing because he could not accept the girl’s decision. He was alleged to have arranged to meet the girl at a bus stop, then stabbed her to death with a pocket knife.

Xinhua News Agency said Abdulmateen had been providing with a defence as well as translation services and consular visits. A spokesman for the United States Embassy in Beijing said it was aware of a court ruling and was monitoring the situation, but could not comment further because of privacy issues.

Human rights groups believe China is the world’s top executioner as Chinese executions numbers far exceed other countries every year. That being said, executions of Westerners are very rare. In the last decade, drug crimes have resulted in death sentences for people from Uganda, South Korea, Japan and Kenya with 120 Nigerians on death row in China.

(Note: Chinese government does not reveal it execution numbers, considering that to be “state secret.”)
Art exhibit at Traffic Zone

Location: 250 3rd Ave. N., Minneapolis
Time & date: 5:30-9 p.m., Saturday, May 7

Traffic Zone artists have been working diligently during the pandemic and are excited to show their work! They will host Open Studios with its accompanying gallery exhibition. Paul Kwok and Pat Hu’s work will be on Floor One.

Standard COVID protocols will be observed. Please check www.trafficzoneart.com and social media for up-to-date safety information.

Silk Road International Exposition

Location: Xi’an International Convention and Exhibition Center, Xi’an, China
Date: May 11-15, 2022

The Silk Road International Exposition and the Investment and Trade Forum for Cooperation Between East and West China is an annual event with many co-hosts including the National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Commerce, All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese, All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce, China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, and more.

The exhibition will cover culture, art, tourism, education, industry, urban governance, and other areas. By integrating sister cities’ resources across the board, we can enhance and deepen exchange and cooperation in broader areas and at a higher level, and enlarge our circle of friends with different nations.

It will be in seven pavilions covering a total exhibition area of 72,000 square meters. In order to deepen exchange and cooperation with sister provinces and cities and inject impetus to friendship and collaboration, the 1st Product Exhibition for International Sister Cities is to be hosted by Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries.

The 1st Product Exhibition for International Sister Cities will transform sister cities’ resources into momentum for stronger friendship and closer cooperation by sharing resources, complementing advantages, and achieving win-win results.

For more information, email daisy525zy@126.com or visit http://www.sbshe.net.

Chinese American Convention: Building a Civically Engaged Community

Date: July 14-16, 2022
Location: Omni Shoreham Hotel, 2500 Calvert St. NW, Washington, DC 20008

This national convention is held every two years and is an open convening platform for Chinese communities. Organized by the United Chinese Americans (UCA), a national community-based coalition and civic movement, the 3rd convention, originally scheduled for 2020, was postponed to this summer. As with our first two successful conventions, this third convention will bring together hundreds of communities and civic leaders, activists, elected officials, and entrepreneurs from across the country. They will come together to discuss issues and concerns, share unique experiences, forge consensus and common agenda, and explore opportunities to work together.

For 2022, UCA will also hold its inaugural “UCA National Youth Convention (UCA全国青年大会),” where hundreds of high school and university students will convene in the nation’s capital to network, learn from each other, expose themselves to new ideas and initiatives, and ultimately nurture a youth movement for change among the Chinese American community.

Convention highlights
• White House & Congressional Citation to Chinese Community
• UCA Congressional Day & Congressional Reception
• First UCA National Youth Convention
• Launching UCA Community Fund
• Launching National Association of Chinese American Elected Officials
• Launching National Association of Chinese American College Students
• Report on Chinese American Demographics 2020 & Youth Survey
• UCA 2021 North American Chinese Photography Awards and Exhibition

Convention agenda: https://ucausa.org/2022-chinese-american-convention/

Please click here to register for 2022 Chinese American Convention; click here to register for 2022 UCA Youth National Convention.

Thank you for reading China Insight
What are vaccines?

Source: Asian Media Access and Spitfire

Everyone has made changes in our lives because of COVID-19. Our daily routines are different, like working or learning from home, wearing masks, or staying six feet away from our friends and relatives.

One of the tools for keeping our communities safe from COVID-19 is the vaccine. Vaccines are like a seatbelt for our immune system. The immune system is the body’s defense system to fight off sickness and keep us healthy. Just like we wear seatbelts to stay safe in case of a car crash, getting vaccinated helps keep us healthy when viruses like COVID-19 spread.

Vaccines work by training our body’s immune system to fight sickness. If we do catch the virus, our bodies can react faster. That protects us from getting very sick or needing to go to the hospital.

When our body knows how to fight a virus, that is called immunity. Vaccines give lots of people immunity, which means the virus cannot spread as easily through the population. When viruses spread, they can change into new forms. Vaccines help stop viruses from changing into new forms that cause more harm.

Vaccines have helped communities fight viruses for more than 100 years. Vaccines fought off smallpox, measles and polio and are the main reason these deadly viruses are not common today. Building on the experience with smallpox and other viruses, scientists developed safe and effective vaccines for COVID-19. The technology and ingredients used in the COVID-19 vaccines were researched for decades.

Three companies (Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson) developed COVID-19 vaccines that are safe and effective. The vaccine ingredients are similar to food ingredients. They are made up of mRNA, fats, sugars and salts. Like food, the vaccine ingredients leave your body after they have done their job.

mRNA is the ingredient that makes the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines work. mRNA is a molecule that gives the immune system instructions about how to fight the virus. These harmless molecules allow our immune systems to practice fighting COVID-19 and build a strong defense.

Each of the vaccines went through three strict periods of research and testing to make sure they are safe and effective. Each vaccine also received two approvals. One was from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the government agency in charge of making sure medicines are safe. The other was from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. These are medical and health experts who develop guidelines for safely using vaccines.

Since the vaccines were approved in December 2020, 255 million people in the United States have taken them. That is why it is now safer to return to school and work. It is also safer to see our loved ones in person. Getting vaccinated is free and easy. Local clinics, pharmacies, and healthcare centers in your community provide vaccines at no cost. You do not need health insurance or an ID to get one.

After getting the shot, it is normal to feel a little sick. You might have soreness in your arm, headaches, tiredness, muscle pain, chills, fever, or nausea. These are signs the vaccine is working. Your body is learning how to fight the virus.

COVID-19 is especially dangerous for older people and people with other health problems. Their bodies cannot fight off viruses very well. Vaccinations can help these people stay safe from the virus. If you have someone in your family who is older or has a health problem, getting vaccinated protects their health and your own.

COVID-19 has made the last two years scary and overwhelming. But you can take control of your health and protect your community by learning more about the vaccine. Doctors and nurses are ready to answer your questions and ease your worries. So, keep asking questions and talking with family members and friends about their vaccine experience. That will help you decide whether vaccines are right for you and your community. For more information, visit projecthealings.info.

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<td>Vector (deactivated piece of virus that helps the immune system build a defense)</td>
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May Day is also Chinese Labour Day

Nowadays, May 1 is celebrated as Labour Day in more than 80 countries. China also celebrates May 1 Labor Day (láo dòng jié). Until 2008, this holiday was celebrated for seven days. However, the Chinese government decided to reduce the number of days off for workers in favor of other traditional Chinese holidays.

May 1, also known as May Day, has a long and varied history. Throughout the years, there have been many different events and festivities worldwide associated with it, most with the express purpose of welcoming spring in the Northern Hemisphere. At the height of the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century, May Day took on a new meaning as an International Workers’ Day commemorating achievements of the labor movement, worker’s rights and an eight-hour workday in the United States.

In China, May Day (五一節 – wǔ yī jí) is used to be one of three “Golden Weeks” (黄金周 – huáng jīn zhōu), along with the Spring Festival and National Holiday. At that time, the government thought it would be a good idea to have three week-long holidays to encourage domestic travel and spending. The desired results did not materialize. In fact, the government actually found the long holidays to be more of an economic drain than anything. As a result, May Day was reduced to a three-day holiday, and three additional traditional holidays were added: Tomb Sweeping, Dragon Boat and Mid-Autumn festivals. This new calendar was adopted in hopes of restoring some ancient Chinese traditions while preventing overcrowding during the week-long holidays.

International Workers’ Day in China started in 1919 when the communist organizations in Shanghai, Shanghai and Hangzhou initiated insurrections, declaring “Labour is Sacred.” Later, in 1920, Beijing and Shanghai held the first-ever demonstrations in honor of all workers. Officially, this holiday was established and approved by the Chinese government in December 1949.

During the “cultural revolution,” May Day in China was considered almost the most important holiday in the country. Political rallies and demonstrations across the country were organized. However, by the end of the 20th century, the holiday took on a more capitalist consumer-oriented family holiday. Huge numbers of Chinese travel to meet friends and family, and to sightsee. They can visit main attractions such as theatres, parks and public squares. Government agencies also organized parties to showcase “model labourers!”

In pre-pandemic May Days, air travel and hotel bookings are high. However, with Shanghai and Beijing both facing lockdowns leading up to the holiday, government officials estimate that passenger traffic over this May Day will be down significantly from last year. For those not locked down, travel outside of their own provinces are being discouraged. Hotels across the country are bracing for a very lean May Day holiday this year, which will be April 30-May 4 when workers will have days off.
A Chinese takeout item that is decidedly NOT Chinese

By Elaine Dunn | May 2022

The Chinese can proudly lay claim to many inventions: the compass, gun powder, paper, the mechanical clock and a host of many other items. However, they cannot take credit for one of the most iconic items associated with Chinese takeout in the U.S.

Aside from the fortune cookie, what’s the other most-used item associated with Chinese takeouts? The ubiquitous, almost leak-proof takeout carton, of course! The takeout carton is an American invention. Chicago, to be exact.

According to the Digital Research Library of Illinois History, this amazing container was invented and patented by one Frederick Weeks Wilcox, president of the Wilcox Paper Company of Chicago, on April 29, 1890, in Chicago.

Wilcox called his creation the “paper pail.” It was made up of one single piece of cardboard paper and folded ingeniously, origami-style, into a “pail.” Wilcox’s “paper pail” was so called because it was based on the wooden pails used for transporting oysters back then. In the 19th century, along the east coast, oysters were a popular food item associated with Chinese takeout. The “pail” seemed ideal for the sauce-heavy “Chinese” takes foods as the fold-up top allows steam to escape. When the top flaps are “unlocked,” the wide opening allows eating directly out of the carton. Or … if one is really careful and the contents are not too runny, the carton can be completely unfolded flat to do double duty as a (flimsy) plate!

By the 1960s, Bloomer Bros. had become the Riegel Paper Corporation. During the 1970s, one of Riegel’s graphic designers decided to add a bit of embellishment to the white takeout carton. He added the signature pagoda and the words “Enjoy” and “Thank you” in an Asian-looking font in red ink to the carton. (The color red is symbolic of good fortune in the Chinese culture.)

Fold-Pak Corporation bought Riegel in 1977. It continues to produce Wilcox’s oyster paper pails in much the same way, with a few upgrades: solid-bleached-sulfate paperboard with a poly-coating on the inside for more grease- and leak-resistance. In addition, adjustments to accommodate the market for convenient Chinese food delivery also increased. The sturdy origami-inspired “paper pail” seemed ideal for the sauce-heavy “Chinese” takeout foods as the fold-up top allows steam to escape. When the top flaps are “unlocked,” the wide opening allows eating directly out of the carton. Or … if one is really careful and the contents are not too runny, the carton can be completely unfolded flat to do double duty as a (flimsy) plate!

When various designers included takeout carton-inspired purses in their collections, fashion commentators did not object. Chanel’s 2010 metallic fabric “take-away box” sold out, even at $7,500! Kate Spade’s 2014 collection included a very literal version of the takeout carton, at a whopping $799! In 2017, Kylie and Kendall Jenner released a $150 takeout carton lookalike bag. “Beverly Hills Bag Lady” Kathrine Baumann’s takeout clutch with Swarovski crystals retails in excess of $3,000-plus, if you’re lucky enough to find one. Of course, there are myriad cheap knockoffs, probably made in China, but you get what you pay for.

Continued on page 7
A Chinese takeout item that is decidedly NOT Chinese

Continued from page 6

And, you know the lowly Chinese takeout carton has definitely achieved pop culture status when they become table lamps. In five different colors. Each color features a Chinese character representing good luck (green), prosperity (mustard yellow), longevity (purple), double happiness (red) and (okay, this is a little questionable!) sexy in black. And each comes with its own pair of chopsticks. Oh my! ♦

By the numbers

• Minimum of 40,000 Chinese restaurants operating in the U.S. prior to the COVID-19 pandemic
• GrubHub’s fourth most popular dish among its 4.57 million active diners: General Tso’s chicken
• 2022 industry statistics show there are 23,661 Chinese restaurants in the U.S.
• 2022 market size of the industry, measured by revenue, is projected to be $20.2 billion, an increased growth rate of 11%

Oyster facts

While eating oysters today will set anyone back an arm and a leg, back in the 19th century, oysters were so plentiful and cheap they were used as a substitute for twice-as-expensive beef in stews and soups. In fact, one of the most popular Victorian dishes with the lower class was oyster pie! Sean O’Scannlain, president and CEO of Fortune Fish Company, which supplies fresh seafood to many of Chicago’s finer retailers and dining establishments today said oysters were “the peanuts of the 19th century” – a salty bar snack saloons sold cheaply or even gave away to their customers to get them to drink more beer!

New Englanders settled in Chicago, bringing with them a taste for oysters. The first fresh oysters were delivered by sleigh on a bed of ice from New Haven, Connecticut, and served at the Lake House Hotel on Kinzie Street in 1838. By the 1840s, Chicago had become a huge oyster town. However, the 1924 typhoid outbreaks in Chicago were tied to oysters and demand declined.

National Asian American and Pacific Islander museum bill passed in US House

On April 26, the U.S. House of Representatives unanimously passed a bill that would kickstart the creation of a National Museum of Asian Pacific American History and Culture.

“It’s an honor to champion this cause so close to my heart and I am grateful for the allyship of my colleagues as we have stood together fighting for similar efforts to create the National Museum of the American Latino and the American Women’s History Museum in recent years,” Representative Grace Meng from New York, who first introduced legislation to examine the possibility of creating the first museum dedicated to preserving the history, culture and accomplishments of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI). on July 31, 2019. The bipartisan bill titled H.R. 3525, Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Museum of Asian Pacific American History and Culture Act, had 120 co-sponsors.

The bill would establish an eight-person commission comprising of individuals well versed in Asian American history or who have a background in museum development. The commission would be tasked with estimating the museum’s cost, drafting fundraising plans and submitting suggestions on how to move forward with the creation of the museum. It would also study how it would acquire a collection, determine who would run the facility, propose possible locations, and establish how to involve the AAPI community. This is the first step required to build new federal museums.

The bill will now be sent to the U.S. Senate for passage before it is sent to President Joe Biden’s desk. If created, the museum would sit alongside the National Museum of the American Latino and the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.

“The passage of this bill is an important first step in recognizing the history and lived experiences of AAPI communities,” said John Yang, president and executive director at Asian Americans Advancing Justice.

Creating a national resource and institution dedicated to public education of Asian American and Pacific Islander histories is critical to building a more inclusive future.”

Jo-Ann Yoo, executive director of the Asian American Federation, said the bill’s passage was particularly important in the current day, as hate crimes against the AAPI community have risen nationwide since the onset of the pandemic.

“We are a community full of rich history, traditions, and culture that deserves to be shared with the American people,” said Varun Nikore, executive director of the AAPI Victory Alliance.
Hankering for Shanghainese fried shengjian baos?

By Elaine Dunn | May 2022

Everyone gets a craving for some food item from their past at some point in their life. The trigger can be as innocent as a whiff of garlicky grease from a parking lot, watching a cooking show or travel program on TV, flipping through a magazine, etc. It doesn’t take much to make me go stir crazy on TV, flipping through a magazine, etc. It watching a cooking show or travel program.

The magic of these baos lies in the cooking: in a hot frying pan with oil so the bottom gets crispy and golden brown. Then some water is added and an oversized lid placed over the pan so the bao tops get steamed and soft, with the broth bubbling inside. This is responsible for the signature contrast of these baos: crispy bottoms, soft slightly chewy tops with small amount of hot “soup” inside.

In the process of looking for a recipe, I found out there are apparently three “schools” of this Shanghainese snack and it’s all about the thickness of the “skin” and degree of soupiness of the filling.

The thick-dough school (from the Da Hu Chuan chain in Shanghai) has a fluffy skin with no juice in the filling. Eater is meant to order a bowl of soup on the side with this version. On the other end of the spectrum, the thin-skinned one from the Xiao Yang chain has lots of “soup” and is perfect when eaten hot, but once cooled down, they look deflated and sadly “dimpled.” But they’re still tasty while cold, so looks aren’t everything! And the medium-thick-skinned ones? The dough is slightly fluffy and the filling has a little bit of soupy liquid. These are the signature item from the Dong Tai Xing chain. Unlike Goldlocks, there is no “Just right!” here. It’s what you like!

And the best way to eat these tasty baos? Carefully and slowly. First, nibble a hole in the skin to let the steam vent, then slowly slurp the “soup” directly from the bao or from a spoon before gobbling the rest of the bao. This way, you won’t end up scalding your tongue and throat! Of course, you can also make a dipping sauce of soy and black vinegar with a touch of chili oil.

For those visiting Hong Kong, Michelin-recommended Cheung Hing Kee as the place to get your fix. There are branches in Tsuen wan, Tsimshatsui, Mongkok, Sham Shui Po, Wan chai, Central and Tin Hau. If you’re not interested in flying to Asia, there’s a closer, highly rated place in Toronto for shengjian baos as well: Sang-Ji Fried Bao in North York. Their bao actually has the knotted top golden brown crispy and the bottom soft!

And, any reader who knows of a decent place in the Twin Cities for shengjian baos, please email me!

Making shengjian bao

Bao ingredients
1 2/3C all-purpose flour, sifted
1/2 C lukewarm water
1/2 tsp instant dry yeast
2 T sugar
1 tsp salt
1 tsp oil

Filling ingredients
3/4 lb. ground pork
1/2 lb. pork belly fat, diced
1 T minced scallions
1 tsp dark soy sauce
1 T light soy sauce
3/4 tsp salt
1 tsp Shaoxing wine
1 1/2 tsp Chinese five spice powder
1/4 tsp white pepper
1/2 tsp sugar
2 tsp sesame oil
3 cloves garlic (minced)
1 tsp cornstarch
1/4 C Chinese chives (optional)

Ginger scallion water
1/2 C boiling water
1 T minced scallions
1 T minced fresh ginger
1 tsp peppercorns

Garnish:
1 stalk spring onion (chopped)
3 T toasted sesame seeds

Directions:
1. Mix all the condiments with the pork, stirring in one direction (clockwise or anti-clockwise, you choose, but once you choose a direction keep stirring in THAT direction). Then add ginger-scallion water to pork mixture in two batches. Mix well until liquid is all absorbed evenly. Let sit in the fridge for 4 hours to let the flavours mingle. (*Note: If you don’t have dark soy, substitute it with light soy.)

2. Prepare the bao. In a large bowl, add warm water and mix in yeast, sugar, salt and oil. Let sit for about 5 minutes. Then add in sifted flour and knead on a floured surface until the dough becomes smooth and elastic, adding flour to the dough as needed. (Be careful not to add too much flour to the dough all at once! The dough will tend to be sticky, especially in the beginning, so don’t overdo the flour.)

3. Place kneaded dough in a lightly oiled bowl, cover with cling wrap and let it sit and rise in a warm, draft-free place. Or place in warm (70?F) oven and let dough rise inside for about an hour.

4. Once risen, on a lightly floured surface, divide dough into 8-10 pieces. You can either roll it into a log and cut it, or roll it into a circle and divide it as pictured.

5. Roll out each piece of the divided dough to a circle, leaving a slightly thicker center and thinner toward the edge. Add the meat filling onto the dough, and pinch and pleat the dough into bao form, as shown below.

6. Place the bao in an oiled tray, cover and let rise and rest for another 10 minutes.

7. Meanwhile, add vinegar with a touch of chili oil.

8. Once the bao has risen, add oil to a pan and heat on medium high heat. Place the bao bottom down to brown until the underside is a crispy golden brown (about 2-3minutes).

9. Once the bao has risen, add oil to a pan and heat on medium high heat. Place the bao bottom down to brown until the underside is a crispy golden brown (about 2-3minutes).

10. Once the bottoms are a nice golden brown, add BOILING water to the pan till it covers about half an inch of the bao, cover with lid to let steam cook the top of the bao. As the steam cooks the bao, the steam will escape leaving the pan dry, about 5 minutes.

11. When done, place the bao on a plate, crispy golden side up and top with toasted sesame seeds and chopped green onions!
World Press Freedom Day heightens concern of press freedom

By Elaine Dunn | May 2022

May 3 is World Press Freedom Day. Last year (2021) was a record year for press freedom violations in the U.S. But this May 3 may be cause for celebration. Why? Because Elon Musk succeeded in his hostile takeover of Twitter and Musk had said he will protect “free speech” on Twitter.

On April 24, the Twitter board of directors unanimously agreed to accept the $44 billion buyout from Musk. Panic and despair spread among Twitter employees. Two days later, Musk tweeted, “Suspend- ing the Twitter account of a major news organization for publishing a truthful story was obviously incredibly inappropriate,” in reference to Twitter blocking the New York Post’s account for 16 days in October 2020 over the Hunter Biden laptop story. Heard “on the street” was Twitter’s head of “legal, policy and trust, and safety” cried over Musk’s tweet.

By early 2022, mainstream media (New York Times first, then Washington Post) acknowledged the 2020 NY Post Biden laptop story was no Russian disinformation after all. Don’t think for a moment that the NY Post article ban from Twitter and shut out by mainstream media was an isolated incident, though. In November 2021, Project Cen- sored published an article on news sources removed by YouTube with no explanation.

The 2022 theme for World Press Free- dom Day is “Journalism Under Digital Siege,” focusing on “the digital era’s impact on freedom of expression, the safety of jour- nalists, access to information and privacy.” ♦

May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month
Dong residential buildings in China

Part 1: Earthen dwellings

By Chen Min and Bu Aihua | Center for Hunan Cultural Heritage at Huaihua University | contributors

Dong ethnic groups, who mainly live across the border areas of Hunan and Guizhou provinces, as well as the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in south China, have a long history, rich culture and unique residential houses. Most of the Dong villages are located in a place with a stream in the front and a hill at the back, for the purpose of achieving harmony and unity between man and nature. Over the past century, Dong’s residential buildings have developed from earthen dwellings to wooden houses and mixed ones.

I. Earthen dwellings

Before the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, earthen residential buildings were commonly seen across the Dong areas. The houses of this kind were usually low and small, with only two stories and simple structure. The kitchen and dining room were usually on the ground floor. The second floor was used as storerooms and bedrooms. The earthen buildings were completely made of rammed earth and timber. The main material was a mixture of fine laterite, sand from the river, silt from the bottom of paddy fields and even recycled ancient wall mud. Also because of their thickness, the earthen walls helped provide thermal insulation and preservation, which made the buildings warm in winter and cool in summer. The earthen buildings could be further divided into three kinds as follows:

1.1 Net-soil dwellings

To build a net-soil dwelling, Dong people firstly constructed a wooden frame. Afterwards, they walled the rooms with large pieces of cross-criss nets made of thin wooden or bamboo strips. Then they filled the nets with mud mixed with short pieces of straw of approximately 6”-8” long and yellow soil free from sand and pebbles. The mud could neither be too wet nor too dry when adding water to it, most favorably when it could just be held by hands, which was appropriate to paste it on the fastened nets. After the mud wall dried, the wall surface would be covered with muddy soil or with mixture of cow dung and kiwi juice, and then the whole job was done and they could live in the house. In order to keep the interior clean and good-looking, some villagers would add a layer of wooden board inside the rooms, so the exterior soil wall would have a function of protecting the wooden board of the inner wall from decay caused by sunlight and rain. With wooden or bamboo strips as cross-criss nets and straws as ‘rib’, this kind of mud wall was not only firm and solid but also rainproof and fireproof.

1.2 Rammed-soil dwellings

The rammed-soil dwellings were made of fine yellow soil without sand and gravel. Firstly, foundation lines were drawn where the workers they need for their businesses to grow and thrive. There are 32 CareerForce locations across the state. Not all locations are currently open for in-person support, but all of them are providing online or phone support to career seekers.

1.3 Clay-brick dwellings

In order to save the time-consuming and labor-intensive trouble of building rammed-soil houses, Dong people turned to building with clay bricks. Firsty, they made a cubic model box with wooden boards according to the specification of a normal brick. Then they put clay or soil into the box and pressed it hard. When a brick was made, the wooden box could be disassembled to make another one. The model box could be used over and over again. Making clay bricks was less laborious than building u layers of the rammed-soil houses because bricks could be done single-handedly while the other required joint effort of two men. In addition, bricks could be made at any free time. Houses made of clay bricks were commonly seen across the areas before where timbers were short in supply.

With the development of times and improvement of people’s living standards, earthen dwellings are rarely found now across the Dong areas. What commonly seen nowadays in the Dong districts are the wooden houses and mixed-material ones, which will be covered next month. ♦

DEED resources for job seekers

Minnesota’s Department of Employment and Economic Development’s CareerForce offices can help people find a job or new career path at no cost to career seekers. Expert staff can guide job seekers through all steps of job search and career planning. They offer many programs and services such as the Dislocated Worker Program, Veteran Services Programs, Youth Programs and many more. Job seekers can find and set up job search appointments near them at careerforcemn.com/events, and can register to reserve a time to meet with staff either in-person, over the phone or online. Job seekers can also find a list of upcoming online career fairs with employers looking to hire for a wide variety of high-paying jobs.

CareerForce is Minnesota’s workforce system that helps connect job seekers with family-sustaining jobs, and employers with the workers they need for their businesses to grow and thrive. There are 32 CareerForce locations across the state. Not all locations are currently open for in-person support, but all of them are providing online or phone support to career seekers.

Professor Bu Aihua is the head of International Office, Centre for Hongkong, Macau and Taiwan Exchange as well as the dean of International School of Huaxia University where The Center for Hunan Cultural Heritage is located. She spent 2017 in Minnesota as a visiting scholar at Minnesota University and Concordia University. In recent years, her major research interest covers translation and dissemination of Chinese Culture, biculturalism and bicultural active living lifestyle with a special focus on the Hmong youth in western part of Huaxia Province and the state of Minnesota.

Chen Min is an associate professor from the Foreign Language School of Huaihua University. His research covers translation, comparative education and cross-culture. This paper is sponsored by his research project of Philosophy and Social Science of Hunan Province: “Lin Yutang’s Compilation Strategies and the Study of Cultural Translation in the New Era” (No: 20WLH26)

Photo from https://image.so.com/view?ie
Jenny Tinghui Zhang is a Chinese-American writer who holds an MFA in nonfiction from the University of Wyoming (where she wrote the popular Calapull column Why-oming). Zhang is a prose editor at Adroit Journal and has written nonfiction for The Cut, Bustle, Huffington Post, and HebeGigles; her fiction has appeared in Ninth Letter, Passages North, CALYX, The Rumpus, and more.

Zhang was born in Changchun, China, and grew up in Austin, Texas, where she currently lives.

Drawing on the Chinese classic novel, “Dream of the Red Chamber,” Jenny Tinghui Zhang’s debut novel is a beautifully-written if haunting story set in coastal Shandong province, San Francisco and Idaho. Eight years ago Jenny Tinghui Zhang learned from her father, after he traveled through Idaho, of the brutal murders of Chinese men in the 1880s who were falsely accused of killing a white shop owner in that state. These senseless killings inspired Zhang to write a fictional account of what may have occurred, after her father asked her to write it “in order to solve the mystery of what happened.” Zhang aptly earned an MFA at the University of Wyoming, a state that was also the place of Chinese lynchings back in the late 19th century.

Zhang’s “Four Treasures of the Sky” is very much in direct conversation with “Dream of the Red Chamber.” She uses the character of Lin Daiyu in the original classic as the sometimes alter ego and guiding spirit of the protagonist, also named Daiyu. In “Dream of the Red Chamber,” Lin Daiyu dies after a broken heart after her cousin and true love is to marry another woman. Zhang’s protagonist is named Daiyu after this character, yet she rejects the namesake because she doesn’t want the same tragic destiny.

“I have always hated my name. Lin Daiyu was weak. I would be nothing like her, I promised myself. I did not want to be melancholic or jealous or spiteful. And I would never let myself die of a broken heart. They named me after a tragedy, I would complain to my grandmother. No, dear Daiyu, they named you after a poet.

It would take Daiyu years to learn that her grandmother was correct. She spends her childhood trying to prove to herself that she is nothing like the character from the book, even as she faces disappointment after disappointment.

First, her parents are arrested in China and taken away, then her grandmother sends her away, disguised as a boy so as to avoid being recognized by the people who arrested her parents. Daiyu apprentices under a master calligrapher who becomes a surrogate father until she is kidnapped and smuggled against her will to the United States. It is on the ship that Daiyu mentally summons her namesake.

I thought about Lin Daiyu, willing her to come. She could take me out of here and we would float above the world, our bodies as thin as paper, as light as the last day of winter. I wanted to pour myself into her mouth, to sleep inside her body for years and years. For her to grow me inside her.

In San Francisco and later Idaho, the spirit of Lin Daiyu allows teenaged Daiyu to emotionally detach from traumatic experiences, both as a girl and again disguised as a boy. Daiyu learns it is just as dangerous in the US for Chinese women as it is for Chinese men. She often finds it difficult to decide which identity will best help her survive.

She finally falls in with a loyal group of Cantonese men in Pierce, Idaho, disguised as a boy named Jacob Li. By 1885, many of the previous Chinese residents of that town have left and Daiyu realizes Idaho is no safer than the lawless San Francisco.

I read in the paper—the fourth page, a tiny corner mention—about a mob ransacking a Chinatown and lynching its inhabitants. The bodies are poked and jeered at, castrated and decapitated. The journalist justifies it as Americans’ right of revolution.

While Zhang is not the first Chinese-American writer to tackle the United States’ shameful treatment of Chinese, her book certainly stands among the most memorable of these. With violence against Asian Americans at a recent all-time high, this lesson of the brutality inflicted on Chinese residents who were only trying to help build the United States into a more efficient and prosperous country could not be more timely.

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About the reviewer
Susan Blumberg-Kason is the author of “Good Chinese Wife: A Love Affair with China Gone Wrong” and co-edited “Hong Kong Noir.”

As a child, she dreamed of visiting China and Hong Kong and eventually, went to study Mandarin and received a Master of Philosophy in Government and Public Administration from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, where she also researched emerging women’s rights. She’s a freelance journalist now based in the Chicago suburbs, where she is also an elected trustee of her public library as well.
At this time of shifting geopolitical relationships — “decoupling” between China and the U.S., rapprochement between China and Russia — it is unsurprising that the cultural and intellectual as well as political history of these relationships has attracted increasing attention. Recent volumes on Sino-Soviet “internationalist” interaction is now joined by “Arise, Africa! Roar, China!”, Gao Yunxiang’s recent study of “the close relationships between a trio of famous 20th-century African Americans and two little-known Chinese” from, roughly, the 1930s through the advent of the Cold War. Her three Americans, WEB Du Bois, Paul Robeson and Langston Hughes “need no introduction,” she writes, “but their Chinese allies, journalist and musician Liu Liangmo and Sino-Afro-Caribbean dancer-choreographer Sylvia Si-ian Chen, have, until now, been consigned to the dustbin of history.”

This is an academic title from a university press, and Gao starts by making the case for her book

While most scholarship on Sino-American relations treats the United States as default white, this book breaks new pathways by foregrounding African Americans, combining the study of Black internationalism and the experiences of Chinese Americans with a transpacific narrative, and understanding the global remaking of China’s modern popular culture and politics — a case which, for the non-academic reader, is entirely unnecessary, for Gao is by any measure a talented and engaging writer who brings her fascinating subjects vividly to life. The book is devoid of jargon; if there’s theory, it’s hidden under readable prose.

On the one hand, while Du Bois, Robeson and Hughes seem to have had a longer-lasting resonance and legacy in China than their Soviet counterparts, notably Sergei Tretyakov, any such treatment is by its nature somewhat anecdotal. The significance of these relationships depends on what one is measuring. Nevertheless, should these three need a bit more introduction that Gao thinks might or should be necessary, her book serves that purpose as well: while her coverage uses relationships with China as focus and context, the biographies cover far more ground than that.

Of particular interest, narrative and otherwise, is the way that these five citizens of the world interacted with one another in a variety of ways, at times collaborating and contributing to historic alliances, at other times falling in and out of love … for which Moscow (rather than Beijing) was often the central pivot. Gao includes numerous details about things one perhaps knew but maybe forgot, such as Paul Robeson’s fondness for “Chen Lai!” (now the Chinese national anthem), his renditions of which are now easily available online. Langston Hughes’s chapter is liberally sprinkled with his poetry. And the malign invasiveness of the FBI in this period is also well brought to the fore.

While both Chinese protagonists are interesting, Sylvia Chen’s life is the stuff of movies, or should be. Of mixed Chinese, African and French heritage, she was the daughter of Trinidad-born Eugene Chen (who became a leading diplomat in the Nationalist Government) and Alphonse Agatha Gannecoume, a French creole. She was educated first in London and later at the Bolshoi (in 1930, she—probably wisely—declined the lead role in the Bolshoi’s new production of The Red Poppy) and became an accomplished dancer and adventurous choreographer, with credits from China to Hollywood. She was for a while the love interest of Langston Hughes, or believed herself to be. Although she lived in the US for decades, she was kept in immigration limbo due to her Chinese ancestry and leftist political leanings.

Although Gao has considerable sympathy for her subjects and their struggles for personal and broader social justice, she doesn’t treat them with kid gloves. She notes that Du Bois flirted with support for Japanese military aggression against China, arguing that an Asian dictatorial power was better than Western colonial governance. Some of Du Bois’s later comments about China have also not aged well. And despite China being portrayed, and portraying itself, as a haven for African-Americans oppressed in their country, China was not without racial prejudice itself: the fact that Chen’s mother was of Caribbean African descent was something trailed both her and her father Eugene (who became Foreign Minister in the Nationalist Government) inside China as well as out. Langston Hughes, meanwhile, is portrayed as playing unfairly or unfeelingly with Chen’s romantic sensibilities.

Gao concludes with Together, their lives stand as powerfulful counters to narratives that foreground racism and alienation. Their lives offer a view into the power and potential of Black internationalism and Sino-African American collaboration. “Arise, Africa!” and “Roar, China!” as articulated by Du Bois and Hughes, respectively, match the shared struggles of a nation and a nation-within-a-nation. Their power and promise resonate to this day.

One is left with the impression that “Sino-African American relations” might, at some level, have had an importance at least as great as that of those she calls the “default white” with which China, after all, had had, and continued to have, a rather poor experience.

Gao has a bobble or two, admittedly somewhat outside the book’s main focus.

When she writes that Soviet futurist poet and playwright Sergei Tretyakov had first authored a poem titled “Roar, China!” around 1924, while teaching Russian in Beijing. He soon transformed it into a play prophetically predicting the 1926 Wanshan Incident, in which the British military massacred hundreds of Chinese civilians … she seems to conflate the poem and the play. The two were discussed in detail by, for example, Edward Tyerman in Internationalist Aesthetics: China and Early Soviet Culture.

Tretyakov … reused the title of his poem “Roar China” to name a new play … in January 1926 …

At its core was a recent historical event: an act of British imperialist violence that had taken place in the city of Wanshan …

The only other drawback is that because the lives are organized thematically rather than chronologically, Gao will jump back and forth in time. Whatever the merits of laying the stories out this way, the transitions can be a bit abrupt.

But neither detracts from the book’s main and major virtue: Gao tells a good story, actually five, and tells them very well. That the stories and protagonists are all linked yields a book is far more than the sum of its parts.

About the reviewer

Peter Gordon is the editor of The Asian Review of Books and wrote regular editorial columns for Hong Kong’s English-language dailies for several years. He co-authored “The Silver Way: China, Spanish America and the Birth of Globalisation, 1565-1815.”
Lake Phalen Chinese garden project overshadowed by Hmong dialect controversy

By Greg Hugh

Who knew words of welcome on a rock in a Chinese garden in St. Paul can spark testy debates and protests?

On April 17, the following paragraph appeared in an article in the Pioneer Press with the headline, “Dialect dispute has St. Paul Hmong group calling for Dai Thao to quit; he wants FBI probe”:

“The exchange holds special meaning to some in the Phalen area and the Asian-American community. For others, it’s become a flashpoint in a simmering war of words between speakers of two traditional Hmong dialects known as “Hmong Green” or “Leng,” and “Hmong White” or “Der/Daw,” which is more common in the Twin Cities.”

“The exchange” referred to the gifts from the Minnesota China Friendship Garden Society to St. Paul’s sister city, Changsha, in China’s Hunan Province, where many in the Hmong community claim as their ancestral home.

The Hmong dialect controversy centers around the spelling of the term for Hmong engraved on some of the art stones placed in the St. Paul-Changsha China Friendship Garden last fall. That event was attended by a number of dignitaries, including a majority from the Hmong 18 Council (group that sets standards and settles disputes among the 18 Hmong clans) of 2020-2022. Of the nine art stones, some have Chinese, Dakota and Hmong engraved on them.

No one voiced any concern the day of the event. However, concern was later brought to the attention of the St. Paul Parks and Rec and to Council Member Dai Thao over the use of “Moob” (rather than “Hmoob” or “Hmong”), which led to personal attacks, demonstrations outside St. Paul’s City Hall and calls for Thao’s resignation in April.

The tension between the Green Hmong and the more dominant White Hmong is tribal and as old as the hills. (A 2002 California bill using “Hmong” raised hackles within the Hmong community there.)

William Zajicek, president of the garden society said, “What a sorry situation this is. Dai Thao and others involved in contesting the use of “Moob” have at other times been sincere supporters of the project. And to have this past support devolve over the use of the letter “H” is to me a very tragic turn of events.

“Words do matter, but intentions behind the words also matter. In this case, the use of both Green and White Hmong terms was intended to show inclusivity. The local Chinese community together with the Minnesota China Friendship Garden Society have worked long and hard on this project. They have raised funds tirelessly, spent inordinate number of hours providing manual labour in weeding and planting, consumed an exhaustive amount of time researching the finer points of Chinese garden design to get the garden to this point. It would be most unfortunate to let a well-intentioned act of goodwill be misappropriated into a political battle.

Take a lesson from the California bill meant to strengthen Hmong heritage among Hmong youth. The end result because of disagreement between the Green and White Hmong was a bill so watered down it “erased all reference to the Hmong community.”

Let not a Hmong dialect dispute derail a grand, collaborative Chinese-Hmong garden project.”

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On April 19, Gallup released the results of a poll conducted between March 1 and 18 asking respondents how worried they are about illegal immigration. Forty-one percent of respondents worried “a great deal” about aliens in the United States illegally, and another 19 percent were worried “a fair amount.” A plurality of Democrats (44 percent), however, weren’t worried at all about illegal immigration. That may be why the administration isn’t doing anything to fix the Southwest border — though two key political analysts see as a tidal wave of illegal migrants there as a major liability for Democrats in the upcoming midterm elections.

Poll Results. Gallup surveyed a random sample of 1,017 adults in the United States and gave them a list of problems facing the country. One of those problems was illegal immigration, and respondents were asked how much they personally were worried about it. They were given four choices: a “great deal,” a “fair amount,” “only a little,” or “not at all.”

Overall, 41 percent of respondents said that they were worried a great deal about illegal immigration, while 19 percent said that they were worried a fair amount about it. Another 17 percent asserted that they were only a little worried about illegal immigration, and 23 percent responded that they were not worried at all.

That is the highest number of Gallup respondents who asserted that they were worried a great deal about illegal immigration since March 2011 (42 percent), when by January 2019 they carried the day: 31 percent of Democrats then were not concerned by illegal immigration at all, 18 percent were concerned a fair amount, but just 16 percent were a great deal concerned. That’s how “great deal” Democrats have risen up since (accounting for 18 percent of such partisans), but they still fall well below either Independents or Republicans.

Conversely, the number of Republicans who are worried a great deal about illegal immigration is high: 68 percent, compared to just five percent of GOP respondents who don’t worry about illegal immigration at all. While that percentage of “great deal” Republicans is high, it is still eight points off its record, 76 percent in January. As with most other things, Independents are middle of the road on the issue. But they are still much more likely to be concerned about illegal immigration than not worried about it at all. Thirty-nine percent of the non-aligned worry a great deal about immigration, their highest level of concern since January 2015 (40 percent).

On the flip side, just 21 percent of Independents stated that they were not worried about illegal immigration at all, down from the January polling (18 percent), but down from January 2020, when 26 percent of this cohort could not have cared less about illegal immigration. Likely not coincidentally, that was at a point Trump had brought the Southwest border under control.

As the percentage of Independents who are worried a great deal or are not worried at all about illegal immigration has risen, the percentage of them who are worried a fair amount about the issue have fallen, to 17 percent from 20 percent in Gallup’s January polling. Combined, illegal immigration is a worry for 56 percent of Independents.

Democrats’ Concerns. Although Biden ran as a reasonable and adult moderate, many of his policies across the board — including in taking office have appeared to peel to the progressive wing of the Democratic party.

Nowhere is that truer than on immigration. Biden’s little-noticed immigration campaign platform was largely a repudiation of Donald Trump’s policies, and almost all of it followed progressive talking points.

In fact, when he was on the campaign trail, Biden’s staff released what was called the “Biden-Sanders Unity Task Force Recommendations” (for “democratic socialist,” Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), each piece of which called for reining in immigration enforcement.

Either voters didn’t notice any of this, or they figured that Biden didn’t mean it (or they didn’t care), but since he took office, the president has followed the immigration and border blueprint he laid out when he was running for the job.

Which explains why the Southwest border — the calamity it is today. Border Patrol agents there set a new yearly record for apprehensions in FY 2021, apprehended more illegal migrants in March than they have in any month in the last 22 years, and have released more illegal entrants (856,000-plus) than the populations of Seattle or Denver since the day Biden was sworn in. Given how catastrophic the border has become, you may (reasonably) ask why the president hasn’t done anything to fix it? As Gallup shows, Biden’s Democratic base doesn’t care about illegal immigration, and that is the only audience that the president seems to care about.

Electoral Ramifications. The president may start caring a lot more about the state of the border in the not-too-distant future if two prominent political analysts are correct. In an April 19 piece, CNN’s editor-at-large Chris Cillizza referenced the Gallup poll when he referred to immigration as “the new weekly big issue of the 2022 election.”

To be clear: Inflation and gas prices — as well as more general concerns about the state and direction of the economy — continue to dominate most Americans’ minds. But, immigration — and the administration’s ability to control it or not … is nudging its way into the midterm conversation as well.

Cillizza noted that the Gallup poll was conducted in early to mid-March, weeks before the administration announced that it would end COVID orders issued under Title 42 of the Immigration and Nationality Act. The expansion of illegal migrants to curb the spread of Covid-19 on May 23.

Title 42 is the only quasi-border policy of the Trump administration that Biden has retained, and it has been the only program that has prevented the debacle at the Southwest border from evolving even further into catastrophe. Biden has not utilized those orders as vigorously as Trump did (Trump’s DHS expelled more than 88 percent of the illegal migrants it encountered under Title 42 after that measure took effect, while Biden has expelled just over half), but at least Title 42 has enabled CBP to try to manage the migrant flow to some degree in recent months. Border Patrol agents apprehended an average of 1,771 illegal migrants per day at the Southwest border in March (as noted, the highest monthly total of apprehensions there in the last 22 years), but DHS estimates that it may see as many as 18,000 illegal migrants enter illegally per day after Title 42 is lifted.

That would overwhelm the fewer than 17,000 agents in the Border Patrol’s Southwestern sector and render them powerless to stop drugs, criminals, terrorists, and contraband from flowing straight into the United States.

Cillizza warns: “A glut of people trying to cross the border once Title 42 is rescinded — and the resulting media coverage — could make the issue top of mind for many more voters.” And not in a good way for the president or his fellow Democrats already facing strong headwinds heading into the November midterm elections.

The CNN editor-at-large’s points were echoed by William Galston, the Wall Street Journal opinion page’s resident liberal, on April 21.

Galston, who served as Deputy Assistant to President Bill Clinton for Domestic Policy and has been around Democratic politics for decades, reluctantly admitted: “It seems that the Biden administration well, I’d like to be able to support its immigration policy on the merits. But I can’t, because the policy has been a mess from day one, and the American people know it.

The main problem, he asserts, is that while “Democrats recouled in horror at the enforcement excesses of the Trump administration … they never reached an agreement on a strategy to replace these excesses.”

I have explained before (with actual statistics) that the contention that immigration enforcement under Trump was “excessive” is a “canard,” which may be part of the reason that the White House has no strategy to enforce the law now.

The CNN editor-at-large’s points were echoed by the president and his advisors (and more specifically to Biden’s liberal base), there is no illegal immigration problem that needs to be addressed, so any enforcement — be it detention of illegal entrants (as the law mandates) or the arrest and removal of criminal aliens from the interior (ditto) is “excessive”.

That said, Galston all but concedes this point when he concludes:

No doubt guilty Republicans will claim vindication for the Trump administration’s policies, whose malignant objectives few if any Democrats have ever endorsed. But the alternative is a near-certain loss of Democratic control of the Senate, leaving Mr. Biden to face an impenetrable wall of legislative opposition as the third year of his presidency begins.

Joe Biden is “president of the United States,” not “president of the Democrats.” He must listen to the large number of Republican and Independent voters who are worried about illegal immigration. A pluralify of Democrats may not be bothered by the prospect of 2.5 million illegal migrants at the Southwest border this year, but their votes alone will not be sufficient to ensure Democratic control of the House and Senate come January.

The Center for Immigration Studies is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit research organization founded in 1985. Its single mission: providing immigration policy analysts, the academic community, news media, and concerned citizens with reliable information about the social, economic, environmental, security, and fiscal consequences of legal and illegal immigration into the United States.
There are 1.7 million undocumented Asian immigrants in the U.S., with over 460,000 in California, 166,000 in New York, and 148,000 in Texas. The nationalities that make up the Asian undocumented population are largely from India, China, Philippines, Korea, Vietnam and Pakistan.

While the Biden Administration has significantly curtailed the arrest and deportation of immigrants who are the U.S. without authorization and have not had criminal convictions, the fact remains that 1.7 million pending cases in removal proceedings are clogging up the immigration courts across the country. These cases have accumulated over the years, dating back to Trump, Obama, and even George W. Bush.

One thing is clear: the current immigration court system is unsustainable, unable to provide due process rights of immigrants and their families, and represents a massive waste of scarce government resources.

Instead of leveraging our tax dollars to tax and deport hardened criminals, drug dealers, and violent predators, we are spending billions on a deportation system that is focused on perceived individuals, many of whom are related to American citizens and have U.S. citizen children.

Their biggest crime? They don’t have papers.

There are now at least 11 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. Of the 1.7 million who are in removal proceedings, a relatively small percentage is comprised of Asian immigrants. In terms of country of origin, the Asian immigrants have the highest numbers of documented immigrants in the U.S., with over 148,000 in New York, and 148,000 in Texas.

The nationalities currently in removal proceedings:
- China: 30,000
- Bangladesh: 8,000
- Pakistan: 4,000
- Philippines: 2,700
- Vietnam: 2,300
- Sri Lanka: 1,300
- S. Korea: 1,300

While the numbers of Asian being subjected to removal from the U.S. may not be large – the negative impact felt by the families and the community cannot be ignored.

In prior generations, Congress has viewed the undocumented issue from a different perspective. From the 1980s all the way until 2001, there were laws that provided a path to legal status. By paying a fine for the civil infraction of not having papers, immigrants could come out of the shadows, get fingerprinted, and obtain a green card, often through family or employer sponsorship.

For more than 21 years, because of the political benefits of riding the wave of xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment, Congress has refused to pass legislation to provide a path to legal status.

This has created a crisis in our immigration court system which is incredibly dysfunctional and hearing dates are often pushed out years down the road, while families live in fear that they may never get due process and the opportunity to stay.

There may be relief ahead.

On April 3, 2022, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of the Principal Legal Advisor (OPLA) Kerry E. Doyle issued new guidelines for its attorneys regarding prosecutorial discretion.

The memorandum titled "Guidance to OPLA Attorneys Regarding the Enforcement of Civil Immigration Laws and the Exercise of Prosecutorial Discretion" (Doyle Memorandum) will be effective from April 3, 2022. This memo is consistent with the memorandum titled "Guidance to the ICE Attorneys for the Enforcement of Civil Immigration Law" (Doyle Memorandum) issued on Sept. 30, 2021, and took effect on Nov. 29, 2021, issued by Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas (Mayorkas Memorandum). The new memo provides a strong directive by the Biden administration to ICE attorneys that they must follow the time-honored tradition within the law that prosecutors should “do justice” – and prioritize scarce government resources in a way that maximizes public safety.

The new memo updates and expands the exercise of prosecutorial discretion by ICE attorneys. The Doyle Memo streamlines ICE process for designating enforcement priorities and provides greater discretion to ICE attorneys to exercise various forms of prosecutorial discretion in individual cases.

What is prosecutorial discretion?

An immigration prosecutor has the authority to make a decision regarding placing a person in immigration court and charging them with removability, or even terminating an existing deportation case. This is called prosecutorial discretion.

Prosecutorial discretion is a wide range of authority that even allows offering plea bargains to a defendant. For example, a law enforcement officer gives you a warning for speeding and lets you go while they can charge you.

ICE is the representative of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in immigration removal proceedings before the United States Department of Justice’s Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR). Moreover, the Office of the Principal Legal Advisor (OPLA) has the power to use prosecutorial discretion. The OPLA attorneys can independently reevaluate your case if they get new information. If they change the priority status, they may support your PD request.

The new guidance prioritizes:

1. Threat to national security
   - Noncitizens who are suspected or involved in espionage or terrorism-related activities are a priority. Moreover, people who are dangerous to national security also come under this priority.

2. Threat to public safety
   - Noncitizens who are involved in criminal activities are a threat to public safety. Hence, they are a priority for removal.

The new guidance also allows for certain prioritizations.

Firstly, OPLA evaluates if your case is a priority for enforcement or not. If it is a non-priority case, OPLA is highly likely to use PD such as not filing the Notice to Appear (NTA). For instance, if they have filed NTA already, OPLA will dismiss the removal proceedings without prejudice.

Depending on the case, they may opt for requests for relief, waiving appeal, a reduced bond amount, administrative closure, and other methods.

Priority cases

When OPLA evaluates that your case is a priority for enforcement, they don’t use PD and refuse to apply for NTA, termination, administrative closure, or dismissal.

In some cases, OPLA still uses PD if your case is a priority. In addition, you can provide evidence to change the status of priority. OPLA lawyers can independently reevaluate your case if they get new information.

If they change the priority status, they may support your PD request.

The civil immigration enforcement priorities

For civil immigration enforcement, the Mayorkas Memorandum has defined three priorities. OPLA attorneys are asked to use their resources on noncitizens that are a threat to border security, public safety, or national security.

In this section, we will talk about these three priorities. Moreover, we will share how OPLA attorneys determine priorities.

The Mayorkas Memorandum priorities

Let’s talk about three priorities of the Mayorkas Memorandum:

1. Threat to national security
   - Noncitizens who are suspected or involved in espionage or terrorism-related activities are a priority. Moreover, people who are dangerous to national security also come under this priority.

2. Threat to public safety
   - Noncitizens who are involved in criminal activities are a threat to public safety. Hence, they are a priority for removal.

The public, they are not determined with bright categories. Instead, it requires a detailed analysis of the circumstances and the conduct of the individual.

3. Threat to border security
   - When a noncitizen is dangerous to border security, they will be considered a priority for removal. They are considered a threat when:
     - They are captured at the port or border of the United States while trying to enter illegally.
     - They are captured in the United States and they entered the country after Nov. 1, 2020.

In addition, there may be some other scenarios that ask law enforcement agencies to remove the person. Depending on the facts and circumstances, there may be some favor for an individual case.

The Bottom Line

The latest guidelines of ICE are welcomed by the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA). The memo will allow prosecutors to resolve cases immediately. It will help reduce the backlog in immigration court proceedings. Thousands of people are waiting in line for years to get asylum or a green card.

The Doyle Memorandum offers clear guidelines for prosecutors. In the past, ICE prosecutors have not closely adhered to PD guidelines.

By Richard Herman | Contributor | April 2022

ICE issues new guidance on prosecutorial discretion

How will it affect Asians and others in deportation proceedings?

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By one thing is clear: With nearly 1.7 million cases currently pending in immigration courts and the Board of Immigration Appeals, let’s hope that ICE prosecutors will “do justice,” conserve scarce administrative resources, make the U.S. a more safe and equitable nation, and will help keep peaceful and hardworking families together.

On May 12, 2022, ICE Principal Legal Advisor Kerry Doyle and ICE Detroit Chief Counsel Tara Harris will hold a community meeting with interested legal services providers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community stakeholders who work with immigrant communities in Michigan and Ohio.

This meeting presents a unique opportunity to hear directly from PLA Doyle on her recently issued guidance to ICE attorneys on enforcing the civil immigration laws and prosecutorial discretion. It is anticipated that specific guidance on process will be provided.

For more information on how to submit a request for PD, please see the ICE Website. ♦