

Celebrate Asian Pacific Heritage Month
with Bay Area freelance writer

William Wong

who will be reading from his new book

Yellow Journalist: Dispatches from Asian America
published by Temple University Press

booksigning will follow

May 9, 2001

9:20-10:30 A.M.

MI 2100

Read Wong in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (www.sfgate.com)

"In a Time of 'Yellow Fever': As Asians Rise to New Heights in America,

Why Do I Feel This Sense of Disquiet?," 4/4/2001

and "A Great Wall of Unease," 4/18/ 2001

and check his website: www.yellowjournalist.com

Sponsored by the Department of Mass Communications and the Asian American Educators
Council (a staff and faculty organization)

Questions? Contact Professor Colleen Fong, 885-3181 or cfong@csuhayward.edu



May 17, 2001

- News, p 2
- Editorial, p 4
- A & E, p 6, 5
- Sports p, 6
- Movies, p 6
- Classifieds, p 7
- Calendar, p 8

The PIO

young has been tossed around for

Asian American Journalist Addresses Cal State Hayward Students On Culture, Stereotypes

By Eri Koyama
Contributing Writer

William Wong, a Bay Area freelance writer, talked about his experience as a Chinese American and read from his new book last week at Cal State Hayward.

In his book "Yellow Journalist: Dispatches from Asian America," which is a collection from his 30-year career as a writer, Wong, born and raised in Oakland's Chinatown, talks about finding his Chinese family roots, keeping and modifying family traditions and dealing with racial stereotypes.

Addressing students from a variety of classes, invited by Ethnic Studies Professor Colleen Fong, he read four passages from his book, starting with a memoir of a trip to a Chinese village, Goo Doo Hong, with his Chinese-born sister to get in touch with their family roots.

Although he enjoyed his stay in the simple, isolated village, he felt inauthentic and insecure, due to his inability to speak the village dialect fluently, and to his Americanized personality, shaped by the mass media.

"My sisters and I, after all, aren't Chinese enough to the Chinese living in China, nor are we American enough to some Americans who see us as perpetual foreigners," he read.

This and other trips to China made him realize that understanding the language is very important to understanding a culture, he said.

"I have mixed feelings about going back to the village," Wong said.

As an American-born man, Wong was reluctant to have a "Chinese fam-

ily relationship" with his Goo Doo Hong relatives, though he felt an obligation to them.

"Tradition means you stick with something old," Wong said, reciting another passage about following and modifying his family tradition.

For a Chinese New Year dinner, he and his sisters tried to host a big, traditional banquet for 35 people in his modest, three-bedroom house.

Knowing little about the recipes of

Chinese dishes, they nevertheless cooked a whole fish, a hallmark of a traditional celebration, but they drank California wines and beer instead of Chinese beverages.

Also, although the ceremony of bai sin, an homage to ancestors, traditionally is reserved for males, the entire family took part, regardless of age or sex.

One year he tried to follow another Chinese New Year tradition - setting off fire-

See **Journalists**, page 2.

Journalist Combats Ethnic Bias

By Sherryl Morris
Staff Writer

He is known as a private individual who hardly shares his inner feelings. The silence is now broken and William Wong is speaking out on behalf of Asian Americans.

The Asian American Educators Council and the Mass Communications Department's invitation to Wong to speak on campus proved timely, coming shortly after the tension over the collision between a U.S. spy plane and a Chinese jet fighter.

In an article in the San Francisco Chronicle last month, Wong spoke out against racist comments associated with that incident.

He said the comments were so derogatory that he questioned his profession as a journalist. Slurs came from such as well-known figures as disc jockey Don Bleu of 101.3 FM in San Francisco,

Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial cartoonist Pat Oliphant, and some prominent newspaper editors.

There even were rumbles about boycotting Chinese restaurants until the Americans returned home, said Wong.

On a lighter note, Wong has also written about the accomplishments, gifts and talents of many Asians and commended them for their excellence. He noted golf champion Tiger Woods, daytime talk show host Lisa Ling, and basketball player Wang Zhizhi, who recently signed a contract with the Dallas Mavericks, the first Asian to have done so.

According to Wong, Asian Americans are no longer sitting on the sidelines taking society's leftovers, but are now working their way into the eyes of the American people in a positive way and making a great difference.

See **Wong**, page 2.

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on his Web site,
wjournalist.com.

Admission to the talk will be
\$3 for those with student Ids, \$10
for others.

Professor Calls Fong Inspiring

Wong, from page one.

Professor Colleen Fong, of the Ethnic Studies department, said that Wong has been speaking out on behalf of Asian Americans for decades.

"His voice is an important voice for Asian Americans," Fong said.

She said he serves as an inspiration for students, thinking critically about Asian American issues, and events in China that affect people in the Bay Area.

By Sukhinder Thethy
Staff Writer

The Ethnic Studies Academic Society at Cal State Hayward is planning a group trip to Angel Island on Sunday, May 27, which will include a docent tour of the historic immigration station.

Angel Island was the port of entry where immigrants from China, Russia, Japan, Korea and the Philippines were processed and detained from 1910 to 1940. Today the barracks, where thousands of immigrants were detained, are still intact. Visitors still can see the poetry carved in its walls by hopeful immigrants.

"We have been planning this trip for almost a year. So we are really looking forward to it and we have the exhibit on campus, so we are hoping more students will be interested," said Tara Anima, president of the Ethnic Studies Academic Society.

All are invited to attend, including faculty members and families. Persons interested should respond to esas-info@csuhayward.edu with name, phone and email no later than Monday, May 21.

The photographic exhibit on campus chronicles the experience of the immigrants at the Angel Island Immigration Station and Detention Center and will be in the Biella Room of the CSUH library until May 30.

"It is really important for students to see first hand an actual historic site, to see where immigrants were detained and housed, to see the actual conditions and most importantly to see the poems carved in the barracks," said Colleen Fong, advisor of the club and an ethnic studies professor.

The group will meet at the ferry terminal in Oakland, at the end of Clay Street at the Embarcadero, with a scheduled departure at 9 a.m. Round-trip fares, including park admission, are \$11.50 for adults, \$8.50 for juniors aged 13 to 18, \$8.50 for ages 62 and over and the disabled and \$5.50 for children.

Participants should bring a lunch and dress in layers with comfortable walking shoes. There will be only one ferry returning to Oakland. It will leave the island at 3:10 p.m.

Wong Regrets Loss of Culture

Journalists, from page one.

crackers. However, he could not find them at any Chinatown stores that used to sell them "under the table."

So he did without, noting he was no longer a Chinatown resident, and his Piedmont neighbors who probably were "not tolerant of firecrackers."

Still, tradition brought luck to his life. Wong, as a male, could go to college and even finish his master's degree without any objection from his parents, while his sisters had to convince them to pay their college tuition.

The reason was simple, he declared: "I was a boy in the family. What can I say?"

Wong also dealt with the problem of stereotyping of Asian Americans, noting problems with the mass media - particularly television and the movies - and even cited an academic study that characterized Asians as more intelligent but less

sexual than other races.

Regarding TV, he pointed out that hospital dramas, like "ER" and "Chicago Hope" scarcely had any Asians on their sets, despite the large number of Asians in health care roles.

"It's unbelievable to me," he said, noting that since the first Chinese migration to the United States, to labor in the gold fields, Chinese and other Asians have been more excluded than other immigrants.

His writing career began when he failed to make his high school basketball team, due to his lack of height. Giving up on his dream of playing the game, he instead started to write about sports.

"Sports writing is wonderful to read, because it has all kinds of cliches and military analogies," he said. "Boys love such stuff."

Wong's first language was not English, but a Chinese dialect. To become a "productive citizen of the United States," he needed English to survive in "this often intoler-

ant society."

He built his English vocabulary through radio, newspapers and novels even though his parents wanted him to hold onto their Chinese dialect.

After earning a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of California, Berkeley, and a master's degree from Columbia University, he became a professional journalist, but said his Americanization took something from his life.

"I have lost my Chinese," he said.

He urged members of his audience who had bilingual backgrounds to maintain their bilingual skills not only for "commercial value," but also for "personal value."

Wong currently contributes columns to the San Francisco Chronicle's op-ed page and features sections. Information on his book is available on his Web site, www.yellowjournalist.com.

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