

**Gulfcoast Chinese-American Association (GCAA) Newsletter  
Second Issue, Fall 2005 (release date: November 2, 2005)**

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Please note: if you feel you should be on our email list and for some reason are not receiving this newsletter and other GCAA notices, please help us amend our database by sending an email to [elin@ingenious.com](mailto:elin@ingenious.com) with copy to Dr. Kevin Hu at [cunkuohu@yahoo.com](mailto:cunkuohu@yahoo.com). Thank you.

**Newsletter Table of Contents:**

- [News of the Association](#) by Edward Lin
- [Strength of the Chinese](#) by Dr. Hammond Chen
- [URGENT NOTICE: Chinese Acrobatic Musical Spectacular November 12](#)
- [Report of the Mid-Autumn Festival \(MAF\) Celebration](#) by Tracey La
- [GCAA's first Ping Pong Tournament](#) by Jinbo Yin
- [Notice of GCAA Good Sundays](#) by Edward Lin
- [Kudos to our members and families](#) by Kevin Hu
- [Solicitation for Articles and Reports](#) by Kevin Hu
- [Helpful Info \(Real Estate Tax\)](#) by Edward Lin
- [News Articles of Interest](#) Q&A about Avian Flu
- [For Sale/Wanted](#)

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**[News of the Association](#)**

[Message from the president](#)

Dear fellow members and friends of the GCAA,

Our association which was incorporated on August 29, 2005, has recently undergone a formal name change from Gulf Coast Chinese Association (GCCA) to Gulfcoast Chinese-American Association (GCAA) to reflect the all-inclusive nature of our membership. Our Association welcomes not only all families with Chinese heritage but also families with children from China (FCC) and anyone interested in Chinese culture and greater understanding and friendship with the Chinese people.

Our October social, which was held at Grand China Buffet, was a special and joyful occasion marked by the attendance of FCC families. Approximately 60 people attended, among them 15 adults and 11 children from FCC. We regret that at least one FCC family did not connect with us because they went to Oriental Buffet, believing the gathering to be there. Please see Good Sunday notice below for restaurant rotation schedule through 2006. The new FCC chair is Ms. Sheila Blom ([sblom@cnlmortgage.com](mailto:sblom@cnlmortgage.com)). We welcome all FCC families to join the GCAA. Our kinship is natural; and we acknowledge them with admiration and gratitude for extending and sharing their love across the globe. All men are truly brothers.

We also wish to extend a most cordial invitation to all members of USCPFPA (US/China People Friendship Association) to join our organization. Some of them have already; and we look forward to enjoyable activities together and working in synergy to promote friendship and goodwill amongst the two nations. Mr. Duane Finger ([gduanef@aol.com](mailto:gduanef@aol.com)) is the President of the Sarasota

Chapter of USCPFA. On October 30, at the Selby Library auditorium, Mr. Finger, his artist wife, Jill Dye, and Dr. Carolyn Bloomer, Chair of the China Exploratory Committee, Sarasota Sister Cities Association, each gave interesting and informative video presentations of their recent trip to China and their on-going effort to create a sister-city relationship with Xiamen. Please see article below on opportunity to attend the Chinese Acrobatic Musical Spectacular with the USCPFA.

On October 6, GCAA was invited by Tony Cornish, Jr., President of the Sarasota Chapter of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) to their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary Freedom Awards Banquet at the Sarasota Hyatt. Our attendance was made possible through the generous sponsorship of Mr. Joseph A. Barbetta, Esq. a Sarasota civic leader. Representing GCAA at this event were Dr. and Mrs. Hammond Chen, Drs. Ed and Suzanna Lin, Dr. and Mrs. Xueji Zhang and Mr. Alan and Mrs. Helen Pollak. The event was well organized and inspiring, and a wonderful celebration of the human spirit.

GCAA salutes and honors the NAACP for their enormous contribution to civil rights. This week, as we observe the passing and honor the memory of Rosa Parks, mother of the Civil Rights movement, it is important that we remember and recognize that that movement did not simply benefit African Americans. Civil Rights is for ALL people and advocates equal opportunity for ALL – black and white, male and female, young and old, strong and infirm, rich or poor.

Civil rights, or the inalienable constitutional rights of the individual, are what allow all of us to participate in the democratic process in our pursuit of happiness and equal opportunity. Were it not for civil rights, many people would be excluded from voting, buying or getting mortgages for homes in locations they choose to live, and seeking gainful employment or promotions based on individual merit. In the past, an older unattractive person (regardless of skin color) wouldn't have a chance to work, for example, as a flight attendant, no matter how well qualified that person may be in all other attributes. We have come a long way, but the work is unfinished.

In our imperfect world, prejudice and discrimination – rooted in ignorance -- continues to be the excuse and pretense used by certain groups to create hatred and division, wars and suffering across the globe. All of us have a DUTY as part of humanity to do our part to stamp out ignorance and prejudice by promoting enlightenment and kindness to all people.

**Edmund Burke** (an Anglo-Irish statesman, who served for many years in the British House of Commons and chiefly remembered for his support of the American Revolution) said it best, “ **The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for the good men to do nothing.**” Every time we reject prejudice and bigotry, every time we stand up and speak out against injustice and inequality, we become part of that energy working to uplift humanity. We become part of the legacy of Rosa Parks, Aung San Suu Kyi , Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Our programs Committee, under the energetic and able leadership of Dr. Xueji Zhang (VP of Programs), Tracey La and Jinbo Yin (Co-chairs of Program Committee) have done a fantastic job with our MAF event. They are already at work planning our New Years' Celebration. It is scheduled for Sunday, January 29, 2006 from 4:00P to 8:00P at the Venice Community Center.

We need ideas for celebration and of course, the all-important volunteers. Please answer the call to service and pitch in to help. GCAA can only be as good as you are willing to help make it. Our thanks also to the spouses and “significant-others” of our officers, committee chairs and members who also pitch in and work in the background, often without proper recognition.

**Ed**

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## **Strength of the Chinese**

By Dr. Hammond Chen

Of course, I'm not talking about physical strength. It is the spiritual one. The strength Chinese has in Chinese culture, in Confucianism.

You may not realize it, but you are practicing it all your life, such as respect for elders and ancestors, love, kindness and loyalty.

The tenets of Confucianism can be summarized in just four powerful words,

“Zong 忠” Loyalty

“Hsiao 孝” Respect elders and ancestors

“Ren 仁” Kindness, and

“Ai 爱” Love

Chinese culture is one of the oldest cultures and still shines through world history. China was conquered by the Mongols and Manchurians, but they were eventually assimilated into Chinese culture.

The moral fabric of the Chinese people embodies the four characteristics above in individual lives and in its society as a whole. These humanistic characteristics transcend culture, geography and national boundaries. The more the world appreciates and adopts our cultural spirit, the more likely greater understanding and world peace will result.

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## **URGENT NOTICE: Chinese Acrobatic Musical Spectacular November 12, 2005**

On Saturday, November 12 at 2PM, the Player's Theater will present a Chinese Acrobatic Musical Spectacular at Sailor Circus Arena, 2075 Bahia Vista Dr. The program is written by Burton Wolfe and features both famed acrobats from China as well as American performers. If we have 25 or more people interested, we will be able to secure group rate of \$22.50/person instead of \$25. Children between the ages of 3 and 18 pay \$15. Please have your check payable to The Player's Theater in appropriate amount for our Sunday November 6 gathering at 5:30P at the New Dynasty Buffet (see Good Sundays below). Duane Finger from USCPFA will collect them. If you cannot attend the November 6 gathering but wish to obtain tickets, please mail your check to: Duane Finger (tel: 388-5098)  
295 Morningside Dr.  
Sarasota, FL 34236

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## **GCAA PROGRAMS COMMITTEE: EVENTS AND ACTIVITES**

**By Ms. Tracey La**

Our Programs Committee is dedicated to serving the Chinese community with our fullest efforts in providing and organizing fun, cultural, social events such as Chinese New Year, Mid Autumn Festival, and Dragon Boat Festival, along with other activities as manpower and resources permit.

### **Annual Events:**

Chinese New Year

Dragon Boat Festival

Mid-Autumn Festival

We are so proud to have had a very successful first annual Mid Autumn Festival Celebration. Over 150 Chinese friends and families attended the event and participated in fun and exciting activities put together through team effort by our dedicated volunteers.

Along with the fabulous displays of delicious dishes brought in by our members and attendees, there were beautiful lanterns and decors surrounding the well-laid out pavilions on the green grass fields of Twin Lakes Park, Sarasota. It was surely a great setting. Some of the fun activities included a best dish contest with two winners. The Best Tasting Dish Winner 2005 went to Mr. & Mrs. Mike and Kim Hung for a wonderful Sushi platter, and the Best Presentation Winner 2005 went to Dr. Suzanna Lin for a beautiful Fruit Pizza on a delicious cookie crust. There were over 50 dishes brought by Chinese families.

Of all the strong and talented fellows that participated in the intense Tug-of-War contest, a special team of five survivors won, one of them is nonetheless our very own Dr. Kevin Hu, VP of Information and Communication.

The children had so much fun with the water balloon tossing contest, it turned into an exciting but friendly water balloon fight. Throughout dinner, which seemed a never ending display of creative dishes, numerous donated raffle prizes were given out. Prizes included over a dozen exotic fruit trees brought in by Dr. Edward Lin, our cherished President, exotic fruits from his garden, six commercial boxes of fresh shitake mushrooms brought in by Mrs. May Chang of Omega Mushrooms, various imported household items and gifts from the Huang-Schmidl and La families, along with candies and other goodies. Thank you all for your generosity. \$105 was raised for the GCAA treasury from the raffle sales. Towards dusk, the children settled down and took a breather from all the games and toys, running and laughing, and joined in on our Mid Autumn Festival themed drawing contest. The drawings were all so creative and amazing that our judges decided to make them all winners and they all received first place prizes. Following the drawing contest, the children made traditional Chinese lanterns while listening to tales of Mid Autumn Celebration. The celebration came to a close with the handing out of moon cakes to GCAA members so families can bring home to share and savor the memories of this beautiful evening.

The event was an astonishing success, but we could not have done this without all the efforts and dedication of our many volunteers, and also to all those that put their hearts into preparing all the tasty dishes to bring for all of us to share. All GCAA officers, their spouses and committee members in membership and treasury all pitched in to help. This is what culture and teamwork is all about. We hope that by pulling together and learning from the old and teaching the young, the importance of embracing the culture and tradition of the Chinese people, through social events like this one, we will be able to one day look back proudly with a smile knowing that the rich culture will not be lost but will instead endure forever.

#### **Planned Events coming up...**

Chinese New Years 2006 will be on Sunday, January 29, 2006 from 4:00P to 8:00P at the Venice Community Center. Mark your calendars!!! Specific times and activities will be announced via e-mail and other forms of notice. We hope that all will be able to attend.

If anyone has any ideas, suggestion, or request for the New Years Celebration as for time, place, or activities, or if anyone would like to lend a hand and become a volunteer or become a member of our Programs Committee, please contact **Jinbo Yin** [best\\_ck9103@yahoo.com](mailto:best_ck9103@yahoo.com) (941) 966-4355 or **Tracey La** [Parisces26@comcast.net](mailto:Parisces26@comcast.net) (941)780-3011. Thank you very kindly.

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#### **GCAA's first Ping Pong Tournament - 2005 GCAA OPEN** now accepting registration.

By Jinbo Yin

This is a free event. We welcome and encourage everyone to participate.  
A great chance to meet other member families and have a lot of fun !!!!!.

Please email to Tony Shih by Nov 15 at [tonyshih88@msn.com](mailto:tonyshih88@msn.com) with clear indication of

your name, email address, gender, proper age group (Kids, Adult or Senior) and your interest of participation in Single, Double or Mix Double competition .

Depending on number of participants, we may group all participants into just one group.

Scheduled time and place for competition will be announced via email.

Thank you for participating and good luck to you all,

Jinbo

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### **Notice of GCAA Good Sundays:**

Our monthly social will continue to be held at 5:30P on the first Sunday of each month. These are typically not official meetings, just an opportunity to meet other families who share or are interested in Chinese friendship, culture and heritage. If you plan to attend, please RSVP the number in your party to Helen Pollak at [hwpollak@comcast.net](mailto:hwpollak@comcast.net) by Friday so the restaurant can plan space and waiters accordingly. Thank you.

For the month of December, 2005 (Dec 4) and Feb/Apr/June/Aug/Oct/Dec 2006 it will be at:  
Oriental Buffet (Tel: 377-6699)  
4458 Bee Ridge Rd, Sarasota (Take Exit 207 and head west for 2 mi;  
turn left before MacIntosh into the plaza at the southeast intersection with McIntosh).

For the months of Jan/Mar/May/July/Sept/Nov 2006 it will be at:  
Grand China Buffet (Tel: 341-9868)  
3969 Cattlemen Rd., Sarasota, FL 34233  
From I-75, take Exit 207 for Bee Ridge and head west. Go very short distance, 500 feet or so.  
Turn left at the next intersection (Cattlemen) and move into the left lane and turn left again at your first or second opportunity. Restaurant is near the southeast corner of Bee Ridge and Cattlemen, between Burlington Coat Factory and Home Depot.

While there are other restaurants large enough to hold our group gatherings, [in the interest of central location, and familiarity for our guests](#), we have adopted the above alternating location schedule for 2006:  
Grand China Buffet (G) for all odd-numbered months (Jan, March, May, etc.)  
Oriental Buffet (O) for all even-numbered months (Feb, April, June, etc )  
One way to help you remember is to make the association "G before O, Jan before Feb"

Our Programs Committee is actively preparing for Chinese New Year Celebration on Jan 29, 2006 at the Venice Community Center. If you are willing to help with any aspect of GCAA activities, please come early to the Sunday social as the Committee meets at 4:30P at the restaurant. See you there.

While there are a few other restaurants large enough to hold our group gatherings, [in the interest of central location, and familiarity for our guests, we will adopt the following location schedule beginning January 2006:](#)  
**G**rand China Buffet (**G**) for all odd-numbered months (Jan, March, May, etc.)  
**O**riental Buffet (**O**) for all even-numbered months (Feb, April, June, etc )  
One way to help you remember is to make the association "G before O, Jan before Feb"

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### **Kudos to our members and families**

**Little Swimmer**

By Dr. Kevin Hu

On Saturday morning, Oct. 8, Shark team swimmers of YMCA at Sarasota kicked off swim meet after loudly cheering "GO SHARKS!" As one of many parents who were cheering their little swimmers, I sat in the audience and watched my little swimmer Nancy Hu with the heart-stopping moments. Nancy has been quite good in backstroke and therefore easily won first-place in 25-yard backstroke event. Before the game she was worried about her butterfly performance due to her weakness in this area, but she performed well and finished first in 25-yard butterfly event. Nancy had a pretty good day and was excited with her four first-place finishes in all events: freestyle, butterfly, breaststroke and backstroke. Congratulations to my little swimmer!

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## **Solicitation for Articles and Reports**

By Kevin Hu

I hope the categories listed below will help GCAA members understand how they could easily contribute some articles to the GCAA newsletters, and thus actively participate and get involved.

### 1. Featured articles

This section includes the articles with top priority such as words from president or the major events in focus.

### 2. News in GCAA

This section includes the Association activities and events that have recently happened or is scheduled in the near future. Examples include MAF event, cultural performance coming to the area and ping-pong or other sports competitions.

This section also includes any good or sad news from some of GCAA members who would like to share with others. GCAA members may write short stories about special achievements or talents of their family members such as their children at school.

### 3. Gulfcoast Life

This section includes any local events and experience which may be interesting to GCAA members. It may range from anything that could improve GCAA members' life quality in this area to a fun local story.

### 4. Miscellaneous

This section may include any tips for safety and better life, special cooking skills, how to decorate homes and gardens, traveling experience to mainland China or Taiwan, business opportunities, finance, etc.

### 5. Advertisements

List all sponsor advertisements.

Kevin

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## **Helpful info**

By Ed Lin

### **How to reduce your real-estate tax**

Because of surging property value, homeowners are seeing steep increases in their property tax each year. If you own your home in FL, it is important that you file for a Homestead exemption as soon as possible. Even though the exemption is for the relatively small amount of \$25,000, it brings another much bigger benefit: One year after claiming the \$25,000 homestead exemption,

the 3% cap on increase in assessed value takes effect, and will continue automatically until the law changes. For example, if you bought a home for \$200,000 and immediately filed for Homestead exemption, you pay tax only on \$175,000. A year later, your property value shot up to \$350,000. Instead of paying tax on \$325,000 (less the exemption), you pay tax only on \$180,250 (\$175,000 X 1.03).

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## Scholarships for your high school senior

By Eric Man

If your child excels as a high school senior or you know a distinguished student who is a high school senior and planning to go to college next year, please apply for the AXA Achievement Scholarship offered by our company-AXA. You don't have to be our company's client; as long as you apply, you will have a chance to get up to \$25,000 for college. Our company AXA has a foundation called AXA Foundation which gives away \$670,000 for college scholarships. I love to see someone from our community getting it. Go to [www.axaonline.com](http://www.axaonline.com), click on AXA Achievement Scholarship on the right column for more info.

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## News Articles of Interest

### Avian Flu Under the Microscope

OCTOBER 9, 2005

NEWS ANALYSIS

By Catherine Arnst

[http://www.businessweek.com/technology/content/oct2005/tc20051010\\_0869\\_tc024.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/technology/content/oct2005/tc20051010_0869_tc024.htm)

**Here's key information about the potentially deadly disease that has governments and scientists on high alert, since it may spread around the globe**

Suddenly the news is filled with dire warnings about avian flu, a potentially deadly disease that may -- or may not -- sweep the globe in the next few years. Infectious-disease experts have been warning for years that the virus that has killed tens of millions of chickens and waterfowl in Asia since 1997 could mutate into a form that would infect humans. If that happens, it could produce a devastating flu pandemic such as the Spanish flu of 1918 that killed as many as 50 million people worldwide (see BW Online, 10/6/05, "["Eerie" Discoveries about Flu"](#)").

Now Washington is taking the threat seriously: Health officials from 80 countries met with the State Dept. on Oct. 7 to discuss coordinating strategies to address a possible pandemic, and the White House met with vaccine makers the same day to see if production of a potential vaccine could be ramped up.

Here are some facts about avian flu and the risks it poses to humans:

#### **What is avian flu?**

In birds, the disease is caused by one branch of a family of microbes called Type A influenza virus. The viral subtype that scientists have been anxiously watching since 1997 is called H5N1, and it originated in water birds, primarily ducks. Ducks can usually withstand this virus, making them ideal carriers -- especially since they're migratory. Chickens have less resistance, and once one is infected it can quickly spread the virus through an entire flock, killing nearly all the birds.

#### **How do humans get avian flu?**

So far, virtually all the 100 or so avian-flu cases identified in humans can be traced directly back to contact with live chickens. Infected birds pass the virus through feces, and it affects humans that breathe in the fecal dust. The virus is not passed on in the meat or eggs, so there's no danger from eating cooked chicken.

#### **How deadly is avian flu to humans?**

In its current form, very. So far, about 65 people have died from the disease, resulting in a mortality rate near 70%. By comparison, the SARS outbreak of 2003 infected 8,098 people around the globe and killed 774, for a 9.6% death rate.

The disease can kill within a week, destroying the lungs and other organs. If it's anything like the Spanish-flu outbreak, its main victims will be otherwise healthy adults. The World Health Organization has warned that an avian-flu pandemic could kill as many 150 million people worldwide, and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention estimates that about 25% of the U.S. population would fall ill.

#### **How can the virus mutate into one that can be passed from human to human?**

Viruses are notorious shape-shifters, able to constantly rearrange their genes and swap genetic material with different strains. Virologists are watching carefully for evidence that the microbe has begun swapping genetic material with a human virus -- that's when it could turn deadly for people. One worrisome sign: This summer there were reports out of Indonesia that the virus was found in pigs, which often act as incubators for human infections.

#### **Are we sure that avian flu will turn deadly for humans?**

No. The virus may never mutate into a form that's harmful to people. Or it could change into a relatively benign bug. Infectious-disease experts fret that the world is overdue for a flu pandemic since for hundreds of years there have been four every century.

In the past 100 years, the world has seen three, of varying deadliness: The Spanish flu of 1918, which killed 500,000 Americans; an outbreak in 1957-1958 that killed 70,000; and the Hong Kong flu outbreak of 1968-1969 that caused 37,000 deaths.

Most experts, however, believe H5N1, if it does end up threatening humans, will probably be quite deadly because of its similarity to the Spanish-flu virus. Also, doctors have noticed that more people are surviving the infection recently than they were when H5N1 was first discovered. That's not necessarily a good thing. It could mean that the virus is mutating into one that is easier to carry -- and spread. Ominously, the Spanish-flu virus, which also started in birds, followed a similar evolutionary path.

#### **If it does turn deadly, when might that happen?**

It could be in the next few months, or in the next few years. No one's sure. Once it does turn, the pandemic will likely sweep around the globe over several weeks and last for about a year. Although, again, no one can be sure.

#### **Can anything be done to prevent a pandemic?**

Not much. The WHO and other international groups would like to increase surveillance and monitoring in Asia, so that a human outbreak can be quickly identified and contained, with quarantines and aggressive treatment. But Thailand is the only country in Southeast Asia with a comprehensive pandemic plan, so international efforts would have to be put in place rapidly.

Once the virus starts to spread, most likely carried by an international traveler, quarantine will likely do little good. Unlike SARS, which could only be spread by close personal contact, flu is transmitted by sneezing and hand contact, and carriers can be infectious up to a week before they start showing symptoms.

#### **What about a vaccine, or treatment?**

No vaccine exists right now, although there was some early success this summer with a potential candidate. The National Institutes of Health is racing to develop one, and the White House is talking to vaccine manufacturers about increasing production capacity. However, if a pandemic does break, it could take six months to produce a vaccine for that particular strain.

As for treatment, Tamiflu, made in Switzerland by Roche Holding's ([RHHVF](#)) Hoffman-La Roche,

is the only antidote for flu. However, the U.S. has only stockpiled enough for a few million patients.

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### **For Sale/Wanted**

Please limit your ads to 75 words or less, and keep in mind this Newsletter is only a QUARTERLY publication so you should not rely on it for anything of a time-sensitive nature.

#### **For Sale:**

2004 Silver 5-Door Mazda 3. Less than 20K Miles  
Excellent Condition, with s trim package. 2.3-liter 4-cylinder 160 hp  
17-inch 5-spoke alloy wheels, 4-wheel disc brakes; tinted windows, Moon roof  
6 CD In-Dash Changer, 4-Speed Sport Automatic Transmission.  
ABS/SAB/SAC Package; Side Impact Air Bags & Curtains

**Kelly Blue Book Value: \$18,040 Price: \$16,000**

Call Troy Lim 941.284.4582

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