

## **Gulfcoast Chinese-American Association (GCAA) Newsletter**

**May-June Issue 2007 (release date June 10, 2007)**

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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 Linda Fung at [elfunkkee@mailmt.com](mailto:elfunkkee@mailmt.com) and Helen Pollak at [hwpollak@comcast.net](mailto:hwpollak@comcast.net). Thank you.

To unsubscribe, see instructions at end of newsletter.

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The GCAA Newsletter is sponsored in part by

**Feng Shui advisor-practitioner, Gigi Freeman**, member of GCAA since 2005, now available for consultations for those interested. Gigi has been practicing Feng Shui for more than 20 years under the guidance of her Chinese-Filipino-Spanish father who was knowledgeable in Feng Shui principles; She has a certificate from the New York School of Feng Shui where she studied Classical Feng Shui focused on the Compass School and Form School. Feng Shui aims to balance the environment in your home or office, very much like an "acupuncture of your living or work space" to achieve harmony in your life, promote prosperity, success, good health, and good relationships. Gigi has lived most of her life in Asia and Mexico; she moved to Venice, Florida in 2004 with her Cuban-Canadian husband, Larry. You may call her at (941) 484-3917 or (941) 932-1642 for appointments.

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**1. URGENT NOTICES: =====**

None at this time

**2. News of the Association by Edward Lin =====**

Dear members and friends of GCAA,

Due to travels and a convergence of many pressing tasks, for the first time, this issue of GCAA newsletter is late. My apologies.

I'd like to share with you a thought from our recent Memorial Day:

When a soldier was injured and could not get back to safety, his buddy went out to get him, against his officer's orders. He returned mortally wounded, and his friend, whom he had carried back, was dead. The officer was angry.

'I told you not to go,' he said. 'Now I've lost both of you. It was not worth it.'

The dying man replied, But it was, sir, because when I got to him, he said, 'Jim, I knew you'd come.' (*Leslie D. Weatherhead*)

The covenant of trust and leadership is a high honor that I have been privileged to receive from you while serving as your GCAA President for the past two and half years. Much progress has been gained, made possible only through the support of our dedicated team of officers, committee chairs and many volunteers. To them, I owe my heartfelt thanks and admiration for their altruism and team spirit.

As many of you know, I also serve as a Director of 80-20 initiative ([www.80-20initiative.net](http://www.80-20initiative.net)), a national organization working for equality and justice for all Asian Americans. My position there, as well as other growing responsibilities has necessitated passing on the Presidency of GCAA to an able replacement. I tendered my resignation at the GCAA Board of Directors meeting on May 19, and Dr. Xueji Zhang was unanimously elected as our new President.

On behalf of the Board and our members, I wish to congratulate Dr. Zhang and thank him for his willingness to serve. In the near future, Dr. Zhang will announce new officers and other appointments within the leadership ranks of GCAA. We are excited and optimistic about GCAA's future under Dr. Zhang and pledge our support and cooperation.

Best wishes,

*Ed*

Dr. Edward Lin

Past-President, GCAA

Chairman of the Board

Encourage Inspire Empower

*"You must be the change you wish to see in the world" Mahatma Gandhi*

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The new owners, Mr. KongBiao Ni and Ms. JinXing Yang, started their business in January 2007 They warmly welcomes **GCAA members and friends with a 20% discount**. If you are planning a remodeling or building a custom home, put J&K to work for you. They are also hiring sales staff. If you are a good salesperson and have computer skills, please call Ms. Yang as soon as possible.

GCAA extends a hearty welcome to Mr. Ni and Ms. Yang and wishes them success.

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**3. Who to contact about what =====**

**Programs:**

Co-Director, Shawn Kuang, [xkuang1@lsu.edu](mailto:xkuang1@lsu.edu) 941-538-8525

Co-Director, Valentina Pippin, [mvpc@comcast.net](mailto:mvpc@comcast.net) 941-961-3044

Co-Director, Cheyenne Wu, [cheyenne@theblueexchange.com](mailto:cheyenne@theblueexchange.com) (941) 921-4205

**Membership**

Co-Director, Jian Wang, [jian@doctorhan.com](mailto:jian@doctorhan.com) 941-924-2278

Co-Director , Linda Fung, [elfunkkee@verizon.net](mailto:elfunkkee@verizon.net) 941 918-8505

**Monthly socials**

Helen Pollak, Secretary [hwpollak@comcast.net](mailto:hwpollak@comcast.net) (941) 929-9266

**Community Relations**

Director: Dr. Carolyn Bloomer, [cmbloomer@comcast.net](mailto:cmbloomer@comcast.net) (941) 351-0995

**GCAA website**

Barry Zhang, WebMaster: [bzhang@comcast.net](mailto:bzhang@comcast.net)

Asst. WebMaster John Zhu [juntaozhu15@yahoo.com](mailto:juntaozhu15@yahoo.com)

**Other issues:**

Dr. Xueji Zhang, [zxj001us@yahoo.com](mailto:zxj001us@yahoo.com) (941) 321-7903

**4. Programs Committee Report =====**

None at this time

**Report on GCAA website:**

Thanks to Barry Zhang, our website is now up and running: [www.GulfcoastChineseAmerican.org](http://www.GulfcoastChineseAmerican.org)

Please send suggestions for new features and improvement to Barry at [bzhang@comcast.net](mailto:bzhang@comcast.net)

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GCAA acknowledges with sincere thanks the generous support and sponsorship of the Marco Polo Restaurant in our annual CNY and MAF festivities.

**The Marco Polo International Buffet & Grill** is located at 549 US Highway 41 Bypass North, Venice, FL 34292 in Bird Bay Plaza (near Big Lots), just south of the bifurcation of Business 41. Tel: 941-412-3988. When you visit the restaurant for their wide selection of seafood (including crawdad, oyster and crab) and Chinese, Mongolian, Japanese and Italian food, please say hello to the owners: Mr. & Mrs. Lau and let them know GCAA appreciates their support.

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**5. Upcoming events and attractions =====**

To be announced

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## 6. Volunteers needed=====

to help with various programs of GCAA, and to take over the Editorship of the GCAA newsletter. This is your chance to develop personal growth and derive satisfaction at the same time by serving your community. Please contact any of the Programs Co-Directors if you are willing to assist. "We all can make a difference, and we must!"

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TRANSLATORS sought to translate our GCAA newsletter into Chinese so we can reach out to the Chinese in our area who have limited proficiency in English. We are not seeking to translate the entire newsletter; we can start with minimal sections (such as GCAA Good Sundays) that are important for helping maintain channels of contact and social activity. In the future when our website is up, we also will need help with translations there. Please volunteer to help. Thanks!

## 7. Notice of GCAA Good Sundays=====

Our monthly social is held at 5:30P on the first Sunday of each month. These are 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. A discount is extended to all attendees. When a major program is approaching (such as Chinese New Year), the Programs Committee and other volunteers often meet earlier, at 4:30PM, to discuss planning matters. Please join them and lend a hand. **This is YOUR association and it can become better with you being an active part of it. Thank you.**

For odd numbered months, Jan/Mar/May/July/Sept/Nov 2007, it will be at:

Grand China Buffet (Tel: 341-9868)

3969 Cattlemen Rd., Sarasota, FL 34233

At the southwest corner of I-75 (Exit 207) and Bee Ridge, between Burlington Coat Factory and Home Depot.

For even numbered months, Feb/Apr/June/Aug/Oct/Dec 2007, 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).

## 8. Kudos to our members and families =====

Don't be shy. Please let us know what's happening in your family that our community should know about. We'll all crow along.

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### 1. Happy news from the Malave family

The Malave's are back from China with their bright and beautiful little bundle of joy! It was an amazing journey. Little Ivy XiBing, age two and half, is an absolute doll! And, what a character! Sara says, "She is a very happy, giggly little girl and we are all in love with her! She has adjusted amazingly well. MeiMei and Elisa can't wait to get home from school each day so that they can play with her. The Malaves can't wait to show her off – hope to see you all next month at the monthly social."

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2. The day following the Virginia Tech Massacre by a deranged Korean immigrant, the media conveniently used the opportunity to link the tragedy with Asians and fanned prejudice and xenophobia. Michael Pollak, son of Helen and Alan Pollak took prompt action and wrote the following letter to the newspapers in Sarasota and Philadelphia:

Dear Editor,

When Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing sent a condolence note to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice expressing "shock, condolences and our sincere solicitude to the US government and those affected by the shootings," he was immediately asked about speculation that the gunman was Chinese. His response was 'We shall not speculate on this as the investigation is ongoing.'

And why should he respond? Beijing commenting on Blacksburg has about as little relevance as the race of perpetrator. And why does the media, in its choice of words, continue to connotatively provoke the quiet anti-Asian racism that seems to bubble to the surface in times of crises? ( e.g., the Wisconsin hunter killings involving the Hmong population.)

There are an infinite number of facets to this still-unfolding story and surely the most important is the return of any shred of normalcy and stability to the Virginia Tech campus and the victims' kin. I am merely commenting on one of the other facets in my sincere hopes that an anti-Asian sentiment -- arguably not as visibly marked on United States history as racism in other equally abominable forms -- does not become a dangerous, misplaced, and xenophobic side effect of the events at Virginia Tech.

Michael Pollak

Cornell University, Graduate Student  
University of Pennsylvania, '05  
Sarasota High School, '01

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3. For the second consecutive year, Bryan Lin, a Burnett Honors College student and son of Ed & Suzanna Lin, spent his entire Spring Break in New Orleans to help Hurricane Katrina victims. Bryan led a team of 17 students from the University of Central Florida on this mission. Spending their own money for the trip and sleeping on the church floors after working from morning till dark, they gutted and painted a total of 5 houses in a 7 day period. A high quality video (71 Mb) of the trip is available for download at <http://www.cgot.com/asb.htm> Watch these young men and women in action as they exemplify the spirit of service to their fellow beings.

Bryan is also the 2007 recipient of the Junior Achievement "Heroes Among us Scholarship" for his service to the Orlando community, teaching disadvantaged students. See if you can recognize Bryan, a pirate extra in the newly released "Pirates of the Caribbean 3"

Laura Lin, Pine View Class of 2007 was the recipient of the Florence Seibert Entrepreneurial Grant for a reshipping label and reshipping waybill pouch invention that will benefit the environment. Each label or pouch carries a prominent message explaining that the sender is reusing a shipping pouch or carton to save the environment. This replaces the embarrassment factor of reusing old boxes with a feel-good and public recognition factor. Proceeds from the sale of the label or pouch benefits public education and charitable causes.

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## 9. Feature Article

### On traditional vs, simplified Chinese by Dr. Carolyn Bloomer

Dr. Bloomer comments on a recently widely circulated petition via the internet to the UN not to do away with traditional Chinese characters.

Although this petition may be well-meaning, its author is poorly informed about the history of Chinese writing and also confused about the relationship between speech and writing.

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First of all, **Mandarin has not "always been the official spoken language of China"**. Mandarin is a composite (rather than a "natural:") language, created to give officials a common language for their communications: 官话 *guanhua* or 'officials' language'. For officials and educated people, Mandarin was a second language. Regional dialects remained everyone's first language. Mandarin did not become widespread even as a second language until the Ming (1368 -1644) and Qing Dynasty (1644-1911); and

the northern-based dialect that we are familiar with did not become dominant until the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – very, very late in Chinese history (4).

In the 1930s, filmmakers' choice of Mandarin for the sound-tracks of motion pictures, and the widespread distribution of movies to create patriotic anti-Japanese nationalism contributed greatly to the dissemination of Mandarin speech throughout the country. However, Mandarin was not declared to be the official language of China until after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, when it was designated the official language for education and media. In the PRC, it is known as 普通话 *Putonghua* or 'common speech'; in Taiwan (ROC) it is known as 国语 *guoyu* or 'national speech'. The term Mandarin itself is a foreign word, generally thought to have come from the Portuguese word for 'minister'.

These aspects of speech have little or nothing to do with the written language.

Secondly, it is **very misleading to state that “traditional Chinese has been the official form of writing for thousands of years”**. While it is true that a little more than two thousand years ago the First Emperor standardized the Chinese script existing at that time (which consisted of nearly 10,000 characters), it is not true that the writing system has remained unchanged since then. Reforms of the written language have taken place numerous times in numerous dynasties throughout history, and these reforms included simplifications and corrections as well as expansion (to 23,000 characters by the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and to nearly 50,000 today). (1, p. 84)

Furthermore, the classical Chinese writing system(文言 *wenyan*) in use until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, did not represent vernacular speech. It is, rather, a highly telegraphic and condensed system of communication acquired by scholars and officials -- while the masses of people remained illiterate. Even today, although the forms of the classical characters may appear familiar to modern Chinese, special education is still required to read and interpret classical Chinese – much as English speakers must now learn how to read Old and Middle English.

**Written Chinese did not fully represent Chinese vernacular speech until the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century** with the 白话 *baihua* or 'plain speech' movement – a bitterly contested reform movement to transform the written language so as to reflect people's actual speech, and so bring literacy within the reach of ordinary people. Persons who protested the *baihua* movement used some of the same arguments made by this petitioner – that it compromised meaning and would result in the loss of history and culture. And yet -- without the success of the *baihua* movement we would not have the great modern Chinese literature of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Lu Xun and the May Fourth writers, e.g.), nor any mass media such as newspapers, magazines, novels, etc.

Today's simplified characters came into being as a cornerstone of Mao Zedong's massive campaign to bring literacy to the peasant masses (then constituting about 85% of the Chinese population), and to bring about greater literacy among cadres at the lower levels of the Chinese bureaucracy (2). The petitioner's

**statement that simplified characters were created for the purpose of teaching youth and foreigners simply has no basis in fact.** (She may be confusing simplified characters with pinyin, a transliteration system.)

As to the question of Chinese writing and phonetics, **the idea that traditional Chinese characters do not represent phonetic syllables is a myth.** The so-called ‘pictographic’ principle (e.g. 日月人山下上), while important in the early stages of development, by the 12<sup>th</sup> century constituted less than 3% of written characters. Since then, approximately 97% of Chinese characters are composed according to semantic and/or phonetic principles. (1, p.84). From 65-72% of traditional characters have at least one significant identifiable phonetic component. Take for example *ma*: 马吗妈码骂玛蚂蚂蚂蚂 – now (except for 马) what does “horse” have to do with the meanings of any of these words? Nothing! It is there solely to represent the sound *ma*. Another example is *qing*: viz. 请請清情青晴蜻鯖磬鄙擘箐圉. In the process of developing simplified characters, no special attention was given to the question of phonetics (3), although in some cases simpler characters with identical sounds were substituted for the phonetic (*not* the meaning) element of traditional characters (2). So: overall: **simplified characters are no more and no less ‘phonetic’ than are traditional characters.**

**The petitioner seems to vastly overestimate the impact of simplified characters.** Ordinary low-level dictionaries list 6-7000 individual characters, and the number of characters required to read Chinese fluently is generally considered to be 3500-4000. Only 54 character components were involved in the simplification process, and at the time (1956) many of these simplifications were already in common usage in informal cursive script. These 54 simplified components affect approximately 2200 characters. (2)

**The petitioner greatly overestimates the difficulty of moving between simplified and traditional characters.** The simplification process follows a number of common-sense principles such as, adopting commonly used cursive forms, eliminating redundant parts (choosing the dominant element), reducing the number of strokes (e.g. a row of dots becomes a line), and simplifying radicals. As a result, most simplified characters are easily recognized as logical variants of traditional forms. For example: (門 becomes 门; 諳 becomes 谳, 鬚 becomes 须). A few simplifications are less obvious ( e.g. from 學 to 学, from 龍 to 龙) In addition, one repeatedly encounters the same limited number of simplified components (54) in numerous different characters, so the learning curve is fast.

Simplified forms have now been in universal use and taught in schools in China for over 50 years. Traditional characters are still used in some situations such as formal name-cards, shop-signs, etc. (as Americans or English might use “Ye Olde Shoppe” to suggest historical or literary sophistication). Standard dictionaries include the traditional forms, and most word-processing software easily switches between the two scripts. Most Chinese living outside of China (perhaps 50 million) still use traditional characters -- just as Americans and British continue to use different spellings for the same English words. This has not seemed to create a very serious problem.

Of the over 200,000 signatories to this petition, I have been informed that 59% of the signatories are from Taiwan, 14% from Chinese in the U.S., and 14% from Hong Kong. It is perfectly understandable that

Chinese living outside of China – sometimes for several generations -- would be dismayed to see changes the written language to which they are accustomed.

The U.N., on the other hand, has to make practical decisions that involve how documents are to be printed and published. As the use of simplified characters has been standard practice in the PRC for over 50 years, and as the PRC holds membership in the United Nations, and is home to approximately 1.3 billion people (about 1/5 of the world's population and more than 95% of Han Chinese worldwide), it makes sense for the U.N. to adopt the practice of the overwhelming majority of contemporary Chinese language readers.

There may be cogent counter arguments to the adoption of simplified characters, but they are not to be found in this petition, which is chock full of misinformation, inaccuracies, and confusions, and lacking in a careful and considered analysis of the issues.

Sincerely,

Carolyn M Bloomer, PhD

Cultural Anthropologist

[www.carolynbloomer.com](http://www.carolynbloomer.com)

#### References

1. John DeFrancis, 1984. *The Chinese Language*, p110.
2. John Montanaro, 1985. *Complex and Simplified Forms of Chinese Characters*.
3. Sally Ng, 1976. "The Phonetic Aspect of Character Simplification" *Journal of the Chinese Language Teachers Association* 11(3):179-186.
4. W. South Coblin, 2000. "A Brief History of Mandarin", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 120:4. Oct-Dec., 2000, pp. 537-552.

#### **9b. Solicitation for Articles and Reports =====**

If you have any news or announcements of interest or pride and relevance to the GCAA, FCC and USCPFA, please send it to [elin@ingenious.com](mailto:elin@ingenious.com). Letters to the Editor are also welcome. Thank you.

## 10. Helpful Info and articles of Interest =====

Thanks to Susan Harris for info about Kiva, a non-profit that is helping people around the world through microfinancing. We as individuals can help provide working capital for the poor with loans as little as \$25. Got to [www.kiva.org](http://www.kiva.org) and see how your \$25.00 can go a long way. It provides working capital ( money to buy a sewing machine, nails, seeds etc.) to empower people to earn their way out of poverty. Tell me what you think! Feel free to send to others if you think it is worthwhile. I was up last night researching this and getting very excited about how we CAN make a difference in peoples' lives!!

for more info

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### **Rights groups demand firing of radio hosts Bay Area advocates call for CBS action in wake of prank**

[Vanessa Hua, Chronicle Staff Writer](#)

Thursday, April 26, 2007

Prominent Asian American civil rights groups in the Bay Area are demanding that CBS Radio fire New York shock jocks Jeff Vandergrift and Dan Lay, who were suspended this week for making a prank phone call to a Chinese restaurant seen as racist and sexist.

On Wednesday, the coalition of groups submitted a letter to CBS Radio, calling for the network to improve its guidelines on offensive terms, to communicate periodically with civil rights and community groups and to fire the duo -- who had broadcast on Bay Area airwaves for more than a decade before they went to New York in 2005 -- and their producer at WFNY-FM.

The coalition includes the Asian Law Caucus, Chinese for Affirmative Action of San Francisco and Equal Rights Advocates -- all in San Francisco -- along with Oakland's Organization for Justice & Equality and, in New York, **the 80-20 Initiative**, Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, and the Organization of Chinese Americans.

The station's general manager, Tom Chiusano, has agreed to meet with the coalition, but no date has been set. He had no comment on the groups' petition.

Vandergrift and Lay, who go by the monikers JV and Elvis on their show "The Dog House," placed a **six-minute call** to a Chinese restaurant in which they repeatedly requested "shlimp flied lice," used sexually explicit language to proposition a Chinese waitress, referred to another employee's body part as a "tiny egg roll" and made other racially denigrating remarks.

The station suspended the pair without pay until further notice on Monday.

"The suspension is not enough. New York City is the most diverse city anywhere, and to do this is irresponsible and very hurtful," said Vicki Shu Smolin, president of the New York chapter of the Organization of Chinese Americans. She is organizing a protest for Friday in front of the CBS headquarters in New York. "It's the kind of radio that perpetuates bullying in schools and hate, later on, in people."

Vandergrift and Lay performed in the same show format on Bay Area radio stations starting in the early 1990s. In 2005, Clear Channel Communications fired them from Wild 94.9 FM after they made offensive remarks following an appearance by a local drum-and-bugle corps.

They filled in at KIFR, an FM station in San Francisco, before moving to New York.

Their suspension follows the recent firing of radio host Don Imus after he made racist and sexist comments about the Rutgers University women's basketball team.

E-mail Vanessa Hua at [vahua@schronicle.com](mailto:vahua@schronicle.com).

<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2007/04/26/MNGFRPFMUF1.DTL>

**News update: Through the coordinated effort of Asian rights group such as 80-20 Initiative, major sponsors of the above CBS radio program including Anheuser-Busch and Mercedes-Benz USA withdrew their support, resulting in the permanent shutting down of the above program.**

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**REMINDER. PLEASE KEEP YOUR EMAIL ADDRESSES CURRENT WITH US** SO WE CAN keep current in our channels of communications. Outdated email addresses create returned mail and hinder my efficiency. Please also provide us the email addresses of your teenagers so they can stay informed of the GCAA activities as well. If you have or anticipate a change in your email address, please notify me (Ed Lin; [elin@ingenious.com](mailto:elin@ingenious.com)), and Ms. Helen Pollak ([hwpollak@comcast.net](mailto:hwpollak@comcast.net)) promptly via email.

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**11. For Sale/Wanted** =====

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