

PASSAGES

PROPOSITION 12 VICTORY

On March 7, California voters overwhelmingly passed Proposition 12, a \$2.1 billion state parks bond measure that included \$15 million to restore the Angel Island Immigration Station. What once seemed an impossibly distant dream – to preserve the detention barracks, re-adapt existing structures and create an immigration museum – draws closer.

Once the bond is issued, the funds will be made available and released over the next few years. Board member and architect Daniel Quan has played a crucial role in helping define the scope of work necessary to move the project forward. Quan estimates that one third of the bond money will be used to restore the barracks, including \$1 million for poem preservation. Another third will help rebuild the pier where the immigrants first set foot on these shores. Of the remaining third, \$1.25 million will be spent renovating the power plant, \$2.25 million for preserving the hospital, \$1.1 million for interpretive exhibits, programs and historic furnishings, and \$1 million for landscaping. Rough estimates indicate that the entire project will cost upwards of \$30 million.

Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation

is a non-profit organization whose primary goals are:

- to lead the effort to preserve, restore and interpret Angel Island Immigration Station, a National Historic Landmark, as the Pacific gateway for U.S. immigration; and
- to promote educational activities that further the understanding of Pacific Rim immigration in American history.

SUREY BLACKBURN



The crumbling interior of the hospital today.

Initial work begins this spring with Architectural Resource Group set to conduct a series of on-site studies. Among the work to be tackled are assessments of the three main structures to determine what it will take to bring the buildings up to code and to preserve them; documentation of the historic significance of each part of every building to determine what is original and what has been rebuilt; and a poem documentation and conservation study whereby different methods of stabilizing, preserving, recovering or uncovering, and displaying the carved poetry will be analyzed and recommendations will be made for future treatment. The studies should be complete by the end of 2000.

The objective of these studies is to provide a detailed guide for future planning and design decisions that will be made during the next phase of work, the master planning of the site. Master planning will look at building and site use and re-use, circulation, infrastructure requirements, interpretation and public programs, economic feasibility and operational models, and marine use.

AIISF continues to work closely with Angel Island State Park Superintendent Nicholas Franco and Ray Murray of the National Park Service to assure that the money hard won with Proposition 12 is properly and well spent.

NEW AIISF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Katherine Toy has been named AIISF's first full time Executive Director, ending a long and extensive search for the position. A member of the AIISF Board of Directors since 1997, Katherine commented that "the job is a dream come true" as she has long envisioned the creation of an immigration museum and the restoration of Angel Island Immigration Station.

Most recently, Katherine served as Assistant Director of Travel/Study Programs at the Stanford Alumni Association, where she coordinated educational travel to destinations around the globe. Before that, Katherine spent six years as a secondary school social studies teacher, with a special interest in migration and immigration history. She received her bachelor's degree in International Relations and master's degree in Education from Stanford University.

Katherine will assume her role as Executive Director on May 1st. At that time, AIISF will bid a fond farewell to Interim Executive Director Mim Carlson who has guided our growth and strengthened our organization for the past nine months. Her experience and warm presence will be missed.



AIISF's first Executive Director, Katherine Toy.

KATHARINE TOY

President's Message

On March 7th, the preservation fund for Angel Island Immigration Station grew by \$15 million with the passage of Proposition 12 – California's safe parks and clean water bond initiative. It was an apt "lai see" or red envelope in this Year of the Dragon.

AISF's excitement over this gift to California State Parks for the Immigration Station's preservation is multi-layered. First, the pleasure in knowing that a visit we made to Senator John Burton's Sacramento office and a VIP tour of the site for his senior staff led to the \$15 million line item in the bond. Second, this huge sum of money takes us halfway to our estimated goal of \$30 million to restore and develop the entire site. Third, our efforts to get out the community vote introduced many new people to the Angel Island Immigration Station story via our new website: www.aiisf.org.

We share this sweet victory with you knowing that it was your vote and your help in spreading the word to family and friends, sending e-mails, fliers, postcards and buttons that exponentially rallied broad-based support throughout the state. That's powerful!

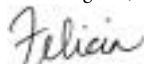
The good news doesn't stop here. It's my great pleasure to introduce you to AISF's first Executive Director, Katherine Toy. A hardworking board member for the past three years, Katherine chaired the Education Committee, edited *Passages* and served on numerous committees. Her experience in program administration, education and curriculum development, along with her passion and commitment to the mission of the Foundation, will ensure continuous and steady action toward our goals.

She will be assisted by Adam Wimbush, staff Administrative Assistant and the new Editor of *Passages*. Our organization has also grown with five new Board members with diverse talents and expertise to support our work.

The opportunities that have come to us and those we created have required countless hours of staff and consultants' assistance throughout. Mim Carlson wins the VIP trophy for her work as our Interim Executive Director for the past nine months. A seasoned administrator, Mim helped us develop policies, recruit and hire staff, coordinated the Proposition 12 campaign, transitioned us from a volunteer organization to a staffed one, and on and on. Her patience, knowledge and skills nurtured our growth. Thank you, Mim. You'll be missed... but always considered part of our family.

My gratitude grows even while writing this message. We've experienced much good fortune. And I believe it will continue because the time is right to honor our history, learn from it and create a platform to talk honestly about the future.

Warm regards,



Felicia Lowe
President of the Board



AISF's new Board members: Robert Gonzalez, Elizabeth Goldstein, Patty Nishimura-Dingle, and Gale Young. Not pictured: Irene Yee Riley

AISF Welcomes Five New Board Members

AISF is proud to introduce five new members to the Board of Directors. Elizabeth Goldstein, Patty Dingle and Gale Young all joined the Board in January; Robert Gonzalez and Irene Yee Riley began their terms in April.

Patty Dingle graduated from San Francisco State University in 1990 with a bachelor's degree in Broadcast Communications. After eight years at KGO television, where she worked as the assistant to the publicity and event director and eventually became the public service coordinator, Patty moved to KTSF where she was the Promotion Director for two years. On April 3, she became the Community Affairs Program Specialist at the California State Automobile Association. She also serves on the board for the Chinese Newcomers Service Center and is on the steering committee for the Partnership for Drug Free America.

Elizabeth Goldstein joined the staff of the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department as the Director of Operational and Physical Planning in July 1999. Her responsibilities include strategic and long-term capital and operational planning. Prior to joining the Recreation and Park Department, she was the Director of the Western Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, based in San Francisco. Prior to joining the National Trust, Elizabeth was the New York City Regional Director of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and was the Director of Planning for the City of New York Department of Parks and Recreation.

Robert A. Gonzalez is an architect who graduated from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and is currently a Ph.D. candidate of Architectural History at the University of California, Berkeley.

Robert has taught seminars on memorials, ethnicity and the public realm; and his dissertation focuses on Pan-American architecture. Robert has also taught at Arizona State University and the University of California, Berkeley. He is currently teaching at California College of Arts and Crafts. He is also the founding editor of the bi-lingual magazine *Aula: Architecture & Urbanism in Las Americas*. His AIDS Memorial for Key West, FL has received several national awards, and he has also published on Latin American and Latino/a built environments.

Irene Yee Riley, Senior Vice President and Consumer Region Executive of Bank of America is in charge of the Special Markets-Northern Region headquartered in San Francisco. She is responsible for 26 Bank of America traditional banking centers, the new Bank of America's U.S.-Asia Banking Center and marketing programs that serve a range of ethnic communities in the greater Bay Area. As an active member of the community, Irene is the President and Chairperson of the Chinese American Women's Business League and the Co-Chair of the San Francisco Taipei Sister City Committee. She recently became President of the Hong Kong Association of Northern California.

Gale Young, Professor of Communication and Co-Director of the Center for the Study of Intercultural Relations at California State University, Hayward teaches the graduate and undergraduate communication courses in *Intercultural, Interpersonal, Conflict and Intimacy*. She publishes, receives grants and consults in the areas of intercultural communication, racism and integrating multicultural perspectives into higher education. She is a co-recipient of the California State University Woman of the Year Award for contributing to diversity and currently is an ACE (American Council of Education) Fellow.

Angel Island Cup Reception & Regatta 2000

On a stunningly beautiful day, 43 sailboats set out from the Corinthian Yacht Club in Tiburon for the first annual Angel Island Cup Regatta. Only 10 completed the course which circled Angel Island. There was no wind – the weather played an April Fool's Day joke. It didn't dampen the enthusiasm of the crews who celebrated at a shore-side party with a live band. There were five winners in different classes, each of whom will have their name engraved on a plaque which will be permanently placed on the base of the Perpetual Trophy – an exquisitely crafted piece donated by renowned artist Dale Chihuly.



FELICIA LOWE

The Perpetual Trophy: SAIL's Angel Island Regatta Cup was designed and donated by Dale Chihuly.

The night before, a reception and silent auction was held at the St. Francis Yacht Club in San Francisco attended by some 100 guests. The reception and regatta benefit the Save Angel Island League (S.A.I.L.) in association with Save America's Treasures and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. S.A.I.L. was formed by Yeni Wong of Washington, D.C. to raise funds for the preservation of Angel Island Immigration Station.

National Parks Community Partners Program

Promoting diversity in the national parks through its interpretive programs, its hiring practices, enhancing youth participation, its overall accessibility and relevancy to communities of color is the goal of the National Parks Community Partners Program (NPCPP). AIISF, represented by Board President Felicia Lowe, serves on the San Francisco Task Force. There are delegations in Los Angeles, Boston, Florida, Washington, D.C. and Hawaii. In late January members from across the country convened at Jekyll Island, Georgia to share, learn and evaluate their progress made

to date. The four day summit was sponsored by the National Parks Conservation Association.

Lowe is a member of the Park Interpretation and Relevancy sub-committee. "Our group decided to revise an existing program in the Presidio entitled the "Living History Classroom – 1878." It seemed to us to be too narrow in its view of history at that time. Our plan is to broaden its perspective, make it more exciting for fourth graders from wide demographic backgrounds to think about what their ancestors might have been doing in 1878."

The committees are made up of both park personnel and people working directly with communities. The exchange has brought about creative solutions for real problems. Based on the work and findings of the individual Task Forces, recommendations will be presented to Robert Stanton, Superintendent of the National Park Service, in June 2000.

Grants and Donations

This past quarter AIISF received \$14,400 from Save America's Treasures for site preservation. \$12,500 (the second half of a \$25,000 grant) from San Francisco Foundation and \$25,000 from the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund were for capacity building and the education program. California Bank and Trust donated \$2,500. The Chinese-American Women's Club of Santa Clara County donated \$250.

Gateway Exhibits at BART

From February 1 to 10, the Gateway Exhibit was displayed at BART Headquarters in Oakland. The Asian American BART Managers Group sponsored the exhibit and donated \$400 to AIISF as part of their Chinese New Year's celebration on February 9. This event attracted over 800 students from local schools as well as many people from the community who came to see the exhibit, watch cultural performance groups and sample a variety of ethnic food.

The Gateway Exhibit will be featured again this May. From May 1 to May 14, it will be on display at the Oakland Federal Building, 1301 Clay Street. The exhibit will then move to 75 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco from May 15 to May 20.

Future Events

May 13th – National Japanese American Historical Society hosts a free family day event, "Discovering Our Roots" at Building 640 on Chrissy Field West, in the Presidio. Noon to 4 p.m.

June 17th – "made in usa: Angel Island Shhh", an exhibition of Flo Oy Wong's art which pays tribute to former Angel Island detainees. Noon to 3 p.m.



Felicia Lowe, AIISF President, accepts a check for \$2,500 from California Bank and Trust Executive Vice President, Jeffrey Cheung. Also pictured, CABT Vice President Richard Hong and AIISF Vice President Ginny Yamate.

KATHY KO

Preserving Angel Island Immigration Station

By Daniel Quan

From 1910 until 1940, Angel Island Immigration Station operated as a primary gateway for immigration from across the Pacific Ocean. More than a million immigrants from around the world passed through this station including Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Russian and Punjabi people. During World War II, the Immigration Station became a Prisoner of War processing station. After the war, it languished in obscurity, with the wood frame buildings deteriorating with each succeeding year. Then in 1963, Angel Island was established as a state park and the California Department of Parks and Recreation assumed stewardship of the immigration site. The detention barracks was on the verge of demolition when a state park ranger discovered a wealth of Asian inscriptions carved on its interior walls.

The inscriptions turned out to be over one hundred poems written in a classical Chinese style, each by a different author. Translated, they expressed the emotional heartbreak, sorrow and anguish felt by the immigrating Chinese detained on Angel Island. These poems, first-person accounts of the immigration experience, were clearly significant historical treasures. However, repainting of the walls and more recent weathering had left only a portion of them visible.

Community groups lobbied state government about the importance of the discovery, which ultimately led to a 1976 appropriation of \$250,000 for repair and preservation of the detention barracks. Roof repair, foundation stabilization, seismic bracing, building access, exterior patching and painting and installation of a sprinkler system were completed in 1981. The restoration was designed to bring the detention barracks back to its last occupied period as a POW camp.

PASSAGES

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SURREY BLACKBURN

The barracks, freshly painted on the outside, still needs much preservation and renovation work.

With a cash-strapped state park system, no further preservation was possible, and now an urgency exists to complete the stabilization and restoration or risk losing the resource. In 1999, sponsorship of a bill by Senator Daniel K. Akaka (D - Hawaii) resulted in a \$100,000 federal appropriation to study the feasibility of a major West Coast immigration museum center, of which Angel Island Immigration Station would play a pivotal role. Following this initial seed money came a state appropriation of \$400,000 for planning and interpretive implementation. These monies, combined with grants received by AIISF from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Getty Trust, have made the first steps in the new preservation effort a reality.

THE RESOURCE

The major standing features from the immigration station period (1910-1940) are the detention barracks, the hospital and the power plant. A barn and a small carpentry shop also remain, as do the partial foundations of the employee cottages and the administration building. The most significant of all the features is the detention barracks with its inscribed Chinese poems. Also, on the second floor of the barracks can be found carvings in Japanese, Russian and Arabic, establishing the presence of other immigrating groups.

A number of structures were added to the site during the World War II POW camp period (1942-1946). A mess hall, two guard towers

and a set of army barracks were built during the war years. The mess hall remains intact, as do two of the military barracks and the remains of one guard tower. Related to this period and located on the second floor of the detention barracks are a number of inscriptions written by Japanese and German POWs.

The value that these buildings hold is not in their individual architectural merits, as they are neither unique nor distinguished in that way, but in their collective symbolism as a processing station and in the valuable carved inscriptions contained within them. The immigration station site as a whole is the only one of its kind existing on the West Coast.

PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION

During the 1970s barracks restoration, great care was taken to protect the carvings. After completing the restoration, park officials decided to leave the carvings untouched, determining also that no mechanical systems were to be added to the barracks. A change in temperature and humidity could potentially produce irreversible changes to the walls, thus further degrading the carvings. A minimum of interior lighting was added to allow some of the carvings to be read, but no surface protection was provided. Guided docent tours, an alarm system and limited hours of operation have served well to limit the amount of touching or vandalism occurring in the barracks, but a long-term solution is now needed.

(continued on page 5)

Thank You

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Ginny Yamate

Special Thanks

Jim Lobdell, Senior Director,
Teacher's Curriculum Institute
(*donated Teacher's Curriculum Materials - 1/11/00*)

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The carved poems were actually the second generation of wall inscriptions. In the early station years, Chinese immigrants were said to have written on the walls with ink brushes. The staff immediately painted the barracks walls, but succeeding groups of detainees simply carved their inscriptions into the redwood paneling instead. Time and again, the carvings were covered with layers of paint until many of the lower relief carvings filled in. Now, only the more deeply inscribed poems are visible. The challenge that this poses for preservationists today is that of recovery. Can layers of paint be stripped away to reveal the more delicately carved poems? Can oil-based paint be stripped to expose the water-based, ink brush painted inscriptions without destroying them? Are there ways to read and record the inscriptions on the walls without having to actually remove paint? And finally, can a long-term solution for both protection and display be found?

NEXT STEPS

An in-depth study of the inscriptions is set to begin this spring that will analyze the historic paint and the Chinese writing ink, determine the probability for successful recovery of written inscriptions and explore alternative safe recovery techniques. Mapping and photographing the

poems and translation of all other inscriptions in the building will also be completed. Historical research will be conducted concurrently to access known historical translations and references that may provide additional clues to the locations and ages of the carvings.

Alternative methods of protection and security for the carvings will also be studied. Different lighting techniques could be explored that would enhance the visibility of the carvings while generating less heat and ultraviolet radiation. Security alternatives such as clear protective coatings, glass covers, railing systems or area alarms may also be considered.

Conditions assessments of the hospital and power plant will also be conducted to establish benchmarks for their restoration. Unchanged in use and untouched since 1946, both structures are badly in need of basic repair. The assessments will determine the level of effort required for restoration and adaptive re-use of the buildings. In addition, a cultural landscape study will be completed in order to guide future plans for improving and restoring the site.

SUMMARY

The greatest benefit that can be offered to the visiting public from this work is the ability to share the rich history of this valuable resource.

The site provides the foil against which the hardships of immigration and the ramifications of political realities such as exclusion can be presented and discussed. The carved inscriptions provide the personal insight that humanizes these issues and relates them to the visitor. It is a great accomplishment to preserve the carved poems, but it is not enough if they are not available for public view and interpretation. Restoration of the buildings and grounds combined with a good interpretative program will give visitors a greater sense of the physical presence of the station, the power of the governing authority behind it and the feelings of those it affected.

Daniel Quan is an architect, interpretive exhibit designer, past president of AIISF and coordinator of the site development studies.

AIISF is a non-profit organization fully qualified under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. All contributions (including Friends payments) are tax deductible to the maximum extent permitted by law. For those wishing to make larger gifts or contributions, please contact AIISF for more information.

Commemorative T-Shirt

Proceeds from the sale of the commemorative t-shirt honoring Angel Island Immigration Station as a National Historic Landmark will go toward the docent training program for the Immigration Station. Please contact the Angel Island Association at (415) 435-3522 for more information.



Wear a landmark! Specially designed for the Landmark event, these t-shirts are silkscreened in four colors and are 100% cotton. Available in adult sizes S, M, L, XL for \$12.00 and XXL for \$14.00 (plus sales tax and shipping).

Would you like to plan a special visit to the Immigration Station? Please call AIA Volunteer Co-ordinator Ellen Loring at (415) 435-3522 and she will be happy to make the arrangements for your group.



Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation
P.O. Box 472243
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Become a Friend

Become a "Friend" and receive quarterly issues of our newsletter and/or exclusively designed items that show your support of Angel Island Immigration Station and its rich historical legacy.

Student or Teacher Friend – \$25

- Receive the quarterly newsletter for one year (Please enclose a current copy of your student or teacher I.D.)

Friend – \$50

- Receive the quarterly newsletter for one year

Heritage Friend – \$100

- Receive the quarterly newsletter for one year
- Commemorative t-shirt

Legacy Friend – \$250

- Receive the quarterly newsletter for one year
- Commemorative t-shirt
- A choice (please indicate) between the book, ISLAND by Him Mark Lai, Genny Lim and Judy Yung **OR** the video "Carved in Silence" by Felicia Lowe

Landmark Friend – \$500

- Receive the quarterly newsletter for one year
- Commemorative t-shirt
- The book, ISLAND by Him Mark Lai, Genny Lim and Judy Yung **AND** the video "Carved in Silence" by Felicia Lowe

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