

ARIZONA CHINESE UNITED ASSOCIATION HITTING ITS STRIDE

Yee Moon-cheak

As 2011 draws into its final season, the autumnal equinox in the week following, [Arizona Chinese United Association](#) (ACUA) with other co-sponsors and support is hitting its stride once again after a rather troubled, even tumultuous first part of the year. At the Memorial Union of Arizona State University (ASU), with the ASU Confucius Institute primarily, [ACUA](#) on September 18th, Sunday, for its fifth year, conducted a multifaceted event. In the afternoon, a forum of speakers kicks off; as evening commences, a Tea Reception formally observes the National Day of the People's Republic of China (PRC), and into the later evening, dancing and revelry helps convey the festivity that has traditionally accompanied the Mid-Autumn Festival / *Zhongqiujie* that celebrates the brightest full moon of the lunisolar Chinese year (at the 15th of the 8th month – this year falling on September 12).

Bin Dong of the [ACUA](#) Board of Directors and Cindy Lin acted as the Master/Mistress of Ceremonies. Fernando Jimenez, Vice President for International Trade in the state government Arizona Commerce Authority, read a message of welcome from Governor Janice K. Brewer. A further note of welcome was offered by Mayor John Lewis of the Town of Gilbert, AZ, which has rapidly risen as a destination for many recent Chinese-Americans professionals for its quality of life as a newer suburb in the greater Phoenix metropolx. Garry Ong, President of Chinese United Association of Greater Phoenix (CUAGP) in his remarks stressed that Chinese of every origin now live in a common home and our friendship and cooperation should be a focus. Al Yee, who serves with the Sister Cities Commission over many years now on the particular relationship with Chengdu in Sichuan Province, noted how this is thriving indeed: the Mayor will visit next week, and a music ensemble from the Conservatory there will follow in mid-October to the Musical Instruments Museum. Professor Madeline Spring described a first-ever endeavor by the Confucius Institute: an all-grades art-contest that received over 300 entries. These were displayed to great enjoyment by all and she especially thanked Fannie Tam for her leadership in this highly successful (and hopefully annual) activity to focus on art and Chinese themes.

Consul Chen Zhunmin remarked after the renditions of the respective national anthems that October 1, 1949 when the PRC was formally proclaimed was not precisely a peaceful, orderly time. (Indeed, the Battle of Gunningtou on the Jinmen island group in Xiamen harbor would occur later that month and the failure of that invasion would be harbinger to the long-standing stalemate in the Taiwan Straits.) [ACUA](#) President Jian Fei delivered his remarks in English and noted that this organization will endeavor to increase and improve ties all around, but especially with the wider society beyond its Chinese-American roots.

Undoubtedly the highlight of the evening was the awarding of prizes to the dozens of youngsters in their respective categories: K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12 grades. Graceful classical music as well as an excerpt from *The Butterfly Lovers* was offered by a string quartet. (This is probably the most well-known piece of modern Chinese music, composed in the 1950s, and whose Chinese name naturally commemorates this Romeo & Juliet love story – *Liang Shanbo yu Zhu Yingtai* – but having much older roots, being set in the Eastern Jin dynasty and entering the literary records as a tale by the Tang era 618-906 C.E.) Additional musical performances involved the Arizona Chinese Chorus plus solo and duet numbers by Ms. Yayu Khoe and Mr. Frank Li.

As the Tea Reception gave way to the evening of dancing, CUAGP and [ACUA](#) co-hosted a banquet at Mekong Palace Restaurant for Consul Chen and his assistant, Wang Hongming. As the outgoing president of [ACUA](#), Shicheng Tao, noted, this was the most successful of these annual events and certainly marks a new page for this organization.

A side note of some interest had also been provided by Consul Chen earlier during the day. There had been some confusion and disquiet over the handling of visa/passport services here in the Arizona area during the recent year or so. As the jurisdiction of the Los Angeles office extends from Guam to New Mexico, it is only occasionally that a visit can be made to Phoenix. Nonetheless, it is hoped that by 2012, regular and locally convenient, FREE, service can once more be arranged; in the meantime, anyone needing such services on a no-cost basis is welcome to visit the Los Angeles office, or to handle matters through the regular mails.

(By Courtesy of ASIAN AMERICAN TIMES)



(Photo by Linda Wei)