



**FRIENDS
OF
CHINA
CAMP**

Newsletter

Fall 2016

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In this edition of the Friends of China Camp Newsletter:

[Remembering Frank Quan](#) | [FOCC Executive Director](#) | [Turtle Back Trail](#) | [The Surprising World of the Park](#) | [A Docent's Reflections](#) | [Best of Marin](#)

Remembering Frank Quan (1925-2016)



We were shocked and saddened to find out that Frank Quan passed away on August 15, 10 days short of his 91st birthday. It has been our tradition to celebrate his birthday on Heritage Day, but instead, we will be celebrating his life on October 15.

Other than 10 years in the Navy, Frank lived his whole life at China Camp Village. He was the last remaining resident of this former shrimping village established by Chinese immigrants in the mid-1800s. His grandfather came to China Camp in the 1880s, and for generations his family ran a shrimping operation, general store, as well as a cafe and a boat rental business. In WWII, Frank served in the United States Navy as a signalman.

Frank was instrumental in the transformation of China Camp into a State Park in 1978, while at the same time keeping the essential community spirit and historic lifeways of his family and the Village alive. Frank was always in motion, and he worked around the Village until the end, maintaining historic buildings and machinery, keeping his shrimping boat afloat and gear ready for the next drag of his shrimp net. His weekends were busy with cooking and serving visitors shrimp salad and clam chowder in the Village's historic cafe, just as his mother and

aunt had done since before the 1950s.

Frank served for decades as an invaluable member of the board of Friends of China Camp, helping to unite the efforts of California State Parks staff, volunteers and the Village community. Friends and park visitors could be found in Frank's cafe on any given Saturday or Sunday, enjoying lively conversation and local gossip. He also played a significant role in saving the park from closure in 2012, tirelessly telling his fascinating stories to communities, media and organizations.

"Frank was such a rare character, really the true living history of China Camp," said John Muir, long-time friend and board member of Friends of China Camp. "When you visit the Village, it feels like you have stepped back in time, and a lot of that feeling is there thanks to Frank. He will be deeply missed by so many here. The way he welcomed friends and park visitors, and engaged with people of all ages, and his constant devotion to the care and the life of the Village was such a gift, and will resonate here for a long, long time."

Friends of China Camp and Marin Chinese Cultural Association are planning a public celebration of Frank's extraordinary life on October 15 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at China Camp Village. Details will appear on the [Friends of China Camp website](#) as they become available. Please join us for this special event to remember Frank.

Martin Lowenstein, FOCC Executive Director

We are delighted to welcome our new Executive Director, Martin Lowenstein. Martin's arrival marks a milestone for Friends of China Camp, which began as a group of docents and has evolved into the operator of China Camp



State Park, with responsibility for all aspects of keeping the park open and thriving. Martin started with us at the beginning of August, and he is already making a positive impact on our developing volunteer organization, helping us to make the best use of our resources.

Martin is busy getting to know people who frequent the park and is eager to make connections with the broader community. "The biggest misconception about China Camp is that it is state-operated and state-funded," Martin remarked. "Marin folks should understand that their purchases of annual passes are largely responsible for keeping China Camp open and financially self-sustainable."

Until joining FOCC as its executive director, Martin had been consulting with non-profit organizations in resource development and governance, and he continues to be a passive partner in a private equity and real estate investment company. Martin also volunteers his time as advancement chair on the board of trustees of Brandeis Marin, a K-8 private school. From 2010 to 2013, he was board chair of the Jerusalem American International School. Martin received his MBA from Georgetown University and his BS in Civil Engineering from Tufts University. Martin and his wife, Inbar, have three little children: Tamara, Ben, and Maya. In his spare time, Martin enjoys running at China Camp, reading spy novels and spiritual books, going to farmers markets with Inbar, and making his children laugh.

Martin can be reached at mlowenstein@friendsofchinacamp.org or on his cell at (650) 343-1822.

Turtle Back Trail is Reborn!

China Camp State Park may be the most diverse park in Marin County! It has a bayshore beach and rugged ridgeline. It has historical and cultural significance. It has salt marshes, grasslands and chaparral, and is home to

oak, madrone and bay laurel forests. There's so much to do, including fishing, hiking, biking, boating, camping and bird watching.

In 2010 the park added a wonderful feature for visitors, especially those with hearing and visual disabilities. Turtle Back Nature Trail provides a visual, audible and tactile learning experience, with interpretive panels, tactile features and an audio tour. The loop trail circles a hill that resembles a turtle's back and was conceived as a nature walk accessible to everyone.



Unfortunately, wind, sun and rain (and a little vandalism too) took its toll on the five panels. But with the support of Friends of China Camp, State Parks began a campaign to restore the trail features to their original splendor, and with materials to assure they'll last for many years.

The panels were replaced in August and include topics such as The San Francisco Estuary, The Underappreciated Salt Marsh, Above the High Tide Line and, our personal favorite, A World of Mud!



Friends of China Camp encourages visitors and neighbors to come out and discover (or re-discover) this unique learning trail. This is one of the few trails in the park not open to bikes, primarily to accommodate people with visual and auditory disabilities.

The California Department of Parks and Recreation has prepared a series of audio MP3 files, called the Turtle Back Trail Interpretive Audio Tour. You can download the files from [this link](#).

The original signs were a collaborative effort by California State Parks and Recreation, the National Estuarine Research Reserve and Friends of China Camp. Thank you to Whitworth & I, the company responsible for the reprinting and production of the tactile structures, and to Michael Rome, project manager of the California Department of Parks and Recreation responsible for the oversight and installation of these magnificent signs for all to enjoy.

The Surprising World of China Camp State Park Monthly Talk Series Starts October 29

Here's a chance to learn about the scary, the unique, and the curious in the exciting park in your backyard.

A series of illustrated talks led by Bay Area rangers and naturalists will be held in the museum at China Camp Village, starting on Saturday, October 29, from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The first talk will be "Mountain Lions at China Camp: Threat or Myth?", presented by Zara McDonald of the Felidae Conservation Fund, an organization dedicated to research and preservation of wild cats. All programs are designed for the whole family, with titles like "Scary Critters of China Camp" (about bats and other little-seen animals), "Why Frogs Ain't Toads" (about resident amphibians), and "Fine Feathered Friends That Are Here Today and Gone Tomorrow" (about migrant birds).

Free refreshments will be available. Space is limited in the museum and advance reservations will be required. So make a note on your calendar. Sign-up information will be sent to you from Friends of China Camp in early October. We hope you can join us.

A Natural History Docent's Reflections

The Evolving Eras at China Camp

A few weeks ago, China Camp State Park reached the end of an era when Frank Quan, the Park's last remaining shrimping village resident, died at the age of 90. Many Park visitors have benefitted from speaking with Frank, who embodied the rich history of one era of China Camp.

Frank's era was rooted in the 19th century founding of the village, a century that brought hordes of fortune seekers to California for the Gold Rush and a wave of Chinese immigrants fleeing the Taiping Rebellion, southeast China's civil/religious war. Of course, for thousands of years before that, in what is now known as China Camp State Park, the Miwok tribe hunted, gathered acorns, fished, and dug for clams in the waters off Point San Pedro. And before that, the Park's sandstone, claystone, shale and greywacke were formed during the Cretaceous Period (just after the better known Jurassic era and its dinosaurs collapsed) some 50 to 140 million years before man became man.

Educating visitors about the Park's eras is one of Friends of China Camp and California Park Rangers' pleasures. The Camp museum provides insights into the daily life of the shrimping village. Other programs focus on woodpeckers, the Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse, the wildflowers around Turtle Back Hill, and the area's geology. We hope you'll find time to enjoy the history, fauna, flora, rocks or just the fresh air, whatever you fancy, at China Camp! -- *By Harold Hirsch*



***Friends of China Camp
thanks you
for your vote and
for your
continued support!***

UPCOMING EVENTS

Celebrating Frank Quan's Life

October 15 - 11:00 am - 2:00 pm

Park Champion Volunteer Work Day

October 29 - 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Mountain Lions at China Camp: Threat or Myth?

October 29 - 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm

[SEE ALL UPCOMING EVENTS](#)



WHO ARE WE?

We are volunteers who operate China Camp State Park.

Despite the name, China Camp State Park is neither operated nor supported by the State of California. Park operations are funded entirely from your fees and tax-deductible donations to Friends of China Camp, Inc., a 501(c)(3) public benefit corporation. All fees collected at China Camp State Park stay within FOCC for use in operating the park; no fees go to Sacramento.

With your donations, plus thousands of hours of volunteer support, FOCC continues to keep facilities open and in good repair, maintain the trails, provide educational programs in natural history and cultural history, and pay for rangers, park aides, and maintenance workers.

For more information about the partnership between FOCC and California State DPR, [click here](#).

How You Can Help

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