

# December 2019

## “Year of the Rat” Celebrate the Chinese New Year with Us!

The Mai Wah Society will once again host Butte America’s annual Chinese New Year Parade, which has been described as the shortest, loudest, and (sometimes) coldest parade in Montana. Celebrating the “Year of the Rat,” the parade will be held on Saturday, January 25, 2020. It begins at the Butte-Silver Bow Courthouse (155 West Granite, Butte) at 3:00 p.m.

Following opening remarks, the parade heads east on Granite Street with the dragon stopping along the route to bless business sponsors. YOU are the parade! Follow the dragon through the streets and become part of the procession. Chris Fisk and the Butte High History Club will again serve as dragon dancers this year. Following the parade, a reception with refreshments will be held at the Mai Wah Museum (17 West Mercury St).

While Westerners might not hold rats in high regard, the animal is the first of the 12 animal signs of the Chinese zodiac. Rats have spirit, wit, alertness, delicacy, flexibility, and vitality. As the Chinese say, even in times of scarcity, rats somehow always know

where sacks of grain can be found. It’s no wonder that these resourceful creatures are first on the zodiac.

People born in the Year of the Rat are instinctive and alert, and also socially popular and outgoing. “Rats” make good artists, authors, doctors, and teachers. They take delight in family and home, and tend to be avid collectors. They function best as bosses where they can use their knowledge and freedom to steer the group toward opportunities and away from potential problems. Whatever their profession, “Rats” bring innovation and fresh insight to their work. Blue is the color associated with this sign, which is often evident in home décor and furnishings.

Our thanks to the Silver Bow County Developmental Disability Services Council for refreshments following the parade. Also, thanks and blessings to all the members, business sponsors, and community folks that make this celebration possible.



*Marelene Zhou leads dragon dancers from the Butte High School History Club in the 2018 parade.*

## Welcome Emma Cunneen, our newest board member

Emma is a fifth generation Buttian. After five years of moving around and escaping Butte, she learned that this it's the perfect place to be. Her family is really large—so large that, at events like her grandma's recent 100th birthday party, she spent half the night learning her cousins' names. Emma is a house appraiser, and promises us that it's not her fault if your taxes went up. There is a high demand for real estate in Butte these days, she explains, because folks from Bozeman and other high-priced areas are buying houses here.

Emma went to the Highlands College in Butte for Carpentry/Historic Preservation. It's a hands-on program about learning modern and historical craftsmanship. She is very passionate about Butte history: retelling it, celebrating it, and learning from it. She points out that it is especially important to instill this passion for history in other young people. This all makes Emma an important member of the Mai Wah team, where we're always grateful for talent and dedication.

So, it's natural that Emma is very excited to be a part of the Mai Wah, especially with all the renovations and new changes. As a relative newcomer to the group, she is also excited to come on board with such an amazing group of passionate and educated people. She says it's been wonderful learning so much about the history of the Chinese in Butte, in a way that is so much deeper and broader than what can be learned in history classes. Bottom line? Emma says, "I'm excited to share the knowledge I've gained and am gaining."



## Mansfield Center International Programs: Special Visitors

Annually, several international groups from the Mansfield Center of the University of Montana come and tour the Mai Wah Museum. These programs are sponsored by the US State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The groups are composed of university students studying environmental science and educators who teach American Studies in their home countries. We met a young man from China, Jialin Chen, who was very impressed with what is being done in Butte Montana to preserve local Chinese History. He asked to keep him informed of the things we are doing and he will share with his friends and family in China. The Mansfield Center of the University is a great partner to share the preservation of Chinese History of Butte worldwide.



*A group from the Mansfield Center on tour at the Mai Wah*

# Big Changes Underway at the Mai Wah Wah/Chong Tai Building!

## Big things are happening at the Mai Wah!

- West wall rebuild: A local mason is carefully disassembling and replacing damaged brick from the building's west wall.
- Storefronts and windows restoration: Local carpenters have completed a beautiful restoration of the Mai Wah façade, and are completing similar work on the Wah Chong Tai side.
- Vaulted sidewalk repair: A huge hole opened in the sidewalk this summer, necessitating emergency installation of a new sidewalk. Pan decking and concrete will cover the now open vault—a large subterranean space historically used for storage and entry to the basement level.
- New roof: The blistering cold of a typical Butte winter has delayed efforts to reroof the building and install new but historically accurate skylights. Alas, we'll be shoveling snow from the roof again in late winter to prevent water damage from the leaks that have plagued us the past few years.

When visitors arrive at the Mai Wah Museum next summer, they will be excited to see the building restored to its original grandeur. As we have written in grant applications, our current work on the building's "envelope" will secure this priceless historical asset for another century.

Thanks to our funders for this important work:

- National Trust for Historic Preservation and American Express, through the Partners in Preservation program (\$133,000)
- Butte's Urban Revitalization Agency (\$31,950)
- Butte's Superfund Advisory Redevelopment Trust Authority (\$24,000)
- Members like you, whose donations made our matching funds possible.



**National Trust for  
Historic Preservation®**  
*Save the past. Enrich the future.*



*Kevin Edgar, Docent, with new Mai Wah storefront*



*Scaffolding, west wall rebuild*



*Vaulted sidewalk repair underway*

# Montana Shares

by Deb Bishop

The Mai Wah Society is a proud member of Montana Shares (MS), a statewide partnership of 43 nonprofits devoted to improving the quality of life in communities across our state. I have been the MWS representative for many years and can honestly say that you will not meet a nicer, more caring or sincere group of people. Over the last 31 years, MS has raised over 6.3 million dollars for member groups.



Our members promote, protect and preserve our state's human, animal, cultural and natural resources. They work on issues concerning women, children, families and seniors, health and hunger, the environment, arts and culture, education, domestic and wild animals, social justice and human rights. The purpose of Shares is to work with and on behalf of our members to promote and support their programs, provide training, technical assistance, consultation and financial support on a year-round

basis and, thereby, to help them expand and diversify their programs that serve Montanans.

Contributions can be made through workplace campaigns or individual donations. Montana Shares can be reached at [www.montanashares.org](http://www.montanashares.org) or at 406-422-2216.

## 1882: A Turning Point in Chinese American History

(based on a new poster exhibit at the Mai Wah Museum)

### The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act

On May 6, 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act became law, legalizing discrimination already practiced throughout the American West. Unlike any law before or since, this law singled out one nationality and race. Even Chinese immigrants already in America were prohibited from becoming U.S. citizens. Exemptions were provided for "non-labor Chinese students, teachers, merchants, or [tourists]." Thus, Butte's middle-class merchants and professional families such as the Chinns, Pocks, Yows, and Lambs could travel back to China, conduct international business, and bring their wives and children.

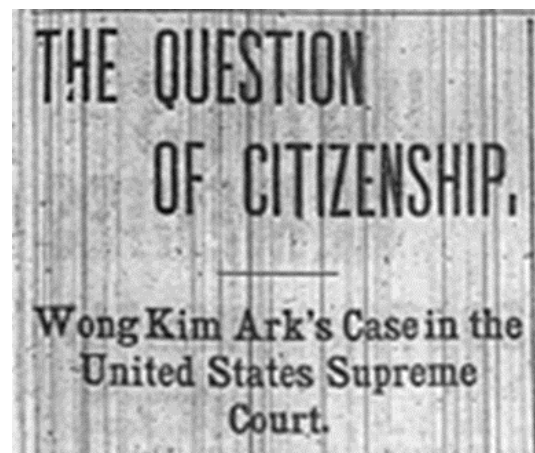
### Chinese Americans Respond: Speaking Truth to Power

Chinese Americans responded to racism and exclusion through various strategies.

### Legal Strategies

For example, in *U.S. v. Wong Kim Ark* (1898): Ark, born in San Francisco, was denied re-entry to the U.S. after an 1895 visit to China. The Supreme Court ruled in Ark's favor, thus upholding "birthright citizenship" and the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

(cont. next page)



## 1882, cont.

Here in Butte, Hum Fay and a number of other Chinese merchants successfully challenged an illegal 1896-97 boycott led by White labor unions. The boycott included physical force and intimidation to prevent customers from entering Chinese-owned restaurants, tailor shops, and other businesses including Dr. Pock's offices. Although Fay and others won their case, the boycott seriously cut into business profits and hundreds of Chinese left Butte during this time.

## Assimilation and Educational Strategies: The Case of Rose Hum Lee (1904-1964)

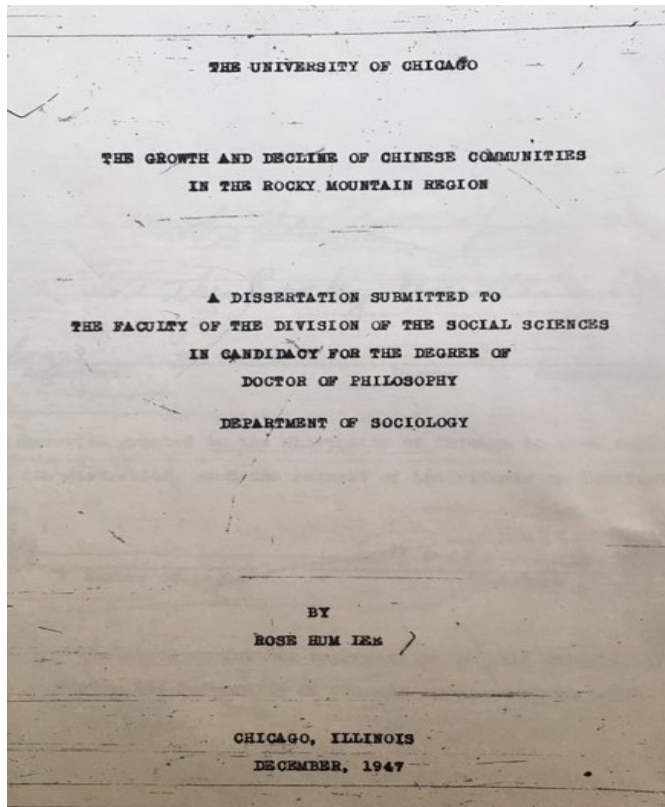
Like other children born to Chinese families in Butte, Rose Hum attended public schools. After Garfield Elementary and Washington Junior High, she graduated from Butte High School in 1921.

After marrying, Rose Hum Lee took her BS in Social Work (1942) from the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh, and her PhD in Sociology (1947) from the University of Chicago. Lee began teaching with Roosevelt University in 1945 and became chair of the Sociology Department in 1956.

In addition to scholarly books and articles, Lee wrote popular articles for magazines such as *Girls Today*, explaining the prejudices Chinese Americans faced in everyday life.



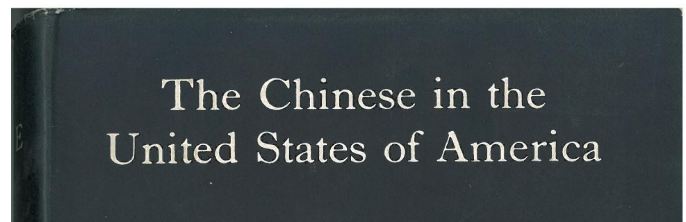
*Hum Wah Long and family, 1920.  
Rose is standing in the center (4<sup>th</sup> from right).*



*Title page from Lee's PhD dissertation.*



*Lee (left) with colleagues at Roosevelt University.*



*Lee's 1960 book, still a standard source on this topic.*

# 2019 Membership

We have three calendar-year membership levels: \$25, \$50, and \$100. Every membership level helps our operations—please consider joining for 2020, using the membership form in this newsletter. All levels include free admission to the museum. Thank you to our members and donors from 2019!

## Paid Members, 2019

### \$100 and more level

Deb Alt  
Phelps Anderson  
Robert B. Anderson  
Dee & Mike Antimisiaris  
Joyce Chinn & Jon Roush  
Karen Davidson  
Gretchen Geller & Butch Gerbrandt  
Dick Gibson  
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Ginger So & Ruben Chan

### \$50 level

Gregory Bishop  
Celine & Steve Fisher  
Laurence Huie  
Lisa Larson  
Kay McAllister  
Mary McCormick  
Noorjahan Parwana  
Deanna Schafer  
Victor Sloan  
Betty & Steve Wing

### \$25 level

RaeBell Arbogest  
Debbie Bishop  
Ernst Chan  
Alana & Bill Ferko  
James Garris & Michael Hampton  
Annie Gilmore  
David Granell  
Sue Leferink  
Cindy Perdue-Dolan  
Elizabeth Ramsey  
Sallie & Logan Schendel  
Deb & Mike Stickney  
David Stonehocker  
Larry Venditto  
Susan Vuke  
Donna Young

**Thank You! 谢谢**

### 2019 donors (over \$50)

Phelps Anderson  
Robert B. Anderson  
Dee & Mike Antimisiaris  
Joyce Chinn & Jon Roush  
Karen Davidson  
Gretchen Geller & Butch Gerbrandt  
Dick Gibson  
Travis & Jaquie McAdam  
Pat & Jan Munday  
Tom & Jeanna Nance  
Winnie Nishimine  
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Fred Quivik, Consulting Historian  
Ginger So & Ruben Chan  
Janet Sperry

### 2019 Display Case Sponsors

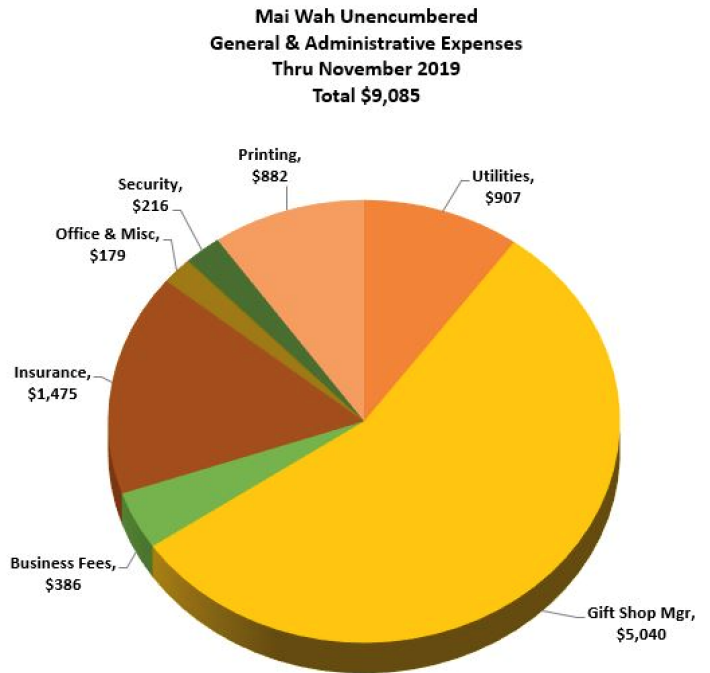
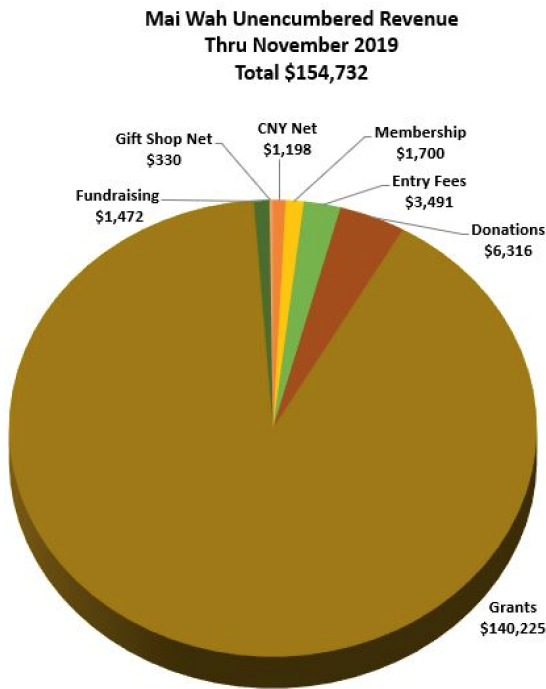
Travis & Jaquie McAdam  
Dick Gibson  
Betty & Steve Wing



# Finances

In 2019, the Mai Wah received a total of \$154,732 in unencumbered income. The majority received was from grants that covered extensive building restoration. Grantors include the Superfund Advisory & Redevelopment Trust Authority (SARTA), Montana Arts Council Cultural Trust foundation, and National Trust for Historic Preservation in Partnership with American Express. Donations, memberships, fundraising, and program events make up the remainder of the income.

The charts do not reflect income and expenses related to specific encumbered accounts such as our curator and some exhibits.



## 2019 Business Blessing Donors

- Headframe Spirits
- Butte Plaza Mall
- Main Stope Gallery
- Dori Skrukruud
- Jade Studio
- Copper City PT
- Pita Pit
- Dancing Rainbow
- Rooted Tribe
- Hadnagy Photography
- Quarry Brewing
- Metals Sports Bar
- KBMF
- Venus Rising
- Northwest Energy
- Silver Dollar Saloon
- Butte Stuff
- Miners Hotel
- Couture Weddings
- Mainstreet Uptown Butte
- Imagine Butte
- Insty Prints
- Bad Beaver Bikes
- Taco del Sol
- MSU Bobcat Football
- Gamers Casino
- M&M Bar
- Cavanaugh's County Celtic
- Gamers Café
- Imagine Butte Resource Center
- Butte Silver Bow Executive Office
- Butte Silver Bow Public Library



*Marlene Zhou and Grace Speece (with pearl) lead Butte's 2018 Chinese New Year parade*

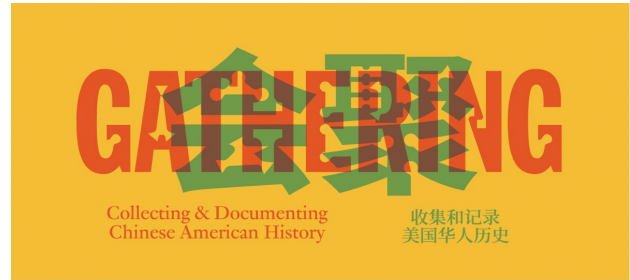
# Rare Shoes on Loan to the Museum of Chinese in America

A pair of “Machu Shoes” are on loan to the Museum of the Chinese in America in New York City. The exhibit, called “Gathering: Collecting and Documenting Chinese American History,” opened in October. The Mai Wah Society was invited to send one artifact for the show, where a total of 50 objects are on display.

Also known as “flowerpot shoes” or “horse hoof shoes,” the shoes feature a heel-like structure in the middle of the shoe rather than at the back. The shoes were status symbols but also restricted women’s movement. They were the invention of the Manchu people, who did not practice foot binding.

Very few of these shoes have survived. Amidst turmoil in China and the process of assimilation in the West, Manchu shoes were often lost or destroyed.

The shoes from the Mai Wah belonged to Lily Chew Huie, who was born in San Francisco in 1890 and moved to Butte after marrying Sam Huie. The couple had 13 children and operated a restaurant on East Park Street.



# Searching for Lost Chinese History

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, tens of thousands of Chinese worked in remote areas of the American West, building railroads, placer mining, and cutting timber. When they died, they were buried near the work site. Magdalene E. “Peggy” Luna, a U.S. Forest Service employee, is working with the Region 1 Forest to “bring to light the forgotten history of the Chinese in Montana.” When Peggy contacted the Mai Wah about this project, we pulled together a team with some knowledge of local late-19<sup>th</sup> century sites and set up a day tour that included archeologist Mitzi Rossillon.



*Pat Munday at a suspected grave site*



*Left to right: Magdalene Luna, Mitzi Rossillon, Kevin Edgar*





**MAI WAH**  
**MUSEUM**  
BUTTE, MONTANA

# Mai Wah Society

## MEMBERSHIP & DONATIONS

Memberships and donations to the Mai Wah help make possible all the programs we have—from tours to special educational programs to new exhibits. The Mai Wah Society is a 501(c)3 non-profit, so donations are tax deductible as allowed by law.

**For calendar year 2020**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Membership levels (check one)

- \$25 (free museum admission, 2 guest passes)
- \$50 (free museum admission, 2 guest passes, \$5 discount on t-shirt)
- \$100 (free museum admission, 2 guest passes, \$5 discount on t-shirt, 15% gift shop discount, private tour for up to 10 people)

Amount enclosed for donation above membership: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to Mai Wah Society  
and send to  
P.O. Box 404, Butte, MT 59703

**Thanks very much! 谢谢**



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*Mai Wah Society Newsletter*  
*January 2020*

**Regular season:  
 June-September.  
 Off-season tours can be  
 arranged with advance  
 notice.**

**MONTANA  
 CULTURAL  
 TRUST**



Partial funding for the Mai Wah's operations was provided by Montana's Cultural Trust

**MAI WAH SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
 Emma Cunneen, Travis McAdam, Mary McCormick, Pat Munday,  
 David Stonehocker, Sonny Thornborrow, Kim Tintinger