



AABA Newsletter

WWW.AABA - BAY.COM | AUGUST 2010



President's Column Billy Chan

This month's column is written by our Vice President Malcolm Yeung, who was a friend and coworker of Joannie Chang.

It is with great sadness that I write this month's President's Column. Unbelievably and for the second issue in a row, we are dedicating the President's Column to an AABA member who passed away well before her time. On Saturday, July 31, 2010, former AABA member Joannie Chang passed away. At the happiest moment of her life – when she was expecting twin girls – Joannie was diagnosed with cancer. The cancer was aggressive and spread rapidly. While her twins were delivered prematurely, they survived the trauma and are recovering with the love and care of Joannie's partner, Luna Yasui.

Joannie's death is a deep loss for the Bay Area's API legal community. She was a dedicated legal services attorney who worked at the Employment Law Center, the Asian Law Caucus, and the City of San Francisco while in the Bay Area. Joannie represented low-income workers during all stages of her career. She was a true community lawyer who believed in empowering her clients, her community, her co-workers, and her law student mentees. Joannie was also a direct and significant contributor to AABA. She coordinated AABA's legal services clinic during her time at the Asian Law Caucus.

The impact of Joannie's work cannot be understated. In addition to her day to day representation of the poor and disadvantaged, Joannie led a number of innovative impact cases on behalf of the API community. Joannie represented Filipino airport screeners who were discriminatorily terminated from the TSA immediately following 9/11, Chinese and Vietnamese factory workers who suffered health impacts while working in a nail polish chemical factory, and exploited low-income Chinese garment factory workers.

I had the good fortune to cross paths with Joannie for three years while we were at the Asian Law Caucus together. Joannie was as a good lawyer as she was a good person. She was funny and light hearted, but tough when the occasion called for it. She never minced words – something I always appreciated. I was also lucky enough to get to know Joannie outside of work. She loved her long-time canine companion, Jack. She loved her friends immensely and derived incredible joy from these relationships. She also loved children and had an uncanny ability to relate to them.

Joannie's friends have set up a fund to help with the medical expenses and for her twin daughters. Donations can be made at: <http://www.giveforward.org/baconapple/>. A memorial service will be held for Joannie in the Bay Area in the late summer.

Thank you Joannie. You will be deeply missed.

AABA THANKS THE FOLLOWING SUSTAINING MEMBERS OF 2010!

Kathy Asada
Michael Isaku Begert
Raymond Buenaventura
Billy Chan
Edward Chen
Hon. Andrew Y.S. Cheng
Annie Y.S. Chuang
Maki Daijogo
Hon. Samuel Feng
Kevin M. Fong
Keith H. Fudenna
Carin T. Fujisaki
Hon. Delbert C. Gee
Lisa Hamasaki
Joan Haratani
SinclairHwang
Daro Inouye
Kenneth Jew
Christopher Kao
Eric Kawamura
Terri Ann Kim
Lily Kimura
Lucy Koh
Minette Kwok

Celia Lee
Jack W. Lee
Garrick Lew
Wesley M. Lowe
Dale Minami
Patrick T. Miyaki
Christine Noma
Genevieve Orta
Weilyn Pa
Paul R. Perdue
Edwin Prather
Larry Quan
Hon. Donna Miae Ryu
Tiffany N. Santos
David Sohn
Theodore Ting
Lucy Wang
Garner Weng
Hon. Garrett L. Wong
Michael Li-Ming Wong
Darcey L. Wong J.D. LL.M
Stanley Young
Jim Yu

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

President's Column	1
Sustaining Members List	2
AABA Happy Hour at 5A5 Steak Lounge	4
Starting a Small Firm: Higa & Gipson	8
AABA Welcomes Dean Frank Wu.	10
AABA Career Day	11
AABA-SABA Joint Voter Registration Drives.	12
The AABA Newsletter Needs You	13
Calendar of Upcoming Events	13
2010 - 2011 Officers And Directors	14



*Photo credits: Soyeun Choi, Gina Tsai,
David Tsai and Benjamin Uy*

AABA HAPPY HOUR AT 5A5 STEAK LOUNGE



By Benjamin Uy, Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP

On July 22, 2010, AABA held another fun happy hour at 5A5 Steak Lounge in the Financial District. The venue's bar area was packed with over 60 guests in attendance! The evening attracted a diverse crowd of law students, new and experienced attorneys, and legal support providers. AABA guests caught up with old friends and connected with new ones at the happy hour. With smiles and good drinks aplenty, the mix and mingling continued until well after dark.

The next AABA social events will include: Bowling Night, Giants Baseball Game, and AABA Idol (featuring karaoke performances by your very own talented AABA friends)! Please stay tuned for more details about these exciting upcoming events. If you have any questions or suggestions regarding these or any AABA social events, please contact Benjamin Uy at benjamin.uy@pillsburylaw.com. We look forward to seeing everyone again soon!



Ben Uy, Gina Tsai

James Higa, Ronnie Gipson, Alston Lew, Ben Uy, Rhean Fajardo



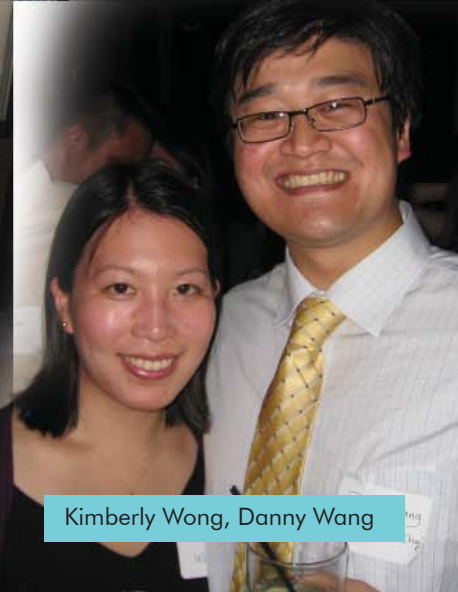
Billy Chan, Soyeun Choi, Rhean Fajardo



Ben Uy, John Le, Madelene Sun



Frances Pai and friends



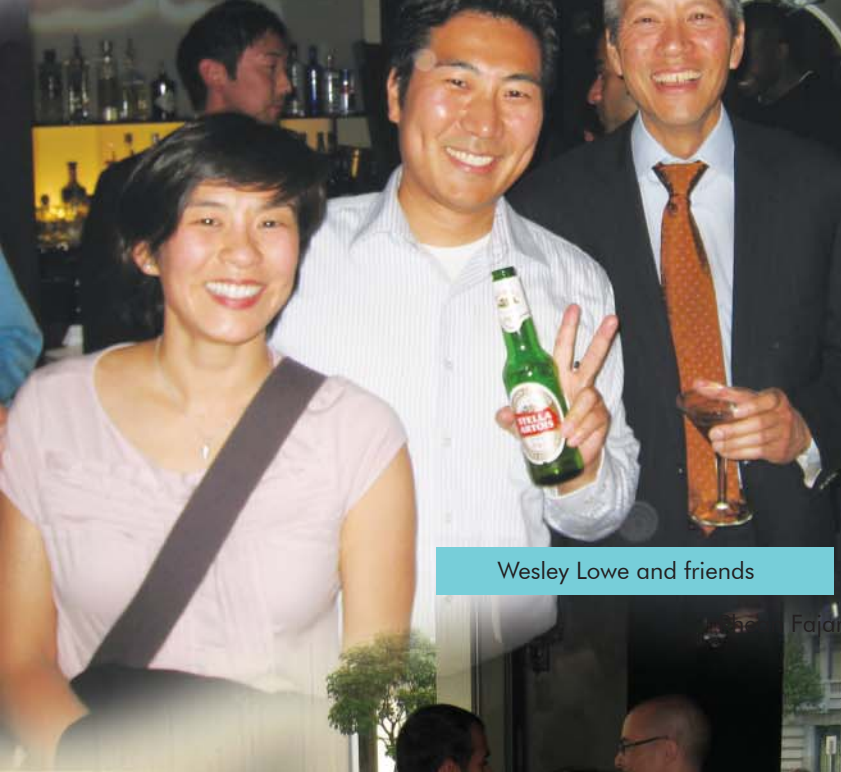
Kimberly Wong, Danny Wang



Yaeri Kim, CJ Lee, Dale Minami



John Hamasaki, Melissa Hung, Roshani Parekh



Wesley Lowe and friends



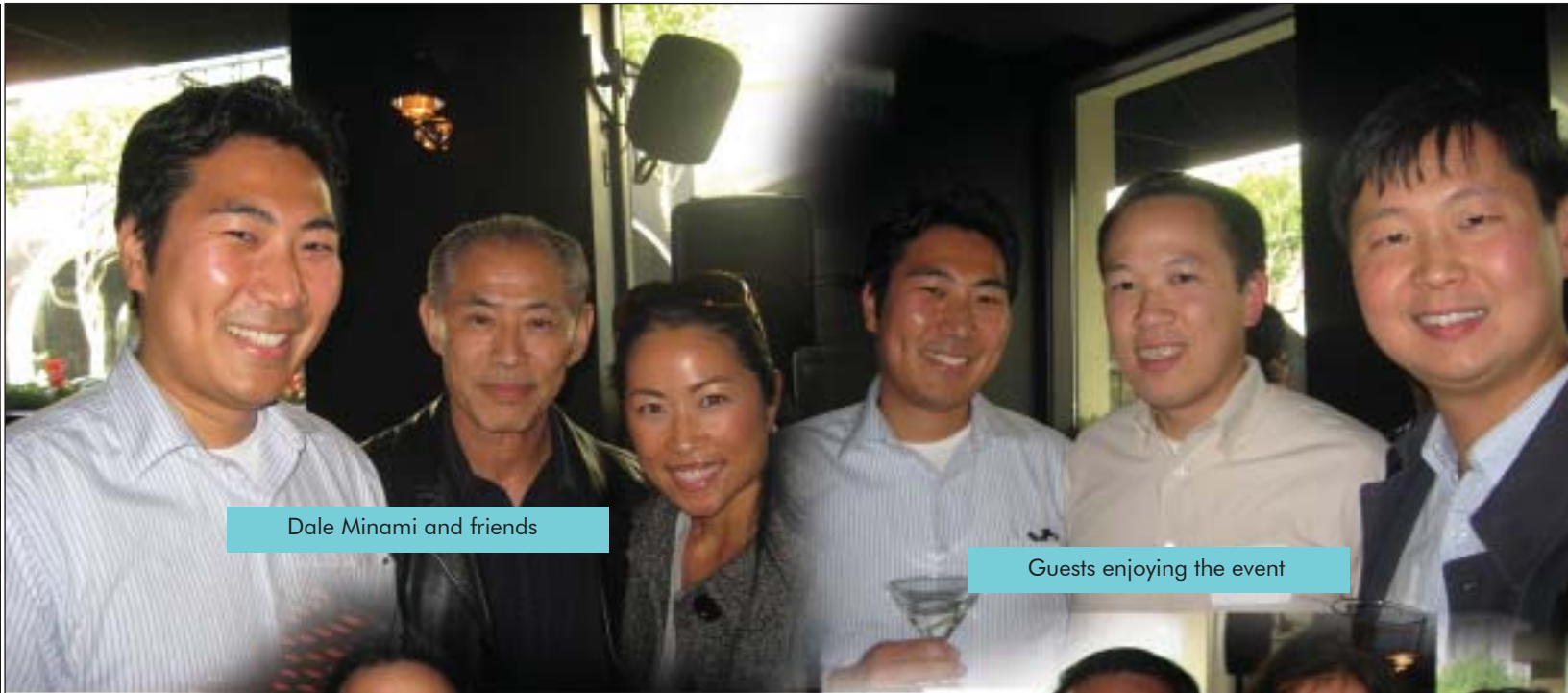
Rhean Fajardo, Billy Chan



Angela Tseng, Ben Uy



Dale Minami



Dale Minami and friends

Guests enjoying the event



Gina Tsai, Billy Chan, Rhean Fajardo

Ben Uy and friends



David Tsai, Stella, Ronnie Gipson

Noelle Nguyen and friends

STARTING A SMALL FIRM: HIGA & GIPSON



This month, Soyeun sits down with **Higa & Gipson**, a newly minted San Francisco firm practicing in Business/Commercial, Criminal Defense and Transportation Law.



AABA: Thanks for agreeing to our interview series. It's a pleasure meeting you both. First of all, what were some of the reasons for teaming up?

HG: We wanted to cast a wider net with respect to capturing a greater share of the market. We felt that by teaming up and combining our resources we would double our network of referrals and provide a greater range of services.

AABA: How did you decide to focus on your particular areas of law?

HG: We chose these practice areas because they are commensurate with our experiences and our passions. James was a former Deputy Public Defender in San Francisco so a return to criminal defense and particularly trial work was compelling. Prior to becoming an attorney, Ronnie amassed experience managing different segments of businesses. So the allure of building a practice that focuses on helping businesses succeed was a natural step for him.

AABA: Are you more similar or different from each other? What do you each contribute to the firm?

HG: As business partners, we are two people with very different personalities. The differences are not so distinct such that we clash; and are complementary instead. We do not look at the partnership with respect to individual contributions. We both have anxiety and sleepless nights over the direction and success of the firm

building our respective practices to insure the long-term success. More importantly, we are both very good at what we do. We are very focused on the goal of building a successful practice and we work towards that goal. Neither of us is afraid to express our individual opinion, positive or negative, about an aspect of running the firm.

AABA: How do you work together and maintain a friendship?

HG: We were friends and colleagues at a larger firm before embarking out on our own. We understand that first and foremost our partnership is a business venture. As a consequence we separate our friendship from our business. When we are at work we produce quality work product and superior representation for our clients. When the workday is finished, we make sure to spend time with friends.

AABA: As a firm of two, how do you manage your practice? Do you have meetings?

HG: Our firm is a partnership. As such, we have partnership meetings. We communicate every day to discuss cases, marketing, and business development.

AABA: Formal, sit down meetings? You two get along so well, I can't imagine a meeting with notepads and an agenda.

HG: Ronnie'll make notes of topics to discuss, but there is not a formal agenda. We don't have formal, noticed sit down meetings. Instead, we deal with administrative matters and case issues as we encounter them. As required, we revisit a strategy on a case when events occur or

facts change. Our lines of communication are such that we both understand what is happening in each other's respective practice and how it impacts the firm.

AABA: What have you found to be the biggest surprise since you struck out on your own?

HG: The spirit of camaraderie among solo and small firm practitioners, it is a great support network based on shared experiences.

AABA: What is the biggest upside to having your practice?

HG: Having our own practice enables us to craft a practice that suits our interests and our passions. We have the power to say no to cases and clients. As a result, we are excited to go to work every day.

AABA: What is one challenge people should be aware of before following in your footsteps?

HG: As a small firm owner, you are financially committed to the firm's success first. Make sure you have a comprehensive understanding of the financial commitment necessary for your firm's success. There are no fountains of money out there.

AABA: So what do you see in the future: Do you plan on one day growing into the next behemoth law firm?

HG: No. We are refugees from that culture. We have no intent on becoming a behemoth law firm.

AABA Welcomes Dean Frank Wu

Photo credits: Rhean Fajardo

By Rhean Fajardo, AABA Board Member

Hanson & Bridgett recently opened its doors to host a reception in honor of Frank Wu, the new Chancellor and Dean of UC Hastings College of the Law. An interview with Dean Wu can be found in our April issue and extensive background material is available on the UC Hastings website. Needless to say, he is an accomplished legal scholar whose resume includes serving as Dean at Wayne State University Law School, serving as a professor at several law schools, and publishing numerous books regarding the law and race relations.

Those who attended the event on July 29 were fortunate enough to hear introductory remarks from San Francisco Board of Supervisors President and AABA Past President David Chiu and even find out how Wu came to practice law, as opposed to say, pursuing a career in architecture.

In June 1982, when Wu was just 14 years old, the news of the brutal murder of Vincent Chin splashed the pages of the local and national news. On June 19, 1982, Chin was celebrating his bachelor party with friends at a strip club in suburban Detroit, Michigan when two men picked a fight with the group. Ronald Ebens and his son in law, Michael Nitz, instigated the incident by declaring "It's because of you little mother (expletive) that we're out of work," referring to the US auto manufacturing jobs being lost to Japan, despite the fact that Chin was Chinese-American. After being kicked out of the club, Chin and his group left the scene to avoid further confrontation but Ebens and Nitz continued to look for them. They caught up with Chin and his friends at a nearby McDonald's. Chin tried to escape but Nitz held him down while Ebens repeatedly struck him with a baseball bat. It would later be noted by investigators that Ebens struck him with such force that it was "as if he was trying to hit a home run." Before he slipped into a coma from which he would never wake, he whispered to his friend, "It's not fair."

Four days later, Chin died and the guests who would have attended his wedding attended his funeral instead.

Prior to this incident, Wu dreamed of being an architect. He even had a drafting table in the basement of his family's home. He had always been taught to walk the line and not rock the boat. When he had trouble with classmates and teachers at school, his parents suggested that he try harder to fit in. The murder of Vincent Chin would forever change Wu's perception of justice and the effects of racism and bigotry. And it was at that moment that he realized the law should protect human dignity and that Asian Americans may and can dissent, stand up, speak out, and advocate for social change. He realized that he wanted to change the world, and that he could.



Eumi Lee, Frank Wu, David Chu



Marcus Wu, Ayumi Sohn, Dave Sohn



Christine Noma, Billy Chan, Arman Javid



Celia Lee, Kiran Jain, Rhean Fajardo

AABA CAREER DAY

Saturday, August 14, 2010
Golden Gate University
536 Mission Street, San Francisco
8:30 am to 1:00 pm

Whether or not you are looking for a job right now, come join us for a free and invaluable opportunity to get career advice, network with other students and attorneys, and hear from a panel of diverse speakers ranging from practicing attorneys as well as individuals in nontraditional paths and academia. Topics will include their career experiences as well as advice (and inspiration) in entering a career in law. Come and be inspired!

8:30 am - Registration and Breakfast

9:00 am - Panel Discussion

Dale Minami, Partner, Minami Tamaki LLP

Steve Ngo, San Francisco Community College District Board
of Trustees

Prof. Anna M. Han, Santa Clara Law School

10:30 am - Mock Interviews and Drop-in Resume Review

12:00 pm - Networking Lunch

Mock Interview Slots are limited.

To sign up for a mock interview, please send a copy of your resume to
AABACareerDay@gmail.com.

Student and Attorney Volunteers Needed.

If you are interested in volunteering at the event,
please contact Un Kei Wu (unkeiwu@gmail.com).

AABA THANKS KIRKLAND & ELLIS LLP FOR SPONSORING THIS EVENT

AABA-SABA Joint Voter Registration Drives

AABA's Civil Rights Committee, in conjunction with the South Asian Bar Association, will be organizing several voter registration drives throughout the summer. This is a great opportunity for all AABA members interested in serving the community to join our team and help register Asian Americans to vote in the upcoming November 2010 election. Strong voter turnout is critical for our community's political leverage. The drives are non-partisan. Right or left, our sole interest is in giving our communities a political voice.

The drives will consist of setting up booths at popular Asian and South Asian events, such as street festivals, concerts and cultural events. You don't need to have any experience with voter registration - we'll give you all the training and materials you need. This is also a great opportunity to network with other politically aware AABA and SABA members while empowering your community!

Please help your fellow community members exercise their right to vote. Contact Asha Padania via e-mail at asha@padania.com if you are interested in volunteering at upcoming registration drives.

AABA-SABA Joint Voter Registration Drives

AABA's Civil Rights Committee, in conjunction with the South Asian Bar Association is registering voters at the Nihonmachi Street Fair
Saturday and Sunday, August 14-15 in San Francisco's Japantown.

Volunteers will be needed from 10-6 each day for 2-hour shifts. This is a great opportunity for all AABA members interested in serving the community to join our team and help register Asian Americans to vote in the upcoming November 2010 election. Strong voter turnout is critical for our community's political leverage. The drives are non-partisan. Right or left, our sole interest is in giving our communities a political voice.

No experience is necessary - we'll give you all the training and materials you need. This is also a great opportunity to network with other politically aware AABA and SABA members while empowering your community!

Please help your fellow community members exercise their right to vote.
Contact Kristy Young via e-mail at kristy.e.young@gmail.com
if you are interested in volunteering.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

AUGUST

AABA Career Day For Students and Attorneys.
August 14. 8:30am through lunch. Golden Gate University, 536 Mission Street, San Francisco.

AABA-SABA Joint Voter Registration Drives.
 Nihonmachi Street Fair Saturday and Sunday, **August 14-15** in San Francisco's Japantown. Contact Kristy Young via e-mail at kristy.e.young@gmail.com

AABA Karaoke Night, TBD

SEPTEMBER

AABA Bowling event. **Sept. 10**, 6-8pm. Yerba Buena Bowling Center.

AABA SF Giants Baseball Night. **September 29.**

NOVEMBER

NAPABA Annual Convention. Nov. 17-21. The Ritz-Carlton Hotel & JW Marriott Hotel, Los Angeles, CA

DECEMBER 2010

AABA Holiday Party. TBD

The AABA Newsletter Needs You!

If you are one of those brave attorneys who kicked off 2010 by leaving your firm to start your own practice, we want to hear from you. We will run a short press release regarding your firm and a small photo or logo.

Please submit your submissions via e-mail to newsletter@aaba-bay.com to the AABA Newsletter Committee.

AL GRAF BAIL BONDS

ACROSS FROM THE JAIL



Al Graf



Geri Ito-Campana
 Owner/Agent
 Ca. Insurance
 Lic# 1659114



Ron Lee
 Ca Insurance
 Lic# 1841697

Confidential
24 Hour Service
Nationwide



Checks Accepted

Established 1967

FREE BAIL INFORMATION
8% RATE FOR ATTORNEY REFERRAL

(415) 431-3333

(650) 369-1111

859 Bryant St.
San Francisco

SSF &
Redwood City

www.algrafbailbonds.com

2010-2011 AABA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

Billy Chan, *President*
Malcolm C. Yeung, *Vice President/President Elect*
Emi Gusukuma, *Treasurer*
Dave Sohn, *Secretary*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Hung Chang	Noelle Nguyen
Rhean Fajardo	Eugene M. Pak
Daisy J. Hung	Ted Ting
Khurshid Khoja	Salle Yoo
Eumi K. Lee	

AABA COMMITTEES AND 2010-2011 CO-CHAIRS

CIVIL RIGHTS/PUBLIC INTEREST

Asha Padania
Kristy E. Young

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Richard Cooc
Allison Hua
Robert Uy

EDUCATION

Ayumi Urabe

EMPLOYMENT

Miriam Kim
Olivia Lee

IN HOUSE COUNSEL

Lawrence M. Chew
Peggy Song
Denise Yee

JUDICIARY/PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS

Kristina Chung
Alice Liu Jensen
Avin Sharma

MEMBERSHIP

Wayne Chi
Sara Mo

MENTORSHIP

Rocky Tsai
Michael Wu

NEWSLETTER

Alice Chin
Soyeun Choi
Michelle D. Jew

PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT

John Hamasaki
Wesley M. Lowe
Richard Tamor

SCHOLARSHIP

Rick Chang
Candice Jan
Annette Mathai-Jackson

SOCIAL

David Tsai
Danny Wang

RENEW YOUR AABA MEMBERSHIP NOW!