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SEVENTH ANNUAL LANTERN FESTIVAL

Exhibit-Inspired Watercolor Activities to Add a Colorful Splash to This Year's Celebration

(LOS ANGELES, Feb. 1, 2008) -- The Chinese American Museum's (CAM) most beloved tradition is celebrating its seventh year with the community! Making its annual grand appearance on *Saturday, February 23, 2008 from 12 noon –5pm* at El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, the famed birthplace of the city of Los Angeles and now home to the Chinese American Museum, **Lantern Festival 2008** will blend traditional Chinese entertainment with a unique educational twist! With a thrilling line-up of stage performances, art workshops on Chinese lantern-making, book signings with authors Icy Smith and Oliver Chin, extended museum hours and a special watercolor tribute to CAM's newest exhibit, the festival's mission to educate as well as entertain has a little something for everyone!

Lantern Festival 2008 will spotlight special watercolor activities in honor of CAM's newest exhibit, *Sunshine and Shadow: In Search of Jake Lee*, produced in cooperation with the Automobile Club of Southern California. The exhibit highlights a compilation of over 60 watercolors from the 1950s to the 1980s, including eight from the Auto Club's WESTWAYS magazine cover art collection by the late-artist Jake Lee, a highly respected yet intensely private painter who embraced California city scenes and landscapes through his art. Festival-goers will be able to view the exhibit during CAM's extended museum hours and inspired visitors will have a chance to create their own art at age-appropriate watercolor workshops or enjoy plein-air watercolor demonstrations with noted artist Tom Fong from the National Watercolor Society offered throughout the day.

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Two popular Chinese American authors will also be onsite to sign their latest books. Award-winning author **Icy Smith** along with the book's illustrator, Gayle Garner Roski, will debut her first children's book, *Mei Ling in China City*, based on an 80-year old woman's experience in Los Angeles' China City during World War II. In celebration of this year's astrological animal and the qualities of those born under this sign, **Oliver Chin** will introduce the third book in his Chinese zodiac animal series, "*Year of the Rat*," which follows the adventures of a baby rat named Ralph. Exciting musical, dance and acrobatic stage performances, along with the festival's signature lantern-making workshops will complete this day-long festival offered free to the public.

A hugely popular holiday in the Chinese culture, Lantern Festival occurs annually on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month to mark the closing of Chinese New Year festivities. As families wish for peace and prosperity for the coming year, colorful lanterns are hung in homes and throughout the streets to celebrate this jubilant occasion. *CAM's Lantern Festival 2008* represents a departure from most other street event celebration because the primary focus will be on education rather than just entertainment. The event's program strives to present the visiting public with a unique and interactive opportunity to learn and appreciate the history, traditions and customs of this Chinese holiday.

The Chinese American Museum is jointly developed and operated by the Friends of the Chinese American Museum (FCAM) and El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, a department of the City of Los Angeles. Located at the El Pueblo Plaza in downtown Los Angeles, CAM is housed in the last surviving structure of the city's original Chinatown. CAM's mission is to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of America's diverse heritage by researching, preserving, and sharing the history, rich cultural legacy, and continuing contributions of Chinese Americans. For more information, please visit www.camla.org.