



THE CHARLIE CHAN FAMILY HOME

2018 NEWSLETTER

ISSUE No. 1 (inaugural)

www.charliechan.info



2018 THE YEAR IN SUMMARY

By Lou Armagno

Greetings fellow "Fans of Chan," and welcome to our very first newsletter. With it, we will try to highlight significant events and happenings at year's end, then mix in some interesting items surrounding one of America's first and most unique detectives: Charlie Chan of the Honolulu Police.

2018 was a busy year for our illustrious detective. Three new books were issues, **Charlie Chan's Poppa: Earl Derr Biggers** (February) by **Barbara Gregorich**;

next came **The Charlie Chan Films** (April) by **James L. Neibauer**. And last, but not least, in October 2018, famed Sherlock Holmes, mystery, and crime authority **Leslie S. Klinger**, included an annotated, *The House Without a Key*, among four other American mysteries in his **Classic American Crime**

Fiction of the 1920s. Outside of these literary additions, from January to February, Charlie Chan Message board member Len Freeman taught a six-session class **Charlie Chan and Friends** at University of Minnesota's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) for continuing education. Then In

"AS A PROMOTION, BOBBS-MERRILL HAD CELLULOID PARROTS MANUFACTURED AND GIVEN OUT TO BOOKSTORES. IN APRIL 1927 BIGGERS WROTE TO CHAMBERS TO SAY HE WAS DELIGHTED WITH THE SALE OF THE CHINESE PARROT..."

(Charlie Chan's Poppa: Earl Derr Biggers, Barbara Gregorich)

March, in Biggers' hometown the **Warren-Trumble County library**, in Warren, Ohio, held a month-long series to include: readings, lectures, and events centered around the author, his detective, mysteries, and Hawaii, for their **"One Book/One Community"** reading program that month. Throughout 2018, our site "regulars" gathered each Monday evening to view **Charlie Chan movies in the**

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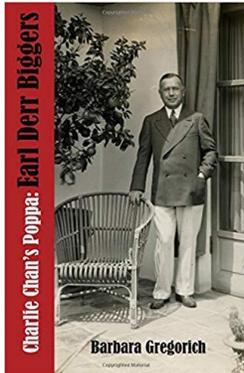
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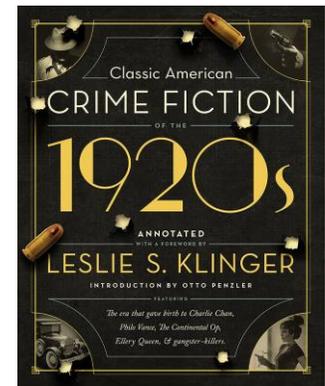
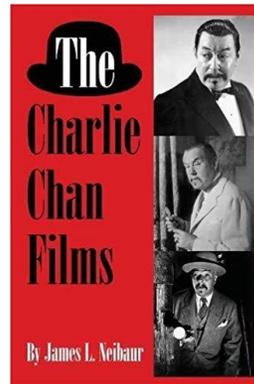
Page 16: Happy New Year! 2019 and beyond (Lou Armagno).

“Chat room” starting January 2d with *Behind that Curtain* (1929) starring E. L. Park in a brief appearance as Charlie Chan. **Then ending the year’s film journey, December 31st** was *The Return of Charlie Chan* (1971), starring Ross Martin. All that not to mention **90+ topics discussed**



throughout the year on the “Message board!” And did you notice those 4 new entries added to **“The Study?”** (Hint: **check the “Bulletin Brd”**) So dive in and take a look! We hope you enjoy our first attempt at capturing the year in review. If we missed something our humble

apologies. And since this is our first newsletter, we've touched upon some significant events taking place in 2017 that we felt worth including. We'll be looking to you in the future for 2019 entries and beyond. So, if you have anything for this year, please send it in via: charliechanfamily@lycos.com



OUR CHARLIE CHAN FAMILY CHAT ROOM – A TIE THAT HAS BOUND US ALL TOGETHER

By Webmaster Rush Glick

It all started on April, 23d, 2000, as the Charlie Chan Family group site was opened at Yahoo. The site included a chat room and message board, and the initial post at the message board, posted by Yours Truly, was titled, as I recall, "This will not happen again." The "this" I was referring to was reference another attempt at a Charlie Chan-based Yahoo Group site by another Chan fan, who just as things got rolling... closed it down! At that point it was time to pick up the pieces, start anew and not let something like that happen again.

Since 1996, Kurt Schmitt had offered a wonderful and very popular message board at his Web site, CharlieChan.net. And our new Charlie Chan Family site would certainly be small potatoes compared to Kurt's venerable site. However, what our new Yahoo site would offer was a live chat room, where fans of Charlie Chan could gather once each week to discuss the detective and his film adventures.

Why “Charlie Chan Family?” I have to say that the idea came to my mind immediately. As Charlie Chan fans were and are still today, a very select, tightly knit group. It was so very evident from the close comradery in the message board at CharlieChan.net, that Chan fans to great measure were more like an extended family than just a collection of detective movie enthusiasts. There is a certain passion that is shared for the venerable Mr. Chan that creates a strong bond. A bond heightened during these politically correct times, which have for a few decades now seen elements of our culture turn against Charlie Chan. Those who love Mr. Chan and the ideals he has exemplified over many decades, closing in on a century now, have stood

strongly together, as a family, in the face of the intermittent attacks directed against the character as well as those who enjoy his exploits. As with any extended family, fans of Charlie Chan who frequent the message boards, and now our chat room, truly care about each other. As time passes, the happy times are celebrated, and the times of sadness are shared. There are birthdays, additions to members' families, graduations, illnesses, and passings. Through it all, it has, as noted above, been something deeper than a collection of Charlie Chan enthusiasts. It is Charlie Chan *Family*!

Charlie Chan Family was actually **a two-person venture at the beginning**. Besides myself, Gary Osborne, another fan who was disappointed at the closing of the earlier group site, helped get things rolling. Between the two of us the word was spread about the new chat room that was available to Charlie Chan devotees. Since the Charlie Chan Family group site was founded on April 23, 2000, a Wednesday, I am pretty sure that our first chat took place on Monday, May 1st. As I recall, the first Monday Evening Chat, which we called our Weekly Chat, was totally open-ended. Beginning at 8:00 Eastern Time and continuing for two hours (chat times that have remained relatively unchanged over the years!), a handful of people showed up. All we really did was get our feet wet, and we probably decided on what format we should follow in future chat sessions. Immediately Gary and I felt that we should focus on one particular Charlie Chan film each week. Participants were asked to view the featured Chan movie on our own during the week before the next Monday evening. We, as individuals, usually came up with trivia questions that were posed throughout the evening as we discussed the featured film.

A little over a year later, even though our then-new home site had opened, we still used the Yahoo Groups site's Chat Room, as it continued to meet our needs. At about this time, mid-2001, **we began to use the "voice chat" feature** that Yahoo had made available. This added a new dimension to our Monday evenings, as we were now able to connect voices with names, for more interesting discussions. This worked fine for smaller gatherings, of say, five or so, but at times when our numbers grew it became somewhat problematic as only one person could speak at a time! However, for a time, we continued along this line.

Then, with time Yahoo began to downgrade the service to their Group sites, and this had a decidedly negative effect on the quality of their chat rooms. It soon became apparent this needed a remedy. If anyone remembers more clearly than your humble servant, I believe that we made **the switch to an alternative Chat Room** sometime in the year 2003. Parachat, a pay chat room service immediately proved its reliability which served us for many years.

Over the years, our Charlie Chan Family Chat Room has provided all of us with, **first and foremost, a comfortable gathering place where we can discuss and share our feelings about Charlie Chan** as we watch his movies together. However, as time has "marched on," our Chat Room has allowed us to also share the ups and downs of life. I remember vividly the somber gathering we had less than a week after the horrific events of September 11, 2001. Not too much was said about Mr. Chan, but we all felt some solace in simply being together for a little while. And, who could forget first the happiness we felt in June of 2003, when Fox Movie Channel scheduled a Charlie Chan marathon, providing us with the thought of watching a Chan film together during our scheduled chat; only to have FMC pull the plug on the marathon due to political pressure on the 27th of that month! But, as noted above, out of the ashes came our long-standing practice of sharing Charlie Chan films in our own way, not subject to the whims of cultural/political shifts!

And, yes, the ups and downs within the bounds of our "family" have been shared over the years. Births, adoptions, passings, illnesses, happiness, tragedy, moves to new homes in new cities or states, birthdays, new jobs, kids going off to college, marriages...so very much in the fabric that makes up our collective lives! We have been at this for nearly two decades, now.

Our Charlie Chan Family has seen its numbers grow from our very humble beginning in that April of 2000. People have come and gone, some to their eternal reward, others simply moving on for whatever reasons. All are fondly remembered. On occasion someone will surprise us on a Monday evening with their unexpected but treasured visit. Sometimes a name from the past will come up during our discussions. But, isn't this not unlike all families? And what a huge family who have had over the years! To name a great many but not all: Gary Osborne (Berang), Stebve Rhodes, Mrs. Pendleton, Steve O., Hounder, Aunt Ling, Andy, Russell, RoWes, Matt, Joanne, Tribefan, Nightwolf, Roy, DAR, Virginia Johnson, Becky, Mike S., Larry, Kashimo, Frosty, The BLOT, Hawaii Steve, Patrick, D, Godwinshelley, John2a, John R, Steve H, Schrevvy, Rita, Di, Craig, Nothere, OldGoat, Raindrop, Jumpy, Chris in Cleveland, Gipp22, Barking Dog, Chris, Caulos, Fredsmom, MysteryMan, Birmingham Brown, Bdogdrummand, Len Freeman, Heather, Fumi_Chan, Sixty_on_de_14;60, Maddy12, Crmfighter, Miro, Cyrtus, JIM_T, Chance, Eric, Philadelphiarow, German Viewer (aka Bremen), Diamondsilk, Dave, Number_1_Fan, Matrim, Gary A, Chan, Caulos from Rio, Studio Manderley, GLS84, Chan Fan, Lawrence, Lois, Lou, FJ, Bob_A, Wax Muse, Joe, Lin, Jeff, Chan's Adopted Son, Professor K, Big O, Edd, vonb, Talbot, Rufus, Timothy2035, JACK, babyrascal52, SchnauzerMom, Anne, HonoluLou, Me Too, Casey, wmpaul, stranded in iowa, lisa, BrooklynJay, Chubrock, Duggerdad, Tony57, louise, Tracy, Tony12, Brian, Kelder, Frances, Pinkflamingo, James362001, Kamen, RChanFan, Santabear, Dona, Jake, DS/RS, Tarbox, Ecker, Chopsuey108, Sploo, Jacks, LauraL, Prop, Harvey Birdman, Helene_S, Marcjcloud, Ed and Nelda, Ira, Lynneb, Paul M, Mike/Rachel in DC, Angel, cdirus... Thank you ALL so much, especially to those whom I may have absent mindedly left out!

As I come to a close, changes are again happening. Parachat, who has served us so well for so many years is now shutting their doors. Our Monday Evening Chat on New Year's Eve, 2018, found us in what I termed a "lifeboat" to enable us to carry on. But carry on we will, of course, as we search for a more permanent solution, again, with our Charlie Chan family working together to find something that we will all be happy with! It is said that "**Blessed be the tie that binds.**" If ever there was a blessing that has enabled a group of Charlie Chan fans – family – to be bound together, there has been no stronger tie than our Charlie Chan family Chat Room.



"Always pleasant journey which ends among old friends" (*Charlie Chan's Courage*, 1934)

A MONTH-LONG CELEBRATION AT WARREN-TRUMBULL COUNTY, OHIO PUBLIC LIBRARY OF A CHARLIE CHAN NOVEL & EARL DERR BIGGERS

By Lou Armagno

Most of us familiar with the fictional sleuth Charlie Chan are aware he was created by Author Earl Derr Biggers, born Warren, Ohio, August 26, 1884. To my great surprise, while glancing through the Warren-Trumbull County Library's website I saw under their "**One Book/One Community**" program, their title book for March 2018 was none other than the first Chan Novel, ***The House Without a Key (1925)***! Under this program, the library's month-long celebration encouraged patrons to read the novel and then hosted various discussions & events surrounding the author, Hawaii, and (in general) mystery novels. I live in Cleveland, an hour away, and was NOT going to miss this opportunity!

All six library locations participated and events included: book discussions, Chan film showings, Hawaiian music, dance and food events, displays, an escape room with a "find the key" themed challenge, a poster design contest for teens, a book discussion & desert event featuring a popular desert recipe from The House Without a Key Restaurant, Halekulani Hotel, Honolulu, HI, for Coconut Cake with Raspberry Coulis. And finally, there were various guest lectures. A complete events listing can be found at:

http://www.wtcpl.org/images/Connections_Newsletter_Winter_2017-2018.pdf.

These events were especially gratifying for me as author Barbara Gregorich, Earl Derr Biggers' biographer, whom I've corresponded with for more than a decade (but never met) was speaking. Barbara appears along with Chan Family Home Webmaster, Rush Glick on some of the Charlie Chan featurettes, which accompany many of the movie DVDs. Happily, I was able to attend two events.

First up, March 3d, was **Barbara Gregorich's** lecture, **Earl Derr Biggers: Think Like a Mystery Writer**. Barbara examined the mystery-writing techniques Biggers put to use, then evaluated how he employed them in each of his six novels. Barbara is a mystery writer herself and teaches writing and self-publishing along with touring to lecture on her books and other topics. So, she was especially capable to dissect and illustrate parts of the novel, such as: plot, sub-plot, clues, major/minor characters, red herrings, and how Biggers used these devices. One extremely interesting revelation (for me) was Biggers' clever method he used in making some 17 suspects easy for the reader to remember in, *Charlie Chan Carries On*. Her presentation lasted about 1.5 hrs and was filled with interesting facts and photographs. And the discussion and questions throughout were very enthusiastic! Then, along with finally meeting Barbara & husband-musician, Phil, I got to attend dinner with her and the graduating class of Brookfield Ohio High School (year purposely omitted), who came out to hear Barbara, a Brookfield High alumna, speak. As one fellow might put it, "Delight in meeting most eminent writer and lecturer, will remain etched on scroll of humble memory for eternity!"

[\(http://barbaragregorich.com/\)](http://barbaragregorich.com/)

The following week, March 6th, I drove back to hear Trumbull County native and Howland High School (Warren) graduate, **Carole Lovett Koontz's** presentation, **Serendipity, Mystery, and Adventure: Researching the Life and Works of Earl Derr Biggers**. Carole's lecture was equally as interesting, and surprisingly different. While both speakers covered much of Biggers' life, Carole's presentation showed how the author included a thinly veiled Warren in his writing. She drilled it down to specific people and places from Warren and the stories or articles where one may find them, many preceding the Chan novels. Carole also had the opportunity (years ago) to interview Biggers' surviving cousins and the legal heir of the Biggers estate. Among many interesting topics, she described a painting Biggers had delivered to his New York office. The painting, by famed Warren painter Carl Schmitt, was purchased by Biggers from Schmitt. After her research, Carole concluded the painting probably depicts the very scene Biggers would have viewed walking home

to his Boston apartment in the snowstorm after being fired from his position at the Boston Traveler. The painting was one of the few surviving items from the Biggers estate, everything else being destroyed. Alas though, Carole's investigations did not find what had become of the painting. One can't help but wonder if it's out there somewhere, its relevance unbeknownst and sitting on someone's wall or in their garage—an unknown tribute to one of the world's most famous mystery writers! A great presentation with much new info and many handouts! Carole Koontz gathered a wealth of information during research for her master's thesis, titled **An Earl Derr Biggers Checklist**, Ohio State University (1982). A copy is on file at the Warren Library and various other locations:

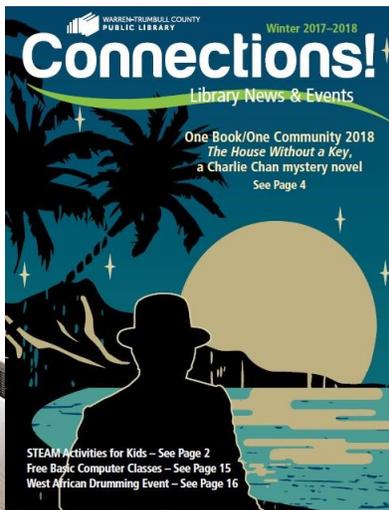
https://www.worldcat.org/search?qt=worldcat_org_all&q=An+Earl+Derr+Biggers+Checklist

Then, before heading back I visited the prestigious tribute to Author Earl Derr Biggers on display in the main library. In 2017, United for Libraries, the national Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends & Foundations, awarded a **literary landmark** to commemorate the contributions of this great Ohio author and playwright. You can read all about it and view the landmark on their website, at:

http://www.ala.org/united/products_services/literarylandmarks/landmarksbyyear/2017/biggers

Finally, my last inclusion is a travel tip to anyone who might venture a visit to Biggers' home town. Situated between Cleveland and Warren, on route US422, is the Welshfield Inn (est 1842), Burton, Ohio. The menu reflects local and seasonal fare, served in a historic building that has been part of the community over a century! It's friendly with good food and reminiscent of days gone by. As I sat soaking in the surroundings and enjoying my repast, I couldn't help but wonder if the Biggers family hadn't also enjoyed a meal there on occasion! "What was that shadow in the corner, Earl?"

Barbara Gregorich (right)



Carole Lovett Koontz (left)



"Confucius has said, 'A wise man questions himself, a fool others'" (*Charlie Chan in the City in Darkness*, 1939)

"Happiest walk in life of mailman are on holiday" (*The Shanghai Chest*, 1948)

"Do not challenge supernatural unless armed with sword of truth" (Charlie Chan at Treasure Island, 1939)

HOW CHARLIE CHAN CAME TO BE

By Len Freeman

Prior to the appearance of Charlie Chan, **Sax Rohmer's insidious, evil Dr. Fu Manchu was the primary Chinese literary and cinematic personification coming out of the early 1900's.**

The Fu Manchu books and films were a set of serialized adventures wherein a British civil servant, Sir Dennis Nayland Smith stood up to fight against the world-wide conspiracy of THE YELLOW PERIL. Citing that great scholarly source, Wikipedia: "The Yellow Peril is a racist color-metaphor that [was] integral to the xenophobic theory of colonialism: that the peoples of East Asia are a danger to the Western world...."

In 1932, Boris Karloff doing HIS duty as Fu Manchu ("*The Mask of Fu Manchu*") may have put the core violation fear right out front: "*Kill the white man and take his women!*"

But **by the 1920s and 30s, views of the Chinese and Asian communities were changing** and getting more nuanced. Previously America viewed "Orientals" as pretty much all the same. But the 1930s brought reason to rethink things.

At the turn of the century the American Navy had sailed into Manila Bay and Japan, forcibly pulling the Asian countries into the modern world. They had no choice but to come along... it was called "gunboat diplomacy"... and the Japanese, in particular, were not thrilled. By the late 1930s, governments and politicians could see that revenge and war were very probably on the horizon. And for the very first time we began to differentiate between a potential enemy, the Japanese... and a potential ally, the Chinese.

Charlie Chan came to literary life then, as a clearly welcomed counter-weight to the insidious Dr. Fu Manchu's. We were ready for a new literary Asian good guy, and in 1925 Earl Derr Biggers provided him.

Biggers was an up-and-coming novelist from Ohio and a hot script doctor for Broadway and Hollywood. He'd been writing at a breakneck pace... sometimes rewriting up to two plays a day... and he was exhausted. So he went to Hawaii... thousands of miles from anything, while still part of the USA ...for rest, recuperation, and a totally different 'island life.'" Later, on his return to the mainland, he found his brain noodling about the hotel he'd stayed in where the rooms had no keys, and the news stories he found about a real-life Chinese Hawaiian detective Chang Apana,

The very first Chan book, ***The House Without a Key***, was the result. **When Charlie first showed up he was supposed to be a secondary, background character.** He arrives about a third of the way into the book... in chapter 7 out of 23.

"As they went out, the third man stepped further into the room, and Miss Minerva gave a little gasp of astonishment as she looked at him. In those warm islands thin men were the rule, but here was a striking exception. He was very fat indeed, yet he walked with the light dainty step of a woman. His cheeks were as chubby as a baby's, his skin ivory tinted, his black hair close-cropped, his amber eyes slanting. As he passed Miss Minerva he bowed with a courtesy encountered rarely in a work-a-day world...."

'Amos!', cried Miss Minerva. 'That man - why he-'

'Charlie Chan,' Amos explained. 'I'm glad they brought him. He's the best detective on the force.'

'But — he's Chinese!'

Yes...exactly.

So, Charlie Chan was a surprise from the start. But he also surprised Earl Derr Biggers. Because Charlie Chan "clicked" so much with the public, that Biggers soon had to deal with the demand to write more about him. Which resulted in five additional Charlie Chan novels: *The Chinese Parrot* (1926), *Behind That Curtain* (1928), *The Black Camel* (1929) *Charlie Chan Carries On* (1930), and *Keeper of the Keys* (1932).

Shortly after finishing *Keeper of the Keys*, Biggers responded to a newspaper query about Charlie's origins and rise by having CHARLIE answer the interviewer, while carrying on a dialogue with his "boss," Biggers:

*Boss looks me over, and puts me in a novel, *The House Without a Key*. "You are minor character, always," he explains. "No major feelings, please. The background is your province — keep as far back as is humanly possible." Story starts to begin serial career, and public gets stirred up. They demand fuller view of my humble self. "What is the approximate date of next Charlie Chan story?" they inquire of the boss. And is my face red?*

Boss glares at me, plenty gloomy. "Good Lord! he cries, "am I saddled with you for the remainder of my existence?"

"You could be saddled with horse," I bristle.

"But how can I write of Chinese? he demanded. "I know nothing of same. I could not distinguish Chinese man from Wall Street broker."

"Chinese would be the one who sold you the honest securities," I elucidate.

*So the boss writes *The Chinese Parrot*, and *Behind That Curtain....*"*

(Honolulu Advertiser Sept 11, 1932, cited in Hunte Yuang's *Charlie Chan: The Untold Story of the Honorable Detective and His Rendezvous with American History*, 2010)

And so we came to know and enjoy one of the greatest detectives of the 20th century.



"Confucius say, Luck happy combination of foolish accidents" (*Charlie Chan at the Opera*, 1936)

"Death one appointment we must all keep, and for which no time set" (*Docks of New Orleans*, 1948)

"Every detail most important where murder concerned" (*Charlie Chan in Egypt*, 1935)

"Every man must wear out at least one pair of fool shoes" (*Charlie Chan Carries On*, 1931)

THE CHARLIE CHAN EFFECT (OUR FAVORITE SUPPORTING ACTORS)

By Virginia Johnson

Fans of the old Charlie Chan movies can count on a dependable group of actors for repeated roles in Chan films as well as in others.

Lois Moran appeared with Lon Chaney, Sr. in *Road to Mandalay* (1926.) She was in *Behind That Curtain* (1929), a Chan film that was altered for her and **Warner Baxter**. **Boris Karloff** had a supporting role in it as Baxter's manservant. **Karloff** had a return appearance in *Charlie Chan at the Opera* (1936) with Warner Oland.

Lon Chaney, Jr., had his own role (albeit a small one) in *Charlie Chan on Broadway* (1937) as a newspaper reporter. *Charlie Chan in City in Darkness* (1939) had **Lon Chaney, Jr.** as an assistant to **Leo G. Carroll** who made illegal passports. **Carroll** would also star in *Charlie Chan's Murder Cruise* (1940) with **Don Beddoe** in a curious set of role reversals.

Kay Linaker had a special role, even among repeating Chan actors. She had a "highlighted" role in *Charlie Chan at Treasure Island* (1939); literally, a headshot as a specter in a séance scene conducted by Dr. Zodiac. "Dr. Zodiac" was played by two different actors: **Cesar Romero** and **Trevor Burdette** in a curious "double role" much as **Leo G. Carroll** and **Don Beddoe** had in *Charlie Chan's Murder Cruise*.

Back to **Kay Linaker**. She added greatly...

...as the manager of a hotel for "divorcee wannabes" in *Charlie Chan in Reno* (1939),

...as a wife involved in her husband's stock mess in *Charlie Chan at Monte Carlo* (1937),

...as a woman on the run from her husband in *Charlie Chan's Murder Cruise* (1940),

...and, as the secretary of a cabaret singer in *Charlie Chan in Rio* (1941).

Louise Henry only had two Chan films to her credit, but she was prominent in both as a despicable villainess: *Charlie Chan on Broadway* and *Charlie Chan in Reno*.

The most prolific supporting Chan actor was **Keye Luke** as, "Number One Son, Lee." Luke's first Chan series appearance, of nine total, was in *Charlie Chan in Paris* (1935) with Warner Oland. One memorable entry was *Charlie Chan at the Opera* (1936) with Warner Oland up against Boris Karloff.

There is an urban legend/game to *Charlie Chan at the Opera*! In the scene where **Keye Luke's** "classmates" (all Chinese) are wearing armor is a very young **Benson Fong**. Fong is only one of three actors to play with at least two principle Chan actors. In the film above "...Opera" it was Warner Oland, and the other instance with Sidney Toler (as Chan) in the Monogram entries.

Victor Sen Yung was with Sidney Toler in the Fox films and in the early Monograms. **Sen Yung** also appeared with **Keye Luke** and Roland Winters in *The Feathered Serpent* (1948), set south of the border. **Keye Luke** played Chan's Number One Son one last time with Roland Winters in *The Sky Dragon* (1949), having begun to learn how to pilot planes.

As an ironic footnote to the Charlie Chan series, **Keye Luke** had begun *Charlie Chan at the Ringside* in 1938. This movie wasn't finished; however, when Warner Oland walked off the set to get a glass of water...and never came back! There are theories why Oland left the film, but 20th Century-Fox scrambled to "fix" what was left. So, **Keye Luke** ended up in a Mr. Moto film with Peter Lorre to fill in the gaps of what was left of the Oland film, now titled, *Mr. Moto's Gamble*." The film also co-starred **Harold Huber** and "**Slappy Maxie**" **Rosenbloom**.

Keye Luke also credited his own niche in Chinese detective films: the Charlie Chan series starring: Oland, Toler, & Winters; the Mr. Moto series starring Peter Lorre; and The James Lee Wong series starring Boris Karloff.

Luke appearing in the last film in the Mr. Wong series, *Phantom of Chinatown* (1940)—the only one where the Chinese detective gets the girl!



Actress Kay Linaker & Actor Key Luke with Warner Oland

“Charming company turn lowly sandwich into rich banquet” (*Charlie Chan in Reno*, 1939)

“Confucius say, No man is poor who have worthy son” (*Charlie Chan at the Race Track*, 1936)

“Friends, like fiddle strings, should not be stretched too tight” (*Charlie Chan's Chance*, 1932)

“Glamour boy who jump to conclusion sometimes get hair mussed” (*Castle in the Desert*, 1942)

“Expert is merely man who make quick decision - and is sometimes right” (*The Chinese Cat*, 1944)

“Man without relatives is man without troubles” (*Charlie Chan in Panama*, 1940)

“Man yet to be born who can tell what woman will or will not do” (*Charlie Chan in Reno*, 1939)

THE CHARLIE CHAN DVD "FEATURETTES" & WHERE TO FIND THEM

By Steve Fredrick and Lou Armagno

One aspect of the Charlie Chan DVDs often overlooked, are the mini "featurettes" one finds at the main menu; usually, listed as "Other Features," "Special Features," or something similar. These small snippets are extremely entertaining tidbits of education and take us behind the scenes of these prospective film productions.

Listed below, please find our index of some thirty extremely entertaining and enlightening shorts and the DVDs where you'll find them. We've omitted any "Theatrical Trailers" or "Still Galleries." Happy Hunting!

(Note: Our illustrious Charlie Chan Family Home webmaster appears in no less than eight!)



[\(20th Century Fox\) Charlie Chan, Volume 1 \(20 Jun 2006\)](#)

1. Featurette - Eran Trece (full Spanish-Language Version of the lost film, *Charlie Chan Carries On*) (1931)

CAST (Main): Manuel Arbo (Charlie Chan), Rafael Calvo (Inspector Duff), Juan Corena (Dick Kennaway), Ana Maria Custodio (Elen Potter).

DVD: *Charlie Chan in Shanghai*.

2. Featurette - The Legacy of Charlie Chan (2006)

Director/Writer: John Cork.

CAST: Jon L. Breen, DeSoto Brown, Janice Clapoff, Rush Glick, Barbara Gregorich, Ken Hanke, James G. Y. Ho, Sheri Kagimoto, Kanoolehua Miller, Judy Narita, Layne Tom Jr., Valerie Yaros.

DVD: *Charlie Chan in London*.

3. Featurette - In Search of Charlie Chan (2006)

Director/Writer: John Cork.

CAST: Howard Berlin, Jon L. Breen, Rusty Cundieff, Rush Glick, Barbara Gregorich, Ken Hanke, Carla Winter, Paul Wurtzel, Valerie Yaros.

DVD: *Charlie Chan in Paris*.

4. Featurette - The Real Charlie Chan (2006)

Director/Writer: John Cork.

CAST: DeSoto Brown, Janice Clapoff, Eddie Croom, Barbara Gregorich, Ken Hanke, James G. Y. Ho, Karl Kagimoto, Sheri Kagimoto, Nannette Napoleon, Bob Krauss.

DVD: *Charlie Chan in Egypt*.

[\(20th Century Fox\) Charlie Chan, Volume 2 \(5 Dec 2006\)](#)

5. Featurette - Charlie Chan's Lucky Director: H. Bruce Humberstone (2006)

Director/Writer: John Cork & Bruce Scivally.

CAST: Eve Brent, Jordana Gainsworth, Rush Glick, Ken Hanke, Scott Mclsaac, Johnny Scheffield.

DVD: *Charlie Chan at the Opera.*

6. Featurette - Layne Tom, Jr.: The Adventures of Charlie Chan, Jr. (2006)

Director/Writer: John Cork & Bruce Scivally.

CAST: Tom Layne Jr.

DVD: *Charlie Chan at the Olympics.*

7. Featurette - Number One Son: The Life of Keye Luke (2006)

Director/Writer: John Cork & Bruce Scivally.

CAST: Rush Glick, Ken Hanke, Vikki Luke, Scott Mclsaac.

DVD: *Charlie Chan at the Race Track.*

8. Featurette - Charlie Chan at the Movies (2006)

Director/Writer: John Cork & Bruce Scivally.

CAST: Jordana Gainsworth, Rush Glick, C. Courtney Joyner, Sara Karloff, Scott Mclsaac.

DVD: *Charlie Chan at the Circus.*

[\(20th Century Fox\) Charlie Chan, Volume 3 \(14 Aug 2007\)](#)

9. Featurette - Commentary by Film Critic Ken Hanke and Film Historian John Cork (2007)

(Commentary that can be played in synch with the movie).

DVD: *Charlie Chan's Secret.*

10. Featurette - Charlie Chan and the Rise of the Modern Detective (2007)

Director/Writer: (D) John Cork & Lisa Van Eyssen / (W) John Cork.

CAST: Ronald Thomas, Matthew Pearl, Dr. Henry C. Lee.

DVD: *Charlie Chan's Secret.*

11. Featurette - Dr. Henry Lee: The Modern Day Charlie Chan (2007)

Director/Writer: John Cork.

CAST: Dr. Henry Lee

DVD: *Charlie Chan's Secret.*

12. Featurette - Commentary by Film Critic Ken Hanke and Film Historian John Cork (2007)

(Commentary that can be played in synch with the movie).

DVD: *Charlie Chan in The Black Camel.*

13. Featurette - Charlie Chan's Chance: A Re-creation of a Lost Chan Film (2007)

Director/Writer: (D) John Cork / (W) John Cork, Bruce Scivally, Lisa Van Eyssen.

Screenplay and Dialog: Philip Kleine and Barry Connere.

DVD: *Charlie Chan in The Black Camel.*

14. Featurette (Side 1) - Charlie Chan is Missing: The Last Days of Warner Oland (2007)

Director/Writer: John Cork.

CAST: Paul S. Oland, David Lewis, Ken Hanke, Valerie Yaros, Rush Glick, Kay Linaker.

DVD: *Charlie Chan at Monte Carlo*.

15. Featurette (Side 1) - Warner Oland is Charlie Chan (2007)

(Screen shots of lobby cards, posters, and advertisements featuring Oland as Chan).

DVD: *Charlie Chan at Monte Carlo*.

16. Featurette (Side 2) - Behind That Curtain -- The 1929 Film Featuring the First Appearance of the Charlie Chan Character at FOX (2007)

DVD: *Charlie Chan at Monte Carlo*.

17. Featurette - The World of Charlie Chan (2007)

Director/Writer: John Cork.

CAST: Ken Hanke, Scott Mclsaac, Rush Glick, Michael Shermer, Khaled Azzam, Gerry Scott, Suzanne Wilson Barnett, Nancy Bistow, Robert Sabia, Jon White, Miles Kreuger, David Wallechinsky.

DVD: *Charlie Chan on Broadway*.

18. Featurette - Chanograms: The Aphorisms of Charlie Chan (2007)

Director/Writer: John Cork.

CAST: Ken Hanke, Rush Glick, Suzanne Wilson Barnett.

DVD: *Charlie Chan on Broadway*.

[\(20th Century Fox\) Charlie Chan, Volume 4 \(12 Feb 2008\)](#)

19. Featurette - Reinventing Chan (2008)

Director/Writer: John Cork.

CAST: Scott Mclsaac, Ken Hanke.

DVD: *Charlie Chan in Honolulu*.

20. Featurette - Sidney Toler: The Man Who Became Chan (2008)

Director/Writer: John Cork.

CAST: Miles Krueger, David Lewis.

DVD: *Charlie Chan in Honolulu*.

21. Featurette - Charlie Chan's Courage: A Re-creation of a Lost Chan Film (2007)

(Based on The Chinese Parrot)

Director/Writer: John Cork/Bruce Scivally and Lisa Van Eyssen.

DVD: *Charlie Chan in Honolulu*.

22. Featurette - Welcome to Reno: America's Divorce Resort (2008)

Director/Writer: John Cork and Lisa Van Eyssen.

CAST: Mella Harmon, William L. McGee, Pat Ferraro Klos, Judge Peter I. Breen,
DVD: *Charlie Chan in Reno*.

23. Featurette - Reno Memories (2008)

Director/Writer: Lisa Van Eyssen, John Cork.
CAST: William L. McGee.
DVD: *Charlie Chan in Reno*.

24. Featurette - Chan's Killer Actress: Kay Linaker (2008)

Director/Writer: John Cork.
CAST: Kay Linaker.
DVD: *Charlie Chan in Reno*.

25. Featurette - The Making of Charlie Chan in City in Darkness (2008)

Director/Writer: (D) John Cork & Lisa Van Eyssen, (W) John Cork.
CAST: Rick Jewell, Scott Mclsaac, John Cork, Marje Schuetze-Coburn, Cornelius Schnauber.
DVD: *Charlie Chan in the City in Darkness*.

26. Featurette - Writing Charlie Chan: Robert Ellis and Helen Logan (2008)

Director/Writer: John Cork & Lisa Van Eyssen.
CAST: John Cork, Scott Mclsaac.
DVD: *Charlie Chan in the City in Darkness*.

27. Featurette - Commentary by Film Critic Ken Hanke and Film Historian John Cork (2008)

(Commentary that can be played in synch with the movie).
DVD: *Charlie Chan at Treasure Island*.

28. Featurette - The Real Treasure Island (2008)

Director/Writer: John Cork & Lisa Van Eyssen.
CAST: Richard Reinhardt, Claire Isaacs Wahrhaftig, Gladys Hansen.
DVD: *Charlie Chan at Treasure Island*.

29. Featurette - Charlie Chan and the Zodiac (2008)

Director/Writer: John Cork & Lisa Van Eyssen.
CAST: Michael Kelleher, Ed Neil, Howard Davis.
DVD: *Charlie Chan at Treasure Island*.

[\(20th Century Fox\) Charlie Chan, Volume 5 \(16 Sep 2008\)](#)

30. Featurette - The Era of Chan (2008)

Director/Writer: (D) John Cork & Lisa Van Eyssen, (W) John Cork.
CAST: John Cork, Scott Mclsaac, Sharon Rosen Leib, Paul Wurtzel, David Wurtzel, Miles Kreuger, Ken Hanke, Jim Doherty, Didi Hunter, Lorenzo Semple, Jr.
DVD: *Castle in the Desert*.

2017 LEFT COAST CRIME'S (LCC) ANNUAL MYSTERY WRITERS' CONVENTION: "GHOST OF HONOR" - EARL DERR BIGGERS

By Lou Armagno

March 16-19, 2017, **Left Coast Crime (LCC)** held their annual **mystery writers' convention** at the Hilton Hawaiian Village, Honolulu HI, titled: *Honolulu Havoc*. Over 400 people attended from around the globe. Several of the events which took place concerned their "**Ghost of Honor**" author **Earl Derr Biggers** and his famous sleuth Charlie Chan. Below is a recap of events from the program surrounding that Best of American Detectives. See more at their site: <http://www.leftcoastcrime.org/2017/>.

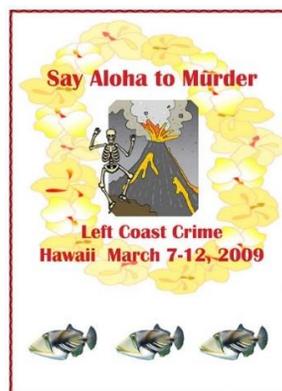
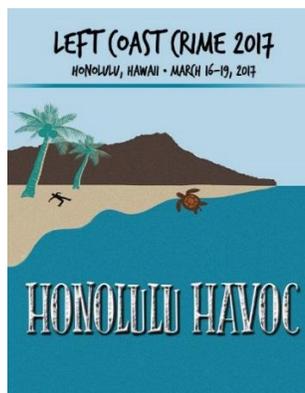
Thursday, March 16th. A convention sponsored tour headed to **The Honolulu Police Museum** on Beretania St. The museum includes a section dedicated to Honolulu detective Chang Apana, Biggers inspiration for the fictional Detective Charlie Chan. Retired museum curator, Officer Eddie Croom, accompanied the group to "talk story" as their guide.

Thursday, March 16th. **A viewing of two Chan Films** took place, *The Black Camel* and *Charlie Chan in Honolulu*. Approximately 70 people attended the event held in one of the Hilton Hawaiian Village ball rooms. Films were introduced by authors Rochelle Staab and Les Blatt, and our very own Family Home member, **Steve Fredrick**, owner/operator, Honolulu Ghost & Mystery Tours.

Friday, March 17th. **A murder mystery event, "Hibiscus and Homicide"** supporting a global literacy charity foundation was held. **Overview:** A disgruntled business partner, a wronged wife, an unstable mistress, and a faithful secretary make for one dead publisher. Guests Assisted Detective Charlie Chan in solving the murder of Don Rush of Rush & Delay Publishers. Guests interviewed the suspects and searched the crime scene for clues to solve the murder, all for the benefit of READ ALOUD AMERICA.

Saturday, March 19, as part of the convention panel discussions **two panels** where of interest: "**Meet Charlie Chan: The Man & his Creator.**" Hosted by Authors Hal Glatzer, Les Blatt, & Rochelle Staab. Also, retired HNL Police Museum curator, Officer Eddie Croom, hosted a panel the same day, "**Hawaii Crime Series: Policing in Hawaii from Kamehameha I to Today.**"

This was the second time **Left Coast Crime (LCC)**, held their annual **mystery writers' convention** in Hawaii with Earl Derr Biggers as their "**Ghost of Honor.**" The first was March 7-12, 2009 on the Big Island, Hawaii, and included a one-hour original play, *The House Without a Key*, by Hal Glatzer!



2019 A NEW YEAR...AND BEYOND

By Lou Armagno

HAPPY NEW YEAR, PIGGIES! OK, let me rephrase that; **KUNG HEI FAT CHOI**, or HAPPY NEW YEAR, to those born in **THE YEAR OF THE PIG!** Yes, while our Roman calendar New Year's began on January 1st, not so with the Lunar New Year and Chinese zodiac! **February 5th, 2019 begins THE YEAR OF THE PIG**, which continues **through January 25th, 2020**. **Recent years of the Pig are:** 1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007, & 2019.

The Pig is the twelfth of all zodiac animals. According to myth, the Jade Emperor called all animals of the universe together for a race. He decreed the first 12 animals to finish would be rewarded with a year dedicated in their honor, and according to the order in which they arrived. Pig was late because he overslept. So, when he arrived, he was the final animal and took twelfth place. The calendar repeats every 12 years. Here is a cute video to watch of this tale (with a great ending!):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lw0adpGLldk>.

The Pig is associated with the Earthly Branch, and the hours 9–11 in the night. In terms of yin and yang, the Pig is yin. In Chinese culture, pigs are the symbol of wealth. Their chubby faces and big ears are signs of fortune, and pigs have a beautiful personality. Want to know your lucky color? How about your lucky numbers, flower, or even lucky direction? And be sure to avoid: red, blue, and green, my little piggy! Want to see more? Then, visit: <https://www.chinahighlights.com/travelguide/chinese-zodiac/pig.htm>



A COPYRIGHT EXPIRES ON, THE HOUSE WITHOUT A KEY! (The following was inspired in a message board entry by “The Match Maker.” Information provided by an “Anonymous Copyright Lawyer”).

Let's face it, “What will be, will be.” That is the most repeated aphorism found inside the six Charlie Chan novels; repeated seven times and found in five of the stories. Without a doubt, with the copyrights beginning to expire on the Chan novels, someone will eventually capitalize on that. You can smell it—the scent of money! And you can hear its voice—Cha Ching!” What will the future bring; more books, television, films? The future is unknown, but the prospects are exciting. As Charlie Chan say, “What will be, will be.” Here are some thoughts from the legal side of the house:

The 1925 “Key” novel will go into the public domain (PD) in the U.S. at the end of 2020, 95 years after its first publication. So that particular book and its contents will then be in the PD and others may reprint and publish it, free of copyright restrictions (There could be other, non-copyright claims, though, such as suggesting falsely that it has been reissued by or with the endorsement of the Biggers heirs or other rights holders.) The question of writing “new” Charlie Chan novels and pastiches is more complicated. The other five Chan novels are still in copyright, although their U. S. copyright terms, too, will begin to expire later. Those who would write “new” Charlie Chan novels and stories could do so only by carefully and accurately restricting their material to what is in the PD and they would not be entitled to copy the Chan character's features and attributes first developed in the books still in copyright, i.e., in the new material added in the later books and movies still in

copyright. (And they would have to be certain not to falsely imply that their “new” books were authorized or endorsed by the rights holders of the other books and movies.)

So it's very complicated, beyond the PD status of the one “Key” novel. This issue arose most recently in the case decided a few years ago (*Klinger v. Conan Doyle Estate Ltd.*) in the federal court of appeals (7th Circuit) in Chicago concerning the U.S. copyright status of Sherlock Holmes (already in the PD in the UK). Essentially, it was decided that Holmes as developed in the first 50 Doyle/Holmes stories was in the PD in the U.S. because all of those stories had been first published before 1923, and their U.S. copyright terms had expired. But copyright continued to exist in the remaining 10 stories, published in or after 1923, and protected any character developments and material first added or developed in those 10 stories. (There were 60 Holmes stories in all.) “New” stories would have to be based only on the PD material, not on what remained in copyright. (Of course brand new material originated by the pastiche author could be used.)

Hope this abbreviated discussion helps anyone who's got their manuscript ready! These concepts are complicated, easy to state but difficult to apply. There are related issues as well, besides copyright, such as whether and to what extent material in the copyright PD could be protected by trademark law. (Think of Mickey Mouse, the subject of both copyright and trademark!) Again, this is complicated stuff. The above is an overview and not intended as a blueprint for future action.



KARATE CHOPS—HAAAAIYA! For those of you around awhile, remember the “Karate Chop?” In most television shows of the '60s and '70s (*The Saint*, *T.H.E. Cat*, *U.N.C.L.E.*, *I Spy*), the way to tackle your opponent was with a good ole chop to the back of the neck.... POW...down he went! Well here's a bit of “literary karate chopping” among two prominent Chinese Americans: Writer, Scholar, Professor **Yunte Huang** and Author/Playwright **Frank Chin**. Professor Huang, born in China, is the author of the national best seller, *Charlie Chan: The Untold Story of the Honorable Detective and his Rendezvous with American History* (2010). One would say he is an advocate of sorts for Charlie Chan. Mr. Chin is a pioneer of Asian-American theater. His play, *The Chickencoop Chinaman* (1972), was the first by an Asian American to be produced on a major New York stage. He, on the other hand, is not an advocate of Charlie Chan.

Following is an NPR interview from the show “On Point” with both men (13:05 min). Be forewarned, there is a bit of “mudslinging,” and both men bring up good points. So who landed the best “karate chop” during the interview? Judge for yourself: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=roaD-IC6b0w>.

