

## Jeff Chang: Can't Stop Won't Stop

by David Mei

### *Why should we care about hip-hop?*

Well, hip-hop is what simply remains on the street. Hip-hop is a culture that started out as representing the voice of neighborhood kids who were abandoned socially and politically by government, by the mainstream, so, hip-hop developed as a movement to give voiceless people voices. Nowadays, hip-hop still does that—if you look at rap artists like Blue Scholars, Native Guns, Beau Sia, there are a whole bunch of folks out there doing their thing and representing. I just find a lot of hip-hop extremely exciting and important because it is our young folks representing who they are every single day.

### *Do you prefer mainstream or underground hip-hop?*

I love all hip-hop and I used to be so much Mr. Underground. As I've gotten older there's great art being created in the mainstream, too. In the underground when I was coming up during the early nineties, it seemed like we really had to fight commercial hip-hop. Hip-hop was endangered and being sort of co-opted and commercialized in a way we didn't recognize; being dumbed down. We won that battle, so it is important for us to support the underground, and also to praise the good stuff coming out of the mainstream. At the end of the day the great artist needs to succeed and be able to make a living.

### *Is hip-hop dead? (Rap down 44% since 2000, 33% this year)*

To me, corporate rap, stuff that you buy is only a fraction of what is happening in the hip-hop movement. If you really want to see what's happening in hip-hop you don't have to go to the store, you need to go out on to the street and see what folks are doing with the dances, how they are reinventing the slang. You've got to look at what happens in the neighborhood every single day, that's where hip-hop is—and always has been—alive.

### *Who is your favorite artist?*

If I was to name just one, Chuck D from Public Enemy. He's somebody that has lived a life of commitment. He has always been the one steadily looking towards a bigger picture. He's real; he's the epitome of real.

### *Will Asians Americans ever be considered part of the hip-hop mainstream?*

I think in a lot of ways we might not recognize it, but we already are. You look at what's been happening in the b-boy, b-girl movement and graffiti, and with alternative spoken word poetry. You know hip hop has in all those areas prominent Asian Americans: Jin in rap, Beau Sia in spoken word poetry, Q-Bert in turntables, you can talk about any number of graffiti artists out there. I think the pure majority of Asian Americans



in hip-hop is pretty much done. Now it's about recognizing what we got and supporting the folks that are out there representing.

### *Who is your Asian American role model?*

Wow, just one? Let's go with two, Grace Lee Boggs and Yuri Kochiyama. Both of them have lives of commitment working for the betterment of repressed people. They see themselves not just in this narrow self, of Grace being Chinese American, and Yuri being Japanese American. They see themselves in terms of a larger picture of who they are, planetary citizens so to speak. It's not just about who you are, but recognizing the world that you live in and dedicating yourself to it. I think they are exemplars of that and so that's why I look up to them.

### *Has your views of Asian Americans changed compared to when you were younger?*

Oh, yea I think so. I'm from Honolulu, HI, I'm Chinese-

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**“hip-hop developed as a movement to give voiceless people voices.”**

Hawaiian. When I moved to California to go to school I started experiencing racist incidents and on the other hand experiencing a lot of pride in who I was. I became an anti-racist organizer, and got a Masters' in Asian American Studies. When I was younger it was all about yellow pride and again I think that's great, but I don't think it ends there. I think that's just the beginning. Once you come to understand what your background is, the epicness of your history just starts a road toward how everything fits.

*To hear more from Jeff Chang, attend his talk:*

**Can't Stop,  
Won't Stop  
Wed., October 10<sup>th</sup>  
4:00 PM  
Student Center East  
room #302**

## Mee Moua: Moving Towards a Pan-Asian American Identity

By David Mei

Mee Moua is a State Senator of Minnesota and also the first Hmong American State Representative. Growing up as a refugee and then migrating to the United States, Mee Moua has lived her fair share of hardships at a young age, experiencing discrimination. By taking great strides the Senator overcame such obstacles, to where she now epitomizes the accomplishments of Asian Americans in this country. Minnesota is not the only thing Senator Moua represents; she also advocates for Asian American issues as well.

Before Senator Moua became highly involved in politics, she was involved in a multicultural student movement in college which was very connected with the Asian American student association on campus. Senator Moua expressed that it was her involvement with these organizations that shaped her political identity as well as her identity as an Asian American. Her motivation to participate stemmed not from any external influence, but from an internal struggle of trying to learn about her ethnic identity. Her involvement also helped her to understand the Asian American community better. As a result she has learned to embrace a much broader identity as a Pan-Asian American, an identity which she feels strengthens the Asian American community.

When Senator Moua was younger, she would refer to herself as an Hmong American. However, as she got older she came to terms with the fact that "Asian American" is an identity that encompasses a much broader spectrum in which she can represent much more than just the Hmong community.

Before Senator Moua became the first Hmong American State Senator there was Patsy Mink, the first Asian American woman to be elected into the U.S. House of Representatives. During Senator Moua's time in college she discovered Patsy Mink from an anthology that featured Asian Americans who had contributed to this country. She became an important role model for Senator Moua and helped shape her into the person she is today. She describes Patsy Mink as an ideal example of what it means to be a good thoughtful leader.

Today in a time when major political events are affecting our way of living, Senator Moua describes a resurgence of political activism among youth, and around the war in particular: "Many of these young people are looking at who's coming back in body bags and many people see these are their high school friends," and this is what sparks political involvement. Even if the war might not concern some young people, other issues are also important such as social justice and the immigration debate. Mee Moua believes that the youth voice is what is going to shape the country and redefine our priorities. So it is important to get involved with causes you believe in.

Senator Moua feels it's very important to have people of color in elected office: "When you're an Asian American or African American there may be a unique opportunity for you to exercise leadership on an important issue, to make sure it is a priority for you and your colleagues...those are the moments that it really counts that you're an Asian American." In order to make sure the issues that matter most to us are on the agenda, we need to become more involved and push these priorities to the top.



Senator Moua currently is satisfied with where she is in her career and hopes to be elected for another term so that she can finish what she has started in office. She also has high hopes in the Asian American community as she would like to see more Asian Americans stepping up and participating in major roles in this country, particularly in politics and also to see Hmong Americans become more prominent nationally.

Senator Moua believes that the community has invested so much and established pipelines for the advancement of Asian Americans in a variety of fields, so, all we need to do is get involved and take advantage of these opportunities.

*To hear more from Mee Moua, attend her talk:*

***From Student Leader to  
State Senator***

***Wed., October 24<sup>th</sup>***

***3:00 PM***

***Student Center East room  
#302***

*Co-sponsored by the Honors College, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs, and Student Leadership Development.*

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

# October 2007

- **Oct 10: Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip Hop Generation by Jeff Chang.** Talk, book signing and reception. 4:00-6:00 p.m., SCE #302.
- **Oct 12: AARCC Book Club 1st meeting!** 3:30 p.m., 101 Taft Hall. For more info 312-413-7696 or [karensu@uic.edu](mailto:karensu@uic.edu).
- **Oct 13: Chicago Asian American Leadership Forum - Networking, leadership development, and community issues.** 8:30-5:00. PWC Training Center, 1 N. Wacker Dr. Register before Oct. 9th for discounted rates. For more info <http://aarcc.vcaa.uic.edu>.
- **Oct 13: Chinese Students and Scholars Association Karaoke Competition.** 6:00-9:00 p.m. Chicago Room, SCW.
- **Oct. 18: Immigration, Reform, and Citizenship a panel discussion featuring Ronald Takaki.** 4:00-5:30 p.m. Union League Club of Chicago, 65 W. Jackson. Complimentary UIC buses will be provided, leaving SCE at 3:30 p.m. To reserve a seat, registration is required. Sponsored by UI Institute of Government and Public Affairs. 312-996-6188 [www.igpa.uillinois.edu](http://www.igpa.uillinois.edu)
- **Oct 24: From Student Leader to State Senator: Mee Moua.** 3:00 p.m., SCE #302. For more info 312-413-9653 or [ckodama@uic.edu](mailto:ckodama@uic.edu).

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10 Jeff Chang: Can't Stop Won't Stop	11	12 AARCC Book Club	13 *Asian American Leadership Forum *CSSA Karaoke Competition
14	15	16	17	18 IGPA Immi- gration Debate	19	20
21	22	23	24 Mee Moua: Student Leader to State Senator	25	26 Battle of the Bands	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3 AASIA's Imperial Ball

- **Oct. 26: Battle of the Bands.** 6 p.m.-10 p.m., Chicago Room, SCW. Sponsored by Asian American Students in Alliance
- **Nov. 3: Asian American Students in Alliance Imperial Ball.** 6:30-10 p.m., Downtown Marriott Courtyard. For more info, [bcasac2@uic.edu](mailto:bcasac2@uic.edu).

## Introducing UIC's newest Asian American Student Organization: Chinese American Students Association (CAMSA) by Melissa Gaba

### Interview with Tommy Tsou, President of CAMSA.

#### *When was your organization founded?*

CAMSA was founded this (2007) fall semester!

#### *Why did you decide to form?*

We decided to form CAMSA because as Chinese Americans we felt very underrepresented here at UIC considering there were numerous student orgs on campus yet none that were specifically geared toward Chinese Americans.

#### *What are the goals/mission/purpose of your organization?*

The mission of CAMSA is to build a stress free environment not solely for Chinese Americans, but all ethnic backgrounds to socialize and learn about Chinese American heritage.

#### *What do you like most about your organization?*

I like the fact that CAMSA is a brand new organization, which allows a lot of room for improvisation. The last thing I'd want to be a part of is a group that tells its members what to do, and how. I like the fact that our members give us their opinions and ideas that can improve this org.

#### *How would you describe your organization in 5 words or less?*

Cultural  
Avant-garde  
Modish  
Serene  
Adaptable



#### *What kind of events does*

#### *your organization participate in?*

As a new org. we are eager to participate in as many events we can get our hands on. The problem this semester was timing, we got this org up and running just spur of the moment, therefore we missed out on a lot of events. Luckily we were able to set up a table during AARCC's ice cream social where we were able to meet a lot of new people and socialize with other student orgs.

#### *What kind of activities does your organization host?*

We celebrate major Chinese holidays, like Mid-Autumn festival and Chinese New Year. We also are trying to plan a workshop on how to cook Chinese food, because let's face it, as Chinese Americans our moms usually do all the cooking. We are also planning a "make your own personalized fortune cookie" for one of our upcoming activities.

#### *In what ways would you like to see your organization grow?*

I'd like for CAMSA to be well established among the UIC undergrad community. At the least, I'd like for people to know what the acronym stood for.

#### *In 10 years, where would you like to see your organization?*

Hmmm, I don't even know what I'm going to eat for dinner later. In ten years...hopefully CAMSA could take an active role in the Chinese American community not only here at UIC, but around the nation. Maybe it'll help break boundaries and stereotypes of the Chinese in film, media, and everyday life. Though this is not an activist organization, I think it's important to touch on these points so we at least acknowledge that these problems truly exist.

#### *How can interested students join or get more information?*

They can contact me by my e-mail [ttsou2@uic.edu](mailto:ttsou2@uic.edu), or they can join our Facebook group for more information. Just search CAMSA under groups. **Ping An (Peace)**.

## Chicago's 3rd annual Asian American Leadership Forum

Registration is now open for Chicago's 3rd annual Asian American Leadership Forum on Sat. October 13th! AARCC is one of the local organizations working with Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics on this annual conference.

What: 3rd Annual Chicago Asian American Leadership Forum

Where: PricewaterhouseCoopers Training Center  
1 North Wacker Drive  
Chicago, IL 60606

When: October 13th, 2007  
8:30am - 5:00pm

Dialogue with individuals from Chicago's diverse Asian American community through workshops focusing on leadership development and community issues.

Planned workshop topics include:

- Mentorship - Exploring the Dynamics of Mentoring
- Team Building through Active Participation
- Understanding Your Cultural Values
- From Geek to Chic: How to Manage Your Career Successfully
- Media Training - Working with Ethnic Media

### HOW TO REGISTER:

#### Before 10/9 Early Bird Registration Fees:

- \$40 General Admission (use promo code: general-aalf for another \$5 off)
- \$25 Nonprofit/Ed Staff/Faculty (code: nonprofit-aalf for \$5 off)
- \$10 Student (promo code: student-aalf for \$5 off)

#### After 10/9 Registration Fee for all: \$50

Head to AARCC's website at <http://aarcc.vcaa.uic.edu> to register online or download a registration form with detailed workshop descriptions.

## VOICE BOX

### *I Wish I Could Do This* by David Mei

"I wish I could do this" or something along those lines is what I occasionally hear my fellow Asian American peers talk about, as if there is no passion in what they are currently doing. I've talked to many people who would want to take photographs for a living or direct a movie and chase this artistic facet that they have, though in the end they think to themselves, "Can I do it?" or a better question is, "Can I make a living off of this?" There are insecurities about pursuing goals that may seem fanciful to some as they want to fall back on something that they can actually make a living out of. However, some of my peers that chose to go into a major that seems to offer some financial stability still seem insecure about their own decisions. There is nothing wrong with an internal struggle, I believe this is how we learn and make us better and more responsible adults. The issue I want to address however is that little voice in the back of our heads that keeps wondering, "What if?"

I've never been outgoing, and since I got into college I have been applying myself to keep stepping out of my comfort zone even if it is just inch by inch. There have been disappointments, but also there are things that I accomplished because I exerted myself. I participated in the Asian American Awareness Month committee which allowed me to meet such people as Jin and George Takei. Also, it allowed me to meet and make friends with a lot of older students that had more experience than me considering I was a freshman at the time. This is also an important aspect of going through college and that is networking. No matter what your intended major, one of the most important assets any student can get out of college is a network and that is only accomplished if one throws him or her self out into the circle. If anything, a year's experience has taught me that it is necessary to move around and stumble and occasionally make a fool out of ourselves, as experiences from mistakes make it possible for us to learn and become more aware of our own abilities. With that being said I don't see any reason that we should hold back of just going out on a limb to see how far we can actually go. Even if the experience is not so memorable the thought of "what if?" will be quenched.

Is it really necessary for us to all become doctors and pharmacists or bio and chemistry majors? Sure, it is a necessary field of study, but is it necessary for you to pursue if you don't have the same devotion for it as singing into a microphone or writing short stories? I find it important for us as Asian Americans to delve into many other things, beyond personal preferences this will also diversify our view of suitable careers for Asian Americans. Instead of thinking of walking on an evenly paved road, it'll be nice to pioneer a new route for future Asian Americans to consider. I think the more we push ourselves outward in other directions we also open many opportunities not for us, but also for later generations.

I wish that those who read this will have the drive to push themselves further, and for those who are passively letting the day go I hope that you can slowly wiggle your way into taking strides. There is nothing wrong in failure if you learn how to succeed. There is nothing wrong with taking a breath in a midst of a storm. The point that we are all in school is to learn, not just English, math, science, and etc., but also about ourselves. This is the time we should understand our roles in society and discover our own identity. At the same time you're wondering "why." you don't have time for such things with classes and such, but also ask yourself, "why not?"

### **Voice Box – Write for Us!**

*Voice Box is a new segment of AARCConnections. The goal of Voice Box is for any student, staff, and faculty to extend their thoughts about how they view the Asian American community or just anything relevant to Asian Americans. Please submit your writing to [aarcc@uic.edu](mailto:aarcc@uic.edu).*

*Disclaimer: Opinions of contributions to Voice Box are not necessarily representative of AARCC.*



- **Are you an undecided major?**
- **Are you questioning your current major choice?**
- **Are you overwhelmed by the many different major options at UIC?**

Then join us for:

#### **Choosing a Major Workshop**

Friday, Nov. 9

1:00 p.m.

3050 Student Services Building  
Office of Career Services

There are over 80 majors to choose from at UIC—how do you know which one is right for you? This is an important but difficult choice for any student, but Asian Americans often feel additional pressure to choose certain majors due to family or societal expectations.

Join us for this fun and interesting look at college majors. Bring your questions! Co-sponsored by the Office of Career Services.

**Asian American Resource and  
Cultural Center**

101 Taft Hall (MC 203)  
826 S. Halsted  
Chicago, IL 60607-7029

Phone: 312-413-9569  
E-mail: [aarcc@uic.edu](mailto:aarcc@uic.edu)  
[aarcc.vcaa.uic.edu](http://aarcc.vcaa.uic.edu)

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AARCC@UIC.EDU*

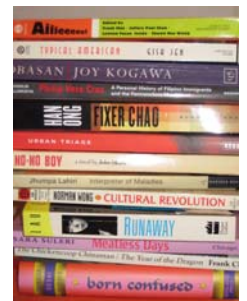


## Join the NEW AARCC Book Club!

Ever wonder what books are out there on Asian Americans? Looking for an opportunity to read for fun? Help us start the AARCC Book Club.

You're invited to a meeting on Oct. 12, Friday, 3:30 @ AARCC (101 Taft Hall).  
Come vote on the first AARCC Book Club selection. Here are the choices:

*The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri  
*Dim Sum of All Things* by Kim Wong Keltner  
*Asian American Dreams* by Helen Zia  
*Bento Box in the Heartland* by Linda Furiya



Bring other suggestions from your "To Read" list. Enter a raffle to win a **FREE** copy of the first book club selection. For more information, contact Karen Su ([karensu@uic.edu](mailto:karensu@uic.edu)) or call 312-413-7696.