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MY TURN

■ Wayne Chan



An electrifying fair

Well, now I've done it. I didn't think I would. Actually, I was sure I wouldn't. I have too much on my plate already. I wouldn't be able to do it justice. Even if I wanted to do it, I just don't have the time, so no way, it's just not gonna happen. I'm ruling it out. Someone else will have to do it. It's not happening. No way, no how.

And yet, for all my naysaying and absolute rejection of it, I'm doing it.

What am I talking about?

I "volunteered" to be the chairman of the San Diego Chinese New Year faire.

How on earth did this possibly happen? What could have occurred to compel me to take on this job?

That's the thing — I didn't. In the end, my friends did me in.

It started simply enough. I was recently asked to sit on the board of the San Diego Chinese Historical Museum. I wasn't really looking to serve on another board, but after receiving the invitation, I thought it was for a good cause and a terrific museum. And I already knew several people on the board. It's also important to note that the museum has nothing to do with the Chinese New Year faire.

I attended the first board meeting and all was well, nothing really out of the ordinary ... until the very end of the meeting.

Our board chair mentioned the San Diego Chinese Center was planning to close its doors after many decades of service and was looking for another group to continue organizing the one large event they put on every year. That event? You guessed it — the San Diego Chinese New Year faire.

Our board chair then looked around the table, finally setting his eyes on me, and asked, "Wayne, do you think you could help look at the feasibility of us taking this on?"

And for reasons I will likely never understand, I said, "Sure, I'd be happy to help."

How it went from my agreeing to do a feasibility study to chairing the whole thing is a story unto itself, but let's just say peer pressure can be a very

powerful thing. Deep down inside, I suspect there is a more meaningful reason why I decided to do it.

It was 1990. I had just moved back to San Diego after working a few years at my first job following college graduation when I decided to get involved with the local Chinese community. I knew the annual Chinese New Year faire was coming up and it always needed people, so after attending a few volunteer meetings, I was assigned to work the children's booth, manning the goldfish pond game.

The game entailed setting down a small plastic pool and filling it with water and goldfish. Floating on the surface of the water were hundreds of plastic bowls. The point of the game was to toss ping-pong balls into the bowls. If the kids were able to land a ball in one of the bowls, they won a live goldfish.

The only issue with the game was that it was pouring down rain during the fair. As the rain cascaded off the top of the booth tent, there was some kind of short circuit that was causing a light above me to spark every few minutes. This was a little disconcerting since I was standing above a pool handling bags of water with live goldfish in them.

I kept thinking the headline for the next day's newspaper would be, "Man electrocuted at children's pool ... but goldfish are fine."

So you can see why I might be a little hesitant to jump back into the whole Chinese New Year faire thing.

Well, except for one thing. During the volunteer meetings, I met the executive director of the San Diego Chinese Center. I couldn't take my eyes off her. She was the most beautiful girl I had ever met. And I couldn't find the nerve to even talk to her. But somehow I managed to ask her out for dinner at some point.

Who was this girl? Her name was Maya, and we recently celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary together.

I may have been nearly electrocuted, but that fair meant the world to me.

So I guess I'm all in.

Opinions expressed in this newspaper are those of the authors and not necessarily those of this publication.

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ภาษาไทย: ควบคุมโรคเบาหวานเพื่อชีวิตของท่าน. **LAOTIAN**

泰语: ควบคุมโรคเบาหวานเพื่อชีวิตของท่าน. **THAI**

GUJARATI: આવાના રોગને કાબુમાં રાખો. **GUJARATI**

KOREAN: 당신의 당뇨병을 조절하십시오. 일생동안. **KOREAN**

SAMOAN: Ia pulea lou ma'i suka. Mu lou soifuaga. **SAMOAN**

TAGALOG: Pamahalaan ang inyong diyabetis, upang manatiling malusog at masigla. **TAGALOG**

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