

Not Just Surviving, **But Thriving**

BY TONY L. STARKS

The influence of the Oakland Chinese Golf Club extends well beyond the Bay Area. Hugh Lee, the club's longest tenured member, joined two years after the group was formed in 1957 and currently serves as both honorary president and historian. During his first run as club president in 1968, he ignited a community of Chinese golf clubs that currently spans the entire West Coast and stretches from Los Angeles to Vancouver.

His vision was to host large invitational events as a show of unity among Chinese golf clubs. After proposing the concept and two years of navigating policy and procedural practices, the Federation of Chinese Golf Clubs was established in May of 1970.

"It was a big undertaking at the time," recalls Lee, 85. "I can remember going to some courses to schedule events and having them laugh at me, saying things like: 'Where are you going to get 50 Chinese golfers?' But we were committed. We've managed to survive and have some pretty good times over the years."

There were eight original clubs, where presently there are 18 with more than 800 members. In 2010, the name was changed to the Association of International Golf Clubs (AIGC) with new member clubs in Vancouver and Victoria, British Columbia as well as Portland and Seattle.

The invitationals he envisioned have journeyed to Tucson, Reno, Hawaii and Mexico – not to mention up and down the West Coast. Prior to COVID, the AIGC hosted two annual events, but all activities have halted due to the pandemic with 2021 events also canceled.

The Oakland Chinese Golf Club's 95 members still play locally each month as ordinances allow, commonly traversing the fairways of Callippe Preserve, Rancho Solano, Chardonnay GC, Poppy Ridge and more. While Lee is grateful, he's also eager to resume the large-scale AIGC events.

"It's so nice getting together from year to year with friends from all over," Lee says. "Golf is such a wonderful foundation for building relationships. It's given me permanent friends from all walks of life." 🌐

