

network

HUMANITIES

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PROJECT AIMS TO USE RESIDENTS' STORIES TO COUNTERACT STEREOTYPES

This is the fifth in a series of articles about the Council's Communities Speak projects, which use story to address critical community issues.

Seventy-five-year-old Edgar Orange moved to South Los Angeles more than 50 years ago. He remembers when Central Avenue was the hub of a thriving jazz scene, when plant closures in the defense and aerospace industries left thousands of South L.A. workers unemployed, and when large numbers of Latinos began establishing roots in the community.

Now Orange's experiences as well as those of many other South L.A. residents are being documented by an innovative story project aimed

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The Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research recruits interns for its "Generation to Generation" project from neighboring Manual Arts High School, one of the oldest high schools in Los Angeles. Manual Arts student Albert Castro, right, worked on the project last spring. At left, a homeroom class at Manual Arts in the 1950s. Photos courtesy of the Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research and Manual Arts High School.

COUNCIL FUNDS 20 NEW CALIFORNIA STORY FUND PROJECTS

Stories to broaden understanding of the state and its people



A newly funded California Story Fund project will collect stories from workers affected by the mechanization of the shipping industry in the early 1960s. Photo courtesy of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union.

The Council is pleased to announce funding for 20 new projects under the California Story Fund, the small grants component of the California Stories initiative. The projects will gather stories from a wide spectrum of Californians and then present them to the public in a variety of ways such as forums, photographs and theater pieces and on CD-ROMs and websites. To date, the Council has funded 87 projects under this grant line.

"California Story Fund projects are expanding our understanding of California by bringing to light important stories from a number of California communities, many of

which have never been told before," said CCH Executive Director Jim Quay. "I think they will reveal much about the reality of California life and give us insight into our past and future."

The stories being gathered are as varied as the state itself. They will tell us about the efforts of Afghan artists to forge a new identity in California, how a small group of citizens stopped a nuclear power plant from being built in Bodega Bay and what happened to San Francisco's Japantown after World War II. They will also reveal the struggles of Indian women to maintain their culture, the role of

the San Diego River in people's lives and how a Los Angeles community banded together to save open spaces for residents.

See the complete list of projects below. For more information,

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The California Council for the Humanities is a state-based affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. *Humanities Network* is published quarterly and mailed to anyone who requests it from the San Francisco office.

RECOGNIZING THE LINK BETWEEN VIOLENCE AND HEALING

By James Quay, Executive Director

This past June, a Council member told me something that reinforced for me the importance of using stories to strengthen communities. While the media was broadcasting disturbing images from Abu Ghraib prison, she was reading California Story Fund proposals from organizations whose only intention was to bring people together to hear one another's stories, to promote mutual understanding in the community. She told me it felt like a privilege, an antidote to the brutality portrayed by the media.

Two months later an old friend told me about his experience returning to this country after attending a wedding in Canada. He was there for only a few days, but it was long enough for him to feel a tangible difference on re-entering the United States. Sitting in a U.S. airport and watching a television screen, he realized that he was once again being assaulted by war. No matter what your opinion about the war in Iraq, news about it is something Americans now live with. In Canada, for three days, my friend had been in a country that was not at war, and it felt different. It felt good.

I was reminded of these two quite different comments as I looked over the newly funded California Story Fund projects announced in this issue because I was struck by how many of the projects have links to both violence and healing. Afghan artists and Vietnamese who came here to escape the violence of their native lands tell stories of their new lives in California. Women in a rural county break silence to talk of their surviving domestic violence. A community confronts the story of an act



of vigilante violence that split the community 60 years ago.

It reminds me again of another observation, by theologian Martin Buber, that the enemy of war is speech, the speech of genuine conversation, in which people understand one another and come to a mutual understanding.

October is National Arts and Humanities Month. The president of the United States and governors of many states will sign proclamations declaring that the arts and humanities are vital to whole individuals, healthy communities and an informed citizenry. At a time when it is so easy to become inured to the brutality of violence, I hope some of the proclamations will acknowledge that the arts and humanities help give us voice to resist the violence around us and to help us — together — realize how bruised and weary our hearts are, how we long to be rid of that violence.

Each one of these projects — not to mention Southern California Library's inspiring "Generation to Generation" project and the San Diego Library's citywide program on the role of religion in people's lives — contributes to the genuine conversation we need so desperately.

Next spring we will publish an anthology of new California writing that will add to the conversation. In April libraries will host reading and discussion groups focused on that writing, and students will interview their parents and neighbors to learn more about their lives.

I will have the pleasure of interviewing writers from the anthology in front of audiences at nine libraries. If you believe in the power of the arts and humanities, if you believe in the power of genuine conversation, you won't want to miss those events.

James Quay

Yoshinaga and Rodgers join staff

Ann Yoshinaga is the new development coordinator in San Francisco. Yoshinaga has more than five years' experience in the field of fundraising, primarily as a grant writer for artists, arts organizations and community-based, nonprofit human services organizations. Before she joined the Council, Yoshinaga worked on a fundraising campaign in the Development Office at San

Francisco State University. Other experience includes a position managing international client relations at an international youth exchange program.

Yoshinaga holds a bachelor of arts degree in community studies from UC Santa Cruz.

Patricia Rodgers is the new administrative/executive assistant



in San Francisco. Rodgers came to CCH from the Library and Center for Knowledge Management, UC San Francisco, where she was a library assistant. She has also held several other library positions and served as an administrative assis-



tant at the Institute for Nonprofit Organization Management at the University of San Francisco

and as secretary in the University Librarian's Office at UC Berkeley.

Roberts holds a bachelor of arts degree in English and French from UC Davis, where she also pursued doctoral studies in English, and a master's degree in English from Boston University.

A native Californian, Rodgers was born in San Francisco, spent her early childhood in Japan and the Philippines, and grew up in Marin and Sonoma counties.

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I nominate _____ as a member of the California Council for the Humanities Board of Directors.

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Please fill out and mail, along with supporting materials, to: CCH, 312 Sutter St., Suite 601, San Francisco, CA 94108.

Board Nominations Invited

The California Council for the Humanities will select at least two new members for the Board of Directors later this year and invites nominations from the public.

Council board members are committed to advancing the humanities in public life and are typically leaders drawn from public and academic life. Members serve three-year terms that are renewable once.

The Council seeks outstanding board members from any part of the state. This year the Council particularly welcomes nominations of Native Americans, Latinos and African Americans, and of people living in the following areas: the northern coast, the upper San

Joaquin Valley, San Diego and the Inland Empire.

To nominate an individual, please complete the short board nomination form (at left) and submit the following supporting materials:

- A brief resume from the nominee
- A statement indicating the nominee's occupation, education, areas of public service and special qualifications for membership
- A letter of recommendation from someone other than yourself if you are recommending yourself, or assurance that the nominee is willing to serve if you are nominating another person.

Please make the strongest case you can for the nominee. Nominations must be received in the Council's San Francisco office no later than Friday, Oct. 15, 2004.

Please note that no nomination will be considered without the requisite supporting materials.

at correcting misconceptions about the area and increasing understanding of its history and changing demographics, particularly among young people. Called “Generation to Generation: Making a Life in South Los Angeles, 1940–2005,” the project, sponsored by the Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research, is one of eight Communities Speak projects the Council is supporting under its California Stories initiative.

“South Los Angeles is home to thousands of people who have raised children, led full and satisfying lives, and worked to improve conditions, but the media has stigmatized the area by portraying it as completely troubled and crime-ridden,” said Project Director Alexis Moreno. “This project will put the real story about South L.A. into the hands of residents and help engender a sense of community pride.”

Moreno, who holds a master’s degree in urban planning from UCLA and serves as the library’s program director, believes that stories are one of the best ways to get at the truth of people’s lives and learn about the past, particularly in communities of color. “A lot of the history of South L.A. is not written down,” she said. “You need to go to the people who lived the experiences.”

Central to the project is a series of community forums on various aspects of South L.A.’s history and culture. One of those, held this past spring, brought together a panel of three older residents to talk about life in South L.A. during the 1940s, ‘50s and ‘60s.

“THE HISTORY BELONGS TO THE COMMUNITY, AND WE WANT TO MAKE IT ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE. WE ENVISION THE LIBRARY AS A DESTINATION FOR ANYONE INTERESTED IN SOUTH L.A.’S HISTORY.”

“The great thing about that event,” said Moreno, “was that the discussion afterwards quickly moved from focusing on things like race relations and the employment situation 40 and 50 years ago to what’s happening today. The people in the audience were asking, ‘How do we make things better for people now?’ The concern made you feel that another way is possible for the community.”

Another community forum held this past summer featured a panel of artists, filmmakers and writers discussing their work and the role of art in the community. “A lot of talented artists are working in South L.A., and we wanted to make people aware of that and how art has always been an important aspect of life here,” Moreno said.

Film screenings are another component of the project and have included a documentary on the history of the African American com-



Clockwise from top left. Panelists Kay Powell, George Wright and Mary Lee talk about life in South L.A. in the ‘40s, ‘50s and ‘60s at an “Elders Speak” event. Project Director Moreno answers questions about the “Generation to Generation” project at the library’s booth at the Central Avenue Jazz Festival. Project interns and a work-study student pose with Project Director Moreno in front of a library mural by Eva Cockcroft honoring the power of ordinary people to make a difference. Pictured, from left, are Christina Sánchez, Sonja Diaz, Moreno, Marlem Landa, Roxane Herrera and Paola Ruvalcaba. Film Director Martin Sorrendeguy talks to Brittany Rodriguez and Alex Poole during the “From Zoot Suit to Hip Hop” video and discussion series. Photos courtesy of the Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research.

munity and another on the economy of the area. Moreno hopes that an upcoming four-part film series on L.A. youth culture will appeal to teenagers. The series, called “From Zoot Suit to Hip-Hop,” will include the 1981 film *Zoot Suit*, loosely based on the Luis Valdez play of the same name about the racial tensions provoked by an unsolved 1940s Los Angeles murder case. Several documentaries will also be featured, including one on Chicano bands in the hard-core punk scene and another exploring the world of the urban graffiti artist.

at UCLA, working on the project, was eye-opening. Born in Mexico, Ruvalcaba lived in South L.A. as a young child and thought she knew the area, but it wasn’t until she began conducting research and oral history interviews that she began to realize its rich history.

Among those Ruvalcaba interviewed was longtime activist Dee Petty. “She is amazing because she’s worked in the community more than 40 years, trying to make things better, and she’s never given up,” Ruvalcaba said. “I wish I could do just half of what she has done.”

Moreno believes that the interns bring a unique perspective to the project because of their connection to the area. “They see the way the area is stereotyped, and they are motivated to change things,” she said.

The library, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, is working with a long list of organizations to make the project a reality. One of those, Manual Arts High School, became involved after participating in library-sponsored oral history training. That experience inspired one Manual Arts teacher to conduct an oral history project with her own students that was later honored by the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Individuals are beginning to come forward to join the effort and donate materials to the library’s collection. “I’m getting yearbooks from high schools, and filmmakers are contacting me about arranging screenings of films they’ve made about the area,” Moreno said.

“People understand that it’s important to have the material here to share with the community. The response has been way beyond what I anticipated, and I think it speaks to the importance of the project to the community.”

The library has involved the

community in its projects before, sponsoring a series of panel discussions in 2000 examining work-related issues and a documentation project in 1998 inviting residents to donate yearbooks, photographs and other memorabilia to the library’s collection. “The ‘Generation to Generation’ project builds on those earlier efforts,” Moreno said.

“This project has allowed us to strengthen our connection with the local community and attract a more diverse audience to the library to discuss and research issues that matter in people’s lives today,” she said. “The history belongs to the community, and we want to make it accessible to everyone. We envision the library as a destination for anyone interested in South L.A.’s history.”

For lifelong Los Angeles resident Moreno, the project has been the continuation of a journey she began in 1992 when Los Angeles erupted in flames after the verdict in the Rodney King case. “I didn’t understand all the reasons that so many people were so angry, but I wanted to find out. It was one of the reasons I decided to pursue the field of urban planning.

“More than 10 years later, my work on this project is providing me with answers to my questions. Now I want residents to be aware of the history here, to know that public policy decisions made a long time ago have contributed to today’s conditions, and that this area has a rich, complex history that people can be proud of and build on.”

For information about the “Generation to Generation” project and upcoming events, visit the website of the library at www.socallib.org or e-mail Alexis Moreno at amoreno@socallib.org.



STORIES

OF

FAITH



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More than 40 events will explore the role of religion in the lives of San Diegans

This is the sixth in a series of articles about the Council's Communities Speak projects. Also see story on page 1.

Two months after the Sept. 11 attacks, San Diego residents gathered at the San Diego Public Library to attend a series of programs designed to challenge people's ideas about Islamic beliefs and practices. Those programs, funded by the Council under a grant line created in response to the 9/11 tragedy, were received so enthusiastically that the three librarians who developed them — Lynn Whitehouse, Marc Chery and Aglae Saint-Lot — began to talk about creating something much bigger, a project that would involve the whole city in discussing religion and its role in people's lives.

Now, almost three years later, that idea has become a reality. "Stories of Faith," a project funded by the Council under its Communities Speak program, is enabling San Diego residents, through a series of more than 40 events, to learn about the beliefs and values of scores of groups in San Diego, from Buddhists and Rastafarians to Bahais and Mormons.

With a population among the most diverse of any in the country, San Diego is home to people from

Maria Aguilar, 87, left and at right, in her church in Chula Vista, Calif. Aguilar talked about the role of faith in her life as part of the Stories of Faith project. Photo/Peter Holderness.

Marian Mohamed, top right, age 11, is part of a growing Somali community in San Diego. Photo/Peter Holderness.

a wide variety of faiths, such as Rubaba Alizada, a refugee from Afghanistan now living in Linda Vista who covers her head with a veil when she goes out in public, or Mai Duong, a devout Buddhist passionate about preserving the religious traditions of her native Vietnam.

"Whether we like it or not, religion has become an extremely important component of society and a big part of many people's lives," said Orlando Espin, professor of religious studies at the University of San Diego and director of USD's Center for the Study of Latino/a Catholicism and one of the humanities experts contributing to the project. "A program like this is much needed in San Diego to promote understanding and respect among the many diverse groups that live here and to lay the groundwork for establishing shared community goals."

In developing the project, the library involved more than a dozen organizations, including the Alliance for African Assistance, the Cross Cultural Center at UC San Diego, the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice at the University of San Diego, and the American Jewish Committee. "Everyone wanted to get involved when they heard what we wanted to do," said San Diego librarian Lynn Whitehouse, who directed the project along with Chery and Saint-Lot. "For us, it reaffirmed the key place of the library in the community."

The 40-odd events that make up the project include dance per-

formances, film screenings, art exhibits, panel discussions and oral history workshops. Three religious centers — the Bahai Faith Center, the Buddhist Temple of San Diego and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints — will hold open houses featuring ecumenical services, exhibits and talks on religious and spiritual practices.

A series of community gatherings designed to introduce people to the basic tenets of Islam will take place at three branch libraries. The Joan Kroc Institute of Peace and Justice at USD will hold a panel discussion on the common roots

Whitehouse is hoping that the project will appeal to all San Diegans, but she is focusing particularly on attracting those in neighborhoods south and east of downtown and in the City Heights community, where many immigrant groups live.

She thinks the project will be a learning experience for those who attend and that it will serve as a catalyst for much-needed dialogue. "Religion is much on our minds these days, and I think it's something we need to talk about, no matter what our beliefs," Whitehouse said. "It's particularly



and shared beliefs of Bahai, Christianity, Islam and Judaism. And UCSD's Cross Cultural Center will feature a presentation and discussion on the role of faith in struggles for social justice, including the civil rights movement.

Among the scheduled exhibits are a collection of personal altars created by 10 San Diego area artists and another exploring the role of the Black Madonna in Italian and Italian American culture.

An original play, developed from interviews with 10 new immigrants about the role of faith in their lives, will be part of the project. And a video featuring conversations with Mexican American grandmothers about their experiences of religion is also planned.

important in San Diego, where so many cultures and religious beliefs are colliding. We hope that the project will open people's minds and that it will enable us to see what we have in common despite our differences and lead us to accept and respect each other so that we can move forward and solve the problems we face."

"Stories of Faith" events will take place through January 2005. For a schedule of events, visit <http://www.sandiego.gov/publiclibrary/newsevents/faithevents.shtml> or contact Project Director Lynn Whitehouse at lwhitehouse@sandiego.gov.

20 NEW STORY FUND PROJECTS (continued from page 1)

please visit the Council's website at www.californiastories.org.

The California Story Fund is a quarterly grant program under the Council's California Stories initiative. The deadline for the next round of funding is Dec. 1, 2004. For guidelines, visit http://www.cal-hum.org/guidelines/guidelines_main.htm.

BACK IN THE DAY: REBIRTH AND RENEWAL IN SAN FRANCISCO'S JAPANTOWN

National Japanese American Historical Society, San Francisco
Capturing the history of post-war history of San Francisco's Japantown

CALIFORNIA AFGHAN ARTISTS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

UC Regents, Sponsored Projects Office, Berkeley
How Afghan artists are forging a new identity in California

CALIFORNIA PROJECT ON SIKH HISTORY AND LIFE

The Sikh Center of the San Francisco Bay Area, El Sobrante
Capturing the Sikh experience in California

FROM DIALOGUE TO DRAMA: THE JAPANESE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IN THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

Friends of Lopez Adobe, San Fernando
Capturing the internment experiences of Japanese Americans from the San Fernando Valley

THE HOLE IN THE HEAD GANG: THE SAVING OF BODEGA BAY

The Sitting Room, Cotati
Stories from the group that saved Bodega Bay

LAS HISTORIAS DE LADERA
People's Self-Help Housing Corporation, San Luis Obispo
Latino families at an affordable housing complex in San Luis Obispo tell their stories

THE LEGACY CONTINUES: YOUTH ACTIVISM TODAY

Community Works, Berkeley
Ninth-grade students in Oakland document the stories of young Bay Area activists

**"LONG SHADOW"
(EBAUGH PROJECT)**
Foothill Theatre Company,



Emma Hoo Tom, seen here in 1911, was one of the first Chinese American women in Oakland to register to vote. In 1935, her son, Art Tom became the first Chinese American to work for the California Department of Motor Vehicles. Tom, 91, will share his story as part of a California Story Fund project on Oakland Chinatown before World War II. Photo courtesy of Art Tom.

ONE RIVER: MANY STORIES
San Diego River Park Foundation, San Diego
Telling the story of the San Diego River

STORIES BEHIND THE SONGS
Programs for People, San Francisco
Adult offenders listen to the stories of performers who use music as a tool for social change

**OUR AFRICAN AMERICAN ELDERS:
WISDOM OF THE AGES**
Eighth and Wall, Rolling Hills Estate
Documenting the life experiences of African American elders in Los Angeles

STORIES OF COURAGE
KOREAN WOMEN SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE
Shimtuh, a project of Korean Community Center of the East Bay, Oakland
Immigrant Korean women break their silence

**RECLAIMED STORIES:
OAKLAND CHINATOWN**
Oakland Public Library, Oakland
Capturing the pre-World War II stories of Chinese Americans in Oakland

REMEMBERING THE RIVER
San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust, Fresno
Using stories to educate people about the importance of a river

RURAL WOMEN'S TRUTH TELLING
Women's Mountain Passages, Quincy
Survivors of domestic violence in a rural area of California tell their stories

**THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY:
VIETNAMESE DIASPORA
STORIES IN CALIFORNIA**
Vietnamese American Arts & Letter Association, Westminster
Using photography and oral history to document two Vietnamese communities in California 30 years after the end of the Vietnam War.



Asian Village, a shopping center in Orange County, caters to one of the largest Vietnamese communities in the United States, now being documented by a California Story Fund project. Photo/Brian Doan.

COASTAL CHUMASH: STORIES OF CONTEMPORARY NATIVE AMERICANS IN CALIFORNIA

California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks
Chumash Indians talk about their culture and heritage

Nevada City
Creating a play from a 60-year-old incident

**MAKING CONNECTIONS: CAREER
WAITRESSES OF THE BAY AREA**
Institute on Aging, San Francisco
Documenting the experiences of older career waitresses in the San Francisco Bay Area

COMMUNITY STORIES: ARTSCHANGE CENTRAL AMERICAN PHOTO NARRATIVES AND TRAVELING EXHIBITION

Arts Change, Richmond
A health center documents one of the immigrant communities it serves

**MEN VERSUS MACHINES:
WORKERS FACING
MECHANIZATION ON THE
WATERFRONT**
The Harry Bridges Project, Los Angeles
Stories from longshoremen affected by a groundbreaking labor agreement



The Council's 2001-2003 California Stories report is now available. Visit the Council's website at www.californiastories.org and download your copy today.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO OLDER WAITRESSES

California Story Fund project director seeks to explore waitress-customer relationships formed over many years



A sign for a coffee shop on Hyde Street, San Francisco. Photo/Candacy Taylor.

When 78-year-old Laverne Phillips was laid off from her job at the Seven Seas restaurant in Sausalito this past summer, many of her regular customers took it hard. Jerry Lolack was particularly upset. “I can’t hardly go in there now that you’re gone,” he told her by phone recently. Lolack, who ate at the Seven Seas every Sunday for 15 years, was one of Phillips’ most loyal customers. “He didn’t want anyone else to wait on him because I took such good care of him and knew all his quirks,” Phillips said.



Project Director Candacy Taylor became interested in capturing the stories of older career waitresses while working as a waitress herself.

Artist, photographer and writer Candacy Taylor has been talking with — and photographing — older waitresses like Phillips for the last three years, traveling more than 5,000 miles in her quest for stories.

She is particularly interested in exploring the connections between waitresses and their longtime customers. Now, as a recipient of a California Story Fund grant, she will be collecting stories of waitresses in the San Francisco Bay Area, her home for the past 13 years.

Taylor became interested in learning about career waitresses while working as a waitress herself at a stylish sushi restaurant in San Francisco. That was three years ago, when she was still in graduate school, pursuing a master’s degree in visual criticism at California College of the Arts and scouting for a topic for her thesis.

She loved the scheduling flexibility that waitressing gave her, but found the work grueling and began to wonder how older women did it day after day, year after year. The idea occurred to her that these older women and their experiences might be an interesting thesis topic.

Armed with a mini disc recorder and a digital camera, Taylor set out on a three-week road trip two weeks after the Sept. 11 attacks. Her trip took her to Arizona, Nevada and parts of California, where she interviewed waitresses in diners, coffee shops and casinos.

What she learned completely surprised her. “Based on my own

experience as a waitress, I expected the women to feel overburdened, underappreciated and bitter, but just the opposite was true,” she said. “These women were full of life and proud of the service they provide. They told me they wouldn’t do anything else.”

Taylor attributes the attitudes of these women to several factors. “Most of the women I interviewed work in neighborhood places, where they feel at home and can be themselves,” she said. “They don’t have to cater to customers the same way that waitresses do at fancier establishments. But, more important, these women have developed relationships with their customers that go way



After 35 years on the job, 78-year-old Laverne Phillips was laid off from her waitressing job in Sausalito, Calif., this past summer and is currently looking for work. Photo/Candacy Taylor.

beyond typical waitress-customer interactions. They look forward to seeing their regulars and catching up with what’s happening in their lives.”

Back in San Francisco, Taylor wrote her thesis and put together an audio-visual presentation featuring excerpts from the more than 20 hours of interviews she had gathered. The response to the project prompted Taylor to think about writing a book about the topic, but in the meantime she started applying for grants. When she read the guidelines for the California Story Fund, she felt it was a perfect fit for what she was doing.

Taylor has already begun to approach longtime waitresses in the Bay Area for her project. And it is none too soon. The Bay Area may be filled with thousands of

restaurants, but neighborhood coffee shops and diners — the kind of places where older waitresses work — are rapidly becoming a thing of the past. Taylor wants to capture stories from waitresses in those establishments before it’s too late.

“It’s been a passion of mine, and I work on it every day whether I get paid or not,” she says. To support herself, Taylor still waits tables at the sushi restaurant a few days a week. “I don’t know how long I’ll keep waitressing. I struggle with it and I think it’s one of the reasons I write about it, but right now there’s no reason for me to leave.”

Taylor’s San Francisco project will culminate in April 2005 with a multimedia exhibit at a local gallery featuring photographs of the waitresses and excerpts from the interviews. The waitresses and some of their regular customers will be invited to the event.

“From what I’ve learned so far I think that older waitresses can tell us a lot about issues of work and identity today,” Taylor said. “The women I’ve talked to have found fulfillment in jobs regularly dismissed as degrading. Many have developed lasting bonds with their regular customers and have become respected and loved in their communities. I hope that this project will bring awareness to the contributions of these women and the important role they play in communities — and cause us all to re-examine the role of work in our own lives.”

Candacy Taylor’s project on career waitresses is being sponsored by the Institute on Aging in San Francisco. Taylor will be conducting a workshop on career waitresses as models of healthy aging at the Joint Conference of the American Society on Aging in March 2005.

Who We Are

The mission of the California Council for the Humanities is to enrich California's cultural life and to strengthen communities through public use of the humanities.

The Council is an independent, not-for-profit state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities supported through a public-private partnership that includes funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities, private foundations and corporations. The Council also receives essential support from individuals.

To learn more about the Council and how you can participate in its programs, please visit us online at www.californiastories.org.

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