

**MY RECENT ARTICLES**
[: Raining On a Chinese New Year Parade](#)

- [Steering Toward Rock; Rolling Toward Rats](#)
- [It Certainly Wasn't The Same Old Song](#)
- [Pass the Catch-Up](#)
- [Manhattan: Chow, Ciao, and Visits to TV Land - and the Summer of Love](#)
- [Ed Jew's Dilemma: When A House Is Not a Home](#)
- ['Ching-Chong' and 'Flied-Lice' On the Air: Enough Is Enough](#)
- [A Visit with Bill Clinton: Health and 'Heartbreak'](#)

[Click for Full Listing >>](#)
**ARTICLES BY AUTHOR**

- [Lia Chang](#)
- [AC Team](#)
- [: Ben Fong-Torres](#)
- [Steven Joe](#)
- [Stephen Rakower](#)
- [Jhemon Lee](#)
- [Jim Ferguson](#)
- [Angi Ma Wong FenSSHui Lady \(R\)](#)
- [Mike Kai](#)
- [AsianConnections](#)
- [Suzanne Joe](#)
- [Marissa Becker](#)
- [Wayne Chiang](#)
- [Matt Wong](#)
- [Contributing Author](#)

[Home](#) > [Articles](#) > [Arts & Entertainment](#) > [Ben Fong-Torres](#)

## Raining On a Chinese New Year Parade

 by **Ben Fong-Torres** March 04, 2008


Rain? What rain? After the broadcast, Ben poses with (L to R) KTVU's Lori Darnell, Jim Haman, Julie Haener, and Vicky McCuaig

**You know how, sometimes, those meteorologists on TV get their weather forecasts a tiny bit wrong?**

Hard to believe, I know, what with all their computers and radars and satellites and fancy Doppler maps and storm tracking weaponry.

But it happened big time the other weekend, when every weather guy and gal and the radio traffic-and-weather people, and the newspapers, too, issued warnings that the San Francisco Bay Area was about to be blown off the face of the earth, by a storm that would rival the January assault that blacked out tens of thousands of homes, some of them for as long as four days and nights.

I had more to worry about than stocking up on batteries and Dewars. The weekend happened to include, on Saturday, February 23rd, the Chinese New Year Parade. I've been co-anchoring the TV coverage of it (on KTVU, Fox 2) for 11 years. This would bring me full circle in the lunar cycle, and would be the 8th year with co-host **Julie Haener**. Eight is an auspicious number, just as red is a lucky color, and noodles ensure longevity.


But the forecasters told of how the parade was a target of the storm; how, despite the parade's 55 year-tradition of going on, rain or shine, Ma-Ma Nature was likely to wreck floats and knock marchers off their stilts.

The parade begins at 5:30; our broadcast runs from 6 to 8 p.m., as the floats and bands and lion and dragon dancers roll past our TV position on Union Square, some of them stopping to perform for our cameras.

**HOROSCOPE**

**Rat** - 2008  
(Ox for protection)  
Prosperity will be yours and a promotion or achievement are in the cards. Don't be concerned with little health problems as they ...[\(more\)](#)

[Horoscopes >>](#)
**FENG SHUI TIPS**

 **kitchen**  
Do put wooden kitchen utensils in the East, Southeast or South, and metal items like pots and pans in the West, Northwest or North. ...[\(more\)](#)

[More Feng Shui >>](#)
**NEWS**

- [Open Call for Performers for the 29th Annual Asian Pacific American Heritage Festival on Saturday, May 10th, 2008](#)
- [Calling NYC participants with roots in the Mississippi Delta for oral-history theater project](#)

[AC RECIPE DATABASE](#)[Marilyn Tam](#)[Len Fong](#)[Joyce Chan](#)[Chef Martin Yan](#)[Dr. K. Kit Hui](#)[Asia Lauren Li](#)[William Wong](#)[Suzanne Kai](#)[Tami Chang](#)[Astronaut Leroy Chiao](#)[Brenda Paik Sunoo](#)[Lia C.](#)[Paul Lee](#)[News Release](#)[Jinnie Lee](#)[New America Media](#)

The rains, the prophets said, would begin around noon and build to a climax in the early evening -- say, 6 to 8 or so -- and continue into Sunday.

Julie and I, along with the parade's writer, **Vicky McCuaig**, prepared to deal, on the air, with the storm. I had a line from the morning's Chronicle--"Batten down the rats!"--ready to steal. But physically, there wasn't much we could do. Set up in a crowded tent on the Union Square lawn, we have our backs exposed to the elements, so that our camera can show the parade activity on Geary Street, below and behind us. If we got severe rain and winds, we were in for a long, wet broadcast.

Saturday arrived, and, by about 1 p.m., so did the rain. Not a lot, but enough to decide that maybe I should wear a raincoat throughout the evening, on and off camera. Julie had a nice, warm jacket, including a faux fur collar, styled and created by **Esther Shih** (of Far East Living, in Palo Alto). She'd be fine. All I got from Esther was a lousy T-shirt. (Actually, she offered an Asian-styled jacket, but I opted for just a necktie - a brocaded gold one, to complement the purple in Julie's outfit.)

By about 3 p.m., when I needed to make the trip downtown to begin preparations, the rain had let up a little. But, as we moved from rehearsals in our tent to our base hotel, the Westin St. Francis, I had to fight a strong wind that kept turning my umbrella downside up. At the hotel, I learned that several contingents, including my favorite, the girls of the St. Mary's Chinese School drill team and drum and bell corps, had dropped out. Although many paraders could simply cover their costumes (and lion heads) in clear plastic, others chose not to make the trip from out of town, given the forecasters' dire warnings about road conditions and possible power outages.

They weren't the only ones who weren't making the drive into Dai Fow. I looked out the hotel windows, down at the VIP bleachers across from the TV tent. Usually, by 5, they're jammed. Today, the seats were barren. A lot of people bought tickets and never showed up.

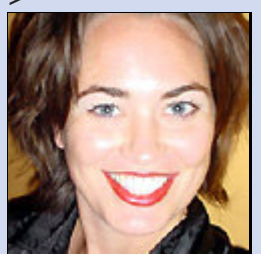
As it turned out, neither did the storm. Sure, there was rain, and it was visible, on the street and when we appeared on camera. Sheets of rain swept behind us, as long strings of firecrackers exploded. (In the rain, they were set off by guys wielding blowtorches.) But instead of building into something fierce, as all the crystal ball-gazers said it would, it came and went all through the parade, and never got blustery. Some marchers even doffed their plastic, if only for the block during which they'd be on TV. Miss Chinatown USA, Ni Jiang from Bellevue, Washington, and her court floated up the street, beautiful, beaming and dry.

And so, instead of an evening of chaos and disappointment, we had -- well, a parade. The brilliant 201-foot long Golden Dragon slithered as it always does; the stilt walkers walked tall; Mayor Gavin Newsom glad-handed spectators and laughed at the rain. "This is nothing," he said to our man on the street, KTVU reporter

- [Award-winning Reporter Ti-Hua Chang Joins WWOR MY9](#)
- [One Million Minutes of Free International Calls to China Starts Today from Rebtel](#)
- [Asian American Voters Favor Clinton and McCain in New York and New Jersey Presidential Primaries](#)
- [Asia Society Seeking Nominations for Annual Osborn Elliott Prize for Excellence in Journalism on Asia](#)
- [Statement from ImaginAsian Entertainment on the Closing of AZN Television](#)
- [AALDEF Announces Asian American Election Protection Plans for Presidential Primary Elections 2008](#)
- [Astronaut Daniel Tani Will Watch His Mom's Funeral in Space](#)
- [Hong Kong's Sir Run Run Shaw Turns 100](#)

[More News>>](#)**LATEST ARTICLES**

- [Native Artist Nicholas Galanin Featured in five myles Exhibition](#)
- [Julian Yeo Celebrates New Release at The Reprise Room](#)
- [Arlan Huang Paintings on View through March 7 in New York.](#)
- [Kenny Endo is On The Way](#)
- [In Search of Roots - Twelve Personal Journeys Create an Extraordinary Exhibition & Book](#)
- [Raining On a Chinese New Year Parade](#)
- [Konrad Aderer 's "Rising Up: The Alams" Screens at NYC Grassroots Media Conference](#)
- [black, white, whatever by Kelly Zen-Yie Tsai](#)
- [Crazy about Charmaine Clamor](#)

**PERSONALS**

- [Harlem in the Himalayas Features The Carl Allen - Rodney Whitaker Project](#)

[More Articles >>](#)

#### LATEST FOOD

- [David Chang's Momofuku Noodle Bar](#)
- [A Private Tasting at the Charles Chocolate Factory](#)
- [Eight Treasures Rice Pudding](#)
- [Ben Fong-Torres' Bul Kogi](#)
- [Pho \(Beef Noodle Soup with Salad\)](#)

[More About Food >>](#)

#### FEEDBACK

Do you have any site suggestions / feedback? Please forward them to:

- [Feedback Mail](#)

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

##### Ben Fong-Torres

AsianConnections Columnist

##### Bio:

Ben Fong-Torres, AsianConnections' very own Renaissance man is an Emmy award-winning broadcaster, author, karaoke singer, and former senior editor and writer at Rolling Stone Magazine. Visit Ben's official website [www.BenFongTorres.com](http://www.BenFongTorres.com)

Robert Handa. At one point, Handa made his way inside Macy's and hung out with a happily rainproofed party. But, moments later, he was back on the street, interviewing Ms. Jiang, and, for the finale, setting off a wagon of fireworks, just ahead of the Golden Dragon.

On Monday, the fireworks came out of the executive offices of KTVU. Jim Haman, the station's broadcast operations director, and the man in the truck who called the cues for Julie and me, told me that the parade broadcast had won the ratings for both hours, in all households. We had all done a good job. But the weather forecasters had done a spectacular job -- at least for our ratings.

*Gung hay fat choy*, indeed.



##### [New Year Parade: Behind the Scenes](#)

Ben and his Flip video gadget give you a behind-the-scenes look at the parade--from the first script reading to the explosive finale--all in 9 minutes!

*Ben Fong-Torres hosts 'Backstage,' a two-hour program of music and personal interviews on Sundays on KFRC in San Francisco. The show streams live at [www.kfrc.com](http://www.kfrc.com) from 7-9 a.m. and p.m., and past shows are archived under 'On Demand.' His February 17 program, Hour 2, includes a musical salute to the Year of the Rat.*

Page: 1 / 1

[Print This Article](#)

[Send to a Friend](#)