

Message from the Chairman of the Board of Directors

On behalf of the Lao Community Cultural Center and Lao community of San Diego, I am delighted and honored to welcome you to our 3rd Annual Lao Boat Racing Festival. LCCC is proud and privileged to host the event this year, an event initiated by the Mekong Boat Racing Club as an effort to revive this tradition. We plan to continue to celebrate this national festival every year into the future as an expression of our cultural identity as well as an opportunity to bring people of all walks of life to unwind and have fun together.

Laos, known for its rich traditions, designates a special festival for each month of the year. However, Lao Boat Racing Festival is unique and one of a kind. Unlike any other, it represents many aspects of Lao culture. A Lao boat racing is not simply a sport activity; it is a festive event that evokes the spirit of the river, Naga, and goes beyond winning. While victory is important to the paddlers, the community spirit and the celebratory vibes accompanied it take the center stage of the entire event. Boat racing festivals represent a jubilation Lao people express at the end of the rice harvest season around October-November. The paddlers and their entire cohorts go to the extreme to express their jubilation and light-heartedness. They would dress in weird and provoking clothes, putting on make ups, dance to the beats of the drums up and down the street along the Mekong River, and chant in unison mischievous rhymes, usually inappropriate beyond boundary of the boat racing festival.

The boat racing fever that eluded the Lao community for over 30 years has now come back to San Diego. We are excited and proud to revive it as another community celebration. Let us together rejoice and embrace it. The fact that this cultural celebration comes to life is a testament to the concerted effort and determination of the Lao American community to uphold our Lao heritage, bring our community together, as well as enrich the culturally diverse community of San Diego. LCCC is grateful for the hard work and dedication of our community members and volunteers, who organize this festival for us to enjoy. We are equally thankful to our paddlers, sponsors, organizations and businesses, whose support makes the event a success. With your continued generous support, the boat racing festival will always remain alive as a true Lao tradition in San Diego. I hope you enjoy the day and thank you again for your support. Hope to see you again next year.

Warmest regards,

Dr. Bounlieng Phommasouvanh, Chair
Board of Directors, LCCC