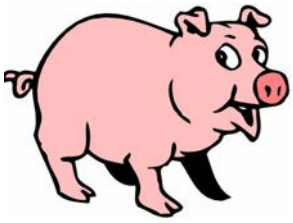
CBA NEWS
March 2007



Year of the Pig

CHINESE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION

CBA NEWS

DR. VICTOR CHEN SEE IS HONOURED BY THE CBA

Peter Chen See receives the CBA Award on behalf of his father, Dr. Victor Chen See, from CBA President Wilson Look Kin

He is the epitome of the true medical caregiver, and the quintessential example of the selfless charity worker. Known for his quiet resolve to heal the sick and help the less fortunate, his reputation as a steady and honourable presence in his profession and in the field of volunteerism is unchallenged and admired by many.

Born in Springfield, St. Elizabeth, on February 27, 1928, it is said that our honouree would have made for a happy missionary and that he, most likely, privately contemplated such a life before finally deciding to follow his first passion and enter dental school. It was at St. Louis University in St. Louis, Missouri, that this exceptional individual learned and honed his skills as a dentist. The year 1951 would mark not only the year of his graduation and return to his beloved Jamaica, but also the year he would embark on his long and distinguished dual career: professional family dentist and tireless volunteer.

The many patients of Operation Friendship were among the first to benefit from his kindness, skill and great benevolence. Sometime later, those entering the dental clinic established by the Chinese Benevolent Association would also receive his care. There he would become a weekly fixture, serving thousands in the community over the decades without complaint and without request for or thought of reward or recognition. Fuelled by an enthusiasm that seemed to have no end, he was truly happiest when working and making better and healthier someone else's life.

Forever challenging his own skills and

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GAH SAN NOTICE

The Chinese Memorial Service will take place at the Chinese Cemetery Sunday April 15, 2007, at 11:00 a.m. Gates open 9:00a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Security will be provided

From the Editor

As the saying goes, "am back in the saddle again!" Well, after a refreshing break from the CBA at the executive level, I'm back as your editor once more to keep you informed and entertained.

The year started with the installation of our new President, Wilson Look Kin, and a new team of officers on January 7, to serve you in the year 2007. We look forward to great things to come with your cooperation and participation, of course.

The recent Chinese New Year garden party – our spring festival event came off successfully with Johnny Chuck at the helm and very ably assisted by Marcia Harford and the rest of the team, who provided invaluable support. We congratulate them for a job well done.

We recognise the importance of respect to our ancestors who have passed on and we honour them for the work they have done on this earth. Please join us on Sunday, April 15, 2007, for Gah San at the Chinese Cemetery as we pay homage to our ancestors.

We give ourselves a pat on the back for having come so far with the restoration of the Chinese Cemetery. Special commendation goes to Robert Lee for his commitment to the project and in bringing Phase I to completion in time for Gah San.

We note, of course, the great efforts of Fay Chang Allen who has worked so hard in raising funds for the project. We give thanks for her stamina for it has been a very challenging task.

We want to maintain contact with members, so please give us a feedback on any matters of interest or concern.

- Phyllis Kong, Editor

Message from the President

I am greatly honoured to be elected as President of the Chinese Benevolent association for this year and my executive team is looking forward to serving you in this challenging year.

Our task this year will entail the expansion of our programmes in the areas of Outreach into the wider community, the Restoration of the Chinese Cemetery and Downtown Temple, and the care of community members at the Home for the Aged.

In the area of Culture, we shall make Mandarin Instructions more readily available and the functioning of the Museum to serve as a vivid reminder of the life journeys of our pioneering ancestors who came to these shores over 150 years ago.

We extend a warm invitation to members of the community at large to come forward to plan and, more importantly, participate in activities of this Association created by your forefathers over a century ago.

I would like to particularly thank Dalton Yap and his team who have guided our affairs so admirably for the previous 3 years that it makes the task of my team immeasurably easier.

- Wilson Look Kin, President

Dr Victor Chen See is honoured by the CBA

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intellectual curiosities, this devoted family man and son of Jamaica has shown by example what it means to live a full and meaningful life. We are deeply honoured to have had the privilege of his service, his talent and his thoughtfulness. Moreover, we are now, and always will be, humbly grateful to him for giving us the standard by which to measure our own individual journeys to become productive citizens and exceptional human beings.

Today, the Chinese Benevolent Association publicly recognizes this outstanding member of our community and remarkable Jamaican. To him we offer a collective and heartfelt "thank you" on behalf of all those who, without his help, would not be living the lives they are today. To him we say "well done" for a life that has been lived in a most exemplary and joyful manner.

It is with great pride that we salute Dr. Victor Francis Chen See, D.D.S., for his lifetime of volunteer work with the people of Jamaica.

Ching Ming Festival

Ching Ming, meaning clear and bright in Chinese, is a festival to hold a memorial ceremony for those who have passed. It is a time to express one's grief for lost relatives. Grave sweeping day, as it is also known, falls in the third day of the third lunar month.

There is only one main tradition associated with this festival: sweeping and weeding graves with family while taking a walk in the countryside as most graves were scattered on hills. During the Tang Dynasty, the tradition of taking an excursion on this day was developed. At this time, the third lunar month, spring usually has just begun and spring growth begins, with sap ascending in trees and buds bursting. Willow branches inserted on each gate add vigor and vitality to the surroundings. But this act actually means more than that. This custom can be traced back to over one thousand years ago.

In addition to cleaning the graves of ancestors, real food is brought along, including cakes, wines, fruit and most commonly roasted pig. Additional gifts to allow the ancestors to have a comfortable afterlife, usually made of paper, include things such as clothes, cars, wristwatches and speedboats. By burning them, those gifts are passed to the deceased ancestors. Quite often "Bank of Hell" money will also be burnt, as it distract the evil spirits who will, given the opportunity, intercept the goods and steal them. While the evil spirits are chasing the Hell money, the valuable goods are passed safely to the dead.

GAH SAN

Paying homage to our ancestors

In the matter of Sun Yat Sen Benevolent Society and 18 Trinidad Terrace

An issue that has hurt the spirit of the Chinese community and eroded the culture of "Respect for Elders"

Information compiled by
David Chang
March 15, 2007

From titles, transfers, Registrar of Friendly Societies, and Lee Tom Yin's book. It is to be noted that Derrick Lee Tom Yin was one of the founders of the Sun Yat Sen group and had served on the Management Committee of the Chinese Benevolent Association from as far back as 1932 until shortly before 1966 when he passed away.

The early Chinese immigrants, having left their homeland and settled in Jamaica in search of a better life for their families, united under the umbrella of Chinese Benevolent Association (CBA) for the betterment of the Chinese community in Jamaica. There was only one China and they regarded China as their homeland.

In 1924, CBA made requests to England for Chinese Consulate representation for the protection and welfare of the Chinese in Jamaica.

In 1943, Chinese Ambassador came to Jamaica.

In 1944, a group of active members of Kuomintang, such as Lee Tom Yin and Chen Kung Yee, made request to the Chinese Ambassador to set up in Jamaica a branch of Kuomintang (now Republic of China in Taiwan).

Many of its members were active participants of the Chinese Benevolent Association and were also members of the many Chinese associations that existed at the time. They held important offices of the Association as President, Committee Members and the advancement of CBA before and after can be attributed to their deep involvement and dedication to the welfare of the Chinese community.

On September 26, 1949, with contributions from members, the group purchased 104-106 Windward Road in Kingston (presently the site of Jamaica Private Power Company) to construct facilities for the benefit of its members and members of the Chinese community**.** Purchase price was Three Thousand Four Hundred and Fifty Pounds.

This was the SUN YAT SEN RECREATION CENTER or known as Chung San Beach. The property was registered in the names of 14 members and later changed to three including Charles Moo, Arthur Yap-Chung, and Henry Hoo Fatt

In 1949 with the Communist take-over in China, England recognized the People's Republic of China and the Consular service of the ROC (Taiwan) in Jamaica was withdrawn.

In 1950, Chinese Ambassador returned to Taiwan.

In the same year, fundraising became difficult. Efforts had to be taken to raise funds from the Chinese community and to hold garden parties and other fundraising drives.

Throughout the existence of the Sun Yat Sen Recreation Center, since many of the same people were committee members of the CBA at one time or another, the facilities were opened to all Chinese in the community. Many people who made contributions were of the belief that the donations made were for the benefit of the Chinese community.

The property was later sold and transferred on May 31, 1969. The price was Twenty Three Thousand Pounds.

"It is to be noted that Sun Yat Sen Recreation Center was changed to Sun Yat Sen Benvolent Society on March 21, 1973"

On May 5, 1969, it appeared that the proceeds from the sale of Chung San Beach were used to purchase 18 Trinidad Terrace in Kingston to be used as the group's office. The names on the title were Willie Lyn Ah Woo, Stanley Lee, and Charles Moo. 18 Trinidad Terrace was bought for Eight Thousand Pounds.

It is to be noted that Sun Yat Sen Recreation Center was changed to Sun Yat Sen Benevolent Society on March 21, 1973. There was a total of 159 members, with 21 of the members' names listed on the application form as the minimum required. There were 11 Officers including President (Charles Moo, trustee), 2 Treasurers (Willie Lyn Ah Woo and Stanley Lee, both as trustees), 7 other Management

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In the matter of Sun Yat Sen Benevolent Society

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Committee Members, and a Secretary.

Charles Moo had been involved with the work of the Chinese Benevolent Association for many years. He was the President of CBA in 1972 and in 1973. It was said that because many members did not agree with his handling of the Sun Yat Sen Benevolent Society issue, he was not elected by the Committee to serve as the President in 1974. This was perhaps why he wanted to have nothing more to do with CBA up to the time of his death.

On December 31, 1974, the property was transferred from the three trustees to the newly registered entity name SUN YAT SEN BENEVOLENT SOCIETY. The Transfer stated that the three were acting as "trustees" and the relation between the **Benevolent Society** and the **Recreation Centre**. Charles Moo and Stanley Lee signed as Directors and Cyril Ying signed as Secretary on behalf of Sun Yat Sen Benevolent Society.

Correction to the name on the title was made on May 13, 1976.

The activities of the SYSBS dwindled with the migration of Chinese in the 70's. However, there were still celebrations of Double Ten in the early 70's.

On December 21, 1995, Charles Moo and Cyril Ying, together with five other persons of the law firm Knight Pickersgill Dowding & Samuels of 33 Duke Street, signed as the Officers of the Society to change the Rules of the Society.

It is to be noted that the original copy of the Rules of 1972 of the Society could not be found, neither at the Society nor at the Registrar of Friendly Societies. Also, as recently as February 2007, the new amended copy of 1996 was also not in the file of the Registrar's Office.

The Registrar of Friendly Societies now has a copy of the Amended Rules of 1996 and we have obtained copies for our file.

Although the objectives in the rules of the Society were for the welfare and benefit of its members and families, we can understand it was a standard format written to comply with the requirements of Friendly Societies.

> ***"On December 21, 1995, Charles Moo and Cyril Ying, together with five other persons of the law firm Knight Pickersgill Dowding & Samuels of 33 Duke Street, signed as the Officers of the Society to change the Rules of the Society"***

Up to late 1988 to early 1990, Timmy Yip assisted Charles Moo in collecting the rentals of the property and lodged in bank account, but later gave it up. Presently, we speculate that the same law firm, which had its staff signed as Officers of the Society in 1996, is managing the property. The Chinese Christian Church has been occupying the top floor rent-free these many years.

In 2000, when news that the Trinidad Terrace property was being given to the Anglican Church was known, Mr. Cecil Chuck, then President of CBA, organized the three Chinese organizations CBA, Chee Kung Tong, and CCA to send a letter of disapproval to Mr. Charles Moo and threatened court action. Mr. David Wong Ken was also involved in trying to persuade Mr. Cyril Ying to withdraw the transfer.

In the file of the Registrar, there was a note from Mr. David Wong Ken dated September 26, 2000 who had requested a copy of the amended rules but, according to Mr. Wong Ken, he could not recall that a copy was received as, at that time, Mr. Cecil Chuck had advised him not to pursue the matter any further. At that time also, the intention to take legal action was stalled because there was no approval to allocate unspecific amount of funds that might be needed.

Mr. Richard Tenn had telephoned Cyril Ying (one of the signors of the transfer) to discuss the issue but failed to get any result.

Mr. Keith Lowe took Mr. Richard Tenn to see Mr. Charles Moo to brief him about the affairs of the Chinese community and CBA. Mr. Charles Moo repeated his resentment of CBA that he was thrown out.

In 2000, CBA Past President David Chang was in Canada and had asked to meet with Mr. Charles Moo but was unsuccessful. He wrote a letter afterwards to introduce himself and briefed Mr. Moo about CBA and the Chinese community in Jamaica.

On February 14, 2001, David Chang wrote Charles Moo a second letter and pleaded with him to reverse his action. There was no response. Charles Moo died shortly after in July that year.

On June 26, 2001, the three Chinese organizations in Jamaica, CBA, Chee Kung Tong, and CCA wrote a letter to the Anglican Church of

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RESTORATION OF THE CHINESE CEMETERY

Photos show on-going construction work at the Chinese Cemetery on Waltham Park Road in Kingston, Jamaica. The restoration work is being done in stages, funds permitting. Phase 1 entails construction of a new boundary wall along the entire Waltham Park Road and a new arched entranceway. Work is proceeding feverishly in an attempt to substantially complete Phase 1 in time for Gah San on April 15, 2007.

The construction work entails:

- Careful removal of salvageable grille work for re-use in the new works.
- Demolition of the entire wall along Waltham Park Road and removal of debris from site.
- Erection of steelwork for the new archway and pouring of concrete foundation for the columns.
- Brick facing to adorn all the columns and the wall panels along Waltham Park Road.
- Re-erection of the refurbished grille work on top of the wall panels.

The project is being monitored by architect Clifton Yap and engineer Tommy Lyew. Fundraising for the project is being coordinated by Fay Chang Allen. Chairman of the Cemetery Restoration Com-

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Noteworthy dates for the Year of the Pig 2007

The Chinese Home for the Aged has been in existence since **1877** when members of the Chinese community bought 51-53 Matthews Lane to house those persons who were unable to care for themselves. Later, Nos. 49 and 57 were bought and No. 55 given as a gift from the Yi Yee Tong in 1944. From then on, the Home was situated at 49-57 Matthews Lane in Kingston.

With general deterioration taking place over the years and following discussions at the Chinese Benevolent Society (CBS), it was decided that a new home was needed, which would be built on the west wing of the Chinese Sanatorium at 1 North Street in Kingston. Construction of the new home started in November 1960 and it was officially opened in March 1962.

The Chinese Home for the Aged continues to exist today with much improved management and facilities for the comfort of our senior citizens.

The year of the Pig 2007 marks **130 years** since the establishment of the Home.

In **1897** the Chinese Benevolent Society (CBS) acquired site at 129 Barry Street in Kingston, on which was constructed the new auditorium of the Benevolent Society, "a modern, pleasing structure," according to the then Governor of Jamaica, Sir Henry Blake.

That structure still exists today, in which the Buddha temple had been installed, and from where the Benevolent Society operated its affairs until the CBA Centre on Old Hope Road in Kingston was constructed some ten years ago, and now houses the offices, meeting rooms and recreation centre of the CBA.

The Year of the Pig 2007 marks **110 years** since acquisition of 129 Barry Street.

Restoration of the Chinese Cemetery

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mittee is Robert Lee.

Various donations and contributions have been received from companies and individuals but much more is needed to continue with other phases of the restoration project, such as the repairs to the other surround walls, the paving of the internal roads, landscaping, etc.

The Chinese Benevolent Association's intention is not only to make the Chinese community in Jamaica be again proud of the burial grounds of their ancestors, but that the newly restored cemetery will be like an oasis in the desert, a beacon in the darkness to the surrounding community, and never again will the cemetery be vandalized and allowed to fall into disrepair.

- Robert Lee

Ancestor Worship

The worship of ancestors, according to most scholars, lies at the root of religion in China and, until recently, served as the principal reason for the type of family life existing in China since ancient times. The cult of the Earth and ancestor worship predate organized religions by close to two thousand years, and formed the basis of what has been called the Chinese family religion.

The Chinese believed that since there was no separation between the affairs of heaven and earth, the spirits of the dead continued to exercise an influence over the living. The critically important rituals characterizing ancestor worship are connected with funerary rites, the selection and tending of graves, and the regular offering of sacrifices – of food and incense burning, kowtowing before the grave, and beseeching one's ancestors to intervene on one's behalf. In imperial times it was not unusual for officials of high rank to retire from public life for as long as three years to mourn parents.

It was believed that if ancestors were buried on family property, they would join the agricultural gods in affecting the family's harvest. Living and dead members of a family were bound together in mutual dependence. While the dead could intervene on behalf of the living in the spiritual realm, the opposite was true as well. The living, by properly conducting their rituals, could assist the spirits of the dead in their progress through various stages of the afterlife. The system insured respect for the family and served to guarantee that people be concerned about its proper maintenance; their own future as dead ancestors was at stake if they failed. The practice of mortuary sacrifice insures one's own future while looking after one's familial responsibilities.

HIGHLIGHTS OF CBA SPRING FESTIVAL 2007

Spring showers blessed CBA spring festival

The CBA annual garden party, celebrating the Year of The Pig, was held on Chinese New Year, Sunday, February 18th at the CBA Centre. As usual, the weather did not disappoint because we were blessed with afternoon showers, which cleared up in time for the arrival of our first guests.

Newly-elected CBA President Wilson Look Kin welcomed the Governor-General H.E. The Most Hon. Professor Kenneth Hall and his wife, H.E. The Most Hon. Mrs. Hall, the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, H.E. Chen Jinghua and his wife, Madame Xiao Linhua and Mr. Peter Chen See – representing his father, Dr. Victor Chen See, the 2007 CBA Honouree, who was unable to attend.

Other special invitees in attendance were the President of Chee Kung Tong, Mr. Eaton Chung and Mrs. Chung, President of the Chinese Cultural Association, Mr. Edward Wong Chew Onn and Mrs. Wong Chew Onn. We also hosted the representatives from recipient schools under our Education Outreach programme, namely, Jamaica College, St. Catherine High, Holy Trinity High, Buff Bay and Seaforth High Schools along with officials of the Chinese Embassy.

The constant hum of voices throughout the early evening was punctuated by the squeals of delight from the children enjoying a choice of rides, including – Bull Rider and Bumper Trains and various games – Tin Can Alley and Basketball. As usual, everyone's sweet tooth was fully satisfied by the cotton candy and cake stalls. Culinary delights from Catering by Lorraine, Orient Express and Golden Gate resulted in much indecision on the part of our patrons who had difficulty in selecting their preferred caterer.

Having satisfied their taste buds and chased away the hunger pangs, the gathering filled the hall for the start of the evening's programme. As is the tradition, the Children's Choir opened the programme with the National Anthems of Jamaica and China followed by Wing Lung's performance of the Lion Dance. CBA President Wilson Look Kin and Ambassador Chen Jinghua brought Greetings. The CBA Award presented by President Wilson Look Kin to this year's Honouree, Dr. Victor Chen See, was received on his behalf by his son, Mr. Peter Chen See. Immediate Past President Dalton Yap read the citation. Presentations to the Schools were made by Vice-President Sandy Chung.

"The constant hum of voices throughout the early evening was punctuated by the squeals of delight from the children enjoying a choice of rides"

With the formal proceedings over, we got ready to be entertained and were not disappointed! The Children's Choir sang and danced to the delight of the audience; in fact, Madame Xiao Linhua was seen singing along with them. Wing Lung had us holding onto our seats with their many death-defying acts! Patrick Chin serenaded the audience with his mellow voice; Lisa Cao, our songbird from Mandeville gave us goose pimples with her beautiful Karaoke renditions, while Dalton Yap rose to the occasion with his duet with Lisa. The soulful voice of Petrus did not disappoint and our newest singing sensation – Xinyu, belted out two of her own compositions – **Clouded and Man**; we predict much success for her! The In Motion Dancers maintained the high energy mode with their number, Dance & Shout to Shaggy's song of the same name.

The Fashion Show was the icing on the cake. The models – tiny tots, children, teenagers, young ladies, past Miss CBAs and contestants, the mature women and handsome young men took the catwalk with such enthusiasm and panache, it was hard to believe that they were not seasoned players in the fashion business. The show opened with ethnic fashions from several regions in China, moved to a beautiful array of Cheongsams and then on to casual and evening wear from **Ammars, June Plum, and Changes**.

While many enjoyed the programmes inside the CBA Centre, others chose to stay outside sitting with friends and family members, chatting away and catching up or reminiscing about the "good old days". Patrons also sampled the goods and services displayed in the various booths including T.Geddes Grant with their line of perfumes and colognes that many snapped up. One of the booths with swords, fans, spears and other Kung Fu gears were also on display and many Kung Fu aficionados and practitioners were very happy to see these objects on sale. Another booth had a line of UPVC windows marketed by Park N' Shop and these items re-

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CBA represented at the CCF Miami Spring Festival

In the matter of Sun Yat Sen Benevolent Society

(Continued from page 5)

Jamaica and tried to persuade them not to accept the property as it was alleged improper for Charles Moo to have given away the property. According to Mr. Vincent J. Chang who was CBA President at the time, he met with the Anglican Bishop and the Bishop said he considered it as a gift and he would accept it as a gift.

On August 12, 2001, Mr. Keith Lowe wrote a letter to Anglican Bishop Rev. Alfred Reid to advise him not to accept the property. He set out the reasons and the historical information.

In 2004, David Chang obtained a copy of the title to check the status of the property but found that the transfer had not yet taken place, presumably because there was no record of Sun Yat Sen Benevolent Society at the Registrar of Companies and a Certificate of Good Standing would be needed from them for transferring the property.

David Chang wrote an article in the **CBA NEWS** of March 2004 on the issue, pleading for help to pursue the matter.

In January 2007, there were words that the Anglican Church was going ahead to transfer the property. A meeting was held and CBA President Wilson Look Kin asked Peter Fung to collect information on the property.

On February 6, 2007, Peter Fung reported his research on the status of the property. He obtained a copy of the title and it showed no transfer took place. A lawyer was to be retained for advice and funds of $500,000 were approved for preliminary work required.

Roger Chang later found out that it was the Registrar of Friendly Societies and not the Registrar of Companies that controls organizations such as Sun Yat Sen Benevolent Society. On February 12, 2007, Roger Chang and David Chang met with the Registrar and was able to obtain copies of all documents in their file and got information and advice on how to reactivate the Society.

On February 27, 2007, another meeting was held to get signatures to reactivate the Society. It was agreed that we would seek to get approval from surviving members of the Society and their descendants and a letter was to be prepared with the advice of the lawyer. Names of some persons willing to sign up were collected.

On March 8, 2007, a meeting was held at CBA to meet with our lawyer to discuss what can be done to recover the assets of Sun Yat Sen Benevolent Society for the benefit of the Chinese community.

It is easy for anyone to suggest that all is lost and we should just move on, but success in our pursuit for what is right will reinforce the reputation that we are still a people of trust and dignity!

We would need to research into the saga of 1973 to understand what caused Mr. Charles Moo's resentment of CBA. There are Minutes of Meetings of CBA for that period, which will shed light on what took place.

Further development of this issue will be made available as it unfolds.

- David Chang

CBA MISSION STATEMENT

As we commence the New Year of the Pig with a new President and team of officers for the year 2007, let us recall the Mission Statement of the Chinese Benevolent Association:

- Develop, foster and enhance the spirit of togetherness within the Chinese community.
- Create the platform for our people to meet, work and play in harmony and respect.
- Foster the culture base that was handed to us by our parents, particularly in the areas of heritage, family loyalty, and respect for our elders and leaders.
- Respond to the needs of our community, where possible, to the best of our ability.
- Share with the wider community aspects of our culture through which the business of nation building may be supported.

Spring showers blessed CBA spring festival

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ceived excellent responses from all the visitors.

The gate-prizes – Trip for Two from Air Jamaica was won by Jennifer Cao and Kay Chen-Cousins took home the second prize of a Weekend for 2 at Breezes, Runaway Bay.

As the curtains came down on Garden Party 2007 and all the excitement inherent in this event, we will also remember the sense of family and fellowship that we experienced. Much appreciation to all the folks who contributed to its success.

See you next year!

- Marcia Harford

CBA OFFICERS 2007

CBA Executive Committee 2007

***Front*: Neil Yap-Sam, Vice President Sandy Chung, President Wilson Look Kin, Hon. Secretary Cynthia Lyew, Treasurer Ventry Foo. *Back*: Robert Lee, Maisie Lau, Phyllis Kong, Brenda Lee, Ann Marie Chen, Karen Hugh-Sam Lee, Lloyd Hoo.**

CBA Supervisory Board 2007

***L-R*: Vincent J. Chang, Johnny Chuck, David Chang, Afen Yap**

CBA NEWS

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We're on the Web!
www.cbajamaica.com

Ladies Night at Seaview

It was "Ladies Night" on March 7 at the Chinese Ambassador's residence but one male figure kept us company—Ambassador Chen Jinhua – and we didn't mind at all.

His wife, Madam Xiao Linhua had invited the female executives of the CBA and of other Chinese organizations to a dinner party to commemorate International Women's Day.

After opening remarks and welcome by the Ambassador and Madam Xiao, we sat down to a sumptuous meal prepared by the in-house chef from China. The jaozi was to die for, not to mention other mouth-watering items of Chinese speciality.

But it was not a "nyam and scram" situation at all. We were entertained by the lovely and elegant Madam Xiao, who sang for us in karaoke style and who was later joined in a duet by her husband, the Ambassador himself – to cheers of applause by the ladies, some of whom were brave enough to afterwards take the mike and sing a song. What a fun evening we had!

To conclude the evening, a vote of thanks was given by Joyce Wong Chew Onn (President of Jamaica China Friendship Association) on behalf of the ladies present, for a wonderful evening of fellowship and entertainment, and for the beautiful gift presented to each of us by Madam Xiao.