CBA NEWS
Mar 2008

Year of the Rat

CHINESE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION

CBA NEWS

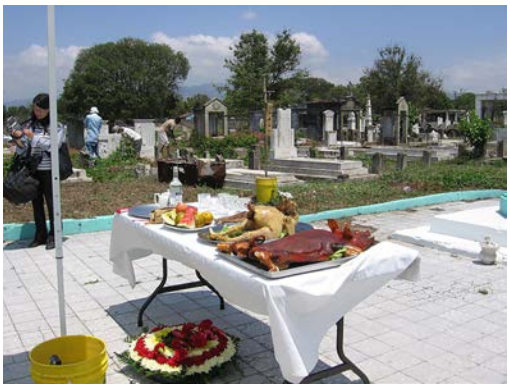
Commemorating our ancestors

It is a traditional Chinese belief that a person's good fortune is directly linked to the happiness of one's ancestral spirits. The Chinese believe in cultural harmony and practise due respect for their elders as well as for their ancestors. Ching Ming (Gah San) is a springtime celebration that acknowledges the dead. The act of paying respect to the deceased is an important tradition and custom. Hence, it is encouraged that all family members attend, despite their busy schedule. In a way, this helps to inculcate the values of the Chinese to the younger generations.

The young ones are taught to pray to their ancestors. Young people accompany their parents to the gravesite and assist their parents in the purification ceremony of the grave.

The willow is regarded as the symbol of 'light and enemy of darkness' in Chinese culture, therefore on this day, the willow twigs and branches are hung on doorways to cast away the evil spirits. The Chinese believe that if you don't hang the willow, then you will be born as a 'yellow dog' in your next life.

Grave sweeping can also be a kind of family gathering for the Chinese people. To 'sweep the graves' means to clear the graves of all the leaves and weeds and repaint the inscriptions on it. The Chinese believe that too many leaves surrounding the graves disturb the spirit of the ancestors. Ching Ming rituals not only include cleaning of the grave but also include other ceremonies.



Ching-Ming Ceremony

Food is laid out in front of the headstone as an offering to the spirits of the de-

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GAH SAN NOTICE

The Chinese Memorial Service will take place at the Chinese Cemetery Sunday, April 6, 2008 at 11:00 a.m.

Gates open 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Security will be provided

From the Editor

Welcome! This is our first quarterly issue of the **CBA News** for 2008, appropriately released at springtime when we have just celebrated Chinese New Year—the Year of the Rat—and as we are about to honour our ancestors at Gah San.

This year, Gah San will be held on Sunday, April 6 at the Chinese Cemetery in Kingston. Do come out and pay respects to our ancestors and keep our Chinese cultural tradition alive, for **"to forget one's ancestors is to be a brook without a source, a tree without root"** (Chinese proverb).

Phase 2 of the Chinese Cemetery Restoration project is ongoing and Robert Lee gives us an update on page 11.

As part of our fundraising efforts for this ambitious project, CBA senior representatives Wilson Look Kin, Robert Lee, and David Chang recently visited Miami for the occasion of the Chinese Cultural Foundation's (CCF Miami) Chinese New Year Festival on February 17. Cemetery Fundraisers based in Florida, Fay Chang Allen and Winnie Chung Devensky, set up a CBA booth and drew much attention to our work so far on the Restoration of the Chinese Cemetery. Thanks to the support of CCF Miami in this endeavour.

Several of our Jamaican Chinese in Toronto through the Tsung Tsing Association of Ontario are involved in organizing this year's Toronto Hakka Conference, called "Roundhouse Reunion 2008", to be held at the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto in Scarborough, June 28-29, 2008. The conference promises to be very enlightening about our Hakka culture and history, and we encourage our Hakka *ngin* to attend.

So closely linked are the overseas Chinese to the motherland that, in Jamaica, the Chinese community and friends of China have contributed to the China Relief Fund for the welfare of the people of China who suffered displacement and hardship as a result of the recent severe winter weather conditions there.

CBA benevolence also extended to the wider community in Jamaica through our Outreach programme on Education, with a presentation to several schools across the island, at our Spring Festival event..

Incidentally, we do have a report and photos galore on our Spring Festival Garden Party inside this issue. Those photos on the back page are courtesy of Neil Yap Sam.

Phyllis Kong, Editor

Message from the President

It is a significant honour to be re-elected as President of the Chinese Benevolent Association for this year—the Year of the Rat—and my Executive team looks forward to be of continued service to our community.

We can do no better than emulate the resourcefulness, creativity and tenacity of the rat to achieve the tasks and goals, which we have set for ourselves.

We will honour the legacies of our forefathers by completing the restoration of the downtown Kuan Kung Temple and, most importantly, the Chinese Cemetery as a fit and final resting place for our ancestors. The care of our less fortunate at the Chinese Home for the Aged and the expansion of our range of Outreach programmes to the wider national community will continue to be of paramount importance.

The enhancement and promotion of our culture through word, song and dance will be done through increased Mandarin instruction and the nurturing of the talents and energies of our young members.

We now ask members within our community to come forward with their plans and ideas to participate in our activities, as your association must be the means whereby we meet, work and play in harmony and respect.

- Wilson Look Kin, President

CCA Toronto Clothes Drive

Photo shows Ms. Tsahai Phillips, Air Jamaica's cargo agent, handing over proceeds of a clothes drive (23 boxes) initiated by the Chinese Caribbean Association (Toronto) to Robert Lee, Vice President of the Chinese Benevolent Association. Air Jamaica has kindly shipped down the boxes free of cost and the Ministry of Finance has granted a waiver of customs duty, GCT, etc. The proceeds will be distributed to various charitable organizations in Jamaica.

Chairpersons 2008

CBA Centre:	Robert Lee
Cemetery Restoration:	Robert Lee
Culture:	Maisie Lau
Finance:	Ventry Foo
Home for the Aged:	Lloyd Hoo
Membership:	Neil Yap Sam
Newsletter:	Phyllis Kong
Outreach / Museum:	Sandy Chung
Properties:	Robert Lee
Social:	Sharon Wan
Sports / Gym:	Patrick Chin
Website:	Laura Chang

Ventry Foo signs at the Swearing-in before Lloyd Hoo, Robert Lee and Wilson Look Kin

CBA Officers 2008

Front Row L-R: Phyllis Kong, Karen Lee, CBA President Wilson Look Kin, Secretary Cynthia Lyew, Sharon Wan. **Back Row L-R**: Lloyd Hoo, Patrick Chin, Treasurer Ventry Foo, Vice President Robert Lee, Supervisor David Chang, David Chuck, Neil Yap Sam.

Missing from photo: Committee Members Maisie Lau, Sandy Chung; Reserve Members Laura Chang, Paula Lee, Eldores Yap; Supervisors Vincent J. Chang, Johnny Chuck, Dalton Yap, Tommy Lyew, and Exley (Busta) Hoo (Reserve Supervisor).

Our ancestors

(Continued from page 1)

ceased ancestors. Food may include steamed whole chicken, roast pork with crunchy skin attached, dim sum pastries—the favourite foods of the ancestors. Besides these, three sets of chopsticks and three Chinese wine cups are arranged above the food, closest to the headstone. The Chinese believe that the dead ancestors are not eating well in their afterlife. Giving them their favorite food not only shows respect for them but also brings the descendants good life and health. The Chinese believe that the spirit has power to fulfill wishes.

The family head begins the ceremony by bowing three times, with wine cup in hand, in front of the grave and then he pours the wine on

the ground, just in front of the headstone. The procedure is repeated three times as each member of the family comes in front of the headstone and bows three times, with the right fist held cupped in the left hand. Some families eat the food there at the grave site, as if having a picnic with their deceased relatives. Chinese have a strong notion that by doing this, it will bring good luck in the family.

In addition, fire crackers are set off to ward off evil spirits and to alert the deceased relatives of the family's presence to pay their respects. Candles, incense and imitation paper money are also lit and the whole family kneels to pay respect. The Chinese believe that paper money can be consumed in heaven or hell. The money is for the deceased to use in his after life.

From a Chinese idiom, *"Ying Shui Si Yuan",* literally, it means whenever one is drinking the water, one must always remember where the water comes from. It is a known fact that our forefathers had been through bitter hardships and hard work that eventually created a better living environment for their future generations. In the end, their efforts have paid off. Hence, we must not take for granted all that we now possess. Instead, we must treasure what we have.

China Relief Fund

The Chinese community in Jamaica and friends of China made a presentation for the China Relief Fund to Ambassador Chen Jinghua at the Chinese Embassy on February 28, 2008.

On hand to make the presentation were Eaton Chung, President of the Chee Kung Tong, Mrs. Fay Pickersgill, President of the Jamaica-China Friendship Association, Wilson Look Kin, President of the Chinese Benevolent Association, and Eddie Wong Chew Onn, President of the Chinese Cultural Association, along with a few association representatives.

Up to the eve of Chinese New Year, China was experiencing unusually severe winter weather conditions that caused loss of life and much hardship for the people of China and the country. The overseas Chinese in Jamaica and friends of China felt the need to provide support to China in her efforts to return normality to the lives of the people and to the country, through the China Relief Fund.

Those contributing to the fund were:

- Jamaica Chinese Christian Church
- Montego Bay Christian & Missionary Alliance Church
- Carl Chang
- Damian Chin You
- Eustace Lee
- Universal Cash & Carry
- Xtra Trading
- Anthony Chin
- Eddie Wong Chew Onn
- Cheron Chong
- Tastee Ltd
- George Chong Sang
- Karl Hendrickson
- Chinese Benevolent Assoc.
- Fay & Tony Pickersgill / Island Dairy Ltd
- Central Trading Ltd
- Mang Hing Co
- Chee Kung Tong
- A.H. Auto

CBA Outreach in Education

"If you are planning for a lifetime, educate people"

CBA Past President Richard Tenn made the presentation to schools at the Spring Festival event on February 10, 2008 at the CBA Centre

The Chinese Benevolent Association recognizes the importance that education plays in our country, and the financial burden that some parents experience, not only in the day to day expenses of sending their children to school, but also in the cost of examination fees.

For the past ten years, the CBA, through its Outreach Programme on Education, has been assisting students who are sitting the CXC and "A" Level examinations and are unable to pay the fees. We at the CBA feel that a collective emphasis on education for Jamaica's youth can only benefit the country.

For students to qualify, they must not only prove financial constraints but also show good grades. Another criterion to qualify for this assistance is that the student must exhibit desirable social attitudes and demonstrate qualities of good citizenship at school and in his or her community. The school authorities work in conjunction with the CBA Outreach Committee to ensure that the monies are dispensed appropriately.

The schools are selected from across the island and we are pleased to present cheques to the following schools this year:

- Seaforth High School, St. Thomas
- Holy Trinity High School, Kgn.
- Jamaica College
- St. Catherine High School
- Buff Bay High School

This year we have increased the amount from $20,000 to $25,000.

ROUNDHOUSE REUNION JUNE 28-29, 2008

Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto, Scarborough

Formerly the Toronto Hakka Conference in winter 2000 and 2004, Roundhouse Reunion 2008 will be held this summer at the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto, Scarborough.

Hakka roundhouses are under consideration to be designated World Heritage Sites by the United Nations. Dating back up to 1,000 years, roundhouses sheltered dozens of multi-generational families in hundreds of rooms. Like a mini-village, the massive earthen dwelling would offer protection, communal space for celebrations, and self-sufficiency in food and water.

Roundhouse Reunion 2008 will be a conference and festival where people:

• Gather to learn, share, meet, and celebrate Hakka history, culture, and traditions;

• Choose from dozens of presentations, workshops, exhibits, and activities with a Canadian and international cast.

□ Come hear Dr. Siu Leung Lee talk about what it means to be Hakka. See him demonstrate different styles and techniques of calligraphy as a discipline and a revelation of the mind. And travel with him on his journey to prove that world explorer Zheng He of China arrived in America some 70 years *before* Christopher Columbus of Spain.

□ Celebrate Hakka heroes in Chinese history with Professor Richard Bohr, a most popular speaker from 2000 and 2004 returning to us with more stories.

□ Discover how food defines the Hakka spirit and ingenuity with Professor Shiu Loon Kong.

□ Tour the incredible Hakka houses of our ancestors with Dr. Keith Lowe.

□ Sample contemporary Hakka literature with Professor Pietro Giordan.

□ Enjoy excerpts from *Reading Mr. Chin* and the stories of first-born sons sent back to China, with Assistant Professor Anne-Marie Lee-Loy.

□ Relive the formation of the Hakka people through centuries of migration from the north to the south with Patrick Chen. Where did we come from, and where did we end up?

□ Examine the adaptation of the Chinese community in the Caribbean with Aaron Bohr (Jamaica), Keith Lowe (Trinidad), and other presenters.

□ Compare the stories of the Hakka in the Caribbean, India, Mauritius, Malaysia, and other countries with your family's story where you come from.

□ See those stories come alive in the Global Village Photo Exhibit.

□ Look inside our own Hakka communities in Toronto with poet, author, and editor, Henrietta Akit, as she shares her perspective.

□ Learn basic Hakka phrases and compare Hakka dialects between different countries and with Cantonese and Mandarin.

□ Marvel at the Hakka population throughout the world on a world map.

□ Mark your own ancestral village or district on a map of China.

□ Enjoy folk and classical music by Chinese musicians live during the festival.

□ Admire the culinary talent of Hakka chefs at live cooking demonstrations. Take away the recipes.

For more information as it becomes available, contact your Association Executive.

Visit our website for details, advance event tickets, and gift tickets for family and friends:

www.roundhousereunion 2008.com

CBA Annual Chinese New Year

Spring Festival Garden Party

Four generations in a family

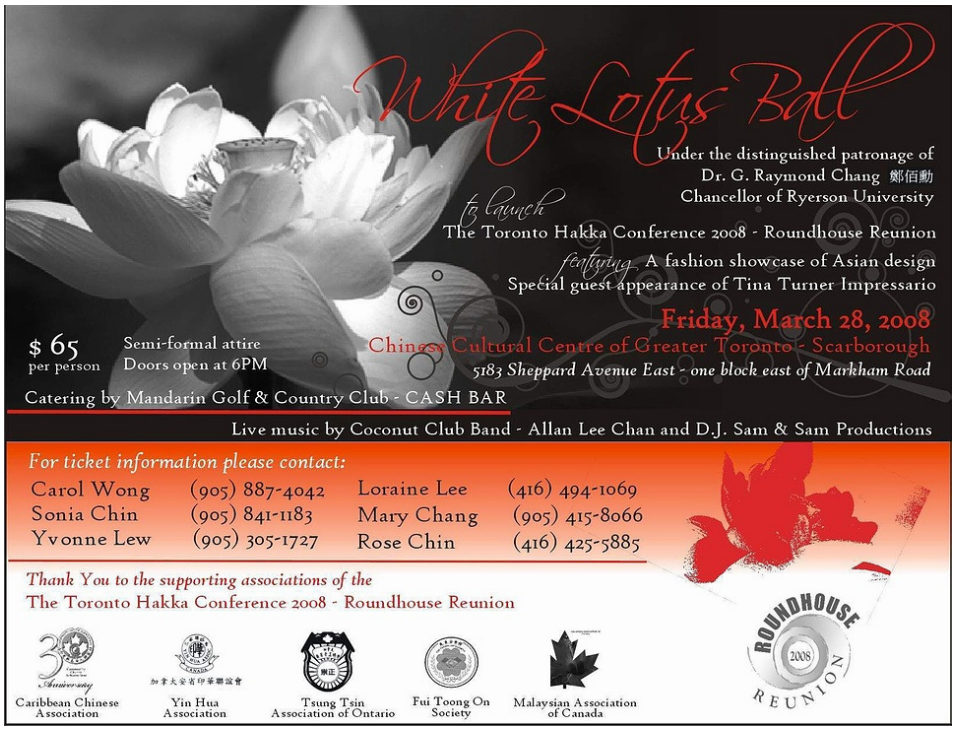
"In family life, be completely present"
- Lao Tzu

Four generations of ladies in the Chin Pen family

Throughout most of Chinese history, the mean age at death was quite low, and one's sixtieth birthday was an object of awesome celebration. It was unusual for elderly people to live to see their grandchildren grow to adulthood. Thus, while three-generation families were common, four-generation families were rare, and five-generation families were truly remarkable.

In this recent photo of four generations of ladies in the Chin Pen family are shown, from left: matriarch Dorothy Chin Pen; her granddaughter Laura (Chin Pen) now married to Oliver Chang; daughter Marcia (Chin Pen), wife of Leslie Chung; and in front, great granddaughter Alexis Leyow, daughter of Paul and Candisa (Chin Pen) Leyow. Both Laura and Candisa are sisters and are the daughters of Vincent and Susan (Lee) Chin Pen.

Still rare and almost remarkable by today's standard!



China Relief Fund

(Continued from page 4)

- Eva Lam
- Bamboo Village Rest.
- Encore Foods
- Dragon Court Rest.
- Lee's Food Fair
- Kendel Trading Ltd
- Dalton Yap
- Albert Chow
- Wayne Chen & Diana Thorburn
- Juen & Ernest Nam
- Irena & Leo Cousins
- Trevor & Ingrid Munroe
- Chinese Cultural Assoc
- Rainbow Haberdashery
- Happy Wholesale
- Wayne's Trading
- Three Star
- Crystal Haberdashery
- Richard Chong
- Kenny Co Ltd
- Percy Hong
- Lisa Huang
- Kim Tsen Lai
- Value Pride/Pink Haber
- Oriental Express
- Gladstone Lee Fatt
- Angela Wong
- Bigga Value Wholesale
- Whacko Trading
- Low Price Wholesale
- Andrew Chin
- Winston Chung
- Cindy Cosmetics
- Sammy Wong Chew Onn
- Raymond Chen
- Buffalo Enterprise
- Extravaganza
- Hen Wah
- Everybody Wholesale
- New Better Price
- Shim's Wholesale
- Leslie Music Mart
- Gold Star
- Winners Wholesale
- Donna Chong
- Theresa Chung
- May Chung
- Aston Lau
- Sweet Enterprise

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CBA Spring Festival Garden Party

This year the Chinese Benevolent Association's Spring Festival Garden Party continued the long-standing tradition of excellence. Upon entering the gates of CBA Centre at 176 Old Hope Road on Sunday, February 10, guests were greeted by the intoxicating melodies of **Keith Lyn**. The crowd was abuzz with excitement, swaying to the romantic sounds of the 60's and 70's as they cued for captivating meals, and explored the exterior concessions.

While children rushed off to revel in a myriad of games and rides, no one was safe from the nostalgic aroma of popcorn and the deliciously pink cotton candy – an irresistible combination. Adventurous patrons eagerly lined up to try the newest Asian trend, Bubble Tea, supplied by **Chá 茶**. Flavours of lychee, green apple, paw-paw and mango became fast favourites with the crowd, many returning throughout the evening to get their fill of the satiating concoction.

An unwavering urge to achieve New Year's fortune kept the Dim Sum stalls by **Orient Express** and **Shanghai Restaurant**, and CBA's own dinner stall surrounded by patrons. Of course, the fact that the key to a year of prosperity and abundance was a selection of succulent Chinese meals did not make the task too difficult. Delectable dishes like pork and muk nee, spicy roast chicken and exotic cha sow provided the customers with such palatable excitement that they will surely be dreaming about them until the next CBA garden party.

Inside, the time-honoured Lion Dance by the **Wing Lung Kung Fu Association** peaked the masses' enthusiasm as dancers marched through the audience before mounting the stage. The performance's use of firecrackers ushered in late-comers and alerted concessionaires and any remote patrons to the festivities within. Virtuoso violinist **Jessica Yap** performed brilliant renditions of Bob Marley and Lionel Ritchie, wowing the crowd with her classical talent, while the CBA Children's Choir delivered charming scores, the product of months of practice and dedication for such young performers. Undoubtedly, the evening's highlight was the section of the programme that belonged to **Jamaica's Elvis**, the great Bobby Demacardo, who beguiled the audience with his incredible timeless melodies.

Patrons were awed as CBA officials revealed just how much their attendance helped contribute to CBA outreach programmes, and the event was brought to a close with Planning Committee Chairperson Karen Lee's Vote of Thanks. In all it was an enchanting experience, an evening of tradition and splendour and the guaranteed merriment associated with every CBA event. With the memories made, CBA best start printing their tickets for the next garden party now, the line is already forming.

Keith Lyn sang Jamaican classics

Jessica Yap performed 'outside the box'

Elvis rocked!

CBA at CCF Miami Festival

MIAMI, FL:

Our thanks to the Chinese Cultural Foundation (CCF) in Miami for their years of generosity and support. This all started five years ago when the late Einez Yap, who was then President of CCF, gave us a complimentary booth at their annual Chinese New Year Festival, for fundraising for the Restoration of the Chinese Cemetery in Jamaica. Since then, with George Yap, Past President, Peter Liu serving as President and Wilfred Lai, Vice President, CCF has been a source of encouragement to our cause.

This year, Wilson and Delores Look Kin, David and Elaine Chang, and Robert and Emilia Lee graced us with their presence and support on February 17. They represented CBA and were seated with the dignitaries for the first of two shows, which Wilfred Lai had dedicatedly put together. The shows are the main attraction. Delicious international food fair and a variety of novelty item, clothes, plants and silk flowers etc., representing multicultural interest, were for sale.

The booth which attracted the most people was our 'Restoration of the Chinese Cemetery'. It was a meeting place and get together of friends, old and new. Faithful Winnie Chung-Devensky, who has been with me on our begging spree, was her usual jovial self. She brought many new faces. Tony Allen donated a new poster which displayed the new entrance gate of the Chinese Cemetery, and I added a new board to show off all the work that Robert Lee has accomplished. This attracted a lot of people—not only Chinese, but non-Chinese as well. Some visitors graciously gave token donations to our cause.

Easton Lee shared our spot for the second year and provided a welcome tent, which warded off both sun and rain. He promoted his books and CDs as well as drew people's attention to the Restoration Project.

David Chang, our principal mentor, came with his computer and records and was able to stimulate interest by providing information from his Cemetery archives, to the extent that he ended the day with numerous "homework" projects.

We were able to supplement our contact list of people as a number of persons signed up our Pledge Forms, which was encouraging.

All together, the day was a great success and enjoyed by all.

- **Fay Chang Allen**
  February 23, 2008

Above: Fay Chang Allen being introduced by George Yap to Chinese diplomat from the PROC, who wanted to see the CBA Cemetery Restoration booth. In the background is Arthur Wong.

Far left: Fay, Victor Chang, and Robert Lee.

Left: Easton & Jean Lee, Penny Lee, Tony Allen, Elaine Chang, Fay, and David Chang.

Below: Wilson Look Kin, Winnie Chung-Devensky, Robert, Easton, Fay, and David.

Thank You

The CBA Chinese Cemetery Restoration Committee expresses sincere thanks and appreciation to the family of the late Mrs. Doris Chung and, in particular, her son Willie Chung for the kind donation of proceeds of collection taken in her memory for the CBA project. Mrs. Chung passed away in June 2007, leaving sons Michael Cheung, William Chung; daughter Violet Spence; grandchildren, relatives and extended family members.

Remember to reply to the CBA Membership circular, using the self-addressed stamped envelope. Let's keep up to date!

Restoration of the Chinese Cemetery – Phase 2 Update

Phase 2 comprising new wall/ repairs to the surrounding walls of the cemetery will, at the end of February, be about 70% complete and we'll be doing our utmost to have it completed before Gah San in April.

In the meantime, CBA has undertaken to clean and bush out the entire cemetery, which had attained a 'jungle' like appearance due to the heavy rains late last year. That assignment is about 90% complete and visitors to this year's Gah San will see a cemetery cleaned as never before.

Members of CBA along with people from around the community have also been volunteering their services, free of cost, to repaint some of the tombs, which were badly in need of a fresh coat of paint. But with over 3,000 tombs to paint, it'll be a long, slow process.

Members are reminded that donations and contributions are still urgently needed to complete the Restoration works as, in addition to completing the walls, other items of work such as the re-roofing of the pavilion, building of a caretaker's cottage, landscaping of the grounds, etc., are yet to commence.

- Robert Lee, Chairman of the Restoration Committee

Photos show part of new wall installed at the rear of the premises, ongoing clean-up work, new entrance and front fence of the Chinese Cemetery in Kingston.

CBA NEWS

CHINESE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION

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CBA volunteers in the kitchen again!

China Relief Fund

(Continued from page 8)

- Cai Mau Man
- Jimmy Lowe
- Simon Yau
- James Chen
- Mi Mi Zhou
- Liza Chen
- Mrs. Lois Sherwood
- Sarry's Haberdashery
- Kevin
- Gold Star Wholesale
- Simon Lue
- Bill Chung
- Peter Chin
- Flo & Keith Bryan
- Ms. Phillippa Horwell
- Kenny Lau
- J.B. Chang
- Zhou Wei Qiang
- Papine Bigger Plaza
- Juice Depot
- Steve Ltd
- BMB
- Peter West
- Ruby & Gladstone DaCosta
- Mrs. Peter Chai
- R. Lyew
- Jim Supermarket
- Astro
- Amy Chin
- Zenhui Liang
- Lisa & Clark Cousins
- Mrs. Yvonne Binns
- Mrs Sheila Carmichael

*To be continued in the next issue of **CBA News**.*