



SIEN LOK NEWSLETTER

EDITOR: WENDY KIT TSUI

WWW.SIENLOK.ORG

SIENLOK@YAHOO.COM

“Through a legacy of co-operation, advancing and preserving Chinese Canadian heritage by creating bridges between generations and cultures.”

Inside this Issue...

Message From The President
Annual General Meeting
Picnic In Our Park/Walk-A-Thon
Membership Renewal/Updating
Afternoon At The Movies
Our Seniors' Visitation
Interview With Bill Mah
Jokes of the Month
We Want Your Feedback

Elected Sien Lok Society of Calgary

Executive for 2002 / 2003

President & Legal	Allen Wong
Vice President	Edmond Lee
Past President	Ray Lee
Secretary	Pam Fearon
Treasurer	Philip Slen
Membership/Newsletter	Wendy Kit Tsui
Social Club	William Mah
New Years Banquet	Cori Louis-Smith
Parks	Windchill Ha
Directors	Jerry Chong
	Jan Mah
	Lisa Woo
	Kevin Wong
	Peter Fung
	Sharon To
	Rosina Ye

Message From The President **by Allen Wong, President**

Well the Year of the Goat has definitely so far turned into an eventful year. We have thus far witnessed

“Operation Iraqi Freedom” and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome “SARS” plus the **“Mad Cow Disease”** which along with the events of 9-11 in 2001 continue to change our world.

The Sien Lok Society of Calgary has not been exempt from the above noted events. At our seniors' visitation on May 4 this year, there was much concern by various nursing homes of SARS and the effects it may have on the seniors. We thank the many volunteers that prepared and delivered fruit baskets to cheer them up and bring some normalcy to the very appreciative seniors, with in my experience were “lifted up” on visitation. A special thanks goes to event planners Cori Louis-Smith, Windchill Ha, Sharon To and William Mah for telephoning, co-ordinating and finding the different nursing homes which the seniors were located at throughout the city and for providing a facility to assemble the fruit baskets.

A note of thanks to our busy Social Committee and co-chairpersons Windchill and William Mah. “Death by Sushi” was a smashing success and the food could have given any “Iron Chef – Japanese” a

run for their money, as the many judges in attendance that night will attest to.

Finally, look forward to our Picnic-In-Our-Park, which will be co-ordinating with the Wing Kei Walk-A-Thon on September 2003 and our General Meeting scheduled on October 17th at the Central Grand Restaurant. We wish you all a safe and happy summer.

Annual General Meeting – Volunteers Needed

If you have not done so, please mark it on your calendar. Our General Meeting is coming up on a **Friday - October 17th 6:00 p.m.** It'll be held at Central Grand Restaurant – 2nd floor, 1623 Centre St. NW. **\$15.00 includes the meal and membership fee.** Our seating is limited to 200. Please contact one of the directors. The location is central and also there's lots of parking space.

Picnic In Our Park/Wing Kei Walkathon –Volunteers Needed

This summer's Picnic In Our Park is being held in conjunction with Wing Kei's Walk-A-Thon on **Saturday, Sept. 20th at 11:00 a.m.** Location – Sien Lok Park (On Riverfront Ave.). It's an opportunity for our members to come and network as well as say "hello" to friends. We are also **renewing memberships** that day and **recruiting new members.** Please bring a friend.

Membership Renewal/Updating

We want to keep in touch with you. At this upcoming General meeting, we'll have a booth set up to ensure that your membership is current. Membership renewal is \$15 if you are attending the AGM and \$5 for a stand alone. Also we've found that a lot of times, members and/or past directors have moved or changed their e-mail address and we were unable to ***maintain our communication.*** So if you know of a member who is not getting a copy of our newsletters electronically, please let us know. Please contact Wendy Tsui at 266-9604 or e-mail kit.tsui@rbc.com.

Afternoon At The Movies

Sunday July 13th, we have a social event coming up. It's an afternoon at the movies. We've got 50 spots to see Terminator III. The film features Arnold in his usual gun slinging fashion. The event will cost each member \$5. Due to the nature of the film, no one under 18 will be allowed. Thanks to William Mah, our social club co-ordinator for organizing the event.

Another Afternoon At The Movies is coming up, this time with a "Family Theme" in mind so everyone can enjoy it.

Our Seniors' Visitation **By Wendy Kit Tsui, Director**

We broke our own speed record (no, not for traffic violation) for the preparation of the **250** fruit baskets in under 45 minutes. It was done before we had a chance to take a coffee break.

Thanks to Lisa who gracefully provided us with Tim Horton's coffee and muffins. The assembly line started right at 9:30 a.m. and before all the volunteers had a chance to get there, we were finished.



We were finished by around 10:10 a.m. and had time to explore the warehouse. Many thanks to William Mah who let us use the warehouse. Also, ***many thanks to our volunteers*** who sacrificed part of their Sunday to make a difference in some seniors' lives.

We had 18 nursing homes on our list to visit. The delivery was divided into teams. We ensured that we had someone who can speak Chinese in every team to converse with the seniors. Again, it was well received. I'm sure the fruit baskets also made a good conversation piece with the seniors and their neighbours.

Interview With Bill Mah

By Jan Mah, Director



Our second honoree goes to Bill Mah, who came on the Sien Lok Board from its inception in 1969 as a Board Director, and retired in the year 2000.

Bill, is a true Albertan by birth, (born and bred in our sister city north of Calgary, and as some people refer to as Edmonchuk, I mean Edmonton!) as one of four children born to Charlie and Kim Mah Yet. Charlie, Bill's dad came to Victoria from China in 1910 to work as a houseboy and Bill's mother, Kim (paid the \$500.00 head tax) came to Canada in 1915 to join her husband, Charlie.

Bill's formative and early career years were spent in Edmonton. While Bill was holidaying in Vancouver, he was introduced to his future wife, Lil Lee, playing tennis on a tennis court in Stanley Park. What is amazing is that it took these two Albertans to go to Vancouver, B.C. to find each other. Lil, although born in Cranbrook, B.C., was raised in Kimberly, B.C, and then moved to Lethbridge, Alberta. After spending a year either flying or driving from Edmonton to Lethbridge (probably

wearing out a car or two). Bill finally got serious or became tired of spending weekends on the road and made an honest woman out of Lil. And then the kids came, six of them. (Bill wanted to start his own baseball team)! Ronald, Joy, Randy, Susan, Lorraine and Ritchie and as the saying goes, along came the next generation, the grandchildren; Christopher, Curtis and Colin Mah; Erin and Jordan Seatter; Kevin, Chad and Sarah Mah, Nicole Latter; and Jacob Mah.

Bill, was an original Board Member who became involved with the Society to help lobby City Hall, because Chinatown as we know it today was threatened by annihilation. The city proposed to put a freeway right through the Chinatown area. When this plan was shelved, the Board of Directors needed to change the focus of being political and turned their energy to do good works within the Chinese Community. It was subsequently decided that good works should also include preserving some green space in Chinatown by a formation of a Park for all to enjoy. So that started a massive fundraising effort which ultimately culminated in the creation of Sien Lok Park.

After holding various positions with the Sien Lok Board of Directors during his long serving time with the Society, it was during his stint of Presidency that the fruition of the Sien Lok Park (1982) became a reality.

Bill reminisces and chuckles fondly in regards to those early years on the

Board and said that a great deal of thanks goes to the Caucasian business community who really contributed largely to the fundraising events of the Chinese New Year's banquets. "If it weren't for their support, the Park would have taken a few more years to become a reality." As Bill comments, he also lauds all of the Sien Lok members and their families who volunteered their time so unselfishly for the Society's goals.

As a board member, Bill feels his greatest area of accomplishment is in the fact that he was very instrumental in creating on-going scholarships for S.A.I.T. and Mount Royal students (of Asian descent) that is still awarded annually today.

Bill also recalls in those earlier years, that Sien Lok became very instrumental in providing assistance to recent Chinese immigrants to Calgary (this was prior to the formation of Calgary Chinese Community Service Association who now provides social service duties.) Sien Lok provided assistance by doing translation work, assisted immigrants in obtaining proper services, such as how to apply for work, how to get children enrolled in schools, etc. All of this which was done purely on a volunteer basis. Sien Lok members became a valuable asset to these immigrants who came to Calgary in the 1970's because of their ability to read, write and speak English and converse in the immigrant's native tongue, Toisanese.

Sien Lok had no problems attracting and garnering memberships

due to the fact that the Society sponsored social events to give families an opportunity to mix and mingle and meet other Chinese Canadian families born and raised in Canada. These outings strengthened families and cemented friendships, because it gave people a sense of belonging. The idea was to bridge the cultural gap for these second and third generations of Canadian born Chinese. As Calgary grew larger, families moved away from the Chinatown area or away from their own immediate families, adults and youngsters alike did not get the opportunity to develop friendships with other Canadian born Chinese. Therefore, it became rather important to have an organization that could help retain some of the heritage that was rapidly being forgotten. It was also a time when there seemed to be a thirst of wanting to understand the Chinese.

Culture, traditions and customs of their forefathers. Sien Lok felt this was a niche they could cultivate, so besides hosting the annual Chinese New Year banquet (where the members acted as hosts/hostesses, wait staff), the Society also promoted family related activities such as the summer picnic, watching professional hockey games, going on ski trips, dinners and other social events which really brought the Society's members closer together. When the Society required volunteers for any fundraising event, the volunteers' turnout was an unqualified success.

I then asked Bill as to what he would like to see as a legacy of the Sien

Lok Society and he indicated that he would prefer to see the Society take a bigger role in the promotion of Chinese culture and traditions for their membership. He said this is especially important for future generations of Canadian born Chinese. If no one takes the initiative to instill culture and traditions, Chinese customs will eventually be lost in the ensuing years to come. This fact is just as true with future generations born to traditional Chinese families, but probably even more importantly to families in multi-cultural and multi racial families. He says it will be a shame not to pass this heritage down, as our culture is a rich and fascinating one. He also believes that no other Chinese organizations in Calgary promotes Chinese heritage, but perhaps Sien Lok could take on that role. It could be a number one priority!

Knowing that their own children were not cognizant of their own Chinese heritage, Bill and Lil took them on a fascinating trip to China in 1990 and in particular back to his roots in the rural village of his ancestors. After the love of his life (Lil) passed in the fall 2002, late last year, Bill took the children/grandchildren who were not able to go in 1990 and made the same eventful trip to his historical roots.

Bill echoes the sentiments of Annie Louis in that he would also like to see more social events planned (outside of fundraising banquets) where members and their families get the opportunity to mix and mingle; learn and share with one another.

Now that Bill has retired from the Board, besides spending time with his family and extended family, he still finds time to enjoy his number one hobby of travelling and has upcoming trips planned with members of his family.

Jokes Of The Month

Work Place...

All the organs of the body were having a meeting trying to decide who was in charge.

The brain said: "I should be in charge, because I run all the body's systems. Without me nothing would happen."

"I should be in charge," said the heart, "because I pump the blood and circulate oxygen all over the body. Without me you'd all waste away."

"I should be in charge," said the stomach, "because I process food and give all of you energy."

"I should be in charge," said the rectum, "because I'm responsible for waste removal."

All the other body parts laughed and the rectum and insulted him. In a huff, he shut down tight. Within a few days, the brain had a terrible headache, the stomach was bloated and the blood was toxic. Eventually the other organs gave in. They all agreed that the rectum should be the boss.

The moral of the story?

You don't have to be smart or important to be in charge.... just an asshole.

We Want Your Feedback

What would you like to see in the newsletters? Our goal is to make this an effective communication tool. You can let us know by writing to or calling Wendy Kit Tsui at 266-9604 kit.tsui@rbc.com. Also we can be reached through our e-mail sienlok@yahoo.com.