

Casa de Macau no Canada (Toronto)



Vol.8 June 1, 2006

4168 Finch Avenue East, P.H. #39
Scarborough, Ont. CANADA
M1S 5H6
Tel: 416-299-6947
www.casademacau.ca

Board of Executives

President and Editor
Monica Alves 905-887-9408
lmonman@rogers.com

1st Vice-President and Editor
Gloria Soares Anok 416-284-9095
theanoks@hotmail.com

2nd Vice-President
Marie-Cecile Remedios 416-383-0327
Marie_Remedios@msn.com

Treasurer
Barbara J. Baptista 416-283-7937
baptistabj@rogers.com

Secretary
Helena Barradas 905-201-7155
helena.tony.barradas@rogers.com

Clubhouse Manager
Isabel Gomes da Silva 416-228-1207

Table of Contents

From the Executive	1, 2
Casa Social Events	2, 3
Upcoming Events	3, 4
Visitors.....	4
R.I.P.	4
Did you know.....	4
Calendar of Events.....	5

FROM THE EXECUTIVE

We have just completed a very successful quarter in the life of Casa judging by the fully subscribed events. It is encouraging to see the support. Our thanks to members.

This is as good a time as any to remind members, once again, that if you wish to attend an event, complete and send in your form and payment as soon as possible. All events are based on a first come first serve basis, so any event can be fully subscribed early on, *i.e.* before the cut off date, as was the case of the April in Portugal and the Bus trip. For in-house events, the building code is such that we can only accommodate a limited number at the Casa. Having said this, don't be totally discouraged because even if the event is full, there will always be a 'waiting list'. We thank those members who considerably informed the contact person when they had to drop out so that those on the waiting list could be accommodated.

New Building Regulations

The building management has informed Casa that due to security reasons, the front doors to the building will be locked at 9:30 pm.

The garage lights will be turned off at 10 pm. and a chain will be placed across the ramp up to the covered garage, and the back door to the building will be locked at midnight.

Members might also have noticed that security cameras have been installed throughout the building.

We do not mean to alarm members, however, we suggest that it would be prudent, whenever possible, for members not to leave on their own, but try to leave in pairs, particularly in the evenings.

Macau Government Tourist Office (MGTO)

Members might be interested to know that we received a letter from Mr. João Manuel Costa Antunes, Director of the MGTO last April requesting information on our Casa. The purpose, as explained by Mr. Antunes, was the hope of MGTO establishing cooperation between their office and those of the various Casas worldwide to help promote Macau.

After sending MGTO the information requested, it was with regret that the reply we received was disappointing in that apparently in the eyes of the MGTO: "...to date, Canada is not yet a priority market for the tourism of Macau." The MGTO did, however, send us some posters and tour guidebooks, which are available from our Library. We have also provided a link on our website to the MGTO site should anyone be interested in finding out information on Macau.

Communication from the Portuguese Consulate

From time to time, Casa receives various notices and invitations to attend exhibits hosted at the Consulate. Members will recall that we have established an ad hoc group of members who volunteered to be on standby should representation from our Casa be requested at any such events. (Refer to Vol. 4, June 2, 2005 pg 2) Due to the fact that the publication of Casa's newsletter is on a quarterly basis, it is not possible to convey all these notices in a timely fashion. If, however, there should ever be an important notice, or if relevant information needs to be passed on to members, rest assured a separate notice will be mailed to you.

Below is a summary of some of the notices we received since the last newsletter was published (Vol.7, March 11) which might be of interest to some:

Courses Offered

From April 3, Instituto Camões will be offering from its Virtual Centre, *Portuguese for Beginners* and *Learning Portuguese as a Second Language* extension courses. The application forms can be downloaded from the Instituto Camões website, <http://www.instituto-camoes.pt> as of April 17.

With reference to the *Portuguese for Beginners* course, the graduates can obtain the certificate of the exams from the Certification and Evaluation of Portuguese as Foreign Language, whose Protocol was signed in 1999, between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Instituto Camões), the Ministry of Education and the University of Lisbon.

IDCard, maximum age 30.

On April 14, the Department for Consular Affairs and Portuguese Communities, Movijovem and Caixa Geral de Depósitos signed a

Collaboration Agreement to create a Youth Card - ID Card maximum age 30, for Portuguese Youth and Youth of Portuguese Descent living abroad, so that they may enjoy the same benefits as the holders in Portugal of the said Youth Card, in addition to other benefits in the country where they are residing and also discounts for trips.

Similar to the Youth Card - ID Card maximum age 30, the Classic and Multibank versions can be applied by youth between 12 and 29 years of age, inclusive. The price for the Classic card is 8 Euros and for the Multibank card is 20 Euros.

The Classic card can be downloaded directly from the website www.juventude.gov.pt as of April 28 and delivered afterwards to the Consulate.

The Multibank ID Card maximum age 30 will be issued directly to clients of Caixa Geral de Depósitos and is available from its branches in Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland, Switzerland and United Kingdom.

Attaché for Social Affairs

The Consul General of Toronto advises Portuguese-Canadian Clubs and Associations that an Attaché for Social Affairs of the Portuguese Embassy in Ottawa, Dr. Fernando Gonçalves has relocated to the Consulate in Toronto, as of April 2.

In addition to his social duties, the Attaché will also be in charge of culture and associative affairs. In this capacity, he will be contacting Portuguese clubs/associations in Ontario to further strengthen the relationship with the Consul General.

CD'S still available

Members who have not as yet bought one of Armando Santos' CDs can still purchase one by contacting

Monica. The Executive have been informed by Mica that once the original lot donated to Casa is sold out, more copies can be ordered for the same price of \$10.

Yoga

The first session of Yoga classes taught by Farida Samad has begun. As Yoga is a continuing process of learning, teaching the body to gently stretch its muscles and in doing so strengthen its muscles and improve balance, one need not be intimidated by joining mid-stream. The cost per lesson is \$5. If you are interested, please contact Marie Helena Yen at 416-291-8689.

Line Dance

Due to a family emergency, Naomi Baltazar had to cancel the start of the new Line Dance session. The next session will begin Tuesday, August 8, 2006. If you are interested in joining, please contact Helena Barradas.

CASA EVENTS

March Minchi Madness

Once again the generosity of Casa members was self-evident at the fully subsidized Minchi event held March 25, 2006. Our thanks go to Joyce Barros who helped organize the event. There was a fantastic variety of Minchi, vegetable and dessert dishes, more than enough to satisfy the full house. (*Photos available on the website*)

Let's Talk

To the handful of members who attended, thank you for your support and suggestions. At times, during our dialogue, it may have seemed that the Executive had answers to everything, and in fact, we had - to a certain extent. If it seemed, at times, that we were impatient, it was frustration on our part in trying to explain our position. When you are actually managing the workload, you

understand and see the whole picture clearly.

As for our Casa Manager being strict with regard to rentals of the Casa, and other related duties, we support her judgment as she is dedicated and is thoroughly reliable. Thank you, Isabel.

We appreciate your kind words

Our thanks to Regina Holden for her letter of appreciation for our hard work; she went on to say that Isabel, our Casa Manager is doing a tremendous job in the smooth-running of the Casa and the monthly afternoon socials; that her infusion of new “chefs” (i.e., Antonio Serro and Humberto Viana) added to the list of regular cooks, as well, “male food servers” make a nice change to the afternoon socials.

We also acknowledge appreciation from Ken/Aurea Meyer, Ben/Nidia Abbas, Joe/Andrea Rodrigues, Humberto Viana, Sebastiao Jose, Ryan/Marie Chang.

Thank you. Be assured that we will continue to serve the rest of our term, which terminates at the end of December 2006, to the best of our abilities.

April in Portugal

In keeping with the theme of the event, Monica welcomed those in attendance at the April in Portugal evening Saturday, April 29 in Portuguese saying: “Em nome da Comissão Executiva, agradeço a todos aqui presentes para festejar o Abril em Portugal. A vossa presença constitui um estímulo para que esta Direcção se esforce no sentido de continuar a trabalhar para que hajam mais eventos que sejam do vosso agrado. Mais agradeço a vossa companhia em partilhar connosco a boa comida e os bons momentos de camaradagem.”

The event was fully subsidized and fully subscribed with a dozen or so members who unfortunately could not attend due to the space limitations of the Casa.

Those attending enjoyed a scrumptious meal, which had as starters, Caldo Verde, made by Chappy and Marie-Cecile Remedios and Pastéis de Bacalhão, which our former Portuguese teacher made. Following the starters, members were treated to a variety of authentic Portuguese dishes prepared by Casa’s own “chefs”. There were: two kinds of baked bacalhão dishes prepared by Marie Camille Gonsalves and Barbara Baptista; Dobrada prepared by Cacilda Ribeiro; Feijoida prepared by Lourenço Conceição; Galhina com Cerveja prepared by Isabel Gomes da Silva and Porco á Alentejana prepared by Virginia Sanchez. Adding to the menu was BBQ chicken and roasted mini potatoes, which were ordered from a *Churrasqueira*. Those who paced themselves could enjoy a selection of: Pudim Flan thanks to Cecilia Conceição; Bread pudding and cake thanks to Americo Sousa; coconut pudding from Clare Soares, Arroz Doce and several Tortas de Amêndoa à moda Albufeira prepared by Monica.

Colourful Portuguese tablecloths covered the tables and added to the festive ambiance of the Casa; posters of various aspects of Portugal adorned the walls and Portuguese folk music played on our system. It was lovely to see as well that all who attended also added to the festive theme by dressing in something red, green or yellow. Special thanks to Marie Camille who brought and wore her Portuguese costume and Helena Barradas who wore Marie-Cecile’s outfit. We also thank David Brander who donated 8 bottles of his homemade wine, which were drawn

as prizes throughout the evening. The lucky winners were: Nidia Abbas; Rita Ashley; Anne Brander; Ana José; Celsa and Archer Larcina; Terry Larcina, and Deanna Tiwari.

The Line Dancers performed a Portuguese folk dance and managed to convince a number of members who good-naturedly joined them on the floor.

As all good things must come to an end, so did this evening. Our thanks and appreciation is extended to all those who helped in the cleaning up and tidying up. The old adage was proven yet again, many hands make light work.

(Photos available on the website)

Bus trip

Without exception, everyone was on time at the designated area to board the coach, and under bright sunshine, we departed for Niagara Falls.

We enjoyed our buffet lunch at the Table Rock Café overlooking the Falls, after which we walked around, then boarded the bus to continue on to the U.S.A. Our first stop was at the Seneca Niagara Casino, where we dropped off about half the group, the bus then proceeded with the shoppers to the Walden Galleria Mall.

On the return journey, buns, cookies and candy were passed around and the group happily munched away. It was indeed a very successful outing, with traffic on the highway and customs in our favour.

(Photos available on the website)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dia de Macau

Members and friends who have not as yet signed up to attend the Dia de Macau event on Saturday, June 24 please contact Barbara right away. Our apologies for the error in the day that appeared on our website which

may have caused some confusion. It was corrected as soon as it came to our attention. In the future, should anyone have any questions regarding an event, please do not hesitate to contact any Executive if you are not sure who the contact person is for the specific event. It is always better to get the information straight from the source.

We look forward once again to seeing many of you at the Mass which will commence at 4:30 p.m. in the lovely chapel at St. Joseph's Convent, then to enjoy the communal feast to follow. Invitations have been sent on your behalf to the Portuguese Consul General, Dr. Maria Amélia Paiva and the Attaché for Social Affairs, Dr. Fernando Gonçalves to celebrate with us

Mahjong Event

Please note that Lucila Olaes will be co-ordinating a Mahjong Event which will be held at the Casa on Saturday, July 22, 2006, starting at 12 Noon. This event is fully subsidized.

If you are interested in participating, please phone Lucila at 905-294-8878, or e-mail her at c_m_olaes@hotmail.com for particulars, and to arrange "legs" etc. Note that this is open to members ONLY as it will be fully subsidized. (*Refer to Calendar of Events*)

A Day at Woodbine

Casa has booked Sunday, August 13, 2006 at the Post Parade Room Restaurant at Woodbine Racecourse. Celsa Larcina has kindly offered to organize this event for us so if you have further questions, please contact Celsa directly. For those who have not attended this popular event in the past, you will enjoy a wonderful selection at the buffet luncheon. If you so choose you can stay and play the horses or if you prefer, a short elevator ride will take you to the

Casino. (*Refer to Calendar of Events*)

Royal Ontario Museum

A mini coach has been arranged to take members and friends who might be interested in going to the Royal Ontario Museum on Saturday, September 16, 2006. The bus will pick us up at the clubhouse at 10 am and proceed to the Museum. On arrival, we will be taken on a guided tour of the Phase One Wing of the renovated Asian Suite of Galleries in the restored Philosophers' Walk Wing containing beautiful art and archeology of China, Japan and Korea. The ROM is a jewel in our very own backyard housing one of the most important collections of Chinese art outside of China, the largest collection of Japanese art in Canada and the nation's only permanent gallery of Korean art. After the tour, we will re-board the bus, which will return us to the clubhouse. Anyone interested or who might have questions may call Cecilia Conceição. 905-427-0850. Note that only those members who want to join in the above, and who have submitted their names to Cecilia will be contacted with news. (*Refer to Calendar of Events*)

November Bazaar

Crafters, bakers, candlestick makers - Casa will be holding another Bazaar in November, the date to be determined at a later time. As with the last Bazaar, a portion of the sale of goods will be donated to a worthy cause. It is never too early to think how you can participate in this fun afternoon. Details will be included in the next newsletter.



Christmas Party - 2006

Please mark this date on your calendar: **Sunday, December 3.** New venue, terrific menu, prizes

galore, all at an unbelievable price for members!!!

Visitors

It was nice to meet some of the visitors who came to town to visit with friends and family. Members are encouraged to bring their out of town guests to the Casa to meet with members and get reacquainted with others. These past few months we met: Marianne Tavares (David and Elizabeth's daughter from England); Lana (Nolasco) Wightman (cousin of Marie Helena Yen from Vancouver); Michol (Beltrao) and Mark Levitt (niece of 'Pompy' Mackintosh and Patricia Alves)

May They Rest In Peace

Sadly, we report the passing of Vivian (Castro) Alves, widow of Elysio Alves on April 6, 2006. Mario Lui, husband of Grace (Pomeroy), son-in-law of Luis/Mary Pomeroy on May 2, 2006. Our sympathies are extended to the surviving family members.

Did you know

In the United States, the driving force behind the establishment of the celebration of Father's Day was Mrs. Sonora Smart Dodd. Her father, the Civil War veteran William Jackson Smart, as a single parent raised his six children in Spokane, Washington. She was inspired by Anna Jarvis's efforts to establish Mother's Day. Although she initially suggested June 5, the anniversary of her father's death, she did not provide the organizers with enough time to make arrangements, and the celebration was deferred to the third Sunday in June. The first Father's Day was celebrated on June 19, 1910, in Spokane, Washington.

It was only in 1966 that Lyndon Johnson made Father's Day a holiday to be celebrated on the third Sunday of June. The holiday was not officially recognized until the

presidency of Richard Nixon in 1972.

The Executive would like to take this opportunity to wish all the fathers in our community, a very Happy Father's Day on Sunday June 18, 2006.

Bamboo Scaffolding

Doubtless most of us, if not all, will remember growing up in HK/Macau and walking past these scaffoldings without giving much thought to them. I came across the following article which I thought interesting and would like to share with you.

The South China Morning Post, Hong Kong, May 27, 2006 by Robert Kwong
The familiar latticework rises a few storeys a day. Within months, nimble workers have weaved the bamboo frame to dizzying heights, wrapping buildings with a second skin. Developers build skyscrapers to an ear-popping 80 storeys and more using hydraulic platforms and other modern devices. But the outer walls of these futuristic edifices are still finished by workers on bamboo scaffolding – a craft that dates back centuries.

Hong Kong is one of the last bastions of bamboo scaffolding. Denying regional trends, bamboo is used for 80 per cent of scaffolding work in the city, says Chiu Kwok-leung, chairman of the Hong Kong and Kowloon Bamboo Scaffolding Workers Union. Construction companies in Southeast Asia and parts of the mainland still use it to varying degrees, but nowhere near the extent Hong Kong does.

The number of scaffolders has held steady at about 3,000 to 4,000, despite downturns over the past decade, Chiu says. Most of the city's scaffolding masters, or *sifu*, came from the mainland in the early 1900s. "I'm the 44th term chairman, so that

makes this the 88th year of the union," he says.

A head for heights is a fundamental requirement for would-be scaffolders. Even so, the early years can test the resolve of the most daring apprentice. "When I first started out I was pretty scared," says 57-year-old Chiu, who entered the trade when he was 15. "But there wasn't much that could be done about it. You just had to be brave and climb up the scaffold."

Like other novices, Chiu's duties in the first six months were restricted to fetching and carrying. "All we did was carry tools, bamboo poles or whatever was needed up to the *sifu*, he says. "Naturally, they didn't let me handle any of the actual construction of scaffolds."

It was years before Chiu got to work on 40- or 50-storey scaffolds. At those heights work gets more complicated. "There's a lot more wind, so we would be swaying while hanging onto the scaffolds," Chiu says. "Sometimes the wind gets so strong we can't work at all."

Many factors contribute to the popularity of bamboo scaffolding in Hong Kong, but the main ones are that it's cheaper and faster than alternatives. It can be put up three times faster than metal frames, Chiu says. "One worker can put up 750sqft of bamboo scaffolding a day. But for metal scaffolding, three to four workers would be needed because it's much heavier."

Over the years, the building industry has experimented with other materials. One company developed a synthetic rod designed to be just as light and strong as bamboo. But each pole cost \$20, so no one used it, says Tang Sung-yuen, a scaffolding instructor at the Construction Industry Training Authority (Cita).

Bamboo also has the advantage of being suited to odd-shaped structures. "Metal scaffolding just doesn't have the flexibility to accommodate odd shapes." Tang says, "Take the Hopewell Centre or the Bank of China building, for example. I can't imagine how anyone could use metal scaffolding for those surfaces."

On the mainland, low labour costs make metal scaffolding a feasible alternative to bamboo. "You could hire someone across the border for \$70 a day," Chiu says. "But in Hong Kong, getting the work done quickly and with few workers makes a big difference because the union rate for scaffolders is \$850 a day."

As well, the mainland was forced to use metal during the heyday of the construction industry in Hong Kong because its supply of good bamboo was exported here, he says.

Mainland builders use a mixture of bamboo and metal because the sites are much bigger, with room for larger foundations. But Hong Kong's high building density means scaffolds rest on smaller foundations, restricting builders to poles that weigh less than 5kg each, Tang says.

To the casual observer, there haven't been many changes to the craft apart from the bamboo strips for tying the poles together being replaced by plastic cords. This simple switch has helped speed construction says Tang. "Because plastic is stronger, we can use fewer poles, which means structures take less time to build."

Scaffolding used to be solitary work. "In my day, we were pretty isolated even though there would be several scaffolders on the same site," Chiu says. "Everyone just went about their business and there weren't many opportunities to chat."

Loneliness was never an issue, he says. If you were working, you were earning money. “Now, it’s different because machines lift the bamboo up, so it’s more of a group exercise and people gather together more. Previously, workers had to have a lot more stamina and independence.”

Safety has improved considerably. Workers are required by law to wear harnesses, and years of public education has raised awareness of safety issues. Accidents still occur – two workers were killed last July after the scaffolding they were working on at a San Po Kong industrial building collapsed – but Chiu says there are fewer tragedies.

However, cost-cutting has resulted in an assembly-line approach that Chiu says is eroding skills. “[Less experienced] workers put the poles into place and all the *sifu* does is tie the knots,” he says.

Chiu says his objections don’t spring from nostalgic yearning. Because younger scaffolders aren’t given a range of tasks, many no longer know how to construct more complex structures, he says. Relying on cranes or other machines to haul poles to different levels also has an impact. “It might seem like just manual labour, but lifting bamboo also trains endurance and agility,” he says. “Bamboo scaffolding isn’t just a construction tool, it’s a traditional Chinese art form, as well.”

According to legend, the earliest Chinese tribes were granted knowledge of bamboo construction by Youchao-shi, one of the three kings who ruled the world when it first began. This is why scaffolders revere Youchao-shi as a patron deity and celebrate his birthday on the 19th day of each lunar year, Chiu says.

Bamboo scaffolding is ingrained in Hong Kong culture. Chinese opera stages are constructed out of bamboo

for major events such as the Tai Ping Sun Chiu festival at Sheung Shui Wai village earlier this year, which occurs once every 60 years.

At the 1986 World Expo in Vancouver, the Hong Kong pavilion was made entirely of bamboo, with craftsman changing the façade throughout the event

Whatever form it may take, bamboo scaffolding is here to stay. With the construction slump after the handover, there was about 40 per cent less work for scaffolders, compared with the golden years of the early 90s, says Tang. But the trade is now enjoying an upswing. “Our current crop of students don’t graduate until August, but we’ve already been getting calls from employers.”

Scaffolders are also in demand outside construction sites. Scaffolds are needed to help fix leaking pipes, install neon signs or air-conditioners, repaint facades and other maintenance work.

“There are a lot daily maintenance jobs out there that need doing,” Tang says. “If the government passes the bill requiring buildings more than 20 years old to be inspected every seven years, then there will be even more work.”

Apprentices these days have the advantage of Cita’s programmes, which are funded by a 4 per cent tax on all construction work exceeding \$1 million, Tang says.

When he followed his father into the trade 33 years ago, training was “entirely haphazard”. Novices had to pick up skills on the job. Since the establishment of the statutory body in 1975, youngsters can receive training in nine different trades, including scaffolding.

“I’d say that one year here is worth three years outside because everything is taught in a much more systematic manner,” Tang says. “Obviously, we can’t teach everything in one year, but we give them a foundation, and afterwards we help them find a job where they can practice what they learnt.”

And because a lot of trainees are teenagers, he says, the instructors don’t just teach techniques but also how to be a responsible person. Learning to work with others, to have right attitude and be responsible is all as important in the workplace as technique, he says. “If I teach even one person well, then it will be a service to the trade.”

Ng Tsz-kin, 17, is among this year’s batch of Cita trainees. “The hardest part of the course was learning to tie secure knots, but it was satisfying to see the first scaffold I built.”

Ng can expect to earn about \$350 a day after completing the course. And if he passes the advanced trade test after three years on the job, he’ll be recognized as a master scaffolder, entitling him to a daily wage of between \$800 and \$1,000. That may seem a long way off, but Ng sees scaffolding as a lifelong career. “I will definitely stick with being a scaffolder.”

Chiu, who just retired from a 16-year tenure with Cita, can empathise. “Once a scaffolding man, always a scaffolding man.” He says.

