



MCAO Newsletter

www.chinesemaurlanassociation.com

Chinese Canadian Archive Project

The Toronto Reference Library (one of the largest archival repositories in North America) has recently launched the Chinese Canadian Archive Project as part of the Library's 2016-2019 Strategic Plan.

The primary goal of the project is to capture the rich history and cultural mosaic of Chinese Canadians in the GTA from 1878 to the present by collecting individual or organizational records, photos, diaries, and recordings which document Chinese Canadians' daily life, community spirit, struggles, successes, hardships, dreams and contributions to Canada. The project's mandate is to: a) collect, maintain, preserve and provide access to this material for the general public and researchers, and b) document the presence of the Chinese communities in the GTA to ensure cultural continuity and strengthen cultural identity.

This project aims at presenting a holistic picture of the diverse Chinese communities in Toronto. It recognizes the importance of representing the Chinese community, including the Hakka people from the Caribbean, Mauritius, India, and so forth.

Should you be interested in contributing your family archival materials such as writing manuscripts, scrapbooks, photos, documents, travel tickets, brochures, or memorabilia, kindly contact Joyce Leung (jmcleung@yahoo.com).

For more details about the project, please go to: <http://torontopubliclibrary.typepad.com/local-history-genealogy/2016/11/official-launch-of-the-toronto-public-libraries-chinese-canadian-archive.html>

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Chinese Canadian Archive Project	1
Celebrating 3 Centenarians	1
Chinese New Year	3
MCAO News	5
A Christmas Party	6
Upcoming Events	6
Our Readers Write	6
MCAO Sponsors	7
Tracing Your Ancestral Genealogy	7
Recipe Corner	8
MCAO Membership	8
Acknowledgement	8
Picture Gallery	9
A Word from Our Sponsors	11

Celebrating 3 Centenarians

By Priscilla Lam/Jean Jacques Hian-Cheong/
Nathalie Limyin



We are most privileged to announce the recent birthday celebration of three centenarians in our Chinese Mauritian community in Canada. This is indeed a noteworthy achievement given the relatively small Mauritian community in Canada.



Mrs. Kim-Chee Yee-Kin-Miow celebrated her 100th birthday on January 18, 2017. She was born in Mauritius and is the eldest of seven siblings. When she was 9 years old, her dad took the

whole family back to Meixian, China, to resettle in their ancestral land.

She married and lived in China for twenty one years before returning to Mauritius to rejoin her husband in 1947.

She immigrated to Canada to join her youngest daughter in 1982 and now resides in Richmond Hill. She settled in very quickly to life in Canada, led an active and independent life and always looked forward to her weekend trips to Chinatown and the occasional card game session with friends. She has always displayed a remarkably caring and generous attitude towards both family and friends and was often the social cheer leader for her wide network of friends. She was one of the original members of MCAO at the inception of the club in the late 1990's. She enjoyed cooking and travelling until she was well into her 90's and made multiple trips to China, England and Mauritius to visit her children and grand-children often on her own.

She has been blessed with a generally good health, largely due to living an active life and a healthy appetite! She has 6 children (1 son and 5 daughters), 13 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren living in Mauritius, China, Japan, Australia, Singapore, England, USA and Canada.



Mrs Simone Filanne Hian-Cheong turned 101 on May 11th, 2016. She was born in Mauritius and spent most of her

life in Piton where she raised 9 children and took an active part in the daily running of her "*La Boutique L'Etage*". Amidst her busy workload, she never missed a beat and would never hesitate to lend a helping hand when needed to the less fortunate of her "*clients la boutique*". She is in essence *une vraie mauricienne*, speaks fluent Creole, Hakka and a smidgen of Hindi and would still very much enjoy her *poisson saler* or *dipain frire*. When asked, she always attributes her longevity to her copious appetite, her ability to sleep and her unequivocal trust in God (at 95, she was requested to become the godmother to an even older friend of hers!) However, we always think that it has more to do with her very positive attitude towards life as she is

a strong believer of good karma. She always professes that things happen for a reason! She is indeed a lady with a big heart.

She came to Canada in 1984 to be with some of her children and now resides in Mississauga. She does consider herself very lucky to still enjoy the frequent visits of her many children, grandchildren and great grandchildren travelling from all over - from Canada, the US, Europe and Mauritius. For the celebration of her 100th, she was blessed with the presence of all her children (except for one), 22 grandkids and 24 great grandkids. One of her favourite quotes is that she likes to compare herself to a huge tree whose branches are all spread out to give shade to and protect her vast family.



Mrs. Lim Yuk Shing (also known as Mrs. Limyin) will celebrate her 105th birthday in April 2017. She was born in 1912 in Meixian, China, and is the third child of

four siblings. She was married at the age of 20 in China and went to Mauritius to join her husband two years later. In Mauritius, she gave birth to four children (three sons and a daughter) and immigrated to Toronto, Canada in 1982 to help take care of her grand-daughter. Her eldest son lives in China whereas her remaining children live in Montreal and Toronto. She has been residing in Montreal since 2002 (after her stroke). Her 12 grand-children adore her to pieces and gave her 13 great grand-children.

Her actions in her long rich life have always been to help people, whether family or friends, and to promote harmony. She is very generous, care-giving and has always seen the good in people and to this day, even if she does not speak much anymore, her sheer presence inspires much love from her family and friends.

Chinese New Year

By Joyce Ng Cheong Tin-Leung



If I were to be asked what were the most precious moments of my childhood and adolescence, I would have to say that they were the Chinese New Year celebrations. From my earliest childhood, I have deeply felt the joy and excitement that prevailed at that time of the year.

Chinese New Year is the most important celebration in the Chinese tradition. It is known as the Spring Festival and dates from the Shang dynasty (17th – 11th centuries B.C.). Agricultural in origin, it first began by offerings made to the deities and the ancestors. It is celebrated on the first day of the Lunar Calendar (usually at the end of January or the beginning of February).

For us children, the atmosphere on this special occasion was filled with the magical warmth and iridescence of festivities unfolding under the humid sunshine of our tropical island.

Those days were very special because we were surrounded by our family, and we could feel their affection. Most importantly, we had our parents with us for entire days. Usually they worked in the shop and were absent from dawn till night for most of the week. The whole Chinese community celebrated the New Year over a few days. In this way they made up for missing out on the main festivities of other ethnic groups on the island, that is Christmas and Easter. Chinese shopkeepers could not take part in those celebrations as they had to concentrate on business and capitalize on the fact that those festivals were the busiest times for the shops; when their customers spent more, and when business became more lucrative.

My earliest memories of Chinese New Year celebrations go as far back as the early 1950's, when we moved to the shop in Quatre-Bornes. We, the children, were between one and seven years of age.

How did we start the week-long festivities? It all began with the special dinner held on New Year's Eve

(*Nien Samsup Yit*). It was usually a dinner for immediate members of the family but I remember that Maman always invited other members of the family such as her brothers (our *Kiew Kiews*). And all the *commis* (shop assistants). Some of these were not closely related to us, but were considered part of the family unit, as they lived on the premises and shared our daily meals. Ours was a small community modelled on village life back in our ancestral country.

New Year's Eve (the *réveillon*) was as important as New Year's Day (*Nien Ts'ee Yit*). It was held in the area between the shop and the small house. That space had a roof made of corrugated iron-sheets and at the other end, beyond the bedrooms, was the kitchen also patched up with corrugated iron-sheets. The area in between was paved with old stones, and there, could be found the washing-up areas, one of which had a tap fitted above a big drum. This was used daily by the family (for their morning ablutions, for example).

To begin with, before dinner was served, a small table was placed on one side of the dining room from which offerings were made to the deities and the ancestors as required by tradition. It was a rite Maman set up every year, in which everybody (including all the children) participated by lighting joss sticks and offering them to the ancestors. The offerings on the table consisted of steamed chicken (*B'hak Tsam Keh*), slices of pork, as well as a variety of fruits. Those would be served at dinner and our parents told us that it was important to eat the 'consecrated' food to receive our ancestors' blessings.

We started the rite fairly early as Chinese people ate dinner early. From the beginning of the afternoon we could smell the delicious aroma of the special soup that was being prepared (shark's fin soup or another tasty one made with white lichen and mushroom simmered in the stock of a *Rodrigues* chicken). We already anticipated eating the tasty *B'hak Tsam Keh* (boiled in salted water, spring onions and ginger) that had been on the offerings table. A mustard sauce that would bring tears to our eyes and would make us sneeze accompanied it. We

children were warned about the strength of the mustard sauce but we were determined to have some and had great fun when the mustard hit our throat and nose!



We were surrounded by an abundance of delicacies. We loved the slightly sweet Chinese sausages served with a garlic sauce. One of the dishes which was served as *hors-d'oeuvres* was the “century-old” preserved eggs that we ate with shredded ginger that had been steeped in vinegar and sugar. The dish the most prized by the adults was the “red pork”; belly pork cooked in wine and red dried fermented rice. We also loved the other pork dish braised with sun dried mustard leaves called *Kon Ham Choy*. There was also Maman’s specialty: *Foo Yung*, a soft omelet with Chinese mushrooms, bamboo shoots, minced pork, prawns and spring onions. These traditional dishes of the Hakka community, made with preserved vegetables and other ingredients, have helped their ancestors survive during their long migrations to the South of China over the last two millennia.

The table and other parts of the house, the door surrounds, must be covered in red (colour of good luck for the Chinese). There must be a lot of gold everywhere too, to bring prosperity and good fortune. Over the whole house, the lavishness must be in evidence, on show for the deities, so as to attract abundant blessings from them for the whole of the new year. Hence, the round table was laden with the delicious dishes prepared by Maman and Cook, and with all sorts of treats.



The following day, New Year’s Day, we woke up to the sound of fire crackers that our parents had set off so as to chase away evil spirits and bad luck. All the Chinese families on the island were doing this. We were used to it and indeed expected the cracking noise that brought good luck on New Year’s Day.

On the first day of the new year, we became vegetarians: a family tradition that served to purify our body and our soul. For the vegetarian dinner, our

grandmothers prepared special dishes from their villages in China: fried transparent noodles in a sweet aromatic sauce or in a spicy sauce served with mustard.

Relatives visited each other at those times. The visits during those days were very important to renew family ties. Most Chinese immigrants being shopkeepers, they did not see each other that often, given that they worked more than six days a week and for thirteen-fifteen hours per day. The solidarity they shared as recent immigrants on the island created a very close-knit community.

Hence, everyone in the community could not wait to spend time with each other. Our family received these relatives and friends with generous hospitality. Maman served tasty traditional cakes, plates of sweet delicacies and treats (*tian yenneh, voo yan, gato-la-cire, gato-cravattes, gato-gingelis, cipekes, sunflower seeds, watermelon seeds*), all washed down with steaming-hot Chinese jasmine tea. We welcomed them warmly after their long bus journeys (some of them had to travel more than two hours across the island to reach us).

It was not long before we heard the clacking noise of the Mah-Jong tiles coming from the dining room. We went over to watch the adults play. They chatted to us in Hakka. For us children, the day held special interest as each child received a *foong pow* (a red envelope with money) from the adults on each visit. We felt excited but felt a little ashamed to show it. Even at our age we instinctively knew that, though it was good to have money to put aside or to give to our parents to buy something later, what counted the most on those days of visits was the human aspect, the deep emotional wealth of family ties.

We would remember the conversations we heard (with half an ear) for many years. Although those conversations sounded fairly important to our young ears, many years would pass before we would understand their full significance.

Prevalent was the sadness of these people who had been forced to leave their homeland due to various reasons. There is no doubt that nostalgia remained uppermost in the lives of these immigrants who had really never left their homeland, for in the very depth

of their beings and in the collective consciousness of their community, remained the epic dream of the “return” to the ancestral home (*tsong T’ong San*), where they would live the rest of their lives!

In the hope of this projected return to the homeland, they were ready to endure much hardship in their new lives on this adopted island - and what they took as a “transitory” place. During those infrequent reunions, they discussed their lives in their shops and how they had to adapt to different languages and cultures to cope with the villagers; the relentlessly work with barely half a day’s rest, when the men would sometimes meet up with their compatriots in the club of their clan (the *Kwo Neh*) in Port Louis. And women would spend a few hours to be with their friends to help during births, and on other occasions.

Thus, one can understand why the Chinese shopkeepers at that period tried to enjoy to the fullest their free time spent together. The week of festivities normally ended with a picnic or any sort of special outing. For our family, one outing that gave all of us an enormous amount of joy was our annual picnic at the beach house of one of our customers who had kindly “lent” it to us for the day. It was the last big event of that week. Maman prepared fried chicken marinated in rum or whisky or brandy! It was the best thing on the menu. There were also *gato-piments*, *bahjahs*, *samosas* ... and a variety of fruits such as bananas, longans, and lychees.

The picnic day had started early in the morning. We got back home late in the evening, extremely tired after a wonderful day at the beach house of someone we hardly knew! There, we had thorough enjoyed playing in a vast field we do not own; we had splashed in an emerald sea we saw only one a year!

The week of the Chinese New Year’s celebrations was a time of great treats; it was a time of reciprocated affection between members of our family and between members of our small community. And to crown it all, the week ended with these hours at the seaside, filled with the joy that derives from something of great wonder: a gift from a stranger, granted to us children of Chinese shopkeepers. That was the golden moment that

ended our time of lavish celebrations!

January 2015 (edited January 2017)

(Translation by Marie Lyne)

Note from Editor: This article is an abbreviated version of one of a series of short stories that will be published in a new book authored by Joyce Ng Cheong Tin-Leung and entitled “Dancing on a Wave - Reveries of a Shopkeeper’s Daughter on a Tiny Island”. This book - in both French and English versions - is due for release in Spring 2017 (See page 12).

MCAO News



MCAO Clubhouse Status

As previously reported, MCAO short-term lease at 189 Augusta Avenue expired December 2016.

With the scarcity and high cost of rental space in the Chinatown, MCAO has secured space at the Alexandra Park Community Centre twice monthly, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM on the second and fourth Saturdays of every month.

The club will evaluate this arrangement to assess if it meets our membership needs and adjustments will be made accordingly.

The Alexandra Park Community Centre is located at **105 Grange Court, Toronto, ON M5T 2J6** (see map below).

MCAO members and friends are welcome to join us for social meeting and recreational activities e.g. potluck lunches, playing cards, bingo or mahjong, etc.

If you need further details, please contact:

- Monique Li Siong (905-812-3735)
- Allan Wan (647-824-3343)
- Joyce Leung (jmcleung@yahoo.com)



MCAO Christmas Party



The MCAO Christmas Party was held on December 17, 2016. We were honoured to welcome a special guest,

Ambassador Phokeer, from the Mauritius Embassy in Washington, who took time to come and celebrate the occasion with us.

A special thank-you to the entire organising team and to all the members and guests without whom the party would not have been the success it was. See *Picture Gallery* on Page 9 for some photos of the party.

A Christmas Party

By Philip Wong Too Yuen



It snowed the night before. MCAO Christmas Potluck Party was just the thing to warm up the winter days. We came into the Council Chamber Member Lounge, The Toronto City Hall, and we immediately knew we were in for some fun time. People were busy in groups, and the atmosphere was relaxed. Music was playing. The food table reminded me of the fried stuff one sees at Champs-de-Mars on race day. It was very colourful and in just as many types of containers. Worth noting was a tray of roast pork pieces with a whole pig's head in it. I did not see any curly pig's tail!

I estimate there were easily more than 100 people: young, old, and the not-so-young. Some were

seated at tables. Others were standing in circles and chatting. I got to mingle and meet many people. When asked who I was, I would say my father's name. "Ah, I know him!" was the usual response from our seniors. "Did I see you on the trip to the Atlantic Coast?" The reply came back, "Yes, that was more than 15 years ago." I think all those who came really enjoyed themselves.

Thank you to the organizers! Good show! Good show! Here seems a good place to reflect on all the efforts and hard work that has gone into making the event happen. Again, as a new member first time attending, I have to agree it was a total success. Let us do it again next year.

Upcoming Events

- Feb 25 : Potluck lunch and mix&mingle/mahjong at Alexandra Park C.C. from 10:00AM to 2:00PM.
Note: the scheduled iPad workshop is postponed due to poor WiFi at the Centre.
- Mar 11: Last iPad workshop rescheduled at North York Memorial Community Hall (details to follow).
- Mar 12: Mauritius Flag-raising ceremony at Toronto City Hall to mark Mauritius Independence Day.

Our Readers Write...



What do these four characters mean? I saw them on the signage of the club. It may be read as: "mao tor fa lian" or Mauritius Chinese Association (of Ontario).

- 毛 stands for Mauritius as in 毛里求斯 Máo lǐ qiú sī or Maolisi (Hakka)
- 岛 means island and pronounced dǎo in Mandarin or tor in Hakka
- 华 stands for 华人 (China, people)
- 联 means associated

Is this a good interpretation?

A new MCAO member



Reply from Editor (courtesy of Mike How):

Yes, you are correct. As you rightly pointed out, these four characters are abbreviations of a much longer (full) translation i.e.

毛里求斯: Phonetic translation of mau-ri-tius and 毛 (*mau*) is short for it.

毛島: *Mauritius Island* (literal translation: *mau island*)

华: Abbreviation for 华人 (*Chinese people*)

联谊会: *social club* and 联 is the short version

毛华
島联
Abbreviation of the complete version, 毛里求斯島华人联谊会.
Literal English translation: *Mauritius Island Chinese Social Club*

"Lat-lat pat-pat!" a Hakka saying

Recently, I was at a family gathering and heard someone call out this expression. I think it means, "Be careful, don't spill" (in other words don't make a mess). Growing up in Mauritius this is what old people and grown-ups may say that to youngsters. Does this sound familiar? Where does this come from? Is it possible that it comes from the word, trumpet? The Mandarin translation for "trumpet" is "喇叭 Lǎbā". The Hakka for trumpet is "lat pat". What does trumpet have to do with spilling something? Can anybody offer an explanation?

A new MCAO Member

.....

Reply from Editor (courtesy of Mike How):

Latlat patpat (also called "Latlat TsatTsat") means "messy, not neat" e.g. when describing a messy cook in the kitchen! There is no connection to trumpet!

MCAO Sponsors

MCAO wishes to extend a deep and sincere thank-you to all its sponsors and members for their generous financial and in-kind contributions to help the association deliver on its mission objectives. Their generosity and support are truly appreciated.

Please support our Sponsors with your business!

For donations and sponsorship opportunities, please contact:

- ❖ Joyce Leung (jmcleung@yahoo.com) or
- ❖ Allan Wan (647-824-3343).

Tracing Your Ancestral Genealogy

A leading company in the field of Chinese genealogy (*My China Roots*) has recently contacted MCAO to promote its internet-based services to help overseas Chinese interested in tracing their genealogical history in their ancestral homeland. We are reproducing below a few excerpts from the company's email for information purposes only:

".....

Expanded team & field research capabilities

In order to service the ever-growing demand from people wanting to connect with their roots, we considerably expanded our team of local researchers. The fact that we have numerous eyes and ears on the ground across China makes us truly unique. Would you like to know more about the people who would visit your ancestral village to look for family history books/jiapus, clan halls, and ancestral graves, interview distant family members, and capture everything with audio-visual recordings? Take a look at <http://www.mychinaroots.com/about/our-team/>

New website

Our new website is up and running! Complete with added client testimonials, new media articles, a My

China Roots introduction film, an extensive blog featuring guest writers, a film page for programs featuring My China Roots, and a fresh, new look! see <http://www.mychinaroots.com/>.

Collaboration with overseas Chinese Associations
We have started to collaborate with a number of overseas Chinese associations and organizations in different ways, depending on the specific nature and needs of each association. For instance, we have drafted historic overviews and PowerPoint presentations for association leaders' speaking opportunities at conferences, provided sizeable group discounts for association members, and conducted tailored, association-specific research."

My China Roots | 中华家脉
 tel: +86 10 8447 7053; ext. 8004
info@mychinaroots.com
www.mychinaroots.com

Recipe Corner



Tienne Yen (Gato Gingelis)
 (courtesy Thérèse How)

Ingredients:

1. 2 lb yam
2. 1 lb glutinous rice flour
3. 2/3 lb sugar
4. White sesame seeds



Steps:

Boil the yam till done (about 30 min). Peel and mash.
 Add the glutinous rice flour and the sugar.
 Mix well and make small balls.
 Coat with sesame seeds.
 Deep fry in moderate heat until golden brown.

Enjoy!



MCAO Membership

New members are most welcome! For new membership enrolment, please contact:

Joyce Leung (jmcleung@yahoo.com)

Existing members are kindly reminded that MCAO membership fees for 2017 are now due. For those who have already paid, we thank you for your much appreciated support.

Please note that remittances can be made directly to any executive committee member.

Contact Us

If you have any questions or comments, please email us at:

clubmcao@gmail.com

You can also visit our website at:

www.mauritiuschineseassociation.com/

Acknowledgement

MCAO gratefully acknowledges the generous contributions provided by the following sponsors of this newsletter:

Jean Paul Li (IDA Pharmacy)

Christopher Moore (Genest Murray LLP)

Joyce Leung

Picture Gallery

Images from MCAO Christmas Party 2016:





A Word from Our Sponsors...

PHARMCARE  PHARMACY

Jean-Paul Li, B.Sc. Phm.
Pharmacist/Owner

Tel 416-245-1221 Fax 416-245-1448
Pharmacarecentre@rogers.com
882 Wilson Avenue, Toronto, ON M3K 1E7

Mon-Fri 09:30am - 6:30pm | Sat 10:00am - 3:00pm



A street map showing the location of Pharmcare I.D.A. Pharmacy. The pharmacy is located at 882 Wilson Ave. The map includes labels for Jane St., Keele St., Dufferin St., Humber River Hospital, Northgate Dr., Gertrude Blvd, and HWY 401. A red arrow points to the pharmacy location, and the I.D.A. logo is also present on the map.


BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS
AVOCATS

GENEST MURRAY
LLP

200 KING STREET WEST
SUITE 1300
TORONTO, ONTARIO
M5H 3T4
(416) 368-8600

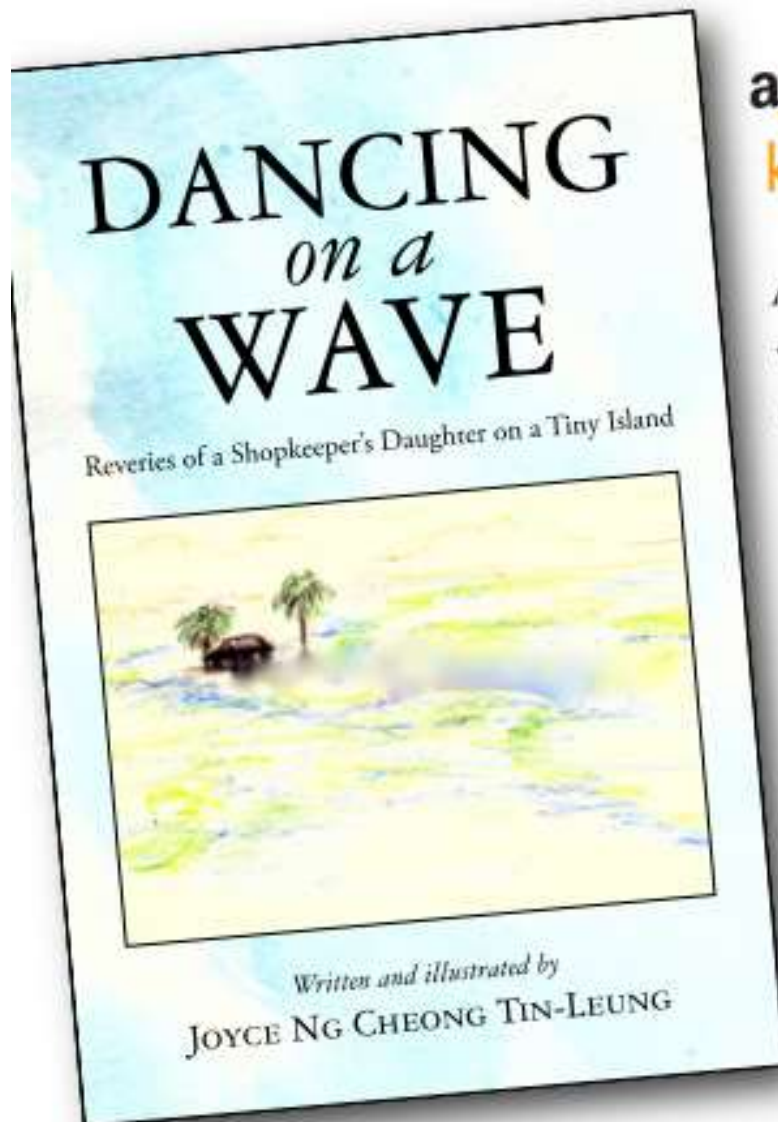
TELEPHONE: (416) 360-2877
FAX: (416) 360-2625
CMoore@GenestMurray.ca

CHRISTOPHER M. MOORE



A red diagonal stripe graphic is located in the top right corner of the business card.

*A must-read book, soon to appear on a bookshelf
near you or on Amazon.com/Kindle!*



amazon
kindle

A collection of 26 beautifully-written semi-autobiographical stories of a shopkeeper's daughter growing up on the tiny island of Mauritius. A must-read for all generations of readers who yearn to be transported to a period of youthful and delightful innocence, and to appreciate the universal challenges of all migrants, especially those of the Chinese-Hakka diaspora.

Original version in French - Available in English - 180 pages

DANSES SUR LES VAGUES:

Rêveries d'une jeune boutiquière sur une petite île

Written and illustrated by Joyce Ng Cheong Tin-Leung

Available in April in both French and English (translated by Marie Lyne).
For more information, or queries about the upcoming spring book launch
kindly contact the author: jmcleung@yahoo.com