

Year of the Dog - New Year's Banquet



*Seated: Mary Lee, Lolan Merklinger, James Steele, Ambassador Lu Shumin and Mme. Lu
Standing: Minister-Counsellor Huang Huikang, Meibing Fu, John Hilliker, Georges Sammé,
Jeffrey de Fourestier, Mme. Desjardins, Gatineau Deputy Mayor Aurèle Desjardins,
Andy Kusi-Appiah, Yong-Zhi Wang*

Celebrating the Founding of our Friendship Chapter **Sunday, February 5, 2006**

“From a ‘telephone booth’ to a Banquet Hall”: That was the title given to an article about the banquet by Elizabeth Yeh in the *Canada-China News* (Feb.10). Elizabeth was quoting Dr. Peter Larson, founding President of the Canada-China Friendship Society of Ottawa, who indicated there were only a few people who would “fit into a telephone booth” at an organizational meeting of the Society in 1975. By contrast, the huge banquet hall of the Mandarin Ogilvie Restaurant could hardly contain the crowd at last month’s event celebrating the Chinese New Year and the 30th anniversary of the Society.

Distinguished guests at the Banquet included Ambassador Lu Shumin and Mme. Lu, Minister-Counsellor Huang Huikang, Counsellor Yang Xuelun and Mrs. Yang, Counsellor Sun Lushan, First Secretary Mrs. Li Caiyun, Canadian Ambassador Arthur Menzies, President of the National Capital Branch of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs Ms. Barbara Darling and Allan Darling, the Deputy Mayor of Gatineau M. Aurèle Desjardins and Mme. Desjardins, and representative of Mayor Bob Chiarelli, Mr. Andy Kusi-Appiah. Ambassador Lu commended the true friends who had built and sustained the Society. Two of the founding presidents, Dr. Peter Larson and Ms. Maiji Kagis, spoke movingly about its origins.

Three musicians performed brilliantly, the beautiful sounds of Cindy Yang's *gu-zhen* contrasting with the energetic lyrics of Dominic D'Arcy and George Sapounides. Door prizes included a framed uncut press sheet of *Year of the Dog* stamps donated by Canada Post together with 165 official first day covers for participants. (Alas the supply proved insufficient when final registration exceeded 200!) Other prizes and wines for all 20 tables were generously donated by the Chinese Embassy. Persons born in the Year of the Dog received *Year of the Dog* souvenir sheets and cards. Additional prizes were contributed by Tsin Van and Lolan Merklinger. Thanks are due to all who contributed to the success of the occasion including in particular Ramona MacFarlane, Josette Samné and members of our Executive Committee.