**GUNG HAGGIS FAT CHOY!**

Chinese-Scottish Celebration

Todd Wong – often dubbed Toddish

McWong – never thought in a million

years he, a fifth-generation, Chinese-

Canadian, would ever be

wearing a Scottish kilt.

But then life threw him

a curveball, resulting

in Gung Haggis Fat

Choy.

The Chinese New

Year celebrates good

fortunes for the New

Year and honours Heaven

and Earth, as well as the

family. Robbie Burns Day is

a Scottish celebration,

giving praise to the great

literary works of Robert

Burns. And Gung Haggis

Fat Choy is a combination

of the two.

In January 1993, Simon

Fraser University (SFU)

was struggling to find volunteers to

help with its annual Robbie Burns

Day celebration. One of the committee

members approached Wong, then a

psychology student and university

tour guide, requesting his assistance.

Wong declined. “What? A Chinese

guy wearing a kilt? That’s strange –

that’s weird,” he said of his initial

reaction.

The more he thought about it

though, the more he realized this

might not be such a bad idea after

all. Once he began flipping the

stereotypes, and drawing parallels

between Simon Fraser – of Scottish

ancestry – and himself, he realized he

might actually be embarking on a

potentially wonderful experience.

The Chinese New Year fell just two

days before Robbie Burns Day that

particular year. Wong couldn’t pass

up that opportunity to combine the

two cultures into one celebration –

he agreed to wear the kilt. But it

wasn’t until 1998 that Gung Haggis

Fat Choy was truly born. Wong

invited 16 friends – both Scottish-

Canadian and Chinese-Canadian –

to a dinner with the intentions of

merging the two holidays once again.

He researched

Robbie Burns Day,

and prepared the

feast of various

Chinese and Scottish

delicacies, including

the Burns’ Day traditional

treat of haggis. “Gung Haggis

Fat Choy is an intersection of

the Scottish-Canadian

heritage, and the Chinese-

Canadian heritage,” Wong

said. “We’re creating a

whole new Canadian

society that we’re dubbing

the Gung Haggis Clan.”

The annual event has

doubled in size every

year since that first feast.

No longer is it just a group of close

friends in a small dinning room, now

it’s expanded to hundreds of people

filling the capacity of large restaurants.

This year’s event was even more special

though because Wong brought it back

to SFU.

In an attempt to unite the university’s

large Asian community with its Scottish

heritage, former SFU intramural

coordinator Geoff Vogt looked to

Wong for assistance. The inaugural

Gung Haggis Fat Choy Canadian

games were celebrated on January 28,

2005. It featured traditional Scottish

Highland elements, Chinese sporting

elements and a dragoncart race and

celebrated muliculturalism through

music and dance.

“When we started this thing, we were

just trying to deal with a really good

house party. I never imagined it

would get this huge,” Wong said.

*Source: Canadian Press Files*