

# THE NEW EURASIAN

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JULY - SEPTEMBER 2011

## PLUS

### HONOURS FOR GEORGE YEO

Tributes flow for former Minister

### CLASS ACT

Youngster's initiative takes her to the top

### A NEW LOOK AT WORLD WAR II

Plans march ahead to renovate history exhibit

## 500 years of Portuguese influence in South-east Asia



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On the Cover

## THE NEWEURASIAN

The quarterly magazine of  
The Eurasian Association,  
Singapore

*The NewEurasian* is published  
quarterly and read by more than  
17,000 Eurasians in Singapore.  
It is also circulated to senior  
government offices, various  
ministries, statutory boards,  
community organisations and  
self-help groups.

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# President's *message*



The year 2011 is hugely significant for Eurasians in Singapore and Malaysia, as it marks the 500th anniversary of the Portuguese colonisation of Malaysia, of which Singapore was a part. The majority of Eurasians in Singapore are – directly or indirectly – of Portuguese descent, making this an important year for us to acknowledge and celebrate our unique heritage and history.

The Singapore EA will be joining the Malacca-Portuguese Eurasian's celebrations of this momentous year in Malacca later this year and will be well-represented at this event; and we hope to meet up with Eurasians from all over the world. In this issue of *The NewEurasian* you can read about the history of the Portuguese colonisation of the region, and learn how the Portuguese influence has stretched throughout the centuries to leave its legacy not only to modern-day Eurasians, but also to Singapore as a whole.

This is also the year that we say goodbye to George Yeo, who served as the Minister representing Eurasians in Cabinet for almost 20 years. He has truly been an asset to the Eurasian community and has contributed greatly to our cause; as a result, we have conferred on him the status of Visitor of the Eurasian Community House. You can find a tribute to Mr Yeo on page 4.

We are also looking forward to our greatest fundraising event of the year, a golf tournament to be held in November at Warren Golf and Country Club, and will be honoured to welcome Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong as our guest of honour. The event hopes to raise at least \$200,000 for the EA's essential welfare and education arms. More details will be unveiled in the coming months, so keep an eye open for further details on our website ([www.eurasians.org](http://www.eurasians.org)) and the monthly e-newsletter.

We highlight the story of an enterprising schoolgirl, whose initiative brought her immense rewards when she was undertaking a school project. Anastasia Pereira and her classmates show great promise for the next generation. Read her story on page 7.

Elsewhere in this issue are stories of Eurasians doing the community proud, enjoying themselves, and helping those in need. I hope you enjoy the read – and find inspiration in these pages.

Best wishes

**William (Bill) Jansen,**  
*President*



EA President Bill Jansen (left) presents George Yeo with his Visitor of the Eurasian Community House certificate

## *Eurasian honour for* **George Yeo**

George Yeo joined a small, distinguished group when the Eurasian Association conferred on him the title of Visitor of the Eurasian Community House. The honour is given to outstanding individuals whose visits and fellowship the management committee deems especially beneficial to the Eurasian Association and community. Other Visitors of the Eurasian Community House include President SR Nathan and Mr Abdullah Tarmugi.

After a speech by EA President Bill Jansen, Mr Yeo was presented with an official certificate and unveiled a plaque bearing his name. Mr and Mrs Yeo celebrated the occasion on 15 June with dinner at Quentin's Restaurant attended by patron Herman Hochstadt, MP Christopher de Souza, the management committee and EA trustees.



Happy reflections: George Yeo unveils his plaque

# George Yeo:

## *a true friend to the Eurasians*

For nearly two decades, George Yeo acted as the Eurasians' advocate in Parliament. As he stands down, the Eurasian Association pays tribute to his tireless work

In the early 1990s, the Eurasian Association sought to make educational advancement programmes available to the entire Eurasian community rather than confine them solely to its members.

The association realised that to implement these plans for expansion it would need to apply to the government on a formal basis; and to deal with the relevant ministries, it would need to have formal endorsement from a government minister. All the other self-help groups had a cabinet minister representing their communities and the EA looked for a suitable minister to act as its advocate.

The role of a minister representing a self-help group in Cabinet would be an advocacy role, an official conduit who would grant more gravitas, help with endorsements, give advice and provide strategies on whom to approach within the government, so that the ministry in question would be in better position to verify and provide information to us.

The then EA patron, EW Barker, had supported the idea but was himself no longer in government – and there were no other Eurasians in government. So who to approach?



*Mr and Mrs George Yeo with guests at his conferment dinner*

George Yeo seemed the ideal choice. The then EA President Timothy de Souza had worked with Mr Yeo and was aware that he knew a lot about Eurasian culture and had many Eurasian friends. At the time, he also did not have a heavy government portfolio so might have time to act for the association. Mr Yeo happily agreed to represent the community and was officially appointed the Eurasians' government spokesman in 1992.

All the various applications for the EA's expanded education plans that needed to go to the Ministry of Education were put through him. Mr Yeo supported all the EA's requests and gave invaluable advice on how to make presentations (such as the EA's papers seeking information), how to approach matters generally, and he also offered different angles to be considered. Again, when the EA began work on its permanent home, Eurasian Community House, Mr Yeo worked closely with the association to smooth the administrative path.

Management committee member Burton Westerhout says: "I can remember the advice and guidance he gave to us members of the project team developing our present Eurasian Community House, which enabled us to get the final approval to build."

Throughout the years, Mr Yeo was supportive of all the EA's requests to promote the Eurasian culture and advance the community's wellbeing, at events including social events such as the EA's New Year's Eve celebrations and various EA anniversaries.

Management committee member Vincent Schoon recalls: "When George spoke at James Boss's book launch [on the Portuguese Mission in Singapore at an event held in December 2010], he provided a history lesson spanning 500 years in 15 minutes! It was a brilliant exposé; even my Portuguese friend from Macau expressed that she learnt more of her country's rich history in 15 minutes compared to two years of high school!"

Mr Yeo was also always ready to speak to EA members over dinner, especially to chat with the volunteers as he was keen to promote volunteerism within the community. He never missed the opportunity to promote the Eurasian community in the national and international media, championing the notion that Eurasians are that ideal blend of East and West. Timothy says: "George Yeo has been a blessing and a gift to the Eurasian community. He has represented us so well. The legacy we have today is because of what he has done for us."



*George Yeo enjoys some Eurasian cuisine*



*George and Jennifer Yeo listen to Bill Jensen's speech*

Patron Herman Hochstadt adds: "George Yeo is indeed a man of compassion, ideas and action for Eurasians and the Eurasian Association of Singapore. Eurasians and the Eurasian Association owe him a huge debt of gratitude."

# Making connections

Communications executive Rachel Chen, 30, keeps members in touch with what's going on in the Eurasian community



## Tell us something about your background.

Well, I'm actually a Chinese Singaporean, not Eurasian, although I've spent much of my life outside Singapore. I spent most of my school years at a specialist music school in the UK, but decided I didn't want to be a concert pianist. Instead, I went to university in the US, where I gained a Bachelor of Arts in English from Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York.

## When did you join the EA and why?

I joined the EA in February 2010. I really wanted to work in a communications capacity at a non-profit in Singapore, and this job opportunity came up at the right time. I had previously worked at the NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) in London. It was a terrific experience, and I knew the non-profit sector was for me.

It's been great so far. I knew nothing about Eurasians before joining the EA. I've always been very interested in cultural anthropology at university (perhaps due to my multicultural background), so it's great to be able to learn about a fascinating, new culture on the job.

## What are your responsibilities at the EA?

I'm responsible for anything related to communications. I work on our quarterly *The New Eurasian* magazine, the monthly e-newsletter that EA members receive, the EA website, the annual report, press releases and speeches, and occasionally help out at events.

## What are the most interesting aspects of your job?

Being able to learn about Eurasian history, culture and heritage while on the job. It never feels like work, because I am learning fascinating things about people and places all the time. There is a real educational aspect to the job and I love that. I think of myself as 'culturally' Eurasian in the sense that I am, due to my upbringing, lodged somewhere between East and West. Though not Eurasian by heritage, I still feel like I have something in common with Eurasians here.

## What is the most challenging part of it?

Working around a diminishing budget! Cuts affect everyone here on an operational basis. We try to improvise but it can be very difficult sometimes.

## Is there anything you would like to say to the readers that might improve communications among EA members?

Do let us know if you're doing anything interesting! We are always keen to hear about our members' achievements!

## Tell us something surprising about your job.

We don't have phone extensions, just one number for the Secretariat. People are often very surprised by this, and assume whoever answers the phone is somebody's assistant...

## What do you do when you leave the EA after work?

I'm fully guilty of collapsing on the sofa, watching DVDs and chatting online with my boyfriend in Australia. I should be having a run, but somehow I have been 'forgetting'. Actually the first thing I do when I am on my street is to pet a couple of stray cats in the alleyway behind my house. Oh dear – does that make me sound like a crazy cat lady?

## News in brief

### EA annual general meeting

The EA's annual general meeting, chaired by President Bill Jansen, was held on 26 April.

After administrative and financial business, Vice-President Benett Theseira initiated a discussion on the possibility of increasing Eurasian Community Fund (ECF) contributions and took suggestions from the floor. Education sub-committee member Edmund Rodrigues raised the case of an FSS client's child whose needs were not being adequately met and he urged all to donate generously to the EA. The meeting was followed by a buffet dinner at Quentin's restaurant.

### SG Gives

In April 2011, Singaporeans eligible for the 2011 Growth Dividend received letters from the government informing them of their payout. Please consider donating all or part of your Growth Dividend payout to the EA by visiting [www.sggives.org/eurasians](http://www.sggives.org/eurasians)

### EA benefits from local philanthropist

A new charitable foundation, set up by local businessman and philanthropist SM Jaleel, has presented a cheque for \$25,000 to the Eurasian Association.

The launch of the SM Jaleel Foundation, held at Fort Canning on 3 July, was attended by President SR Nathan. EA president Bill Jansen accepted the cheque on behalf of the association.

### Eurasian earns public service award

Eurasian Lionel de Souza received an Excellence in Public Service award during Public Service Week at a ceremony on 13 May.

Established in 2008, Public Service Week is an annual event that aims to build in public officers a sense of pride in public service.

# Schoolchildren interview President Nathan

A group of schoolchildren undertaking a project on the role of government found themselves discussing the subject with Singapore's head of state over afternoon tea

When 11-year-old Anastasia Pereira's class was given an assignment to produce an exhibition on the subject 'How we organise ourselves', the youngsters decided among themselves to take on the mammoth task of applying the idea to the responsibilities of government.

And for her part, Anastasia decided to go right to the top for her information. Finding herself with her father at an EA dinner at which President SR Nathan was present, she approached him to ask if she could interview him.

The President not only agreed – but also invited Anastasia, her parents and some classmates to join him for tea at the Istana.

Anastasia's mother, Sharon, points out that the teachers had no input into the subject choice of the class other than to encourage them: "The teachers were actually very surprised with the very difficult subject but said nothing to discourage them."



From left to right: Sharon Pereira, Rachel Evans, Lauren Maharaj, President SR Nathan, Anastasia Pereira and Daryl Pereira

Anastasia's father, Daryl, a volunteer with the EA, adds: "The students based their ideas on the central idea of how a government is organised and how it organises a country."

The youngsters, who attend EtonHouse International School and follow the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme, used the task to look at: how a government is organised to connect with its public; what it does to change its community; how it works to look after the way people live; and the way it is organised to be responsible for its public. Their findings were presented at the school exhibition.

"The students researched their national governments and how a government reacts to a natural disaster," elaborates Daryl. They were also split into two groups, who had to imagine that they were two political parties who wanted to organise the first government for a new imaginary country."

Anastasia selected two of her school friends, Lauren Maharaj and Rachel Evans, who are also coincidentally Eurasian, to accompany her on her trip with her parents to the Istana. The entire Year 6 group received a report from the girls after their visit with President Nathan so they could all share in his wisdom.

## Tea at the Istana

Anastasia Pereira reports on her exciting and educational afternoon at the Istana

On 9 May, my parents, my friends Lauren and Rachel and I went to the Istana to have tea with President Nathan.

We were driven there by my parents; we were excited and nervous at the same time – we couldn't stop smiling even when the President wasn't there.

The Istana had crystal chandeliers hanging from the ceilings and was painted in white and there was a big golf area at the back.

We were taken to a large room. When we were sitting down on the couches and drinking our drinks the President came down and greeted us. My friends and I were shaking a

lot. The photographer came and took pictures with his camera and my dad's one.

The President showed us to a table where it was set up with dishes, cups and little name tags which had the sign of the Istana. President Nathan's butler and other waiters came and put down sandwiches and pandan rainbow jellies. They put tea with milk and sugar cubes.

The President asked what our exhibition was about. We told him that our exhibition title was 'Government in Charge'. We also told him that our central idea was 'How a government is in charge of a country for its public.' We explained that the central

idea is like our broad inquiry for our research. We also explained our lines of inquiry.

Then we asked him questions that we made in school. The President answered all of them. We learned a lot about the role of a president and about government from the President.

Later after tea President Nathan's assistant showed us around the Istana. We saw only the first floor. We could see some swans but we couldn't go where they were. The assistant told us the President meets all the presidents from different countries.

We had a really fun time in the Istana!



## Big walk, big read

As part of the 60th anniversary celebrations of the Bank of India's Singapore branch this year, a Big Walk Day was held at Bedok Reservoir Park in May 2011 together with a ceremony donating book vouchers of \$100 per student to underprivileged school children. Twenty-five deserving Eurasian students received the vouchers.



Ms Grace Fu Hai Yien presents a cheque at the book fair

## Generous words

As part of the Singapore Book Fair held in May and June, 1,000 children from needy families were presented with a total of \$50,000 worth of book vouchers.

The charity project was supported by Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Temple and organised with the four self-help groups. Seventy Eurasian students were among the recipients and each received vouchers worth \$40, which they could use to buy textbooks and other reading materials. The vouchers were presented by Grace Fu Hai Yien, Senior Minister of State for Information, Communication and the Arts.



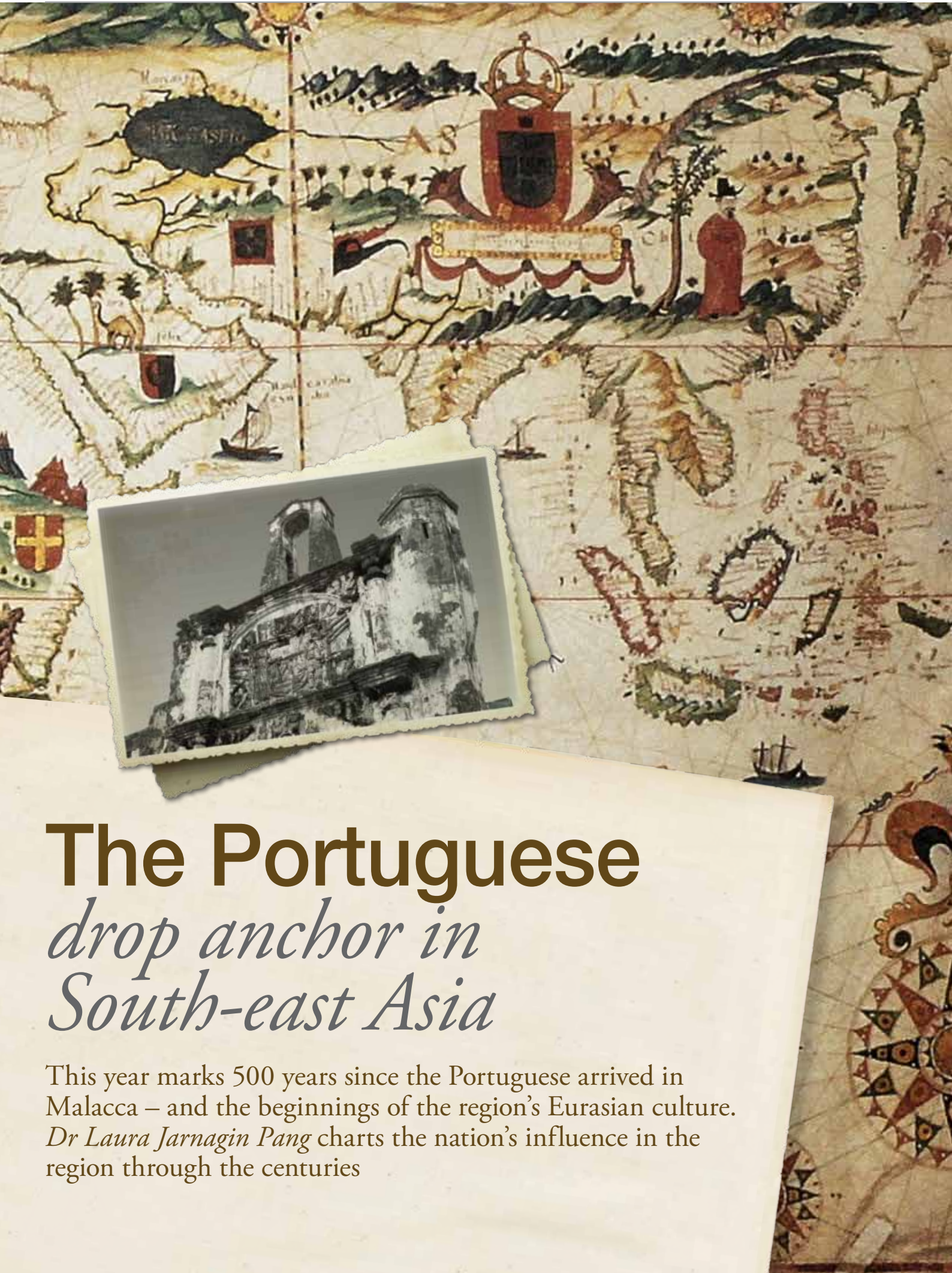
Singapore Book Fair

## Music student's top score

Talented Eurasian music student Nikhil Hogan, who was recently awarded the Gary Burton Scholarship, the most prestigious award from Berklee College of Music in Massachusetts, where he was studying music therapy, has now added to his growing list of achievements by graduating *summa cum laude* at the top of his class.

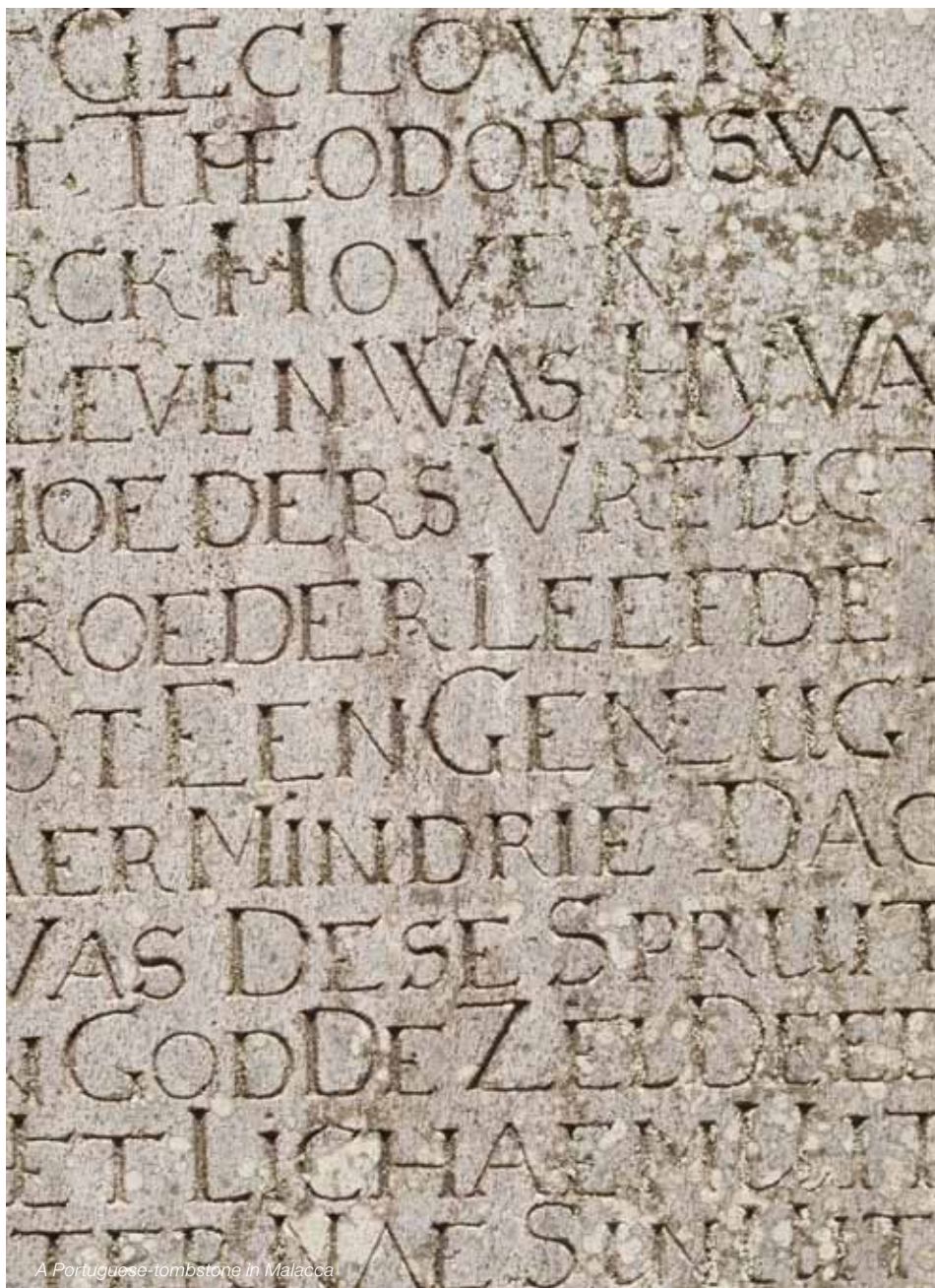






# The Portuguese *drop anchor in South-east Asia*

This year marks 500 years since the Portuguese arrived in Malacca – and the beginnings of the region’s Eurasian culture. *Dr Laura Jarnagin Pang* charts the nation’s influence in the region through the centuries



A Portuguese-tombstone in Malacca

### The Portuguese sail into South-east Asia

On 15 August 1511, the Malacca Sultanate fell to Portuguese forces under the command of Afonso de Albuquerque. This conquest was one in a series of events that established a Portuguese presence at small outposts throughout maritime Asia – from Goa in the west to Macao (and briefly Nagasaki) in the east – as Portugal crafted a maritime commercial empire with Genoese capital in an effort to undercut Venice's near-monopoly of Asian luxury goods (silks and spices), transported primarily overland into the burgeoning European markets.

This seaborne strategy worked. It also set into motion a major redefinition of the relationship between the peoples of the western extremities of the Eurasian landmass and those in its south-eastern and eastern extremities. Further,

these new maritime linkages constituted a major step in making capitalism's worldwide expansion possible and hence today's global economy a reality.

### Mixing with the locals

As we know, Portugal was ultimately not the most powerful of the European interlopers who came into the region, but it did have the unusual policy of encouraging a high degree of interaction with local populations, most notably through marriage with the female inhabitants of the many locales where it set up shop – a way of life not replicated by later European arrivals. This, in turn, gave rise to a population of Luso-Asians ('Luso' deriving from Lusitania, the region approximately relating to modern Portugal) wherein the 'Asian' part of the equation involved the many ethnicities to be found in the locations where the Portuguese went.

*Portugal was ultimately not the most powerful of the European interlopers who came into the region, but it did have the unusual policy of encouraging a high degree of interaction with local populations, most notably through marriage*

### Expanding horizons

Notably, the Luso-Asians – what we now know as Eurasians – were also quite mobile. Recent scholarship confirms, for instance, that the 'Portuguese' who first settled at Macau in the mid-1550s were really mostly Luso-Asians from Malacca, meaning they were descendants of Portuguese, Malays, and Chinese merchants resident in Malacca. In general, and for a wide variety of reasons (war, commerce, disease, famine, greater opportunity), it was not uncommon for significant portions of the Luso-Asian populations to relocate from one Portuguese Asian outpost to another.

Although their numbers were always miniscule in the greater scheme of Asian populations, vestiges of this Portuguese past are still evident. In fact, many scholars believe that a large percentage of today's South-east Asian Eurasians have some Portuguese ancestry,

even if very distantly so, especially because Luso-Asians often formed alliances with later European arrivals in addition to those they formed with indigenous Asian communities.

### Introducing Catholicism into the region

So just how has the Portuguese presence influenced South-east Asian culture? Probably the most 'visible' and well-known cultural impact is in terms of religion, since it was the Portuguese who brought the first Roman Catholic missionaries with them. Other European missionaries came later as well (Spanish, French, and Italian), as did Protestant missionaries (Dutch, German, and British), but that original Portuguese imprint on the religious composition of South-east Asia is indelible. It also continues to be the focus of many academic studies for a variety of reasons, including the curious phenomenon of a tendency (especially during the earlier Portuguese times) for people (irrespective of their own ethnicity) to conflate being Portuguese with being Catholic, such that if one became a Catholic, he or she had also somehow become Portuguese. This is but one small facet of the extremely entangled subject of religion, culture, national identity, and personal identity, however, and scholars are still trying to understand the whole phenomenon more fully.

Without a doubt, though, the implantation of a religion new to the region provided grist for both conflict and accommodation between its practitioners and their various Asian host societies, even though the number of actual converts never came close to the church's original goals. Nevertheless, the introduction

of Christianity into Asia stands as one cultural feature brought by the Portuguese that has impacted on everything from individual identity to national politics, and continues to do so. But because the nature of that influence varies so widely from one time and place to another, it is impossible to make a general statement that would appropriately sum up the 500-year sweep of the history of this religion's cultural significance in the region.

### Two stages of Portuguese colonisation

There is, however, another less 'publicly' visible institutional impact that the Portuguese presence has had on Asian culture – and perhaps especially on South-east Asian culture – but whose contours are easier for the historian to discern, and whose impact is probably best appreciated only when viewed across half a millennium. That phenomenon has to do with how trade and commerce between this region and the rest of the world has come to be organised and conducted. The characteristics of one's economy, after all, are a strong reflection of its underlying culture.

Scholars think about the history of the Portuguese in Asia in terms of two distinct stages. The first stage, from initial contact until the mid-1600s, is considered the 'formal' empire, when Portugal was either the only maritime European commercial and military power in the region, or when it still had the upper hand. But its long string of geographically disconnected small outposts created a big administrative sinkhole consuming lots of human (and other) capital. In the long run, Portugal simply did not have the resource base to maintain its dominance

*The trading networks and modes of production that the Portuguese had systematised throughout the region became a platform on which other European powers piggybacked*



Portuguese-influenced dancing is still a part of modern Eurasian culture



Eurasians have become an integral part of Singapore society as shown in these stamps commemorating eminent Singaporeans: Tan Tock Seng; Eunus bin Abdullah; Eurasian Edwin John Tessensohn; and P Govindasamy Pillai

relative to other European powers as they began to challenge it head-on.

That leads us to the second or 'informal' stage, from the mid-1600s onward, that historians call the 'shadow' empire. By this time, Portugal was on the defensive, first as the Dutch then the French and English entered the region. Whereas Portugal retained a strong presence at its two key anchor points – Goa and Macao – it either reduced its support to many other areas or lost control of them. In this growing vacuum, soldiers and sailors were left to fend for themselves while the more prominent and wealthier private merchants and colonial representatives came to act more independently of the metropole. Here, we have the beginnings of a socio-economic division in Portuguese Asia (others would occur later): in the absence of Portugal's formal presence, Luso-Asians had fewer reasons to stay together as single 'Portuguese' communities and more reasons for various sub-groups to make their way otherwise in the context of the local and regional societies in which they lived.

### Eurasians become the future link between East and West

For those Luso-Asians who had specialised skills or some education, or who could acquire

these, the presence of new colonial powers offered employment opportunities in their growing commercial empires. Thus, the trading networks and modes of production that the Portuguese had systematised throughout the region during the 'formal' empire now became a platform on which other European powers piggybacked. But they had to do so by relying on Luso-Asians, who had the cultural and linguistic skills to operate in the societies in which they lived and to interface comfortably with Europeans.

In other words, Luso-Asians, often along with other Christian Asians, comprised much of the workforce that made other colonial empires viable, whether it was the Dutch in Malacca and Indonesia in the 17th and 18th centuries, or the British in Calcutta, Bombay, Penang, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Shanghai in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. And even though Asian colonies no longer exist, here's a sobering fact that puts the weight of the past into some perspective: we are just now seeing statistical evidence indicating that European dominance of shipping and maritime traffic in South-east Asia is coming to an end – slowly, glacially.

Obviously, South-east Asian economies and cultures have not been defined solely

by the past European presence – not by a long shot. But without a doubt, that past is a significant contributor to the region's fascinating multicultural mix. This short exposé on the Portuguese role in that mix does not even scratch the surface of what is being researched and written on this subject. Although 'culture' is one of the most slippery features of the human condition to document, analyse, and interpret, rest assured that there is a dynamic international community of scholars out there actively engaged in trying to find the answer to the straightforward but inherently complex question: how has the Portuguese presence influenced South-east Asian culture 500 years on?

*South-east Asian economies and cultures have not been defined solely by the past European presence. But that past is a significant contributor to the region's fascinating multicultural mix*



Laura Pang

### The Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

*Laura Pang, from the United States, is visiting professorial fellow, 2010-12, at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore. Her main field of specialisation is Brazilian history, but she has been associated with the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies since January 2010, first to organise a conference entitled 'Portuguese and Luso-Asian Legacies in Southeast Asia, 1511-2011' that was held in September 2010 and co-sponsored with the Universiti Teknologi MARA of Malacca, and since then as the editor of a two-volume work of conference papers that will be launched later this year.*

*The conference also enjoyed generous support from the Government of Portugal and included a welcome dinner hosted by the Eurasian Association. The ISEAS has also hosted the launch of EA trustee Joe Conceicao's books, Love and War in Old Malacca and The Travels and Adventures of Sang Dol.*

# President Nathan pledges cash for education and welfare



President SR Nathan with the patron, trustees and management committee during his visit to the ECH



President Nathan recalls his times with Eurasians



President Nathan greets the other guests



Raising a toast to the President

President SR Nathan has enjoyed a long association with the Eurasians – both in a professional and private capacity – and he was recently the EA's special dinner guest at the Eurasian Community House.

During an evening that included a Eurasian dinner from Quentin's and music by Trevor Nerva, the President delivered an emotional and heartwarming speech, in which he described his first experiences with Eurasians. He recalled the Eurasian woman who helped to pay his bus fare on the morning after his father passed away and also Dr Charles Paglar, who had dispensed valuable medical advice about his father during his lifetime.

The President vowed to help the Eurasian Association with funding for its education and welfare arms and The President's Challenge has since donated \$500,000 to the EA, \$300,000 of which will go towards education and \$200,000 towards the Family Support Services.

The FSS has recently had to cut its welfare support to disadvantaged families as the improvement in Singapore's economic situation has led to some external agencies discontinuing their support. The President's generous donation will help plug the gap, but financial support is still urgently needed and any donations are welcome.

*President SR Nathan's heartwarming speech described his first experiences with Eurasians*

# Easing life's burdens



## The EA's Family Support Services is always in need of funds for deserving causes. Here's how you can help

The EA's welfare wing, the Family Support Services (FSS) has recently faced budget cuts in the face of Singapore's improving economy after 2008's global financial crisis. External agencies that have contributed assistance and resources to needy Eurasians have discontinued some of their financial schemes.

The FSS currently struggles to balance welfare expenditure and income. It is in desperate need of funds to continue support for Eurasians who still struggle to survive on the barest minimum of resources.

The following is a recent example of how funds can help make life a little more bearable for a needy family. (Names have been changed.)

Anna is in her late 40s and has two sons, Gavin, who is in his early 20s and Jerry, who is a young teenager. They live together in a one-room HDB flat.

Anna underwent a liver transplant operation in 2009 and suffers from high blood pressure. While she was in hospital, her husband was in prison, serving a sentence for drugs offences. Despite this, Anna is a strong woman with plenty of determination – she needs to be as she has to work to keep the household together. Her husband, who has been in prison since 2007, is due to be released soon.

The family scrapes by on Anna's salary of \$400 a month; she is unable to work full-time but has a part-time weekend job in a school and has had to be both a mother and father to her children.

When many of us think nothing of stopping by at Starbucks for a coffee, Anna's idea of a treat is a weekly coffee with milk purchased from a kopitiam.

Thanks to the FSS, Anna receives a cash grant, food vouchers and food rations to help her make ends meet.

**If you would like to donate, please use the donation form inserted in this magazine – GIRO payment is accepted. If you would like to volunteer, please contact the EA Secretariat at 6447 1578 or [fss@eurasians.org](mailto:fss@eurasians.org)**

# World War II exhibit makeover

The World War II gallery at the ECH is to receive a much-needed facelift – and benefactors are sought to help safeguard this important piece of Eurasian history



*PM Lee Hsien Loong and his wife, Ho Ching, at the opening of the exhibit*

*World War II – The Eurasian Story*, the exhibit located at the Eurasian Community House, has received some 5,000 visitors since it was opened by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong five years ago.

The exhibit, which depicts the experiences of the Eurasian community in occupied Singapore during the Second World War, is tucked away on the fourth floor and was originally set up on a short-term basis.

Now, it is here to stay – but time and the climate have taken their toll and the gallery is in urgent need of refurbishing. Plans are under way to do this.

While all the displays will be retained, changes will be made to the infrastructure, to include the following improvements:

- the outer glass and metal sliding doors (hidden by the corridor panels) will be replaced by a brick wall to reduce external heat transfer into the gallery;
- the chipboard wall panels will be replaced by fire-safe plasterboard panelling backed by insulation to further reduce external heat transfer;
- the current plastic showcases will be replaced by tempered glass showcases;
- the walls in the Bahau Section will have bamboo cladding to simulate the original camp housing;
- the Camp Diorama will be displayed in a new, sturdier custom-built display unit also with a tempered-glass showcase;
- some new artefacts will be added.

Work on this heritage project is expected to start in early August and take four to six weeks to complete.

**The EA hopes to recover the cost of refurbishing the gallery through donations of cash (please see inserted donation form) and artefacts. Interested benefactors are invited to contact Lester Low of the EA Secretariat, tel: 6447 1578.**

# Korean connection

A group of young Koreans learned about the Eurasian culture in Singapore as part of an exchange scheme to strengthen bilateral ties between the two countries.

The 10-member delegation from Korea visited the Eurasian Community House in April, where they were given a tour of its two museums by the EA's Heritage Chairman Burton Westerhout before enjoying some Eurasian refreshments.

The National Youth Council hosted the Singapore-Korean Youth Exchange, which is part of ongoing efforts to promote youth co-operation and bilateral ties between Singapore and the Republic of Korea.

In addition, the delegation, led by Shin Hong-Ki, Secretary-General of the National Council of Youth Organisations in Korea, visited selected organisations and agencies to allow the visitors to understand better how Singapore's multi-cultural society, history and progress have brought about social cohesion and a vibrant economy.



## Colourful exhibits

The Peranakan Museum organised a two-day festival for children during the June school holidays in which the Eurasian culture was also showcased.

The Kristang Cultural Troupe held several performances in the museum lobby, featuring lively music, singing and dancing – and colourful costumes.



## MALACCA PORTUGUESE-EURASIAN ASSOCIATION (MPEA)

*Warmly welcomes you to join us at  
Our Roots – Our Heritage – Our Home*

*An Anniversary Celebration of 500 years  
of Portuguese-Eurasian History and Heritage*

The MPEA is organising the event to commemorate this momentous milestone in the annals of our proud and colourful history. It will be held in the Portuguese Settlement from 26 to 29 October 2011.

This four-day 'heritage indulgence' will encompass history, culture, music, performing arts, sports, a heritage walk, customs, nostalgia, costumes galore, cuisine, brews, handicrafts, cottage industries, entertainment by various folk and contemporary artists, branyo and other dancing, commercial promotions, a Kristang song composition contest, beauty contest, a fair and more.

A grand dinner and dance, cultural ensemble and awards presentation night will close the celebrations. This commemorative dinner, serving authentic Portuguese cuisine, will be held on the 29 October.

The pulsating beats of a carnival in the ambience of the Portuguese Settlement will provide the ideal atmosphere for a nostalgic, grand get-together for the Eurasian diaspora. Be there!

*To make you dinner reservation:  
Contact Philomena Singho-Tan (secretary)  
tel: 016 250 5309 or the secretariat,  
tel: 06 284 2032, e-mail:melakaportuguese@  
gmail.com and state your preferred table:*

*Superior table of 10  
donations of RM5,000 and above per table*

*Premium table of 10  
donations of RM2,000 per table*

*Standard table of 10  
donations of RM500 per table*

# Happy Birthday, Singapore

Come and show your true colours – red and white! – and party to celebrate the nation's 46th birthday

**Event:** Social Circle's Red & White National Day Celebration Lunch

**Date:** Sunday 14 August 2011

**Time:** 12pm to 3pm

**Place:** Quentin's Restaurant, ECH

**Price:** Adults \$18.00++, children (6-12 years) \$9.00++

**Dress code:** Red and white, of course. And the most stylish outfit will earn the wearer the 'best dressed' title.

The lunch will include a buffet, nostalgic music, tombola, stalls selling *sugee* cake and other goodies, and a chance to win prizes in the lucky card draw.

Make your reservations with

Bridget Basnayake, tel: 6447 1578 or at Quentin's Restaurant, tel: 6348 0327.

Closing date for bookings is 8 August, or earlier if the maximum number is reached.

**So reserve your place now!**

**Please note:** parking space is limited, so please use public transport if possible.

## Fielding a good team



Michelle Tessensohn with Mark Hunter

Members of the EA Toastmasters Club (TMC) were out in full force during the three-day District Council Meeting held at the Singapore Recreation Club in May. Themed on 'Magic on the Padang', the convention was attended by more than 250 delegates from Singapore, Thailand and Taiwan.

Yvonne Pereira, vice president (membership) of the EA TMC, served as entertainment chair of the convention's organising committee while fellow EA members Dorothy Tessensohn and Michelle Tessensohn served on the committee organising the gala dinner, at which Michelle, the club's incoming president, also acted as MC. Crispin Rodrigues served as chief editor. The event was attended by the 2008 World Champion of Public Speaking, Mark Hunter.

The Eurasian presence at the TMC is now even stronger: Michael Rodrigues was elected incoming district governor, the first Eurasian in District 80's history.



# A taste of home



Quentin with the team from Singapore



Quentin meets MP Wong Kan Seng and KF Seetoh, founder of Makansutra

Eurasian chef Quentin Pereira served up much-missed home cooking to overseas Singaporeans when he was among a team invited to Shanghai in April for Singapore Day 2011, an event held to help overseas Singaporeans stay connected to home.

A highlight of the occasions is the presentation of local fare and Quentin was honoured to represent Singapore Eurasians with his mix of Eurasian and Peranakan dishes such as chicken devil's curry and ayam buah keluak.

The Overseas Singaporean Unit explains that the event is held in a number of cities with a significant number of Singaporean expats and that of the some 20,000 Singaporeans in China, about half live in and around Shanghai. All the official ethnic groups in

Singapore were represented at Singapore Day, giving Singaporeans overseas a comprehensive taste of the foods they have missed while home-grown celebrities entertained their compatriots with familiar tunes and performances.

Quentin says: "It was hard work but very rewarding – it wasn't all fun. We had to start cooking at 4am, outside in the cold, in -3 degrees Celcius weather. We had to rinse sago with mineral water and our hands went numb from the cold!"

"However, it was worth it in the end because we met many Singaporeans, including some Eurasians who I knew back in Singapore. One of them was running a business there. They enjoyed the food very much."

Sold out! Quentin Pereira's Eurasian fare is a big hit



## Shepherdsons gather in the flock

A Eurasian family, which can trace its roots to the late 1700s, recently held a huge reunion to keep extended family ties intact.

After researching their family history, the Shepherdsons reunited their family branches, comprising more than 300 extended members. Their work resulted in the publication of two books, *Journey to the Straits – The Shepherdson Story and The Great Genealogical Search*, documenting more than 20 years of research and tracing the family's roots back 14 generations to the 1600s in Durham, England.

Kevin Shepherdson says: "In the late 1700s, brothers Robert and Mathew Shepherdson – ship captains and country traders with the British East India Company – arrived at Malacca and the Prince of Wales Island (Penang).

They settled in Malacca, and Robert's son, John, became a court bailiff shortly after the trading post was ceded to the British in the early



The Shepherdson family clan

1800s. As the British presence expanded via the Straits Settlements in the 19th century, so did the Shepherdsons, who dispersed across Malaysia and Singapore, eventually losing family ties.

"This year marked their third family reunion in Kuala Lumpur, after successful reunions in Malacca (2009) and Singapore (2003), where most of the family currently live. After losing the family connection for more than 150 years, the Shepherdsons are determined to keep the family spirit alive and preserve their links to Malacca, where it all started."

The *Great Genealogical Search*, by Kevin Shepherdson, Percival Shepherdson and Karen d'Almeida, published in 2010, is available for sale at the ECH.

# Round the camp fire

Three young Eurasians volunteered their time to showcase the Eurasian culture when they acted as facilitators at this year's Camp United.

The two-day event in June, organised by Bedok Community Centre with the four self-help groups, and held at Changkat Changi Secondary School, aims to foster racial harmony among schoolchildren from seven to 12 years.

David Pang, Sara Attenborough and Victoria

Apps helped supervise the groups and games, and David and Sara wore the traditional Portuguese dance costume and exhibited some dance moves during the singing of the traditional Eurasian song, *Jinkli Nona*, at the campfire.

The guest of honour was Dr Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Defence & Ministry of National Development and the Mayor of South East District.



Victoria (second from right) with her group, after learning the ethnic dances



Sara (in blue shirt) draws a group flag with her team



David (far right) guiding his group on an ethnic song

# Dancing in harmony



EA Dancers at the IR-IR Harmony Nite



Trevor Nerva and Kimberly Achuk



Dancing on the stage

This year's Inter-Racial, Inter-Religious Harmony Nite was held at Resorts World Sentosa on 9 July with the usual colour and pomp that has come to mark this event to promote better understanding between the nation's diverse cultures.

Organised by Thye Hua Kwan moral society

and supported by the four self-help groups, the event was graced by President SR Nathan as guest of honour accompanied by acting Minister for Community Development Youth and Sport Major General Chan Chun Sing.

The EA Dancers, ranging in age from 14 to 54 and led by Julia Sheikh, put on a spectacular

dance display comprising flamenco, a touch of ballet – and a full blown rock dance.

Not to be outdone, five Eurasian readers, clad in ethnic attire, read the IRIR pledge. The finale saw Trevor Nerva and Kimberly Achuk singing the English version of the IRIR theme song.

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# New Year's Eve Ball 2011

## When

31st December 2011

6:30pm - 7:30pm, Pre-dinner cocktails

7:30pm - 1:00am, Dinner & Dance

## Where

Concorde Hotel, Orchard Road Ballroom  
(former Le Meridian Orchard)

## What

EA Members

- \$120 (payment received by 15th November)

- \$130 (payment received after 15th November)

Non Members - \$140

\*strictly no admittance to persons under 18 years

Corkage

- None

Dress code

- Formal

Entertainment

- Gerard Danker and MSG

- MC/DJ Jude Paul

## Reservations

Contact Bridget

- at 6447 1578

or

- [bridget@eurasians.org](mailto:bridget@eurasians.org)

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