

THE neweurasian

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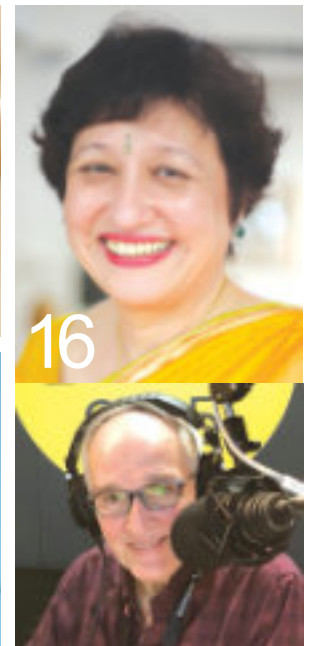
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THE neweurasian

Magazine of the Eurasian Association, Singapore

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear fellow members of the EA,

I hope all of you are keeping safe and healthy during this difficult period.

It was with great sadness that the EA and the community learnt about the passing of Ms Annabel Pennefather in April. She was a truly great Singaporean and Eurasian as she contributed so much in the fields of the law, sports and sports administration. A long serving member of the EA, she had lent her assistance from as early as 1995 and as recently as 2018 when she helped to set up the Joseph Schooling Sports Grant (see tribute on page 3). Rest in peace, Annabel; you will be missed.

This quarter also saw Singapore ramp up efforts to battle Covid-19. The government put in place circuit breaker measures, which saw the vast majority of activities cancelled or postponed. The EA immediately closed the Eurasian Heritage Gallery, and all in-person activities were halted. A few activities such as the Youth Dialogues moved online while essential activities proceeded in accordance to government measures.

As a self-help group, the EA came up with the Empathy Package to put to good use additional funds provided by the government to assist Eurasians affected by the circuit breaker measures (see story on page 4). We have focused our efforts on providing financial assistance to both displaced workers, families-at-risk, as well as under-privileged students.

In addition, we are very proud of Eurasians who have stepped forward to help others in our community. They include a team who sewed masks for our Family Support Services (FSS) clients and an anonymous restaurateur who donated foodstuff to FSS clients. The FSS Befrienders have also been working tirelessly to check on FSS clients at least once a week, to ensure that they are not neglected during this period. Thank you for your generosity!

If any EA member needs help or knows of anyone who needs help, please contact our general manager Lester Low at lester@eurasians.org or 6447-1578 (ext 201).

Lastly, following the postponement of the EA's Annual General Meeting in April due to the circuit breaker measures, we hope to hold it in July or August, if not in person, then online.

Again, I wish all of you good health.

We can get through this, together.

Dr Alexius Pereira
President





Hand-sewn face masks

Sewing Masks For A Good Cause

A big shout-out to MsLinda Pereira, Ms Dione Pereira, Ms Freda Pereira, Ms Penelope Mackenzie and Ms Therese Thompson. These lovely members from the Eurasian Association did their bit for the underprivileged during the circuit breaker period by sewing masks for its Family Support Services clients, participating in the CYC300k Masks for Migrants Challenge or donating materials for mask-making.



Ms Dione Pereira

Catching Up With The EA's Football Families

It won't be sometime before members of the Eurasian Association's (EA) Football Club (FC) get to play a game on the field again. But their passion for the sport continues to lift their spirits. FC members Christopher Valentino De Silva, Chris Lesslar and Roberto De Costa share their feelings for the club and how they kept themselves occupied with their families.



The De Costa family



The Lesslar family



The De Silva family

How does it feel being part of the EA's FC family?

De Silva: I feel that we've grown together and it's like I've found a new family with my wife and children through this excellent sport.

Lesslar: We feel honoured and proud to be part of the EA family.

De Costa: I think it's cool that being a part of the family helps us meet more people in the community!

During the circuit breaker period, what were some activities you'd done as a family?

De Silva: My boys resorted to playing the FIFA game on PS4, while my wife and daughter enjoyed baking.

Lesslar: We spent a lot of quality time together by keeping fit at home.

De Costa: We had more meals together, watched movies, held karaoke sessions, baked and got involved in many home improvement projects.

What is the one thing you enjoy being part of the EA's FC family?

De Silva: Everyone's great love for the game. My own family loves the game too and always supports us.

Lesslar: The time we spent together during our overseas tournament is what I appreciate and treasure most.

De Costa: I love the sense of brotherhood among the boys and the support from their families.

What do you hope for the EA's FC family in future?

De Silva: I hope more children will grow to love the game.

Lesslar: We hope to attend more matches and have more gatherings after this period.

De Costa: I'd like to see more young people get involved with activities. Being around other Eurasians in my age group would be a welcome change.



A Warm Welcome To New Zealand's Ambassador

New Zealand's High Commissioner, Her Excellency Jo Tyndall visited the Eurasian Association on February 13 for an informal lunch to network. (From left: General Manager Lester Low, Honorary Treasurer Martin Marini, Heritage Chairperson Julia D'Silva, Second Vice-President Yvonne Pereira, H.E. Jo Tyndall, President Alexius Pereira, EA Member Humphrey Conceicao and Management Committee Member Andrew Pang.)

Remembering Singapore's Sports Icon

Annabel Pennefather

One of Singapore's most prominent sports administrators, Ms Annabel Pennefather passed away on April 27 at the age of 72.

The passionate trailblazer was known for her legal, sporting and public service achievements, many of which as an outstanding female role model for future generations. Some highlights include being the first female to serve on the Singapore National Olympic Council in its 52-year history in 1998, and becoming the first female President of the Singapore Hockey Federation, the first female Chef de Mission for the Olympic Games in Athens and the first female from Asia to be elected vice-president of the International Hockey Federation.

Despite her busy legal and international sports administration schedule, Ms Pennefather was tireless in her efforts to contribute to the Eurasian Association (EA) and the Eurasian community. She also offered guidance to set up the Joseph Schooling Sports Grant to support young Eurasian sports persons in 2018.

She contributed stories about her sporting family to the Eurasian Heritage Gallery as well. Her father was hockey Olympian Percy Pennefather and her mother was national hockey player Ruth Richards in the 1950s. Her grandmother, Alice Patterson was a well-known badminton and tennis player who was often referred to as the "Grand Old Lady of Sport" or "Sporting Grandmother".

The EA will always be grateful to Ms Pennefather for her numerous contributions to the community and to Singapore. Our memory of this Singapore sports icon will continue to live in our hearts and minds.

– Alexius Pereira

President of The Eurasian Association Singapore



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Annabel has been a staunch member and supporter of the Eurasian Association since the nineties.

Annabel was a member of the first Selection Committee of the Eurasian Association Endowment Fund. She served very actively in it from 1995 to 2000. It was the work she did in that committee which gave Annabel intimate insights to the problems that our lesser privileged Eurasians were facing then. Annabel's contributions spread to the social assistance programmes which the fledgling Family Support Services was establishing then.

Annabel remained involved with the EA and supportive of its programmes after she stood down from the Selection Committee.

The EA has had a standard bearer in her and is very proud of her many achievements. She was an exemplary Eurasian, a proud and loyal Singaporean and an outstanding sports administrator of world class distinction.

May she rest in peace.

– Timothy de Souza

Trustee of The Eurasian Association Singapore

Lending A Helping Hand

The EA launched the Empathy Package to help fellow Eurasians whose lives are adversely affected by the pandemic.

When the Singapore Government provided additional funding to four local self-help groups to help Singaporeans who experience significant disruption following the onset of the pandemic, the Eurasian Association (EA) recognised the dire situations that many face as well, in particular those in the Eurasian community.

In April, the EA's President Alexius Pereira wrote to vulnerable members of the community who were receiving assistance from its Family Support Services (FSS) to attain feedback on how further assistance could be extended.

After gathering adequate information, the FSS and Education teams were able to quickly put together the Empathy Package and launch a publicity campaign for it on the EA's social media platforms.

For Eurasians who have lost their jobs or at least 30 per cent of their income due to the adverse impact of the pandemic, the Empathy Package is offering a Financial Assistance Scheme that comprises a monthly cash grant of up to \$500 (capped at three months) while they look for alternative work. It is also providing a Special Emergency Fund of a one-time grant (capped at \$500) for those with urgent and immediate needs.

In addition, the EA is reaching out to young people receiving assistance from the School Pocket Money Fund to offer a School Pocket Money Fund Top-up of \$100 a month (capped at nine months). Students who currently receive its bursaries also qualify for the EA Bursaries Top-up until September 2020, when new bursaries will be awarded.

The EA's Education team has also stepped in to



assist students who do not have personal computers to facilitate their home-based learning. Over the past few months, the team has processed a significant number of applications for the Ministry of Education's NEUPC Plus programme that offers each successful applicant a new computer bundled with three years of broadband access and software at an affordable price.

Since its launch, the Empathy Package has provided help to about 300 Eurasians, including working adults

who have lost a significant part of their income and students whose families are going through tough times.

Said the EA's First Vice-President Vincent Schoon: "The EA is thankful to the government for providing additional funds to self-help groups, which allows us to reach out and offer a helping hand to the most vulnerable in our community.

"I encourage any Eurasian reading this who needs assistance to contact the EA. We will do our best to help."

Beneficiaries of the Empathy Package share how it has helped them through the tough times during the circuit breaker period



TIMELY HELP FOR MEDICAL BILLS

When the circuit breaker period began, it jeopardised the income earnings of Brendan* and his sibling. They were only able to get by with the Temporary Relief Payout and some savings, and could not keep up with payment for their elderly mother's daily medical needs. After reading about the EA's Empathy Package on Facebook, he reached out for support and successfully received financial assistance for the medical bills.

FINANCIAL AND EDUCATION ASSISTANCE

A single mother with six young children, Jillian* struggled to purchase milk for them when her employment was affected by the circuit breaker period. Not only did the EA lend her immediate support with NTUC Food Vouchers and provide funds under the Empathy Package, its Education team also stepped in to explore ways to assist her children. She was grateful and relieved that the EA was able to address and resolve her issues.



SWIFT ACTION FOR FAMILY OF FOUR

After being let go from her part-time job due to the pandemic, Emma's* combined family income took a hit, although her mother and two siblings continue to work. As the family incurs frequent medical bills, they struggle with payment till Emma and her siblings each received the EA's monthly pocket money assistance of \$100. The financial assistance will continue till the end of the year.

**All names have been changed to protect the privacy of the individuals.*

Buying Guide For A Laptop

Thinking of purchasing a new laptop but not sure where to start? **AnastasiaDe Souza** took this step recently and shares what she learnt. You're welcome!

With so many brands of laptops available, consumers are spoilt for choice. Sizes, styles, screen resolution and prices vary vastly, so take your time to consider your options carefully.

Start by researching on the latest models in the market to empower you to weigh your options wisely. Most new models come with bluetooth capabilities, integrated webcams, built-in microphones and touchscreen features, but don't let them cloud the assessment of your needs and affect your budget.

Scaled down on the fancy features if you intend to buy a laptop for basic needs, such as surfing the Internet, checking e-mails or typing documents. It's important to consider your usage: do you need to store large files such as movies, photos and music, or run intensive programs for editing video and photos, and even playing games?

Finally, refrain from making assumptions or you might regret it later. When in doubt, don't be afraid to ask a salesperson for help. Here are 10 things to consider to make a smart purchase.

Operating system

Windows, Linux or Mac? If you use Microsoft Office products, you'll find the best compatibility with a Windows computer. Linux requires the most technical experience so if you're not tech-savvy, give this a miss. Plus, not all hardware is compatible with Linux. A Mac, though pricey, offers a very user-friendly interface along with a powerful media production operating system.

Compatibility issues

Consider your laptop's peripherals and assess their compatibility. Case in point: a bluetooth mouse is not compatible with every laptop. You will need to get a laptop with a built-in bluetooth antenna to work with this type of mouse.

Weight

Laptops may be compact, but some can be rather heavy to carry along when you are often out and about. Your best bet is one that's under 3kg.

Central Processing Unit (CPU)

Known as the brains of the laptop, the CPU affects your laptop's speed and functionality. There are various processors, but Intel and Advanced Micro Devices are the market leaders.



Random Access Memory (RAM)

Most standard laptops come with 4 gigabytes (GB) of RAM, which is sufficient for most users. But note that large applications require more RAM to run them efficiently and quickly. So choose a laptop with more RAM right away, or upgrade RAM only when needed — which is quite easy.

Storage drive

Also referred to as the hard drive, this is where your laptop stores your files. Having 250GB of storage space is ideal for light users.

Battery life

What's more important than Internet connectivity is a powerful battery with a long life. If you're always on the move, having a laptop with a battery life of about five hours is decent.

Ports

Multiple USB ports are necessities. Whether you need a DVI, HDMI or display port depends on the devices you want to connect to your laptop. Such devices include monitors, iPods, digital cameras and external hard drives.

Warranty

The warranty period for your laptop and adaptor may be different. Check if you need to fill up a warranty card, or if the warranty automatically comes into effect upon purchase. Also ask if a warranty card will suffice when sending your laptop for repair service, or if the receipt, or a copy of it, is also required.

Miscellaneous costs

Factor in extra costs for additional software or items for your laptop to be fully operational. For instance, most laptops don't come pre-installed with Microsoft Office, so you will need to purchase it separately. Do you need to buy a dongle to enable Internet service on the go, or even an external disc drive that most modern laptops no longer have?

A Challenge Like No Other

When Singapore first received news of a very infectious virus making its rounds in Wuhan, China, in early January, very few expected how enormous an impact it would have on the world. Many presumed that like SARS, which occurred in 2003, it would be at worst, a little inconvenient and a bit worrisome for specific sectors of the population.

Today, the grim statistics point to an apocalyptic scenario, with worldwide infections racing past 10 million and deaths surpassing the half-million mark. Economies have been ravaged, and millions around the world have lost their jobs. The most financially vulnerable have been made to face tomorrow with almost nothing in their pantries, and with hopes resting almost entirely on the generosity and goodwill of others.

Luckily for Singaporeans, we have been blessed with a lifeline from the government, which has, through its prudent fiscal policy, accumulated enough reserves to help us ride out this storm. The first tranche of funds for distribution among the needy from the community has already been disbursed via the services of various welfare groups.

With the receipt of the government funds released to the Family Support Services (FSS) for disbursement, a COVID-19 "Empathy Package" was quickly established. FSS has been vetting more than 120 appeals for financial assistance to see families and individuals through this challenging period. A slew of heart-rending appeals has been processed. These will help many individuals and families, including sole breadwinners who have lost their jobs, and parents without regular or monthly income.

However, lending assistance to these families is a challenge with limited funds at our disposal. If the amount awarded collectively to applicants prove to be insufficient, their families will suffer. But if our awards are generous, we may not have sufficient funds to tide over this difficult period.

To date, we have disbursed approximately one-third of the funds that have been allocated for distribution. This covers only two months. But the virus will probably stay till a safe and effective vaccine is found, and it could be sometime in 2021!

Many kind individuals have volunteered to help in their own ways. One generous restaurateur, who wishes to remain anonymous, has prepared cooking kits comprising ingredients and recipes for families to whip up various traditional Eurasian dishes at home. These kits are distributed to the neediest within the community.

There are also others who have distributed homemade face masks to those who need to venture out to make personal purchases. FSS appreciates such kind contributions and hopes that more caring individuals will step forward.

About the same time for the past two years, I have appealed to the community at large for contributions to treat financially disadvantaged members of our community to a Family Day lunch at a date close to National Day. But today, I make a special plea to everyone in the community who can give generously to our new cause to stave off severe financial hardship and despair for many families.

These people have lost the means to help themselves and have no idea when things will return to normal. They rely on you and me — and FSS. To see them safely through this difficult period, the whole Eurasian community must stand united.

Beyond kind and sympathetic thoughts, we need the generosity of everyone to help our fallen brothers and sisters and their children. Those who have the means must consider this a privilege to help the less fortunate ones in their hour of need. We stand as their last hope and their primary source of succour.

We cannot and must not fail them.

Please help us.

Edmund Rodrigues

Chairperson

Family Support Services

Lend a hand

If you wish to make a donation, please address your cheque to "EA-Family Support Services" and state "EA's Empathy Package" on the back. With EA's IPC status, any donation above \$100 is tax-deductible and will qualify for a tax deduction of 250%.

Get help

If you are in need of financial assistance during this challenging period, please reach out to our caseworker, Mr Jagannathan Ramakrishnan at ram@eurasians.org with supporting documents.

UNITED IN COMBAT

Our frontline heroes share the highs and lows of marching in the face of Covid-19

More than 10 million Covid-19 cases with over 500,000 deaths have been recorded from all over the world since the devastating pandemic began last December. Global economies have also ground to a halt as countries pull out all stops to contain the outbreak. Although the danger seems to lurk from every corner, frontline workers such as medical professionals, delivery riders, national servicemen and cleaners ensure essential services continue to prevent further disruption to normal life everywhere.

Like a light in a tunnel, their bravery and selflessness help many people carry hope in their hearts to thrive in these uncertain times.

We spoke to some frontliners from the Eurasian community on how they had coped as they went about their respective duties during the two-month circuit breaker period.



Ms Veron Ann Lincoln and Ms Joan Christina Hendriks
Registered nurses at a senior care facility

When the pandemic hit Singapore, there were reports that healthcare workers were being shunned by the public. Did you experience this and what were your initial thoughts?

Veron: When SARS happened in 2003, I was a student nurse. I didn't feel the stigma that much because clinical attachment and classes in school were cancelled. It's different with Covid-19 though. I used to take the bus to work and there were occasions when I felt other commuters were making a conscious effort to keep a distance from me. Now, I walk to and from work, to avoid potential stares and murmuring from commuters.

Joan: There were actually people who ran away when they spotted me. Some even refused to stand near me at the bus stop. I could hear them whisper "Don't stand near her; she has the virus". Initially, I felt hurt. Who wouldn't be? But after a while, I shrugged it off. Sometimes I get amused by their reactions. I don't completely blame them; it is human nature to be afraid and cautious, but they could have been nicer by being discreet.

As a mum, how has the pandemic affected your home life and what precautions have you implemented at home?

Veron: I reinforced the importance of hand hygiene to my children and helper. During the circuit breaker period, I took unpaid leave to spend time with my children and assist them in their home-based learning. I can proudly

Ms Veron Ann Lincoln

say that I enjoy bonding with them. To me, family is where life begins and love never ends.

Joan: My husband and I are essential workers, so both my kids went to school as usual during the circuit breaker period. After work, I would head home to shower first before picking them up, and they would shower immediately when they get home. I've taught my kids to bear in mind to wash their hands frequently and to sanitise their hands immediately if they accidentally touch the handrails in the lift. It's the small things that we shouldn't overlook.

As Covid-19 primarily affects the elderly, do you have any fear working in a senior care facility?

Veron: No, because the Ministry of Health has been quick to provide and update their guidelines and lend assistance to those in the medical industry.

Joan: Not at all. I love everything about my job. I make home visits as a community nurse, so I ensure I wash or sanitise my hands regularly and educate my patients on the importance of hygiene.

What do you hope that other Singaporeans will come to realise about the healthcare industry during this pandemic?

Veron: I hope they realise that nurses do more than just attend to patients' basic needs or their Activities of Daily Living (or daily basic routines). We do try our best to go the extra mile to help them, such as lending a listening ear and being their advocate when attended by the medical team.

Joan: Treat nurses well. We, too, are humans. Running away from us hurts. Just giving us a smile and or words of encouragement to press on would make a lot of difference.

Could you share some words of encouragement to other Eurasians in the medical field?

Veron: No matter how difficult the days may get, don't forget the reason you became a nurse. Florence Nightingale once said, "How very little can be done under the spirit of fear." To my fellow Eurasian healthcare frontliners, stay strong. Though we do not don a cape, we are already superheroes.

Joan: Dear fellow Eurasian doctors and nurses, we are all in this together. Let's do this, keep safe and stay strong always!

Ms Joan Christina Hendriks and her kids



Ms Danielle Francisco

Medical technologist, NUS University Health Centre (UHC)

How was your workplace affected when the pandemic began, and what initiatives and precautions did you implement as the deputy head of your safety team?

The biggest issue was keeping up with the continuous changes to our daily work. Due to the uncertainty, especially in the early days, we were not able to establish a singular protocol that would be able to last the entire pandemic. Every few days, we would learn something new to adhere to the latest MOH guidelines that were probably only released the night before.

I work with my colleagues in the emergency response team which includes pandemic management. We make sure that all staff are properly fitted with N95 respirators and that the records are updated regularly.

I'm also a part of the infection control team and we ensure the enforcement of infection control protocols such as regular hand washing and waste segregation for proper disposal.

Are you worried for your own health when you have to be in close proximity to patients?

Honestly, no. Although I'm aware that there's always a possibility of asymptomatic transmission from any patient that I attend to, it has never really bothered me.

In fact, I've even signed up to volunteer at isolation facilities and dormitories on my day off. Should I be deployed, I just have to make sure to practise regular hand hygiene and to don appropriate personal protective equipment carefully when required.

When you decide on a healthcare career, you must be prepared that a crisis like this can happen anytime. It is my duty as a healthcare worker to help in anyway I can during a public health crisis.

How has the pandemic affected your personal life, especially when your fiancé is also a medical technologist?

We postponed our marriage which was supposed to be in September. At first, we moved it to December when the Covid-19 situation started to escalate in February. It was pure chaos as we tried to figure out a date to accommodate our vendors and hotel, and scrambled to find a church and a priest.

But we postponed it again to next year because the future remains uncertain. We don't know if our annual leave could be approved, and if our numerous close friends and families who are overseas could travel here.



As we are still living with our parents in our respective homes, we want to prevent any possibility of cross-infection that would affect our parents' health. Thanks to technology, we are still able to communicate all the time to share our daily lives with each other.

What have you learnt from this pandemic?

Even during a pandemic, life in a hospital or clinic has to go on. This is the main thing it has taught me, with regards to work.

I've also learnt that during crunch time, my UHC colleagues are people whom I can count on. Facing this together has brought us closer. They make going to work every day so easy and joyful. I'm grateful to have such wonderful colleagues whom I can call my friends.

I feel fortunate that I'm riding this pandemic out in Singapore. I'm impressed with how our leaders have handled the situation so far, though not perfectly. I know that there are people who disagree with me on this, but I believe that the best decisions were made according to the information available at the time.

I've also come to the realisation that I truly love my profession. And even more so now, I love being able to ease the anxieties of my friends and family by providing accurate information about the virus as I understand the complexities surrounding it. The pandemic has strengthened my resolve to work harder so that I'll be in the position to be able to contribute even more to society should anything like it happen again.

Mr Jason Yeow

*Medical technologist, Khoo Teck Puat Hospital
(Department of laboratory medicine)*

What is it like having to test many samples a day, and how have you been coping with the work?

With the increasing number of suspected Covid-19 patients, there are now dedicated shifts that handle pandemic samples in large batches on a daily basis.

There is a section with a team of dedicated medical technologists working on processing the swabs alone. It is a highly methodical process requiring all steps to be done gingerly, in the quickest possible way. My colleagues assigned to this section work tirelessly round the clock to push for results to be released, sometimes staying beyond shift hours to cater to the high workload.

Doctors push for their tests to be performed so they would be able to discharge patients at the soonest possible time, just to make room for many others waiting to be admitted.

This is a trend which could see an upward climb as many more may be required to undergo testing for Covid-19.

I think being persistent to keep up the drive to work through this period helps us to cope. Being gifted with food items and other tokens of appreciation boosts morale too. The job can get physically exhausting, but in all honesty I really do enjoy it.

Have you had an experience of the stigma against medical workers, even though you do not come in contact with patients at work? How do you feel about it?

I did have an encounter, which I dare say, may be related to this. I was arranging to meet a buyer for an item which I had purchased wrongly online, when he became curious about my job as I could only meet on certain days due to my shift work. At that time, the majority of Singaporeans were supposed to be strictly working from home.

Although I wasn't obligated to reveal my job to him, I answered his query about where I'm employed. Since then, I've not heard from him.

Perhaps he simply lost interest in the deal. Still, I would like to announce that my listing remains and I promise to "disinfect" it before it reaches the buyer.

I feel that such a response (from the buyer) is very normal. Fear is an imminent reaction that comes all too naturally when you can't see your enemy, yet knowing it could be anywhere.

Have you implemented certain precautions at home?

Indeed, I have! Gatherings for meals, and oftentimes parties with friends and family, are quite the norm on weekends, especially for my maternal side of the family who are Eurasians. Just before the circuit breaker came into effect, I had specifically warned my mother to limit her contact with others. There is no sense in risking one's health during these trying times.

Though the circuit breaker was temporary, it is likely that some changes will remain for the long haul. So as painful as it may be with seemingly insurmountable restrictions in place, everything will come to an end.

Apart from this, I find myself constantly reminding (or nagging at) my parents to wash their hands when they return home after acquiring essential needs. It is the little things that matter, really.



Mr Benjamin Hoeden Jr
3rd Sergeant, Singapore Armed Forces

As a national serviceman, what are your thoughts about forum discussions on whether those serving national services should receive benefits from the Covid-19 Budget?

I don't usually take what I read online to heart, so I wasn't affected by those discussions. People can say what they want; ultimately, the government's decision is all that matters to me.

How do you feel about being involved in contact tracing work for two months?

We feel like we're not doing much, but when others recognise the work we put in, it feels good.

The work felt quite strange to me at the beginning. At that time, I was looking forward to my impending operationally ready date (ORD). So being called up to be part of a nationwide effort to contain and keep track of something that's affecting the world felt somewhat unreal. But it was alright after I got used to the workload and schedule.

We were given tokens of appreciation from various organisations and companies for our efforts, which was pretty cool.

How has Covid-19 impacted your work and personal life?

The virus actually put my post-ORD work plan on hold, which is to become an air steward. But that may be a blessing in disguise! My personal life has not changed much other than the fact that I can't meet my friends in person. I've always been close to my family so it feels nice hanging out with them now and just taking it day by day.

Have you implemented any precautions at home to keep yourself and your family safe?

Nothing much has changed at home because we've always been conscious about our personal hygiene prior to the outbreak, as people should be! The only major change is having to wash my clothes immediately when I get home, no matter how late.

What are your personal thoughts on people who don't wear masks when they step out?

Those who don't wear masks when they are outside are just kind of asking for trouble, aren't they? If they feel it's such a hassle or not a necessity, then staying home would be the best option. In these trying times, cooperation is key.

Which is the first country you would like to visit when it's safe to travel again?

Oh wow, I think I'd go to Japan first. I've always loved the country and its culture. I think it'd be the perfect place because the level of cleanliness there is top-notch.



Mr Cheyenne Lucas Holland
*Corporal at Kallang Fire Station,
 Singapore Civil Defence Force*

How has Covid-19 affected your life?

I've been accustomed to quiet bus rides filled with people I can count on one hand, all cautiously keeping me in their peripherals as I walk down the aisle to find a seat as far away from them as I possibly can. They get nervous if I sit too close by.

As I work with medics who engage with patients who have tested positive for the virus, on top of their already extensive duties, I find it heart-breaking to see how exhausted they are. No one really understands the gruelling but necessary decontamination process that they must go through after every call. You can see that this hurts their eyes and skin. So I can only imagine what it does to them internally.

Ask your frontliners how they are doing. It's good for them to talk about themselves and not just about what they experience every once in a while.

Do you worry for your colleagues' health and safety when you dispatch them for their duties?

Due to recent shoulder injuries, I had to stop my duties as a fireman. I now work in the Watchroom of the fire station

where I dispatch personnel and vehicles on a daily basis.

The frequency of calls has increased since the pandemic began and I wonder how my colleagues are coping mentally. Thoughts of their families and loved ones race through my mind every time I see that alert message on the screen.

How can you ever be sure they're going to be okay? We are taught to plan meticulously and never leave anything to chance. And I know they are proficient in their jobs and I trust in their training. But there's always the question of "what if". All we can do is hope for their safer return. Not to the station, but to their families waiting at home.

What is the biggest misconception that Singaporeans have about being a national serviceman?

It's easy to say national servicemen are immature and inexperienced with the struggles of life. But I think national service helps us to become rational thinkers, and gives us a sense of responsibility and purpose in the early stages of our adult lives.

I think the most common misconception is that we don't "have our lives together". It's true that we have to put everything on hold for two years and miss out on opportunities. But we make up for this with the persistence and grit that we've developed.

There will always be struggles wherever you go. The same water that softens the potato, hardens the egg. Be the egg.

During the recent fasting month, what added to the trying times of the pandemic was a fire that broke out in a shophouse. It was reported that 40 SCDF officers worked doubly hard at the scene to put it out so that their Muslim colleagues could break their fast properly with less than 40 minutes till sunset. What are your thoughts about that?

Although I wasn't at the scene, I've witnessed the dedication exhibited by these wonderful human beings.

During the Ramadan period last year when I was still serving as a fireman, my team was literally a minute away from Iftar when we had a call. My assigned vehicle for the day was not needed, but most of my colleagues were dispatched. I watched them disregard the meals set out for them as they ran off to attend to the call. The remaining few firemen and I could only hope in our hearts that the ordeal would be over quickly, so our boys could return and break their fast properly. I had nothing but utmost respect for those men that day.

As for my Muslim brothers who fought that recent case of fire, I salute you with the highest honour. It's not easy to fast and endure the heat of a blazing fire. Without a doubt, these men and women will stop at nothing to preserve the safety of this country. I am proud to be part of this force and I wouldn't have it any other way.



Virtual outreach to Eurasian youth



During the two-month circuit breaker period, the EA's Youth Sub-committee organised a three-part series of virtual meetings and webinars. Its chairman, Christopher Gordon, explained that the aim was to continue efforts to engage youth, help them stay socially connected, and offer opportunities for them to spend their time at home meaningfully through personal and professional development.



Mr Danni Jay



Ms Andrea Khatini

“Learning and Growing During Covid-19” on April 29

Vice-chairman Danni Jay of the Youth Sub-committee kicked off the first virtual meeting by sharing economic insights, global consumer trends and potential opportunities that have resulted due to the pandemic. He encouraged youths to maximise their time to go beyond their comfort zones to try new things, and recommended online learning platforms such as HarvardX, Udemy, Coursera and LinkedIn Learning to upskill themselves. He also shared his personal stay-home experience, and touched on the hype surrounding the Dalgona coffee-making trend and other creative hacks that they could follow.

Ms Andrea Khatini, a Singapore Airlines stewardess who is pursuing a degree in Psychology and Human Resources,

shared her views on travelling the world and the challenges of managing work and studies during the pandemic. It was especially difficult for her and her peers to keep up with virtual brainstorming sessions and productive long lectures. She also raised concerns on domestic abuse and mental health, which can potentially increase as more people stay home and realise they could not cope.



Mr Sunil Rao



Mr Elliot Ong

“Tips on Professional Branding and Securing A Job During Difficult Times” on May 16

The second session, led by Mr Sunil Rao, focused on the importance of professional branding. He spoke about how those in the core youth team have thought long and hard about equipping young leaders in the community to see the value of real and virtual connections as they progress in their lives and careers.

“With everything happening in the world today, it’s ever so critical to be aware of how you show up, and to be deliberate about bringing authenticity to every connection — whether professional or casual,” he said.

He highlighted three ways to build authenticity and substance for a strong online profile:

1. Focus on what’s important

Your online persona is only an extension of who you are “IRL” (in real life). If you focus on gathering valuable experiences and building capabilities, any online presence you create will have more substance.

2. Maintain your professional profile

This takes time and effort, but think of it as an investment to attain your professional goals. Create a schedule to update your profile and monitor the results of your changes in the form of new connections, conversations or opportunities that surface.

3. Remember to engage

Virtual connections can work in ways that real-life connections do. Start conversations and maintain a cadence for keeping in touch with virtual connections as you would with your real-life connections. Staying meaningfully engaged keeps you top of mind and can often lead to opportunities to learn and grow.

“Building Awareness on the Importance of Environmental Protection and Conservation” on May 18

For the final session, the discussion centred on the impact of Covid-19 on wildlife and insights on how everyone can contribute to wildlife conservation and environmental protection.

Wildlife enthusiast Elliot Ong spoke about numerous wildlife non-governmental organisations and zoos that are running low on funds due to a dip in ecotourism and budget cuts. He also dispelled untruths about bats, especially about them being carriers of the Covid-19 virus. He added that inhumane conditions in wildlife markets can potentially lead to an outbreak of viruses.



Did you know that most bats actually eat fruits, insects or drink nectar, and they are also important pollinators?

If not for bats that help to pollinate durian trees, there would be no durians!

Attendees picked up some 3R (reduce, reuse and recycle) tips as well. Mr Jared Bateman suggested utilising grey water generated from doing household chores to reduce water consumption by as much as 40 to 60 per cent, and bringing your own food containers when making takeaway orders to cut plastic use.

He also shared tips to improve the fit of reusable face masks with pipe cleaners or wire. He added that while reusable face masks are washable, disposable surgical or N95 masks should not be washed. The latter can be used over reusable face masks when going to crowded areas with many people in queues.

Passion That Inspires

Our Eurasian Heritage Gallery (EHG) may be closed during the circuit breaker period, but it doesn't mean it needs to be distant! Here's a spotlight on inspiring Eurasian personalities who feature in our Gallery for their significant and varied contributions to Singapore, and who have passed the baton on to their children.



The book cover of Mr Gerald de Cruz's autobiography



Justice Judith Prakash



Ambassador Simon de Cruz at the Embassy in Moscow, Russia, in 2010

Inspiring Leadership

Mr Gerald de Cruz, whose life story is told in *The Life And Times Of Gerald de Cruz: A Singaporean Of Many Worlds*, was a reporter for *The Straits Times* until the fall of Singapore in 1942.

During the Occupation, he was employed by the Japanese Propaganda Department, broadcasting in English from Saigon. Though he wrote for communist publications, he was an advocate for Malayan independence. In fact, he was instrumental in the formation of Singapore's first political party, the Malayan Democratic Union (MDU) in 1945.

His political vision for post-war Singapore was self-rule. When he became the organising secretary of MDU, he said: "We cannot depend on other people to look after us; we must look after ourselves. You see, this is our country and we've got to rule ourselves."

This sparked the awakening of political consciousness among many in Singapore that led to the struggle for

decolonisation and self-rule. His book is on display at EHG where his children are featured as well.

His daughter is Justice Judith Prakash nee de Cruz, who made a name for herself during the 18 years that she had worked at Drew and Napier. She became a judicial commissioner in 1992, Supreme Court Judge in 1995 — the second woman and second Eurasian to receive this appointment — and the first female Judge of Appeal in 2016. She was also the first female Singaporean to be appointed the judge of the Dubai International Financial Centre Courts, and the honourable recipient of the Public Service Star for her outstanding work in 2017.

Her brother, Mr Simon Tensing de Cruz, is a diplomat who has served in various posts since he joined the Singapore Foreign Service in 1979. He received the Long Service Medal in 2008 and has been the non-resident Ambassador to Ukraine since 2009.

Breaking New Frontiers

Putting the spotlight on Singapore on the world map is nothing short of a gargantuan task, but Mr Bernard Harrison has done it — by shaping the Singapore Zoo and the Night Safari into Singapore's most attractive and iconic leisure destinations.

After graduating at 22 with double honours in Zoology and Psychology from the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom, he worked as an assistant administrative officer in the Singapore Zoological Gardens in 1973. Since then, he rose through the ranks as a curator and assistant director before becoming the executive director in 1981.

Mr Harrison introduced the open-concept animal display in the zoo and set other internationally acclaimed benchmarks, such as the Night Safari—the world's first nocturnal zoo in 1994. When Wildlife Reserves Singapore was formed in 2000 to manage the Singapore Zoological Gardens, Jurong Bird Park and Night Safari, he was appointed its chief executive officer.

More can be learnt about the charismatic man in his biography, *Naked Ape. Naked Boss: Bernard Harrison: The Man Behind The Singapore Zoo And The World's First Night Safari*.

His daughter, Ms Sharda Harrison, has also made her own



Mr Bernard Harrison



Ms Sharda Harrison

mark in the local theatre scene. The adjunct lecturer, theatre educator and freelance actress set up Pink Gajah Theatre in 2013 with her mother and brother, where she creates her own works, teaches school groups and runs personal development workshops. The theatre also has an offshoot that features new and emerging artists, especially in fringe works.



Ms Carol Balhetchet



Ms Samantha Scott-Blackhall

Dream Chasers

A senior director and clinical psychologist with the Singapore Children's Society for 18 years, Ms Carol Balhetchet has been helping children, teenagers and families manage their troubles. Best known for working with under-16 youth in conflict with their schools and parents, or displaying at-risk behaviour, she is also the author of *Dr Delinquent: A Guide to Decoding The Teenage Years* to help families understand issues and mend ties in 2018.

This career wasn't on her cards in her youth though. Ms Balhetchet started out as her father's secretary, before becoming a public relations manager at 18, and then moving on to other

stints at hotels. After her marriage, she pursued two degrees in applied psychology and psychotherapy to embark on a meaningful career to help others. But it wasn't till after she had a successful run as the owner of events management company that she committed fully to counselling work. Since then, there was no looking back.

"Humanity becomes your bedfellow. It makes you become more accepting and more confident about who you are," she said. (Source: *Straits Times online*, 27 August 2017)

Her daughter, Ms Samantha Scott-Blackhall is an accomplished theatre director. Since attaining her degree in drama and directing in 2002, she has worked with several theatre companies in Singapore and helmed more than 50 professional theatre productions.

She was awarded Best Director for *The Physicists* at *The Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards* in 2005. *Quills*, which she directed, won Best Production of the Year the next year. She also directed the successful Asian premiere production of *Freud's Last Session*, presented by Esplanade Theatre's On The Bay and her company Blank Space Theatre in 2012. The production received nominations for Best Director, Best Actor, Best Set Design and Best Sound Design at the *Life! Theatre Awards*, and clinched the Best Actor and Best Sound Design awards that same year.

Her passion for the arts drives her creativity as she continues to cast her net with film production companies and advertising companies to create a buzzing theatre scene in Singapore. (Source: *Gateway Entertainment*)



The Singapore Youth Football Team came in 4th at the Asian Youth Championships in Bangkok, Thailand, in 1967. It was the first time that the team qualified past the group stages, and competed against 20 participating countries. Mr Brian Richmond (middle of front row, behind the trophy) was captain of the team, which included three other Eurasian boys, Vernon Lim, Gerard Bheem and Eric Paine.



Mr Brian Richmond (right) co-anchored the 1988 Seoul Olympics broadcast with Mr Hamish Brown (left).

Making Waves

Many will recognise the distinctive voice of Mr Brian Richmond on radio and his familiar face on television. Since he joined Radio Singapore in 1971, he has covered music and sports programmes as a deejay and presenter on both media platforms. He is also a popular master of ceremonies for corporate events, gala dinners and award shows.

An avid sportsman in his youth, he was the captain of the Singapore Youth Football Team. After suffering an injury, he became one of the Class 1 coaches in Singapore for the National Youth Team from 1971 to 1972, while being a sports radio presenter. It was during that time when Radio Television Singapore's executive producer George Favachon noticed his potential and got him to anchor the 1971 Southeast Asian Peninsular (SEAP) Games in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. That marked his first foray into television.

Since then, Mr Richmond has hosted many TV and radio shows, including the 1978 Talentime and Rediffusion. He attributes his lucky break to sports, which led to opportunities to cover high profile sports events, including the 1988 Seoul

Olympics. Acknowledging his blessings, he continues to stay active and currently hosts the Vintage Showcase every Sunday from 8am to noon on Gold 905.

His son, Mr Don Richmond, is a singer, songwriter, music director, composer and producer. His catchy melodies and numerous radio hits won him two Compass awards, two Life Theatre awards, one SPH award for Production and one Creative Circle award for Best Music.

His stint as a music mentor on the National Arts Council's Noise Programme from 2008 to 2014 led to many collaborations. In 2016, he was the music director for Singapore's National Day Parade, where he arranged and produced the song "Coming Together, Achieving Together". It was composed by Ms Jacqueline Peeris from the EA, together with lyricists from CDAC, MENDAKI and SINDA, as the theme song for the Self-Help Groups.

He is currently an instructor at Ocean Butterflies Music, teaching songwriting, song composition and music arrangement.



Mr Brian Richmond hosts the Vintage Showcase every Sunday from 8am to noon.



Mr Don Richmond

Rapping to a new beat

When rapper Kevin Lester released his latest track, “Could Be Worse” during the circuit breaker period, the timing was just perfect to lighten the mood. THELIONCITYBOY looks beyond the negativity to focus on gratitude and what’s truly important to him.

What is the story behind “Could Be Worse” and does the chorus refer to the current pandemic?

This song was from a batch that I wrote with some producers from late 2019 to early this year. It was the last song that I wrote actually. As a rapper, you’ll never catch me rapping out of pocket, as I tell stories about my environment and my community.

When the pandemic led to restrictions in Singapore that made it more difficult to experience them freely, I started looking inwards, rather than outwards, and realised how grateful I am to have my family at home — safe and healthy. Even in this bleakness, there is some light shining. This song is my way of sharing this feeling.

Did you have to work harder than other local artists when you were a 17-year-old Eurasian starting out in the music industry?

I noticed that most people from the music scene were minorities then. They were always welcoming to new faces. I don’t think my growing up in a Eurasian family made any difference to my venture into the scene. As artists, we came together in the studio with whatever money we had to buy beats and get recordings done to tell our stories. That was all we wanted, regardless of race or language.

Tell us about your proudest moment and a setback you experienced in your career.

It’s hard to pick a favourite one but it’s a tie between playing my first solo ticketed show at Kilo Lounge and performing at NDP 2018. I got to put my spin on the National Pledge in the theme song, which was never done before.

2020 has been what I call “a jab and a hook” for sure. I became a music artist to perform in front of people at festivals and concerts. I enjoy collaborating with other artists in the same studio and “cooking” up new music in the same space. These were quickly taken away from all of us. But I’m grateful for the opportunity and excited to be part of the new wave of creation that helps me to continue to express myself.

If you could listen to only two musicians for the rest of your life, who would they be?

Mac Miller, and Chance the Rapper. I’m already listening to their music regularly.

Are there any Eurasian musicians you would like to collaborate with?

Jeremy Monteiro. We’re always talking about doing a collab album.



Rapper Kevin Lester, better known as THELIONCITYBOY, released his latest track, “Could Be Worse” on May 15.

You mentioned “Curry Devil” in Akeem Jahat’s song, “RNP Freestyle”, will we see more Eurasian references in time to come?

I was excited to get a reaction from the phrase “denzel...curry devil”, which refers to Denzel Curry, an artist who inspires me, and one of my favourite dishes ever. A lot of times when I write, it’s based on instinct. It just feels right. It was a song that Akeem and I just “vibe” to. Some people in the Portuguese settlement reached out to me to say they connected with the song even more because of the Eurasian links in the song. I loved it.

I’m involved in something exciting in August. I’ll just share that I have a chance to remix a song and add some *kristang* (Creole language) to it.

Is there a quote that you live by, and what would you advise young Eurasians with dreams of pursuing a music career?

Michael Jordan’s quote: “I wanted to win, but I wanted them to win and be a part of that, as well.”

The basketball legend didn’t just want to win — he wanted his team mates to win as well.

Like him, I want to succeed, and I wish for my fellow Eurasians in the same music industry to be successful too. A lot of hard work is required for this journey, so it’s best that they surround themselves with good people who have similar goals.

Delicious Bounty From The Sea

Fry up a Bawal topped with a flavourful gravy with this Chuan Chuan recipe by chef Kurt Drysdale of CasaKumi that offers a halal home dining experience in Ang Mo Kio.

Ingredients:

- 1 medium Black Pomfret (Bawal)
- 3 tbsp ginger, julienned
- 2 tbsp fermented soyabean sauce (tao cheo)
- 3 tbsp shallots, blended
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 tbsp vinegar
- 2 tbsp oil
- 2 tbsp water
- Pinch of salt
- Pinch of pepper
- Red chillies, sliced
- Coriander leaves



Method:

1. Marinate fish with salt and pepper. Deep-fry it and keep aside.
2. Fry shallots with tao cheo in oil till fragrant.
3. Add ginger, followed by vinegar, sugar and water.
4. Cook till the mixture boils and pour it over the fish.
5. Garnish with sliced red chillies and coriander leaves.





How Upskilling Helps You Move Ahead in Your Career

Here's how you can keep pace in a rapidly digitising world.

The world has undergone a digital transformation, with the evolution of how businesses interact with consumers, as well as how goods and services are transacted. And with the current pandemic, that move has greatly hastened.

So here's what you can do to keep up.

1. Train up your digital muscles

Being equipped with in-demand hard skills may make that difference between you and another hire. Some of these skills include business analysis, cloud computing, analytical reasoning, UX design and scientific computing. Visit the SkillsFuture for Digital Workplace initiative for a list of suggested courses to help you take steps in the right direction.

2. Don't go soft on your soft skills

While there are hard skills in demand, you should not ignore your soft skills either. That's because the former is only made more effective when married with soft skills, such as strategic thinking, effective communication, customer service and people management. A salesperson, for example, will not thrive in the business if he has poor interpersonal skills, even if he has expert industry knowledge.

3. Learn to learn

Many of us may be out of touch with the concept of "school". But the good news is, you now make the decision of what and how to learn. To get started, review the relevant course materials. Then, with the assistance of a subject matter expert, practise it and collect feedback. Finally, apply what you've learnt and improve.

The pandemic has caused change to happen at a rapid rate. Take this chance to reflect, reboot and reinvent yourself to boost your career. So that when the "new normal" comes, you'll be prepared to take it in your stride.

Find out more about **Career Matching Services by Workforce Singapore** and how our professional career coaches can help you in your career journey. Visit go.gov.sg/ea0720 to register your interest and we'll get back to you soon.



EA's EMPATHY PACKAGE

We're here to help!

For Eurasians who have lost their jobs or at least 30% of their income

Financial Assistance Scheme

A monthly cash grant of up to S\$500 (capped at three months) while you find alternative work.

Special Emergency Fund

One-time grant (capped at S\$500) if you have urgent and immediate needs.

If you would like to apply for the **Empathy Package**, or if you have questions, e-mail: ram@eurasians.org

For Eurasian youth

School Pocket Money Fund Top-up

An increase of S\$100 a month (capped at nine months) for students currently receiving assistance from the school pocket money fund.

EA Bursaries Top-up

An additional S\$75-100 a month (until September 2020) for each student receiving an EA bursary.

If you would like to apply for an **EA Bursary** or the **Empathy Package for youth**, please e-mail: vinitha@eurasians.org