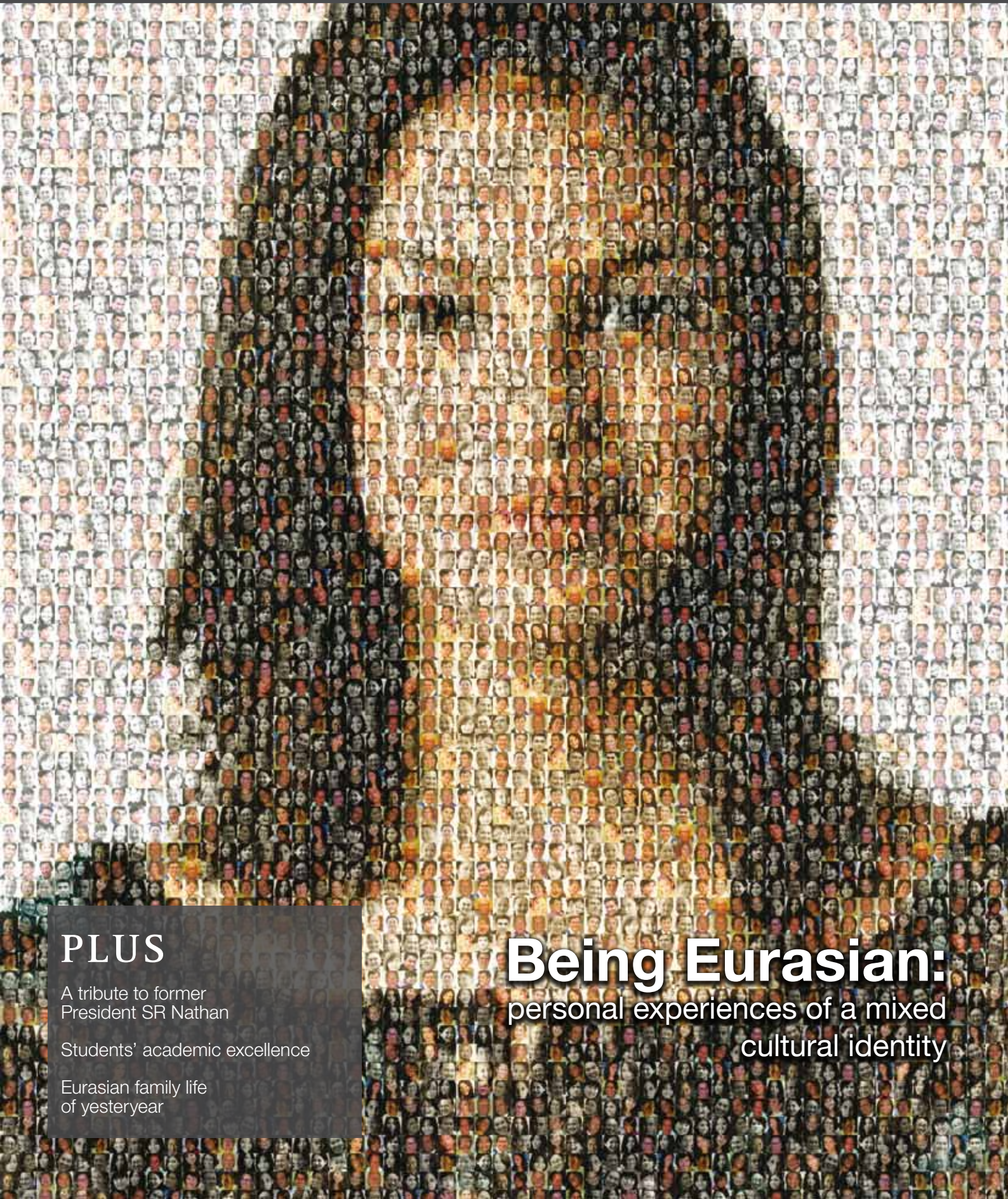


THE NEW EURASIAN

www.eurasians.org.sg

OCTOBER–DECEMBER 2011



PLUS

A tribute to former
President SR Nathan

Students' academic excellence

Eurasian family life
of yesteryear

Being Eurasian:
personal experiences of a mixed
cultural identity

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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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(Established July 1919)

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President's *message*



Welcome to another special issue of *The NewEurasian* – part of a series in which we focus on the legacy of colonisation 500 years after the Portuguese first landed in Malacca. In this issue, we continue from the previous issue's focus on the history of the Portuguese colonisation of South-east Asia to bring you a cover story revealing how Singaporean and Hong Kong Eurasians perceive their mixed ethnicity; in Kirsteen Zimmern's new book, *The Eurasian Face*, many generations of Eurasians discuss what it means to be Eurasian, and how they feel about that identity in the 21st century.

In October, Singapore Eurasians will be joining our fellow Malaysians in Malacca to celebrate the 500th year anniversary of Portuguese presence in South-east Asia. The management committee will be there to represent the Eurasian Association. It promises to be a weekend of culture-rich activities, friendship, and fun. We are looking forward to being part of this momentous event that will serve to strengthen ties between Singapore and Malaysia Eurasians.

We also update our readers with the progress of Kirsty Walker, a PhD student at Cambridge University, who is writing her thesis on Eurasians and who has featured previously in our pages. Now, she gives us some fascinating insights into her research.

Coming up in the near future is a reunion for Eurasians from all over the world. A celebration is scheduled for March 2012.

We will be announcing more details in the January-March 2012 issue of *The NewEurasian*.

Education plays a vital part in the work of the Eurasian Association and we are delighted to highlight the achievements of the annual ECF education award winners and those of other educational awards.

If you are an avid golfer, do come and support the Eurasian Association at our Charity Golf Tournament on 18 November at Warren Golf and Country Club. Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong will be our guest of honour for the third time. The purpose of the golf tournament is to help raise the necessary funds to help our programmes, as well as the general running of the administration and Eurasian Community House.

I trust you will enjoy discovering in these pages more about our cultural heritage, and I hope to see you at the various EA events arranged for the rest of the year.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Jansen". The signature is written in a cursive style.

William (Bill) Jansen,
President

A tribute to former President SR Nathan



EA President Bill Jansen and President SR Nathan

Former President SR Nathan, who ended his second term in August, was Singapore's longest-serving president, having been in office since 1999 and twice standing unopposed for the position.

A Singaporean of Tamil descent, he spent his childhood with his two elder brothers and grandparents in Muar, Johor. After his father's death when he was eight years old, he returned to Singapore and attended Anglo-Chinese Primary School, Rangoon Road Afternoon School, and Victoria School. He started work before completing his studies.

After the war, while working, he completed his secondary education through self-study, and entered the University of Malaya (then in Singapore) where he graduated in 1954 with a Diploma in Social Studies (Distinction).

Mr Nathan has supported the Eurasian Association in many ways during his time as the President of Singapore. He took a keen



President Nathan attends Eurasiana at The Esplanade in 2009

interest in the wellbeing of the underprivileged within the community and the education advancement of young Eurasians. He was also a strong advocate of efforts to preserve the heritage and culture of the Eurasians community, and supported the writing of books on prominent Eurasians, as well as the visit by Professor Moura from Portugal, who helped train our Eurasian dancers. He has also attended dinner functions with Mrs Nathan every year at the EA and donated generously

to the EA's educational and welfare work. In 2011, he contributed \$500,000 from the President's Challenge to the EA's welfare and education programmes. He has been a helpful neighbour, friend, and an official Visitor to the Eurasian Community House.

The association would like to thank Mr Nathan for all the help and support he has bestowed upon the Eurasian community – and Singapore – for all these years.



Author starts book on EW Barker

The official beginning of a biography of the late renowned Eurasian politician EW Barker was made at the ECH on 10 October when an agreement was signed with writer Susan Sim. The author is a former journalist, who before that worked for the police force. The book is expected to be completed by 2013.

A trip down **Memory Lane**



The EA's trustees and management committee with President Tony Tan

One of President Tony Tan's last appointments before his recent election to head of state was a lunch meeting with the EA's trustees and management committee at Quentin's Restaurant.

As guest of honour at the event on 4 August, he made a speech thanking trustee Joe Conceicao for introducing him to the EA – and recalled fond memories of his school days when he was one of Mr Conceicao's students.



Vice-President Benett Theseira shows the President The NewEurasian magazine



President Bill Jansen presents a gift

EA welcomes *VIP visitors*



Minister Chan Chun Sing (left) meets Bill Jensen and members of the management team



Left to right: HE Afonso Malheiro, EA President Bill Jensen and EA Vice President Benett Theseira

Acting Minister of Community, Youth and Sports Chan Chun Sing paid his first visit to the EA in September, when he and his associates met the management committee during a lunch at Quentin's Restaurant.

The ECH also played host to Singapore's new Portuguese Head of Mission, HE Afonso Malheiro in July, where he was hosted by EA President William Jansen and Vice-President Benett Theseira.

Mr Malheiro took the opportunity to sample the famous sugee cake with this coffee. Both guests were given a tour of the ECH's cultural history exhibits to learn more about Eurasian history.

News in brief

Memorabilia sought

The EA is calling on the Eurasian community to lend or donate photographs, artefacts and other articles for potential use in an exhibition to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Portuguese arrival in Asia.

The exhibition is being planned in collaboration with the National Heritage Board and will highlight the impact of the Portuguese on local communities in aspects such as religion, language, cuisine and culture, and especially on the development of the Eurasian community through the intermarriage of Eurasians.

Loaned items will be documented and returned after the end of the exhibition. For more information, contact Jacqueline Peeris at 6447 1578 or jacqueline@eurasians.org

Deck the halls

Need to brush up your artistic skills? Or just want a great way to spend some time volunteering and making new friends? Come and help deck the halls at the Eurasian Community House. The prettifying will take place in the week starting 28 November at 1pm at the ECH. Contact Bridget Basnayake at 6447 1578 or bridget@eurasians.org

Kiddies' Christmas show

ToyBox Singapore is organising a Christmas Show at the Eurasian Association aimed at youngsters from two to eight years old (Children must be accompanied by an adult.) There are two shows on Sunday 20 November: at 10.30am and 4pm at the Multi-Purpose Hall, Level 2. Price \$12.50. To purchase a ticket, contact Reuben Tupaz, Toybox Singapore at toyboxsingapore@gmail.com

Eurasian becomes Speaker of Parliament



Michael Palmer at the Joint Tuition Awards Ceremony in 2011

Michael Palmer MP has been appointed the new Speaker of Parliament by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. Mr Palmer took the post in October, replacing Abdullah Tarmugi, who held the post from 2002 to 2011. He is the third Eurasian to become Speaker after Sir George Oehlers and E W Barker.

Lawyer Mr Palmer has been a partner at Harry Elias Partnership since 1998. He represented Pasir Ris-Punggol GRC as its MP from 2006 to 2011 and has been MP for Punggol East since then.

He currently serves on the EA's Legal Panel, and earlier this year, was guest of honour at the association's Joint Tuition Awards.

When he's not in his office or in Parliament, the 43-year-old father-of-one enjoys jogging, photography, golf and time with his family. He is the son of Singapore broadcasting legend, the late Vernon Palmer.

Safe at home



Lionel de Souza (centre, in red shirt) at the presentation ceremony



Singapore's reputation as one of the world's safest cities is due not only to effective government policies that allow us to sleep soundly at night but also to a network of Home Team Volunteers who give their time and expertise to support the government agencies.

Lionel De Souza is one such dedicated member of the public. The 68-year-old retired police officer was appointed as a crime prevention ambassador (CPA) on the National Crime Prevention Council in 2002 and has also been a CPA in the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority since 2005.

This year, for the third time, Lionel has been presented with the Challenge Shield for the Most Outstanding Crime Prevention Ambassador. He received the award from Tan Kian Hoon, chairman of the National

Crime Prevention Council at the CPA Award Presentation Ceremony in July.

He was also presented with the Most Outstanding Award 2010 -2011. As a bonus, since he has held the Challenge Shield for three consecutive terms, he can now keep it for good.

In his role as volunteer, Lionel gives crime prevention talks to the community, with a focus on helping the elderly from becoming victims of crime. He also gives talks at schools and student care centres to high-risk youngsters on the dangers of joining gangs and getting involved in criminal activities such as theft, extortion and gang fights. He also organises crime prevention road shows and exhibitions, and recently attended a Home Team course called the Community Engagement Executive Development programme.

Rewarding students' academic success

The ECF Education Awards ceremony, the EA's major annual event to recognise academic achievement among young Eurasians, was held in September at St Patrick's School.

Nearly 200 Eurasian students from primary, secondary and tertiary levels received awards for their academic progress in 2010, earning a total \$44,300 between them. The guest of honour was Lawrence da Silva.

The ECF Education Awards ceremony was inaugurated in 1996 to showcase the academic achievement of the future generation of Eurasians. It signals to the Eurasian Community the importance of achieving academic excellence and the EA's support in encouraging more students to excel in their studies.

The winners are all full-time students in the formal Singapore education system from primary to tertiary levels.

There are four categories. The Bursary Award helps to defray certain costs of education for students from lower-income families. The Merit and Excellence Awards are based solely on academic results and serve as a reward for students who have emerged in the top 25 per cent of their cohort. The Distinction Award, the most prestigious, is given to students who have achieved outstanding academic results at their level of education.

EA youth chairperson Zaf Coelho organised a pre-award youth gathering at the EA for the tertiary students to promote EA's activities and encourage the youngsters to become involved in the association and give something back to the community. The students had a tour of the ECH and took part in focus-group discussions.

Distinction Awards

Award Title	Name of Student
Top Eurasian PSLE Student 2010	Monika Lendermann
Top Eurasian Normal Academic 'NA' Level Student 2010	Andrew De Witt
Top Eurasian Normal Technical 'NT' Level Student 2010	Nonis Benedict
Top Eurasian 'O' Level Student 2010	Daniel Neubronner
Top Eurasian 'A' Level Student 2010	Jonathan Trachsel
Outstanding Eurasian ITE Student 2010	Bridget Welford
Outstanding Eurasian Polytechnic Student 2010	Sarah Pennefather
Outstanding Eurasian University Student 2010	Vanessa Godfrey
Outstanding Eurasian Sports Student 2010	Tyra Ree
Meritorious Eurasian Sports Student 2010	Brittanie Bartlett



Guest of honour Lawrence da Silva with Distinction Awards recipients

Eurasian theme for education awards

The annual Joint Tuition Awards was organised this year by the EA and came with a Eurasian flavour. The event, held at Nanyang Polytechnic Auditorium in July, included a performance by the Kristang Cultural Troupe organised by Valerie Scully to showcase Eurasian culture; Valerie also made a speech in which she reminded the audience of this year's celebration of 500 years of Portuguese presence in the region. MP Michael Palmer was guest of honour.

The JTA is an annual ceremony – now in its eighth year – in which students in the Collaborative Tuition Programme, run by the self-help groups, are recognised for their success in national examinations including PSLE, N-levels and O-levels. When CTP centres were first launched in 2002, there were 14 tuition centres. Today, there are 63 centres island-wide, making tuition affordable and convenient for students.

Nine Eurasian students received awards at this year's awards ceremony. They were:

PSLE

Shannon Siew
Rebecca Fletcher
Stephanie Misson

N-Level

Liza Goh
Nurul bte Mohd Amin
Siti Nafira bte Mohd Noor

O-Level

Kimberly Pereira
Colin De Souza
Luke Paglar



Michael Palmer MP meets award winners



The Kristang Cultural Troupe



Bill Jansen and Michael Palmer (centre) with self-help groups' representatives and students

A grandfather's philanthropic legacy



Secondary students



Junior college and polytechnic students



ITE students



Guest of honour Chew Kwee San

The Tan Chin Tuan Education Awards ceremony, which disburses education funds to needy students, was hosted in August by the EA. Beneficiaries of the awards comprise students at junior college, Nitec, higher Nitec and polytechnic levels.

Guest of honour Chew Kwee San, a council member of Tan Chin Tuan Foundation, spoke of his grandfather's goal to establish a foundation to provide needy students with the opportunity to advance their education, and said that the foundation was happy to be able to help the EA.

More than \$22,000 was allocated in total for the current year and more than 60 Eurasian students received awards. Secondary students were awarded \$300 each, ITE students \$400, and junior college and polytechnic students \$500.

Mixed impressions

There are more Eurasians than ever before. But one's sense of being Eurasian can be influenced by a myriad of different factors, as *Rachel Chen* discovers



“Belonging is an active verb. You choose to belong somewhere, and behave accordingly”

What does it mean to be Eurasian in 2011, 500 years after the Portuguese landed in Malacca? With the number of intermarriages between Asians and Caucasians increasing in Singapore and worldwide, the perception of Eurasians in Singapore is being redefined as more and more ‘New Eurasians’, or first-generation Eurasians, enter the mix.

How do these first-generation Eurasians perceive themselves? What forms the basis of their identity? What does being Eurasian mean to them?

A recently-published book, *The Eurasian Face*, by Hong Kong Eurasian Kirsteen Zimmern, attempts to answer these questions. Drawing from portraits and stories of mostly Hong Kong and Singapore Eurasians, *The Eurasian Face* presents a montage of not only diverse ethnic mixes and appearances, but also diverse stories of how it feels to be Eurasian in the 21st century. The differences between Singapore and Hong Kong Eurasians can be seen not only in faces, but in attitudes and emotions relating to feeling Eurasian.

‘Traditional’ and ‘new’ Eurasians

Zimmern was interested in hearing stories of multiple-generation Eurasians who have embraced a Eurasian identity for centuries. “I actually asked for some elder Eurasians from Singapore as I had not had much luck finding many older Eurasians in Hong Kong, so I thought it would be a valuable addition to the book. I wanted to hear the colonial history,” said Zimmern. With so many Hong Kong Eurasians being first-generation Eurasians, an equal mix of Asian and Caucasian, it was more difficult to find the multiple-generation Eurasians so easily found in Singapore.



Dorothy Tessensohn

Zimmern notes: “The wonderful and remarkable thing about Singaporean Eurasians is their strong identity. In Hong Kong, ‘Eurasian’ would never be considered a race. Eurasians here do not have Eurasian traditions or Eurasian food for example. I think that might be to do with the fact that most Eurasians in Hong Kong are first generation by definition – exactly half and half – so there are no ‘Eurasian traditions’ to take on from parents – only Asian or Western ones. The question for first-generation Eurasians is not necessarily how Eurasian they feel but what do they feel more of – Asian or Western?”

She adds: “That is not to say that first-generation Eurasians do not have a Eurasian identity at all – they do, and some feel very strongly about it – but Eurasian culture in Hong Kong is more a reference to living bi-culturally than it is an idea that ‘Eurasian’ is a distinct race.”

This contrasts with the fact that many Singapore Eurasians today feel strongly Singaporean and relatively monocultural, in the sense they do not feel torn between East and West. “I do not feel more Western or more Asian. I was simply brought up as a Eurasian – I never thought about anything else,” said Singaporean Eurasian Joan Pereira.



Stephen Fung



Peter Bennett

“Many felt that they had the best of both worlds, were cultural chameleons and therefore able to blend in anywhere”



Karen Coombes

First-generation Hong Kong Eurasians in *The Eurasian Face* shared similar attitudes as Singapore Eurasians about the benefits of being Eurasian. Many felt that they had the best of both worlds, were cultural chameleons and therefore able to blend in anywhere or adapt to any social situation.

Zimmern herself described her Eurasian identity as embodying two personalities at once, behaving one way in front of her Chinese family and another in front of her expatriate friends. “It is not like acting a role but more like being two completely different people. It is not choosing to behave one way or another, but automatically doing so.”

A bridge between cultures

Some Hong Kong Eurasians who were interviewed felt that they functioned as a bridge between East and West, which came in useful for them in the workplace. “My ability to bridge the gap between East and West has helped me to understand different markets and has contributed significantly to my success in business,” said Lawrence Matthews, an entrepreneur. Jose Maurellet, a barrister, noted that his language skills meant that “we can sometimes act as a cultural bridge”.

However, John Chan, a webmaster, felt that being Eurasian could sometimes act as a barrier, employment-wise: “Having a Chinese last name can be a bit of a disadvantage in being an editor for an English publication or for teaching English. It doesn’t seem to matter that I was born and bred in the UK; people here want people with European names and appearances for that kind of work.”

For rugby player Rowan Varty, having European DNA in the mix meant that Eurasians had an advantage in the sporting world: “In terms of rugby, whilst Eurasians tend not to be huge, we do tend to have a bigger physique than many local Chinese players. This combined with the pressure to excel commonly exerted by Asian parents may also go some way to explaining the prevalence of Eurasians in the international Hong Kong rugby teams at all levels.” Could the tradition of sporting excellence amongst Singapore Eurasians of a previous generation also be a result of this combination?

For older Hong Kong Eurasians like Liam Fitzpatrick, being Eurasian was not really something to be proud of, decades ago. The son of an Irish policeman working in Hong Kong, Fitzpatrick remembered a particular incident etched deeply in his childhood memories during a time when prejudice prevailed: “I was born in a time when the mere sight of Eurasians could still provoke violence. During the disturbances



Zoe Lazaroo



Lawrence Matthews

in Hong Kong in 1967, my mother, who is Cantonese, was driving through Central with me in the passenger seat. We were surrounded by a jeering mob of leftists, calling her a foreigner’s whore and me her bastard half-breed as they pounded the sides of the car.”

Finding inspiration

Fitzpatrick remained ambivalent about his Eurasian identity until he encountered the works of Eurasian author Han Su-yin when he was 14 years old. “As a Eurasian writer championing Eurasian-ness, she was crucial to my adolescent notion of self. There’s a passage in *A Many Splendored Thing* which reads: ‘Look at us, the Eurasians! Just look... The meeting of both cultures, the fusion of all that can become a world civilization. Look at us, and envy us, you poor one-world people, riveted to your limitations. We are the future of the world.’ That single quote sustained me through school, college and into young adulthood.” Fitzpatrick went on to embrace his Eurasian identity in creative ways, such as organising dance parties under the name ‘Eurasian Nation’, creating comical ‘Eurasian’ gang signs and slogans like ‘two bloods, one love’.

Karen Coombes recalled that living as a Eurasian in Hong Kong in the 1950s was rather more difficult: “When I was young there was still a lot of prejudice against Eurasians, especially amongst the Chinese. They didn’t like us and we were called *japp jung* – a derogatory term for being mixed... The impression I got was not that the Chinese despised Westerners, but that they didn’t like the fact that we Eurasians were neither Chinese nor not Chinese. It was the mixed aspect that seemed to bother them.”

At school, as a minority in a predominantly European school, Coombes experienced a reversal on the basis of her Asian features, and as a result, “many of my Eurasian friends would compete over who had the roundest, and therefore least Chinese, eyes. I would say that most rejected their Eurasian identity completely and strived to become increasingly Westernised.”

Towards harmony

The prejudice against mixed races has subsided considerably in the present day, according to older Hong Kong Eurasians interviewed. Peter Bennett said that “growing up in 1960s Hong Kong as a half-English, half-Chinese individual was thus perhaps a different experience than a young Eurasian would encounter today; bustling with myriad races, the present-day Chinese city is one in which racial mixing has become increasingly common and – as exemplified by this very book – celebrated.”

For some older Singapore Eurasians, being Eurasian was not much different in previous generations as it is today. “I do not think there is any difference in how Eurasians were perceived when I was young and how we are seen now,” said Zoe Lazaroo. To Dorothy Tessensohn, Eurasian culture in Singapore is in ways “even stronger and more prominent now than it used to be, as we are officially recognised as a race today.”

However, Yvonne Pereira remembered a time in the past when Singapore Eurasians divided themselves according to their skin tone – what was widely known as the fairer ‘upper-tens’ and the darker ‘lower-sixes’ divide. “In previous generations, there used to be distinctions between Eurasians, and Eurasian families... The fair-skinned Eurasians, who tended to be the British or Dutch Eurasians, and who had a higher



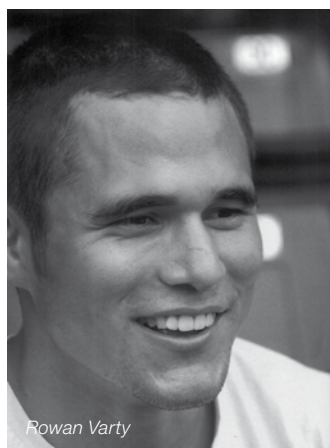
Liam Fitzpatrick



Joan Pereira



Yvonne Pereira



Rowan Varty

“The wonderful and remarkable thing about Singaporean Eurasians is their strong identity. In Hong Kong, ‘Eurasian’ would never be considered a race”

economic standing, were divided from the darker-skinned Eurasians who tended to be the descendants of the Portuguese Eurasians who have been in the region longer, and for more generations.”

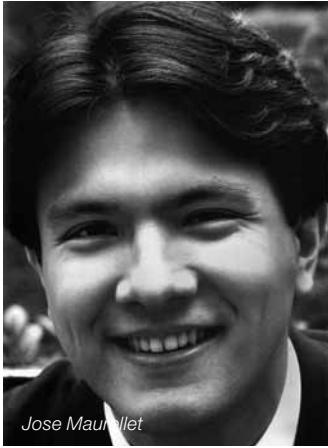
Jean Consigliere, who was born in Kuala Lumpur and moved to Singapore in 1962, remembered that as a child living in Kuala Lumpur, “foreign private firms stipulated in their contracts that their employees were not allowed to marry locally. When I was a child, we were often called ‘mixed devils’ and the like. Many Eurasian children of that era emigrated to Australia in the end.”

The current generation of first-generation Eurasians in Hong Kong report positive things about their Eurasian features and bicultural background, many citing a ‘cool’ factor, ‘uniqueness’, and exotic good looks benefitting their social interactions. Others cite a sense of tolerance – a global, international outlook, and being more sympathetic and understanding towards all cultures. For them, being a Eurasian today is a non-issue.

Comical mishaps due to common assumptions about Westerners and Asians still occur – Zimmern is often assumed to be lost when walking into a Chinese movie, and Rachel Nissim’s mother was mistaken for her domestic helper when she was a child visiting wet markets. Doctors in the UK told Stephen Fung’s mother upon his birth that he was “severely jaundiced... until my dad walked into the delivery room. Realising that he was the father, the doctors decided that I was fine after all.” In contrast, many Singapore Eurasians, owing to generations of Eurasian ancestry, pass as Asian, but are still often identified by others as Malay, Indian or Chinese – anything but Eurasian.

For Canadian-born student and model Lisa Rosentreter, being Eurasian has its perks in an industry where being Eurasian in an increasingly globalised, cosmopolitan world is considered highly marketable and sought after. “I have benefited from my atypical appearance. Fashion clients across Asia are captivated by models who look Eurasian, and this intrigue has been permeating into the mainstream fashion world for years now. I’ve met way too many models to count who are either fully or completely not Asian and posing as a Eurasian for better work opportunities.”

Zimmern observed that Eurasian pride manifested itself in different ways in Singapore and Hong Kong Eurasians. “A first-generation Eurasian might focus their feelings on how wonderful it is to come from two such diverse cultures, being able to speak two languages and engage in the cultures of both. A Singaporean Eurasian may cook Eurasian dishes with pride for their children and family and involve themselves with Eurasian traditions. Both experience pride and a feeling of ‘Eurasian-ness’ but what they are referring to is inherently different.”



Jose Maurillet



Jean Consigliere



John Chan



Lisa Rosentreter

Official recognition?

Would Hong Kong Eurasians like to see ‘Eurasian’ become an official ethnic group in Hong Kong, like in Singapore? Responses in *The Eurasian Face* were mixed. Proponents talked about easier immigration processes, not having to tick ‘others’ in the ethnicity box on official documents, and not feeling that they have to choose one side of themselves over another. Those who opposed it feel that the creation of an official group would create rather than solve problems. Fitzpatrick felt that “the very terms ‘mixed race’ and ‘Eurasian’ are starting to sound weirdly old-fashioned to me – like they come from a time of pith helmets, segregated washrooms and eugenics essays.”

He continued: “Since Reunification – or what some people still call ‘the Handover’ – notions of Eurasian belonging and identity have changed in Hong Kong. Older generations passively waited to feel a sense of belonging here, and a lot of them never felt it. I often wonder if they were excluded from Hong Kong or if they ended up excluding themselves. Belonging is an active verb. You choose to belong somewhere, and behave accordingly. Culturally and historically, Hong Kong belongs just as much to us, and to its other established minorities, as it does the Chinese. We simply need to realise it and then get on with our lives. That is the attitude I see in Eurasians today, and I share it. I rejoice that what was once so life defining has become so irrelevant.”

Are you a first-generation Eurasian?

Tell us what you feel about your identity.

Contact Rachel Chen at rachel@eurasians.org

The Eurasian Face is available for purchase at the EA. \$35.

Contact Jacqueline Peeris at jacqueline@eurasians.org

“When I was a child, we were often called ‘mixed devils’ and the like”



Kirsteen Zimmern

Focusing on a different view

We ask author Kirsteen Zimmern what inspired her to publish *The Eurasian Face*

What inspired you to write – and photograph – this book? Was the outcome what you expected?

I started *The Eurasian Face* in 2007 or so and it was published December 2010. As I am a lawyer by profession, I only worked on the project in my spare time – resultantly, it took a while to complete!

I have always been fascinated by portraiture and as an amateur photographer I have always preferred taking photographs of people as opposed to landscapes or objects. Sometimes when I’m lucky, I look through the lens, press the shutter and in that moment I feel like I’ve

captured a person’s essence in entirety. It’s an amazing feeling.

How did you find your subjects?

Many of the Eurasians from Hong Kong were personally known to me or were friends of friends. We also put out an ad in a magazine and on my publisher’s website looking for volunteers. I found the Singaporean subjects by contacting the Eurasian Association. Facebook was also a valuable resource.

What were you looking for, artistically, in your subjects?

I didn’t really choose my subjects on the basis

of what or would not be artistic. All Eurasians were welcome. What I did try to do however was to try to vary the demographics for a better overall feel.

What were the most interesting things you discovered while researching the book?

I personally found the historical aspect of this study the most interesting. I loved hearing about how Eurasians were treated or perceived in the past – therefore it was generally the more mature subjects who held the most fascination for me. It was also interesting to find out about how the country in which a Eurasian lives really affects their identity as a Eurasian.

Adventurers' wet weekend



The view the kayakers will have on their marathon



The intrepid trio



The 1.6 km lap around Marina Bay

Three Singaporean athletes are planning a 24-hour kayaking marathon for charity

Three kayaking enthusiasts who have already undergone one epic challenge this year – navigating the entire Straits of Malacca from Johor to Phuket and back in January – are now set to test themselves again.

The trio, Andrew Chng and Calvin Palyama, who belong to the EA Dragons dragon boat team, and fellow kayaker Elsie Lim, plan collectively to paddle a minimum of 240 kilometres in 24 hours at One Fullerton and Marina Bay. Each member of the team

– which calls itself X2 – has set themselves a target of 80 kilometres and the cash they raise will go to ARC Children's Centre.

The team says it aims to obtain sponsorship from companies and individuals on a per kilometre basis. "With this format the team has set a target but will also have the capacity to raise more money by paddling over the target."

There will be at least one team member in the

water at any point in time and together they aim to complete 150 laps of 1.6 kilometres. They will be supported by teams of volunteers.

Their gruelling mission will take place between noon on Saturday 26 November and noon the next day.

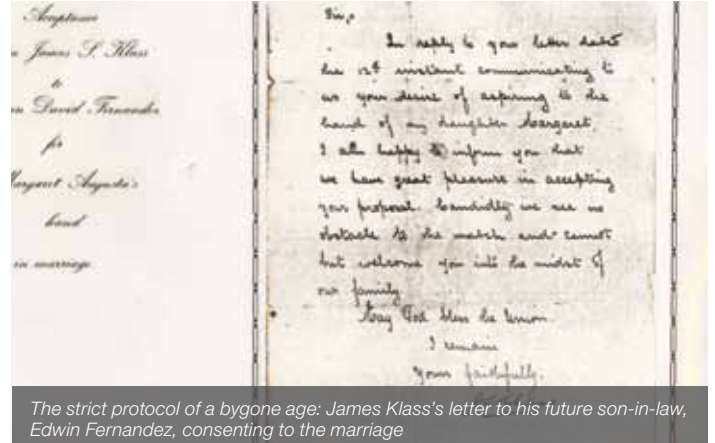
If you would like to support the team with a sponsorship pledge, please e-mail X2pedition@gmail.com – and turn up to cheer them on!

Giving life to Eurasian history

The family histories of Singapore's Eurasian community contain intriguing insights for historians of South-east Asia



The wedding of Edwin Fernandez and Margaret Klass in October 1913



The strict protocol of a bygone age: James Klass's letter to his future son-in-law, Edwin Fernandez, consenting to the marriage

Eurasian PhD student Kirsty Walker carries out much of her research in more convivial surroundings than many of her fellow academics.

Kirsty's doctoral research focuses on creole family histories in South-east Asia, and the history of the Eurasian community of Singapore forms a central part of her work.

"Graduate students tend to spend most of their time in libraries and archives, working their way through government papers, newspapers, journals and more. Though rewarding, research can often be a rather solitary experience," she says. "However, I am fortunate to be working on a period of history that falls within living memory. While researching in Singapore during the last year, I have had the opportunity to interview a number of Eurasians who shared with me their family stories, memories and photographs."

She adds: "Sometimes funny, often moving, and invariably helpful, these interviews have allowed me to trace some of the ways in which cultural exchange has shaped the lives of creole families in colonial Singapore."

Her interviewees could name ancestors from all over the world. Alongside Malacca Portuguese and Dutch descendants, she also found Filipinos, Anglo-Indians and others enmeshed in Singapore Eurasian family trees.

"It was no surprise, therefore, that the histories I encountered revealed huge cultural diversity," she says. "Some families

were entirely English-speaking; fathers and grandfathers worked in government departments or for commercial firms and were members of the SRC.

"For others, Kristang was the lingua franca, and families were run by indomitable matriarchs adorned in sarong kebaya, chewing betel nuts and turning to traditional Malay healers during illness. But most families seemed to lie somewhere in between, taking elements from both extremes, at different moments, and defying simplistic definitions of 'Eurasian'."

Her interviews captured some fascinating insights into the era, reflecting both the smaller and larger scale events of the times.

"There were moments when fragments of these family histories were rendered exceptionally vivid through the practised storytelling of my interviewees. Many were private, domestic moments, often inaccessible to historians, such as Frieda de Conceicao's childhood memory of surreptitiously chewing sireh alongside her Kristang-speaking grandmother as she played card games.

"In others, personal histories were governed by larger historical forces such as Patricia Boudville's dramatic description of her brother's bedraggled arrival in Kuala Lumpur, having escaped from Singapore during the Japanese invasion, riding on the metal coupling of a train.

"Yet others reveal the transnational network of Eurasian families, which left cultural traces

"There were moments when fragments of these family histories were rendered exceptionally vivid through the practised storytelling of my interviewees"

around the world. Though the scene failed to make the final cut, Barbara Rebello's appearance as an extra in the film *Bhowani Junction* in London in the 1950s, illustrates this in an extraordinary way," she says.

Alongside these narratives, inherited family photographs, letters and ephemera offer poignant material reminders of the events which shaped Eurasian family lives. Cedric Pereira's carefully-preserved formal letter written by his great-grandfather in 1912 to Edwin Fernandez, accepting his proposal of marriage to his daughter and welcoming him into the midst of their family, was one remarkable example.

"Indeed, the overwhelming impression I have taken away from all of these interviews is of a community where family mattered a great deal. It was a privilege to hear these family histories and I would like to thank all of my interviewees for their unfailing kindness and readiness to answer my numerous questions," says Kirsty.

Photograph and letter reproduced with the kind permission of Cedric Pereira

Red alert!

When it's time to party, nobody does it better than the Eurasians. So what better way to celebrate Singapore's 46th birthday than at the Eurasian Community House?

More than 100 members and guests – who including visitors from Indonesia, Australia and the UK – turned up to the Red & White National Day Celebration Lunch on 14 August, clad in patriotic red and white outfits.

Husband-and-wife team Chato and Qamal, aka The D'Highlights, entertained the crowd with an 'oldies but goodies' genre – and EA member Morraine Henson just couldn't resist joining Chato to belt out the classic *I Will Survive*.

And the live wire on the dance floor? None other than active senior

volunteer, Helen Joseph, who outshone younger guests.

Four sporting members and guests took part in the game 'A Minute to Win It' and a host of prizes – wrapped in red and white – were given away to the winners of the tombola, games and lucky draw.

Yvonne Pereira, chair of the Social Circle, which organised the event, says: "Everyone stood to attention to sing the national anthem, led by our MC members and members of the Social Circle, with their miniature Singapore flags in hand.

"Kudos to Quentin Pereira and his staff for the sumptuous buffet spread and excellent service! Special thanks to Liz Schurmann for her sponsorship of the attractively decorated centrepieces, and to everyone who supported our event."



Tanglin' with luck

Eighty-eight avid balut players, comprising 22 teams from throughout Singapore, tested their skill – and luck – at the third round of the 2011 Interclub Balut Competition when the EA hosted the event at the Singapore Recreation Club in July.

But 88 could be a lucky number for only four players – and it was Tanglin Club's Team 2 that took the honours on the night. In addition to the EA, SRC and Tanglin Club, the competition represented members of the Singapore Cricket Club, National University Society of Singapore and Indian Association.

EA's balut advisor, Yvonne Pereira says: "The EA is very grateful to the SRC for the use of their premises, for the invaluable expertise provided by their PR department staff in the running of the competition and the members of their balut section who acted as officials. And for the excellent food and service provided by their F&B department."

Philip Cordeiro, Therese Thompson, Nancy Fobrogo and Monica Leicester-Wong represented the EA at the competition. There are still two more rounds to go, which will be held at the NUSS and Tanglin Club, before the finals at the SCC.

The art of communication

You can never be sure what you're going to learn – or find yourself doing – when you attend a Eurasian Association Toastmasters Club event.

At its chapter meeting in July, the audience heard Emilie-Ann Oehlers present a speech on her Eurasian roots. Newly installed secretary Peter Rodrigues gave an insight into Singapore's water supply and the country's agreements with Malaysia. On a totally different track, Santhanaram Jayaram argued the need for a life coach to keep us focused on our personal goals – then persuaded the entire audience to stand up and proclaim that they loved themselves.

From making friends with yourself to making friends with others, it was the turn of Sam Wadia, vice president for membership, to take to the stage to demonstrate with impassioned language and gestures how to break the ice at networking events and turn any stranger into a friend.

But it was Michelle Ayn Tessensohn, the club's newly installed president, who placed the cherry on the cake of well executed speeches. Tales of her unexpected adventures in Thailand, made vivid by her powerful language and superb animations, won her the vote for Best Speaker at the meeting.

The audience was then challenged to give short, impromptu speeches on a variety of Table Topics prepared by club member Russell Bennett.



Those attending – who included guests EA President Bill Jansen and Toastmasters Division D Governor Robert Ng – were treated to refreshments from Quentin's and homemade chocolate cake. The meeting also witnessed the installation of the club's new executive committee by Area D2 Governor, Crispin Rodrigues.

The EA Toastmasters Club is recruiting new members. If you are interested in joining or would like to find out more about future events please visit www.eurasiantm.com or email info@eurasantm.com



Social Circle's Christmas Dinner & Dance

Saturday, 3 December 2011

7.00 pm to 11.30 pm

Multi-Purpose Hall

Price S\$40 Per Person
Performance by MSG
(Malcolm, Sebastian & Gerard)
Great Entertainment and Attractive Prizes

Closing and Payment Date: 13th November 2011

For Reservation and Enquiries

Please contact Bridget @ 6447 1578



THE EURASIAN ASSOCIATION, SINGAPORE
Eurasian Community House
139 Ceylon Road, Singapore 429744
Tel 6447 1578 Fax 6447 3189 www.eurasians.org

FAMILY CHRISTMAS CARNIVAL (FCC) & CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS TREAT (CCT)

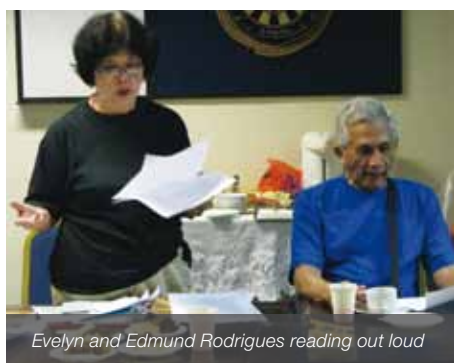
Date: Saturday, 10 December 2011
Time: 11.00am to 4.00pm (for the FCC)
1.00pm to 4.00pm (for the CCT)
Cost: \$20.00 per child for CCT (4-10 years)
Closing date: Saturday, 12 November 2011



A new chapter



Members of the book club



Evelyn and Edmund Rodrigues reading out loud



The READ@EA first birthday cake



EA president Bill Jansen with Elaine Ng, chief executive of the National Library Board

Members of READ@EA, the Eurasians' book club, celebrated its first anniversary in September with a gathering at the ECH which included Elaine Ng, chief executive of the National Library Board, and NLB officers Koh Lailin and Peter Lee. EA President Bill Jansen also attended.

Standing against a setting of a book display Nancy Fobrogo, who chairs the club, explained: "When I was invited to join the Senior Advisory Panel of the NLB I became aware of the various programmes available to engage seniors and to foster an

intergenerational bridge. READ! Singapore was the first project I got involved in, and so I started READ@EA."

She said the NLB had provided reading material and suggestions and Peter Lee had facilitated at its launch and at several meetings during the year.

The club had seen members who began at varying levels of interest in reading progress to become avid readers who could lead discussions. The compilation of stories in NLB publications *Roads Less Travelled* and

Transitions had helped to sustain members' interest, she added.

For the evening's discussion members analysed George Orwell's *Shooting an Elephant*. Afterwards Bill Jansen commented: "I enjoyed the evening. It really opened my eyes to what wonderful work the club is doing. The intellectual stimulus is exciting."

If you are interested in joining READ@EA, the club meets on the second Friday of each month at 7pm in the Platinum Lounge.

THE EURASIAN ASSOCIATION Golf Charity 2011

Calling all golfers! To help raise necessary funds for the EA, we will be hosting a charity golf tournament on 18 November 2011 at Warren Golf and Country Club. The guest-of-honour gracing the event will be Emeritus Senior

Minister Goh Chok Tong. Donation flights start from \$1,200, and the cost for individual players is \$300. Well wishers who don't wish to golf are most welcome to make a cash donation towards this fund raising drive.

Date: **Friday, 18 November 2011**
 Time: **1.00pm**
 Venue: **Warren Golf & Country Club**
 Guest-of-Honour: **Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong**

For more information, contact Lester Low at **6447 1578** or **lester@eurasians.org**



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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

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