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# Malaysia Association of Southern California



## Message From The President

Selamat Kawan Kawan,

**Relationship!!** What is in a relationship? Very important-lah. Relationships can be positive, happy and stress free or negative, troublesome and stressful. That means you live long or die young suffering for no reason.

I am not an expert and I don't claim to be one. BUT, I am orang tua-lah and I have eaten more salt than most of you have eaten rice and cross more bridges than you have walk roads.

**Betul-lah!** You are not seeing double. The above is a repeat performance. The reason being I am continuing on the topic of relationships and the above paragraphs are good enough to continue to be an effective introduction. Moreover, the second paragraph serves as a legal protection issue on professional liability.

Let us expand on the most important ingredient of a successful relationship - **LOVE**.



A relationship without love is built on sand and will soon fall. Love conquers all. First we must love ourselves before we can love others. Love is the most beautiful emotion in the world. All touched by love are always happy. True love will stop hurt and destruction. Love is not a sign of weakness. Love is a pillar of strength, power and can move rocks. All these are good cliches so let us not forget them.

There are many forms of love and they can all reside in one giving body, but the recipients will be different. But, the one most important type of love is unconditional love. God loves us unconditionally so let us learn to love others unconditionally.

**Unconditional love** is when we love someone or thing without condition as to what we expect in return. We love the person for what he/she is and accept him/her.

That does not mean that we agree with or accept everything they do. The bottom-line is I love you because you are my spouse/significant other, my son, a human being, a friend or whatever, but I disagree with a particular action such as smoking, lying, cheating, being selfish, and etc. The disagreement is on the action and not on the person/thing you love. You never say if you love me you will \_\_\_\_\_. Such conditions don't buy love; they only buy obedience till the victim can rebel and cut loose. Money, wealth and fame do not buy true love as they will disappear when the reason for it is gone.

**Tough love** is the most difficult type of love to give, especially among us Asians who are brought up to serve and provide. Tough love is love that is strong enough to stand up and say I love you but you have to go because your actions are destroying you and I refuse to be a clutch to you.

Let me give you an example which I encounter over and over again. A child has graduated from the best college but is still at home looking for a job, that is watching TV, surfing the internet, listening to music, etc. Years pass and the parents continue to provide all with the excuses. They say my poor child cannot find a high paying job befitting his/her education; how can I throw him/her out and make him/her homeless; he/she is not on drugs; the police have him/her pegged. Soon the child passes 30 and then 40. Alamak!! You are nothing but a clutch to disaster and guilty for nothing. You have a false sense of responsibility. Berhenti!! Throw the dead beat out NOW, way before he/she reaches 35 years.



**Try this for size.** A friend whom you are supporting for years keeps telling you how depressed she is, nothing is right (woe-be-me) and the world is against her, over and over with the same story. This happened to me several times.

*(Continues...next page)*

*(President's message...continues)*

After more that two years of the same story, same 2 cents bits, same plan to follow, still there is no sign of even a single step towards the positive. Here comes tough love. Ok! gal enough is enough. I don't want to hear a word more unless it is something new.

I am here to help you move on but it is apparent that you are stuck. Only you can un-stick yourself. And be prepared for such a reply: if you are my friend you will be with me as long as I need you? Answer, for how long and where are you going? I am your friend, that's why I stop being a clutch. This approach has worked over and over again but it is tough and you may lose a friend who storms out and dies.

Stop to smell the roses, be positive and continue to work for better relationships. Trust in the Lord and pray for guidance.

Love & Peace  
Mama Ean



**Selamat Hari Raya  
And  
Happy Deepavali**



### *MASC Members Share Festive Memories*

#### **Welcoming Everyone - by Sharin Harun:**

“When I was I little girl, Hari Raya and Chinese New Year were the two festivals I most looked forward to. The festivities of these two celebrations were joyful and abundant. Not to mention, they were financially beneficial too! As a child, one could really make some serious money on these two occasions when Duit Raya and Ang Pows were handed out.

For Hari Raya, my memories are filled with hectic preparations for the Raya morning itself where we would visit the elders and go to pray at the mosques. We also picked a weekend when we will be hosting our family's “Open House” day. This all had to be carefully thought out as we did not want to impede other families' Open Houses. My parents seemed to have a great system that they had developed over the years so that no two friends or families would have Open Houses at the same time.

I remember that the day before the Open House, my mom and dad would spend the whole day cooking and preparing all kinds of dishes to suit our guests' needs. Amongst others, we would make Beef Rendang for everyone, Chicken Rendang for our Hindu friends who do not eat beef and a non-traditional Ikan Bilis snack that my dad's Mat Salleh boss and other colleagues loved to have with cold beer. All these came with various sorts of ketupats, rice, Roti Jala and other tasty stuff.

On the day itself, people of all races and walks of life will come at various times of the day to celebrate Hari Raya with us. I can see now that it was a lot of work on my parents' part but the merriment and spirit of the season stayed with me till this day. My dad always said to me that Open Houses are a lot of work but they are worth every moment.

Living in the United States has given me a chance to look into myself and search for an identity that makes me who I am. But I want my children to have roots. I need them to understand what makes them who they are and that part of it comes from being half Malaysian. I need them to understand that they were not just a growing generation of Asian Americans but that specifically Malaysian Americans. To understand and share some of the values of their ancestors.

*(Continues...next page)*

*(Hari Raya memories...continues)*

My husband has passed down his Irish heritage to them with stories of Ireland, its leprechaun and cloverleaf, not to mention the spirit of Christmas and Santa Claus. While providing them with the Islamic heritage and education, I also ask myself what do I want to impart to my children that is uniquely Malaysian?

It is then that I realize the spirit of "open house" or Rumah Terbuka during festive occasions is uniquely Malaysian. This is what I will hand down to my children. As Ramadan draws closer, I will take some time and tell my children the stories of my life in Malaysia and of the happy times we had hosting and visiting during Open Houses. Hopefully, this Hari Raya I can continue the tradition my parents had had for so many years and hope one day my children too will carry on the Malaysian tradition.

To everyone who is reading this, be you Chinese, Indian, Mat Salleh, Melayu, Kadazan and anything in between; "Selamat Hari Raya dan Maaf Zahir Batin".



### **The Joy of Anticipation - By Sharifah Varnum:**

"Anticipation is a powerful feeling. As a child celebrating Hari Raya in my kampung, the eve of Hari Raya was an equally important day as the first day of Raya itself.

Each family stayed up late to cook the food for the next day. There was noise, activity and lights in every garden. In our garden, near the jambu tree, a fire was lit, and over it, my grandmother stirred a boiling pot of ketupat (rice dumplings). From our neighbor's yard, the aroma of chicken curry wafted from their pot and fire.

The children had put on our new pajamas, bought especially for Raya. The younger children would light up the sparklers, while the older ones would play with firecrackers. People strolled around the kampung greeting each other, or just to enjoy the atmosphere.

It was like a fairyland to me, and I did not want to go to sleep, hoping that the night would metamorphose into the next day, Hari Raya itself. But of course, I did eventually fall asleep, waking up on Raya morning, to all the cakes, cookies and duit raya that came along with it.

But somehow, the night before, with all the easy fellowship, the aromas and the glow of the fires, cast a special magic for me, and will always be a wonderful memory of Hari Raya that I carry within me wherever I go."



### **Thanksgiving Dinner**

It will soon be time for our annual MASC Thanksgiving Dinner again.

Join us for an evening of festive food including smoked turkey, chicken curry and kueh, as well as great company, when members have a chance to meet and mingle.

Watch the website [www.mascusa.com](http://www.mascusa.com) and your email for further details of the event.

### **Welcome New Members**

Chris Loo  
Yokey and Arman Tan  
Ben Koh  
Josephine Glaubenskleee  
Al Koh



# My Balik Kampung Story



*Our member Lee P Meach recalls how a trip home brings new sights for her young daughter, and life's insight for her.*

In August of 2006, I went back to Malaysia for a two-week visit. I make an effort to visit my folks at least bi-annually. Oh, I try to! No matter how far away we have traveled, no matter how long it has been since we left, there is no other place quite as special as our tanahair. I was born there and grew up there. And so it has in a great many ways shaped the person that I am today, for better or for worse.

This visit especially reminds me more of how time flies. I mean how it really flies. I still remember vividly the days just before I left Malaysia to go to college in the States. I held my cute little niece who was only a few years old then. Well, this little girl is a little girl no more. She is now in college. And who, instead, is the little girl in the family now? Who else but my very own daughter.

Speaking of my daughter, she enjoyed the experience as much as anyone could hope for someone who has to endure those unrelenting mosquitoes. Seriously. I kept checking the labels on the insect repellents to be sure that it is used to repel insects, not attract them. I told her that she just needed to eat more durians so that her blood and sweat smell the same as the rest of us and the mosquitoes will stop picking on her.

This visit served not just as a fun summer vacation for her but also a learning experience – for both of us. She asked questions about things that I took for granted. She asked questions of things that I thought were obvious. Questions such as: Why do they dress like that (women with tudungs)? Why do we have to pay to use the toilets (toilet papers are extra)? How come the kitties look so dirty and hungry (Is there a gentle way to describe “stray”)? Why did you move to America (Great question)? Don't you miss your mom (Oh, I miss her dearly)?

Questions like these make me ponder about who we are and the life we choose to live. I believe Malaysians are one of its kind. Malaysians are special because we speak multiple languages. Malaysians are resilient because we know how tough life can get. Malaysians are tolerant and harmonious people because we come from a community of diverse ethnicity. Malaysians are compassionate because we put great value on our families and friends. Malaysians thrive in this Land of the Free.

Or, as my daughter aptly puts it, Malaysians like to eat, she says. How true! With hawkers stalls at every corner, we eat just about anything at anywhere at anytime. Now THAT is the true Malaysian spirit. There is nothing like starting your morning with freshly-cooked roti canai and teh tarik, a variety of nasi and noodles to choose from for lunch and dinner, and rojak, sotong salad, ais kacang and chendol for whenever. And the list goes on and on. And oh, how I miss the late suppers of satay and curried cockles. Not forgetting, of course, our local fruits which are to die for. And there is only one word to describe our fruits: Durian, durian, durian!!

Malaysia will forever hold a special place in our hearts. We will visit often. But America is our home now. So, until the next time we balik kampung, salam sejahtera to all of you.



The tropics hold new wonders.



Lee, her daughter and family at Bukit Larut.

# Past Events

## Camping Tales

Read the reviews written by our young members

### A Camping Day at Tehachapi by Yun-Ju Chen (4th grade)

August 19 2006: It was camping day and mostly everyone from the MASC club were getting ready for the long trip. It takes about 3 hours to get from Southern California to Tehachapi. That day was a Saturday. It was a very tiring drive but finally everyone got there.

Most of the adults were setting up the tents while the children were playing. Then when it was almost dinner time, we drove to a huge and beautiful lake. Everyone brought food and we ate there. After we ate, the adults were chatting next to the peaceful waters while the children were playing at the fun park. When everyone was full, we drove back to the what was then the dark campground.

It was getting colder so we built a campfire. The kids talked and played with each other (as usual) while the adults were chatting and gazing at the shimmering night sky. Some adults went to the club where they can dance and sing all they want. Slowly, most people took a shower, brushed their teeth, and went to sleep.

Now there were only 5 kids and 3 adults. The camp fire was still going, so why waste the comfortable warmth? So we kept the fire going and chatted. We stayed up for about 1 more hour and then we went to sleep.

The next day, we ate breakfast and then we went hiking to see the beautiful nature and explore through the mountains. Six kids went hiking and the others were adults. We had to bring lots of water for our thirstiness. We hiked for about 1 hour but some adults rested on a rock and waited for the others. Auntie Ean said if you ever see a deer in a light, it will just freeze there and don't know what to do. We hiked for a little more and we saw a rock full of tiny and red ladybugs! Some people took pictures. The kids and some adults sang "SHE'LL BE COMING 'ROUND THE MOUNTAINS" when we ended our hiking. Now it was time to go back. The adults were very tired.

After the hike, it was lunch time. We ate and then it was time to say good-bye to the campsite. But that doesn't mean it was time to say good-bye to our friends. We then went to Whiting Center and rested. You can play lots of games there for FREE! There's pool, table soccer, ping-pong and more! That place was 50% games, 50% comfortable, and 100% fantastic!

After there, we went to a Thai Temple and ate Thailand food. There were lots of food and fruits. Some people went to the fair and some went home. That was the end of our trip.

I hope those members who didn't go to Tehachapi before will join us in the next camping trip. I'm sure you'll enjoy the wonderful nature of Tehachapi. See you next year!

Written by : Yun-Ju Chen (4th grade)

Written on : 9/1/2006

*(More reviews...next page)*



## Tehachapi Camping Written by Kelly Soong

Tehachapi Camping was very fun and it was my first time camping too. Even though it was only 2 days 1 night but it brought me and my family a lot of joy, happiness, fun and it also let me met a lot of new friends and MASC members.

During the Camping we barbecue near the lake and there are some ducks. Some kids feed them bread. The lake is nice and pretty. There are horse riding, swimming pool, tennis court, golfing, bar and lots to do during the camping at the Whitting Center. The Whitting Center is a place for kids and adults to play ping pong, swim and there is also a basketball court. There are lots of fun stuff you can do there. My favorite part during camping was during midnight : playing, hanging out and talking to the friends and members around the campfire! I also learn how to roast mashmallows, and quickly learned that next time when camping out, it is better to bring lots and lots of blankets or sleeping bags! It was really cold during the night. During sleep time, one of my tentmate (Gabrie) and I looked at each other and we both couldn't sleep because it was so cold!

Oh, and the super thing was I learned how to play "POOL", and won at my first time playing. I like the hiking; we sang, we jumped, we ran, we fell, and we posed for lots of pictures. It was hot and sticky but it was really fun. Most of the kids were in the front and the adults were at the back, lol. I like hiking.

The camping area is a very wonderful place to camp, and it has been a relaxing vacation.

I really like it, and I really enjoy it.

I really love this camping.



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## Three Exciting Things I Did Written by : Vicky Y. Mak (3rd grade)

At night, I slept late because I was talking with my friends. I felt like I really wanted to sleep but I can't help talking to my friends.

Next morning, we went to the Equestrian Center. That's where all the horses live. The sheriffs kept the horses safe. I pat a lot of horses. They're so cute and beautiful.

That afternoon, my 2 friends, their dad, my mom and I packed our stuff and left before the rodeo. For about 2 hours we drove from Techachapi to Monterey Park where I'm finally free to meet my cousins.







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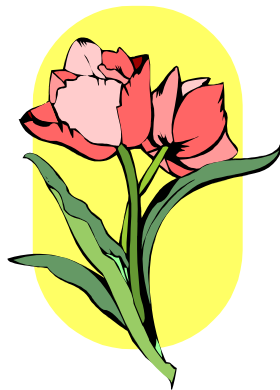
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