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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. My experience is world wide and from all walks of life and all ethnic groups. As they say I have been there and done that. (I learn from the many times that I have loaned an ear and contributed my 2 cents bit.)

The most important components of successful, positive relationship are Love, Respect, Acceptance, Communication and Humor. These are the centers for all types of relationships: parent/child, significant/ non-significant other, boss/employee, kawan/kawan and what have you. It takes two to tango and likewise it takes two to make a successful positive 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. If you are often angry with the next person, find out why and not who. (Maybe you have not learn to love yourself and how to show unconditional love.) Love is the most beautiful emotions 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. Have you heard of tough love?

RESPECT ® ®

Do you respect yourself? Do you respect other's needs, thoughts and thinking? Someone who respects others does not impose themselves and their opinions on others. They agree to disagree. They use words such as 'we' instead of 'you' and 'I'.

ACCEPTANCE



We all have an inner circle of control and an outer. The inner circle is your circle where you have control and the outer is every thing outside you inner circle. You have no control of things, activities and happenings in the outer circle. If you try to control the outer circle you will just wither from stress and frustration. Respect others, agree to disagree and stop trying to control your outer circle. This way you will reduce stress and have a more successful relationship.

All you can do is give your two cents bit, pray for the best and go away. Humility is more effective than arrogance. Understanding is more important than not understanding. Compassion is very important. If you encounter stress or frustration check to see if you are out of your inner circle. If you are, get back in immediately.

COMMUNICATION © ©

Without communication, it is like two trains running on different tracks and heading down opposite directions. Communications is not just talking, shouting, dominating, bullying or just carrying on oblivious of the other person. You cannot communicate if all you want is to make a point and win. No one wins if only one side wins. But, everyone wins if it is a win-win situation. Effective communication is listening not only to words but also to body language; answer and state your position. Body language is most important. Do not take silence to mean understanding, hearing or agreeing. People will communicate with you if you allow them to, if you show interest and you are willing to listen. Remember, there are several different and equally valid points of view which are dependent on time, environment, person and background. One way traffic is no communication.

HUMOR



Without this I will surely die. It takes less effort to smile or laugh. Studies have shown that laughing is the best medicine for almost everything in our life. We become healthier because we reduce stress and all the bad effects of stress. It also decreases harmful chemicals and hormones and increases the good ones in our body. *(Continues next page)*

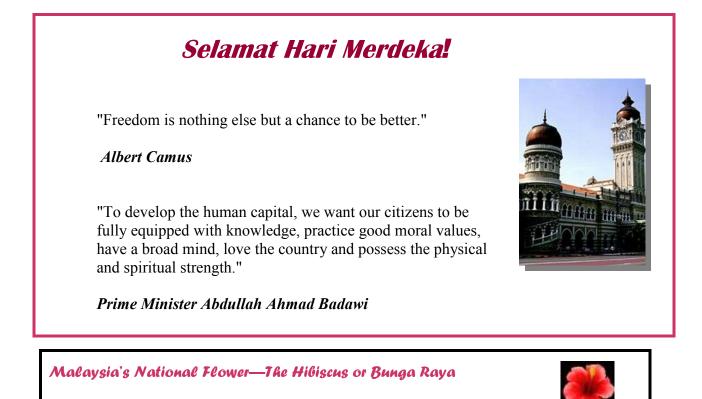
(President's message continued)

If you frown at a person she will frown back. If you are angry, you will receive an angry response. If you raise your voice, this will encourage the other person to do so too. On the other hand if you smile or laugh the response will be smiles and laughter even though no one knows what we are laughing about. Have you tried the terrible childhood trick of pointing your finger at someone and laugh? Soon you will have a collection of people pointing their fingers at the other person and laughing without knowing why. Ai-yah!! Susah-lah!!

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



- The hibiscus rosa sinensis is aptly humble, found throughout the country, yet striking and strong. It was chosen to be the national flower by the first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman.
- The five petals of the hibiscus symbolize the Rukunegara (The Five Principles of Nationhood), and the red color symbolizes courage.
- In 2005, a campaign was launched in Malaysia to reiterate and promote the hibiscus as the national flower. It was proposed that that each household have at least one plant.
- In Malaysia, the hibiscus is a hardy plant, and flowers all year round. Here, in the US, the hibiscus is a perennial, blooming in summer. It requires full sun, but is still an easy to care plant, giving lots of beauty and memories of home!

What It Means to be a Malaysian



Our member Sharin Harun reflects on the intertwining values of self and nation

ometimes change comes to you when you least expect it. Life comes to you at such speed that you could either roll with it or get bulldozed by it, leaving you eating dust in the winds of change.

As a young country, just like the proverbial teen going through her turbulent hormone-driven years, Malaysia is going through her share of fits and starts of growth. Trouble and issues seem rife everywhere and difficulties abound. Change is eminent. That is part and parcel of a young nation. The only issue is how do we adapt to these changes while still staying true to our values.

What are our values? What makes each of us truly a Malaysian? In my opinion, the spirit that makes us have "Rumah Terbuka" or "Open House" during our festivals is really what makes us special.

To me, this is the true spirit of Malaysian hospitality. It takes a special kind of people to be able to say; "I'll invite everyone I know, regardless or race, religion or class to come to my house, share my special day and enjoy my food."

Malaysian hospitality encompasses our values as a host - in our manners towards our guests, in our effort to share our festivities and to get our guests to mingle and get to know each other.

Of late special values have been pushed aside as religious and racial issues are being used for political gain. It would be so easy for us to push aside something as integral as this in our eagerness to push for a point. It is equally easy especially for us here, who do not live in the very folds of the Malaysian society, to also be swept by the powerful emotional tides that it evokes in us and try to walk away from it all.

But then what have we become? What will our values be? What defines us as Malaysians?

You would ask: "Why is this so important in my life here, in the US?" I believe these values define us a person and in turn it will help us mold our children and the future generation who will have to combine two cultures in their world. In this fast paced society, without definite values that will ground them, these children will be swept away without a clear picture of who they are and what makes them the person they have become.

Let these younger generation learn the true spirit of hospitality as a part of their Malaysian ancestral identity. Have them carry that spirit with pride.

As for Malaysia, her road to maturity will be a bumpy one. However, let us hope that she will not make too many mistakes and learn to adjust and strive once again towards cultural, racial and religious harmony.

Malaysia is my country. US is my home. I appreciate the openness of the American way. But when it comes to dealing with those around me, my Malaysian spirit of hospitality plays a key role.

With this I am able to roll with the changes that surround me and still be true to what makes me who I am. Etiquette, modesty and especially the spirit.

I am a Malaysian. What does this mean to me? It brings to me the values.

> Open House spirit Gentility

Malaysian Artists Performed in Los Angeles

Two Malaysians artists were in Los Angeles recently to participate in the prestigious Asia Pacific Performance Exchange Fellowship (APPEX) program for 2006. They were Joseph Gonzales, one of the most dedicated choreographers and dance educators in Malaysia, and Kamrul Hussin, a young practitioner of the wayang kulit and Kelantanese arts.

The APPEX program, organized by the UCLA Center for Intercultural Performance in the Department of World Arts and Culture, enables artists from Asia and America to share their crafts and collaborate works that combine tradition and innovation.

Dance for the present and future

Joseph is Head of Dance at the Akademi Seni Kebangsaan, and under his leadership, the dance department at the Akademi Seni Kebangsaan has grown considerably. Joseph believes that it is crucial for his students to understand and love Malaysia's traditional dances, and this would in turn enrich their innovations in modern dance.

I have been to several performances staged by his students in Kuala Lumpur, and it was always a pleasure to watch the young people perform traditional dances, and also to see their sheer joy in dancing. Joseph's choreographed works have also been presented in many countries including Japan, Singapore, Australia and Belgium.

Joseph said that the experience at UCLA was a unique one where performers from different countries shared not only their knowledge and experience, but also personal stories and cultural lore that shaped them.

The artists from Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, India and the US lived and worked together for six intensive weeks, and collaborated on various pieces, melding traditional arts with the modern, East and West.

Preserving cultural heritage

Kamrul is known for his mastery of traditional percussions, and has worked with many well-known musical names in Malaysia such as Ramli Sarip, S.M. Salim and the Malaysia Philharmonic Orchestra.





Kamrul...drums master (Photos credit: UCLA)

Joseph...dance expert

Kamrul is also a wayang kulit practitioner, and his goal is to master as many aspects of his Kelantanese heritage as possible including silat (Malay art of self defence) and traditional vocals. He also lectures, and only 28, he can be considered as one of the few young artists holding the torch for the next generation.

He grew up in Pasir Mas, Kelantan, fascinated by the traditional culture and healing rituals all around him. "To be an artist, your soul is the most is the important attribute, " said Kamrul.

"I feel it is important that we introduce our young people to our traditional music, in whatever setting, including mixing it with modern music. Once they know and love it, then they will care enough to protect and nurture it."

He said that the experience in UCLA was really enriching as it was about creating and performing purely for the sake and love of culture.

At home in this world

As part of the program, the performers presented their works to the public in July and August. In the collaborative performance of the artists from the various countries, there was an insightful piece where they sought to tell the stories behind traditional songs. Kamrul sang a haunting folk melody in Kelantanese dialect. In another piece, Gonzales acted in a mixed performance that revolved around the stereotypes and perceptions that bombard immigrants and people of color in the US. *(continues next page)*

(Malaysian Artists...continued)

An American artist played the seruling beautifully "almost like a Malay"; jazz moved to the same beat as a classical Indian dancer. Taiko, gendang, gamelan fused in rhythm.

The title of the performance was "At Home in this World?" and at least for the two hours in the darkened auditorium, most the of the audience felt that we did.

What can we do

At the same time, the Malaysian artists feel that there is still much to be done. Joseph, in particular, is committed to putting Malaysian culture on the world map.

"I find that many Malaysians do not know or understand the various aspects of our cultural heritage, "Joseph explained. "I have had people, even those in authority, said that our cultural items are too slow or too intricate, and they prefer to see a touristy version of our culture.

"If you do not know and understand your own culture, then you are not able to love it.

"I travel a great deal related to dance and culture. Another thing that I have noticed is that people overseas, especially in western countries, are aware of, or know, the culture and dances of Indonesia, Thailand and India, but often they are not aware of the culture of Malaysia.

"In actual fact, we have a great, diverse cultural heritage, and we need to promote it. Malaysians living overseas can play a big role in helping us promote our culture." - Sharifah Varnum

Note: Malaysian artists are often part of the APPEX program at UCLA. We will monitor this event next year, and we will inform our members in advance so that we can all go to support and interact with the cream of our cultural talent.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August : Merdeka Day Picnic

October: Moon Cake Festival

November: Thanksgiving Dinner

December: New Year's Eve Party

UPCOMING MAKAN MAKAN

Sept 9 2006: Ramayani Iindonesian Bistro

All events are subject to change. Please check website and email for latest updates.

Welcome New MASC Members

Samuel and Lalaine Sim Leelee Loney Robert and Salina Chan Kooi Ying Yuen Bobby Chua and Teresa Dao



Member's Profile

The newsletter is starting a regular column where we feature a profile of our diverse members. We begin the series with our intrepid president, Ean.

Pek Ean Chong

Born: 1-11-1942 in Jelebu Seremban. Grew up and lived in Ulu Gombak, Kuala Lumpur.

Education: Methodist Girls & also Boys School (class of 1960);

University of Malaysia Degrees: Bachelor of Science (Hons); Diploma in Education and Master of Agriculture. Currently, a second year law student.

Occupation in Malaysia: Adult and high school teacher at 15 years old, Division 1 officer with the Agriculture Dept and Researcher/tutor at UM and Serdang College.

Current Occupation: Data Information Coordinator with the Los Angeles Sheriff's Dept. Been with the LA County since 1974.

Misfit child, born leader

Ean had to face some challenging times even as she just entered the world. Ean was born during the war, and she and her mother had to evacuate the hospital the day after coming to this world. " There was hardly had any milk for me. Instead I was fed tapioca paste with sugar. My elder sister and I caught diphtheria and she died and I made it. Born tough. If I can make it you can too."

As a child, Ean felt like a total misfit. At school, she "gained the honor" of getting unsatisfactory results. In a class of 35, her position was close to the bottom three. The frequent comments from the adults were, "what are we going to do with Pek Ean?"



Ean...always on the go.

"I was a royal pain. Unfortunately, no one understood me except me. I was way before the times and place because I asked difficult questions and refused to follow the norm without understanding it and seeing the value of it," Ean recalls.

"I was the only one who knew that I was a born leader. So I was never given the chance and was not very popular. So, you can see I had a difficult childhood but I made it with flying colors because I had God, respect and faith in myself. Although I have to admit that there were three occasions that I nearly did not make it because I was very depressed and had no one to turn too.

"But, hey, I made it and it strengthens my belief in positive thinking. I am here to support all, so you have someone to turn to and not suffer alone, like I did earlier in my life. So tolong-lah, reach out to others."

Why did I come to America?

"Remember I was a misfit as a minor and it did not get any better as an adult. All my boyfriends except my late spouse were orang putehs. Often I had more than one serious one at any one time. I could tell that the local boys admired me, but were intimidated by me, so they made up stories about me and them," Ean explains.

She also did not fare very well with the local government, agencies or authorities. She asked too many questions and did not toe the company line at all cost. "When something makes sense I am the first to fight for it. But I need to ask questions when I don't understand and cannot see clearly," she adds.

Ean used her positive attitude to forge a generally happy life in Malaysia. She became involved in various activities, and was one of the first three women to scale Mount Kinabalu to Low's Peak. There was even an article on the pioneering group in an Asian magazine.

"All these made me decide to get away from it all to a place where I can use my God given talents. I came to America, and I have no regrets." (Continues next page)

(Ean's profile...continued)

How did I come to America?

"What do you think, slow boat from China?," Ean says, in her usual way of injecting humor. "No! I flew, though the airplane ticket then were rather expensive.

"I had a research scholarship to Nebraska State to do my PhD; and a boyfriend in Canada (I had an immigrant visa) who held all my EPF savings, not much just over \$2 grand. I was visiting my other boyfriend in Los Angeles - who then turned from boyfriend to spouse. My spouse was 20 years older and we were married for 25 years till he died . How that happened is quite another story. "

Making it

"People often ask me how did I survive the earlier days without friends, and sometimes low on funds. I consider myself a tremendous success today because I am very positive, active, happy, have the ability to help many people and be financially stable.

"I hope to continue to be a friend and an inspiration to all."

Many interests

Ean is a world traveler and has holidayed in all the continents. She loves ethnic gournet food, and will eat just about any thing tasty and authentic in any part of the world. "My claim to fame is eating the witchery worm/grub in Australia."

She also loves the outdoors: has completed four marathon; participates in bungee jumping, sky diving, martial arts, weights lifting bike race - tour de Arizona.

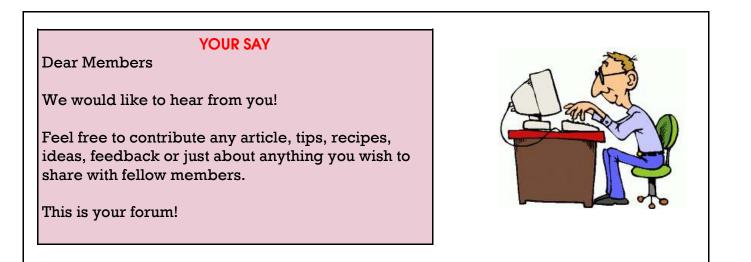
"I also love to sing and dance, I have won silver at the California Senior Olympics in waltz, swing and foxtrot, and have competed in the Ms Senior America. I am also involved in all sorts of volunteer work including as Court Appointed Special Advocate and volunteer groups such as the Senior Center, Sister City, 5K races," Ean adds. "I aspire to be in local politics or to be on TV.I support all sorts of people, at work and not at work; I enjoy organizing and planning all sorts of social activities with all kinds of groups."

Best advice I have ever received: Be happy and positive.

Favorite way to relax or unwind: Listen to music and/or dance.

Favorite Malaysia dish: None as they are all delicious if prepared right - true Malaysian style.

Dream vacation: None as they are all exciting and different, or I will not go and spend my well earned money.



Past Events

Shahnawaz Buffet Gets Five Star!

Sunday, July 16, 2006 :

Thirty members of MASC's Gourmet Club "Makan Makan" had their monthly luncheon at Shahnawaz Buffet in Lakewood. Established in 1987 as the southern California branch of a 40 year old Milpitas institution, Shahnawaz Buffet serves 100% halal Pakistani food, made fresh daily from delicious time-tested recipes. It is the biggest buffet of its kind in Los Angeles County, well-worth the commute for the weekend lunch buffet.

Although some dishes had similar names as dishes one would find in Indian restaurants (lamb korma, tandoori chicken, naan, bhindi masala, etc), Pakistani food is different from most regional Indian cuisines. For one thing, you will find some beef dishes at the buffet. Dip Shahnawaz' savory fresh baked naan into haleem, a slow cooked dish made of wheat, beef, lentils and spices, reminiscent of pea soup or soft dhal. Nehari, beef shanks, beg for more naan to sop up every drop of garlicky sauce. If that leaves you asking, "Where's the beef?", dig into their highly addictive beef biryani.

Unlike Indian biryani dishes, where all ingredients are simmered together in ghee and/or yogurt, Pakistani biryani is non-dairy, prepared in layers of rice, meat, and spices, then baked on low heat in a covered dish. In this way, every kernel of rice and shred of meat is strongly infused with garlic, onion, ginger, coriander, bay leaves, and a touch of cloves, cinnamon, and cardamom. A bit of saffron gives the biryani an orange glow. A sprinkle of turmeric, another orange spice, also colors the tandoori chicken. Imagine, eating tandoori chicken without red food coloring, and yet realizing as you chew, "This is what it is supposed to taste like"—moist, tender, with a hint of smoke and cumin.

Lamb is the meat of choice in Pakistan. I had never seen lamb prepared so many different ways at one buffet—lamb korma, lamb kabab, and lamb paya—succulent lamb's feet braised in a rich, spicy sauce. Islamic dietary laws do not forbid combination of meat and dairy (provided that the meat is zabihah, slaughtered according to Islamic rites), but most meat dishes at Shahnawaz Buffet do not include sour cream, yogurt, or ghee. Fewer calories, more flavor! One piece of lamb kabab, so soft it melts in your mouth, is a garlic lover's delight. Vegetarians will not walk away from the buffet disappointed. Bhindi masala, a dish of smoky sliced okra, bell peppers, onion, and tomato, impressed us with its slight crispness. Who said okra had to be cooked to a soggy, slimy consistency, so often found in curry dishes around the world? Bhagare baigan, eggplant (known as brinjal to us Malaysians) stuffed with a paste of roasted coconut, sesame, peanuts, tamarind, and ginger-garlic paste, is also a must-try. Although I craved bhindi masala all night and day after eating my share, the favorite veggie dish at the buffet among MASC members had to be Mirch Ka Salan, huge jalapeño peppers yellow inside and out with turmeric, in a sauce made of sesame, peanuts, coconut, cumin, ginger, tamarind, and more chilies, sprinkled with chopped coriander.

Leave room for the sweet, authentic desserts, accompanied by milky, peppery chai masala! No tired gulab jamun here. I highly recommend gajar ka halwa: ground almonds and carrot cooked with honey and saffron, flavored with pistachios, raisins, cashews, and cardamom. Their kheer (rice pudding) is the thickest and creamiest you will ever find.

Want more? Shahnawaz has a take-out menu featuring all items mentioned in this review, as well as catering for all occasions. Items served at the buffet may vary from day to day. For a complete list of dishes served, go to http://www.shahnawazrestaurant.com. The owners and employees are friendly and happy to answer any questions you may have about their food, hours of operation, or simply how to find the way there. The buffet, just a few blocks away from Little India, is located in a strip mall that includes a Pakistani grocery store, a boutique, and mosque.



Photo credit: Wee Tee

Go MASC Rowing Team !

Sunday, July 9, 2006 :

2006 marked the 34th year of the Lotus Festival in Echo Park, a popular Los Angeles tradition. Every year people from all walks of life enjoy this free all-Asian cultural festival of singing, dancing, food and vendors that lasts for two whole days. Been there, done that, have you? You might have learned all the Hawaiian dances, and you might have mastered Filipino stick fighting, but you really weren't there unless you showed MASC spirit in the Dragon Boat Race.

One thing about Malaysians...we are a competitive bunch with great "semangat". Eight MASC members formed a rowing team and eagerly took to the water in a dragon boat during the Lotus Festival. Our rival dragon boat team "St. Bart's A-Go-Go" never showed up, but MASC displayed its muscle power and "semangat muhibbah". Former Navy Seal Steve Kaplan coached the team before and during rowing, and if we train hard we will have great potential to win. Our one and only boatswain CK Lim took us down a straight line and back. Considering that we are not Olympians, we didn't have such a bad showing. MASC President Ean reported that our finishing time of 7 min. 3 sec. was one minute faster than last year's time, and way above average compared to the other teams from the two day competition. MASC supporters... see you in 2007.

Members of the MASC Rowing Team are :

- * CK Lim Boatswain
- * Linda Winters Drummer
- * Lee Choo
- * Rachel Wexelbaum
- * Alice Lin
- * Steve Kaplan
- * Richard Woon
- * Wayne Choo



Training sessions and formation of a cheerleading squad are being discussed.

MASC at "Americafest 2006

Tuesday, July 4, 2006 :

Members of the Malaysian Association of Southern California celebrated the **Fourth of July** at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena. Bearing a sign advertising MASC's appearance at the event, we received some puzzled looks from ushers, but our enthusiastic singing and clapping during national anthems assured everyone that we are true red white and blue Americans.

At "Americafest 2006," the Pasadena Pops played Independence Day standards--Sousa marches and military anthems--as well as "West Side Story" and "Raiders of the Lost Ark" themes. Director Rachael Worby infused old music with new passion and spirit, and those with binoculars praised her energy and "take charge" attitude as conductor. Young guest pianists "The 5 Browns" played pieces by Leonard Bernstein and Irving Berlin. Curly haired Kevin Brown stole the show, donning leather biker's gloves for a smoking piece inspired by Jerry Lee Lewis.

After the concert came what everyone eagerly waited for--a firework display put on by the Souza family, advertised as "the biggest fireworks display in California". A fifth-generation fireworks family, the Souzas simultaneously put on similar Fourth of July fireworks displays in Boston, New York, and other major cities across the United States. In case the audience had forgotten, a video explaining the significance of the Fourth of July played in coordination with the fireworks. the video included snippets of speeches from Franklin D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, and George W. Bush promoting freedom and democracy around the world...but Martin Luther King Jr.'s appearance on the video screen received a standing ovation. His commandment--"Let our children not be judged by the color of their skin but the content of their character"--is one of the central values of 21st century American democracy.

A big welcome to new members Keng Hong, David and family, who joined us to celebrate American freedom. We hope to see you next time to makan makan and enjoy upcoming MASC events. - All Past Events articles by Rachel Wexelbaum



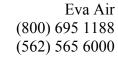
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