

THE BREEZE

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St. Michael's Association

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Letter from the Editor

2011 will be remembered for many things—unfortunately not many of them could be described as positive. Japan lived in the shadows of the March 11 East Japan earthquake, tsunami that followed that devastated the >500km coastal region of Tohoku, and the accident at the 1st Fukushima nuclear power station, which turned out to be the worst nuclear accident since the Chernobyl accident in 1986. Turning our attention to the economy, the news was not much better, with the Eurozone crisis threatening to undo the many years of work by European economists and politicians, threatening to destabilize the world economy yet again. Domestically too, the news surrounding Olympus was a shocking reminder that organized fraud could take place for years even in the better-run Japanese companies.

Turning our attention to even bigger picture, we now understand that our children will have to live with even bigger uncertainties than our generation, with the population explosion resulting in even greater demand to the earth's resources, such as food production and energy needs. And all of these needs will have to be achieved with minimal impact to the climate.

What would the current students of St. Michael's do when faced with these imminent challenges? Ignore and hope that all will turn out well? Hope that other people will work out the problems for themselves? I think not.

It is our responsibility to ensure that the children of St. Michael's have the resources to face these challenging times ahead of them with confidence. Being able to form their views in an unbiased manner, taking in all the resources available to them. Being able to express their views with courage and leadership. Being able to stand up for what they believe is right. But at the same time understand that compromises could be made.

In other words, it is our responsibility to ensure the children of St. Michael's can flourish in the challenges that lies ahead of them in the years to come. Fortunately, the governance structure of the school currently in place ensures the school will continue to provide excellent education to our children, continuing the tradition that started many years before the official founding of the school more than 65 years ago by Miss Lea and Bishop Yashiro. Your continued involvement in the school as past students, teachers, and friends of St. Michael's will help us fortify our reputation.

Keyji Johnsen, Editor

Miss Lea 40th Anniversary Weekend

In the run-up to the Miss Lea 40th Anniversary weekend, we received a message from Mr. Alexander Ho (Hideo Ka) wishing us the best at the Miss Lea 40th Anniversary Weekend. We also received articles from Unryu Haku and Helen McPherson.

Last October, I had the honour and pleasure to be the Master-of Ceremonies for Miss Leonora E. Lee's 40th Memorial Dinner at the Kobe Club. The Memorial Dinner was organized by the St. Michael's Association whose members are the alumni from the St. Michael's International School and the English Language School.

The Committee members were Mr. Komei Kure, Ms. Anvi Shah and Ms. Cindy Taru under the great leadership of Ms. Tazu Makino. Mrs Xue-Feng Liang, office manager, liaised with the Kobe Club.

Bishop Yutaka Nakamura, Mr. Satoru Hamada and the school board members, former teachers, alumni, teachers and staff gathered to pay tribute to our beloved Miss Lea who was not only a great missionary but a great educator who still lives in our hearts after all these years.

Miss Yoshiko Hirose who had been associated with St. Michael's as the Deputy Head for approximately 50 years she shared her recollections of Miss Lea with us. And, Miss Hirose was my Infants Class teacher.

Then, Mr. Michael Bhagwandas, a St. Michael's graduate who has taught the English Language School, shared his memories of Miss Lea with us. He also managed the Tape Library from 1978 to 2010. During that time, he gave workshops in Braille to the ELS students. His wife, Michiko-san, a dedicated school employee, has supported him all the way.

Then, Bishop Yutaka Nakamura of the Kobe Diocese said the prayers followed by a toast and speech from Mr. Satoru Hamada.

Mr. Bill & Mrs. Fumiko Ferguson came all the way from the UK and Mrs. Ferguson. Ms Itoh came from Tokyo.

Seiichiro Kaku spoke of his episodes with Miss Lea. So did a few more others.

It was interesting to hear all these people talk about their Miss Lea with love and affection as if she was still with us today. These are indeed all

signs of loyalty and royalty – the true spirit of the St. Michael's family founded on the teachings of Miss Lea.

As mentioned before, Miss Lea was a true missionary and educator. Did you know that she was also a risk-taker? She had students right out of high school do 'student teaching'. I did it for 2 years. So did my classmate, Seiichiro Kaku, and a few others. I taught the middle school and the English Language School. Towards the end of my 2nd year of my student teaching at St. Michael's, Miss Lea called me in and said, 'Unryu, you have to go to college or you will regret it one day'. She called up Sophia University in Tokyo and took an appointment with the Dean for me. On top of that, she gave me train money to go to Tokyo.

And, Reverend Yasuhide Kato found me a place in Tokyo to stay free-of-charge. My senpai, Shinyoku Sai, took me around to look for jobs. Miss Yoshiko Takagi, my St. Michael's 1st Grade teacher happened to be working at St. Mary's International School and she got me a job there. I never dreamt that I would work at St. Mary's for 44 years until my mandatory retirement. In short, Miss Lea and the St. Michael's family connected me to the outside world and made me what I am today.

On another personal side, Miss Lea helped my brother get into Momoyama University. I asked her if she had connections with the admissions people. She just asked for my brother's application number and helped him with his university acceptance.

Likewise, she helped many people including Ms. Ryoko Sasaki, to study in England.

She was even involved in what we would now call 'money laundering'. Ms Noriko Suzuki told me that Miss Lea helped her find a school and lodging in England. In those days, you could hardly send yen abroad and there was a strict limitation on the amount of yen that you can change to foreign currencies. The British pound was around 1,000 yen at that time. The Church in England used to send money to Japan to the Nihon Seikokai for the missionary work. So Miss Lea and Bishop Yashiro arranged with England not to send the money to Japan but to give it to Noriko Suzuki in England. And Noriko-san's father paid the Seikokai back in yen.

I guess we can say that she worked on a 'mission' and not on a 'commission'.

Most of us have not heard Miss Lea speak in Japanese but I heard that it was super. I was told that when she met the royal family of Japan, she used the very formal Japanese that only educated and aristocrats would use. So there are many aspects we did not know.

Now that I am in my 60's, I wish Miss Lea could have been around in my 30's, 40's, 50's and 60's. Our hearts are with Miss Lea and we are most grateful for our education at St. Michael's.

Unryu Haku

It is impossible to work at St. Michael's International School and be unaware of the legacy of Ms Lea. Having passed her portrait daily each day I worked there she was as familiar to me as the grandparents whose pictures I saw every day as a child and young adult who had shaped my life but whom I had never met.

I have always been fully aware of the school's history, growing up from the devastation of the war and have always respected the challenges that must have presented themselves to Ms Lea as a teacher in those times. I have heard tales of enterprise and knew that the education was second to none despite the shortage of materials at the time and have often wondered if I could have worked as hard and as well as she did with such dedication then.

I returned from her memorial dinner with a much greater feeling of her times as leader of the school being much closer in time than before and with a very real understanding of the respect she had instilled in the pupils and teachers around her whilst remaining humane and humourous. As we ate the beautiful dinner I watched her ex-pupils interact and laugh with each other and it was easy to see them as the boys and girls they had been and the enjoyment they had reaped whilst attending the school. Despite the long, long time and the generations of children that have passed through since they were there the interaction between these old friends and peers made all the years fall away.

On what could have been a very formal occasion, formality was stripped away by those that had studied under or worked with Ms Lea speaking of their memories of her which were often funny, and made her feel very much alive in the room. The memories and delivery of the stories told proved that she had helped to shape charming, caring, articulate people who went on to be productive in the world. Personally, having worked with him and having a deep respect for his teaching and achievements, I loved Mr. Bhagwandas' story of dragging a pane of glass on a crowded train because he had kicked a ball through one at the school and it would have been hard to replace. Of course, the second pane broke on the way! He painted a clear picture of Mike the young boy trying to please his teacher and made clear the warm relationships that Ms Lea managed to establish.

The memorial dinner was a well-organised and happy celebration of Ms Lea. It also linked the generations of people that have contributed to the

memories of the school and to listen to stories and memories that shouldn't disappear because they are still so much a part of the unique place that is St. Michael's International School.

Such events are good for seeing old friends, making new ones and meeting legends like Ms Yang and Ms Hirose. It was an evening I will cherish.

Helen McPherson

Donations Received with Thanks

We are grateful for the generous donation from our friends:

| | | |
|---------------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|
| Tape Library | 200,000 yen | Courtesy of Mr. Bhagwandas |
| George Barantseff | 21,000 yen | On behalf of Mrs. Lydia Barantseff |
| Mike & Michiko Bhagwandas | 10,000 yen | |
| Mitsuko Numata | 10,000 yen | (as flowers) |
| Tazu Makino | 10,000 yen | (as flowers) |

We received generous donation from on behalf of Ms. Lydia Barantseff. We found a photo of Mrs Barantseff in our archives.



In addition to above donations, we are grateful to the donation from the Takahashi family of undisclosed amount.

Interview with a Staff

The population of UK is set to increase to 70 million by 2027 (BBC News, Oct. 26, 2011). And 2/3 of this increase will be due to immigration. Sally Tong, the 6th year teacher who joined us in August 2011, represents this new face of the UK, with Chinese ancestry but born in Norwich. Sally has been kind enough answer some questions:

About SMIS/KOBE/JAPAN

1. Did you know about Kobe before this job came up? If so, what did you know about the city?
I knew about the Earthquake and Kobe beef, apart from that, I knew very little.
2. Why were you interested in Kobe/Japan/SMIS?
As a teenager, I read books set in Japan and it sounded really interesting, and I wanted to learn Japanese and understand Japanese culture.
3. How is Kobe treating you so far?
Very well, food choice is excellent and shopping is good too!
4. Please highlight the differences you noticed between your previous schools and SMIS?
SMIS is much smaller, so you get to know all children.
5. How much Japanese have you picked up?
Basics so far, but have started lessons, so hopefully will learn more and Japan is a perfect place to learn
6. Have you been able to travel around Japan? Do you already have a favorite destination?
No not travelled extensively, just Osaka, Kyoto and Okinawa and need more time to explore.
7. Favorite Japanese food?
Love most Japanese food, as it is quite similar to chinese food. I love udon, sushi and red beans ...great bakeries here too!
8. Favorite eatery in Kobe?
Not sure.....so many...

About UK

9. What do you miss about the UK?
Branston pickle...and my friends and family...and my old school!

10. What about UK are you glad that you left behind?
....grey skies in the winter.

About yourself

11. Tell us a bit about your childhood? You seem to have a mixed culture/cross culture background like many students and teachers in SMIS?
My parents are from Hong Kong and I was born in Norwich. I love Norwich - it is a mini hub!

12. Do you have a hobby? Do you play sports? Do you watch sports?
I like to try new things, I have previously enjoyed kick boxing, spinning and hope to continue Yoga as a hobby. I like to watch tennis and athletics.

13. Future plans—where do you plan to be and what do you intend to do in 10 years' time?
OOOh...still learning and still travelling I hope!

14. If you are given 2 months holiday to do whatever you wish, where will you go and what will you do?
Travel! Where to? Not sure...anyway will do!

Forthcoming Events

- March 10, 2012 (Sat.) Alumni party &
St. Michael's Association General Meeting
April 18, 2012 (Wed.) Meeting of St. Michael's Association
April 28, 2012 (Sat.) School Bazaar

Meetings of St. Michael's Association is open to all who has been involved in St. Michael's in one way or other—International School students, English Language School students, or teachers. We publish The Breeze, organize alumni events, and generally keep in regular touch with the past students and teachers of St. Michael's.

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