Against All Odds

---

p.5 Fengshui Tips for 2012

p.6 Launch of UniSIM’s Master of Community Leadership and Social Development Programme

p.7 Special Deals from Sentosa 4D Magix & Four Seasons Durian / Win UniSIM Business Card Holder

p.8 One-Day Johor Bahru Premium Outlets Shopping Trip & Meet The Avengers this May!
Dear Alumni,

By now, all of you would already be into the swing of life for 2012! Amidst the many predictions of a challenging and difficult year ahead, let us not forget to look for that silver lining. As a UniSIM alumnus who had gone through the struggles and challenges of studying for your degree as a working adult, you are part of a special group. You have a special tenacity that will help you overcome any obstacle that may come your way.

Whether in good times or bad, there is nothing more reassuring than having a supportive and encouraging network of family, friends and associates. And this is what the UniSIM alumni community can offer you. In 2012, we will be organising more events and activities for you to connect with fellow alumni. In addition, for some of these events, we will be inviting our current students to join in, tapping on UniSIM's unique advantage of having an immediate pool of students and alumni who have valuable working experience, knowledge and contacts to share. How active and successful this network can be will depend on you and your active participation. So, come forward and join in! Visit the alumni portal regularly for information and updates. Better still, be an alumni volunteer and have fun organising some of these events.

2011 had been an active year for us in the Alumni Relations Department, supported by many dedicated alumni volunteers. We look forward to engaging you more in 2012 and beyond. Wishing you a progressive year ahead!

Best Wishes,

Evelyn Chong
Director
Office of Student and Alumni Relations

---

Against all odds

Despite being visually impaired since young, alumna Lim Lee Lee has achieved much including obtaining her degree. Lee Lee shares with the Newsletter Editorial Group her growing up years, student life at the then SIM-OUUK and her ambition.

Hi Lee Lee. Thanks for taking time to talk to us. Perhaps you could first share how you became visually impaired?

This blindness was caused by a condition called Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP). It is a condition which occurs at the time of birth where the nerves in the eyes develop inadequately. For me, the doctors then suspected it was caused by strong light and heat waves coming from the incubator.
It was a condition not uncommon for babies born prematurely between 1960s and early 1970s as we were placed in incubators.

How did you overcome the initial difficulty, both psychologically and physically?

My childhood was difficult as I was rather inquisitive. I wanted to do everything my cousins were doing, from learning to hold a pencil, to writing and playing outdoor games. When I noticed the stark differences between me and them, I asked my caregivers why I was born into this world without sight.

Studying in the Singapore School for the Visually Handicapped, now renamed Lighthouse, was a challenge too. As I was not among the brightest, I was often punished. I learnt “what life is” since the age of 10. My parents wanted me to gain independence at a young age as they were busy making ends meet. They enrolled me in the residential programme at the school. There, we learnt independent living skills like personal hygiene and domestic science.

Competition was keen in those days too. Because of my condition, I had an inferiority complex for more than 10 years. It was during my college days that my form teacher encouraged me to speak up. She told me that I needed to present my viewpoint so that the class could benefit. This boosted my confidence. Ever since I was young, I was often labelled as never being good at anything. “Useless”, “Hopeless” and “Good-for-nothing” were words used to describe me. Even my Primary 6 form teacher did not have the confidence that I could pass the PSLE. Hence, I was overjoyed during the convocation.

These hard knocks have taught me a lesson; if I don’t stand up for myself, someone else will trample me. Once I was able to cross the hurdle psychologically, the physical didn’t matter anymore. To me, it has always been a ‘mind over matter’ and “just do it” approach for the opportunity may never come by again.

Alumna Ms Lim Lee Lee, BA English Language and Literature, Class of 2001

Continue on page 3…
Why did you enrol for an English Language course?

My love for the beautiful language, the quest for knowledge and future work prospects were the key driving forces in my pursuit of a tertiary education in the English Language course.

What were the challenges you faced during your studies? How did you overcome them?

Getting access to course materials was my main challenge. Although the course materials were provided, these were in hard copies, which meant I couldn’t read them.

I got in touch with the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) in UK for assistance. I had met them at an exhibition in Singapore the year before I enrolled for the Open University Degree Programme (OUDP) at SIM. They put me in touch with the Disabled Peoples’ Office from the Open University, United Kingdom (OUUK), the first open university that SIM had collaborated with. The OUUK Disabled Peoples’ Office would loan me the course materials which had been recorded. They also partnered with the RNIB to loan me the taped version of the novels for the modules created by OUUK.

For the Singapore-developed curriculum, SIM would provide my course materials in soft copy, I would record the lessons and make notes for my own revision. The staff, lecturers, tutors and course mates also played a large part in helping me complete the journey. The lecturers and tutors allowed me to tape class lessons and they would always encourage me to participate in the discussions.

At times, they would provide additional materials like phonetic symbols to facilitate my understanding. To ensure I could produce the symbols for assignments and exams, they further provided me a list of keystroke combinations so that I could present my views more adequately.

Could you please share with us what a typical classroom lesson was like for you? How did you sit for the examinations?

Apart from recording the lectures and tutorials, my lecturers would also lend me their presentation materials so that I could copy them at home. They would also email me soft copies to allow me access to these materials. My course mates would interject intermittently during lessons, keeping me updated on the goings-ons.

SIM would liaise with OUUK for my examination questions to be written in Braille. I would then submit my answers in soft copy. After I had completed my answers, the staff would print and save my scripts to be sent to OUUK for marking.

Is commuting from home to work and to school a difficult task for you?

I must say that the Singapore government has been making a conscientious effort to construct disabled-friendly amenities since early 2000 and we’re taking gradual steps to become an all-inclusive nation. Initially, commuting to school was a challenge. As I became more familiar with the surroundings, I became more confident of myself and experience less difficulties.

On weekdays, I would take the school bus from the bus interchange and travel home using the public bus service. During my term holidays, I would board the MRT, which meant that I needed to exercise a lot more caution. Other than contending with the morning rush hour, I needed to take extra care not to walk into fixtures.

In your opinion, what characteristic or personality trait has helped you persevere through the years of studies?

The desire to pursue my goal, my tenacity, and a ‘never quit’ approach propelled me to complete the degree at UniSIM.

What was your most memorable / precious moment in the course of your studies?

The knowledge gained and the friendships and camaraderie with my course mates built along the course of my journey. Capping it all was my conviction and parents’ pride, which are memories I treasure even till today.

We know that you maintain a blog. Could you share more about it with us?

Blogging allows my friends to keep in touch with me. It gives me the freedom to express on social issues – to give voice to the issues faced by the visually challenged – and to demonstrate that we are not, in any way, inferior to our able-bodied counterparts.

Please tell us about your current work. What are some of the challenges you face, and the rewards you reap?

I am holding two part-time jobs at the moment. The first is on public relations-related work with the Lobangclub.com. This is a new start-up that allows consumers to compare prices for goods before hitting the stores. It is an iPhone App which can be downloaded for free. The job scope includes blogging on consumer issues and procuring publicity for the company in various media platforms. My second job is at Dialogue in the Dark, a social enterprise located at Ngee Ann Polytechnic. I work as a guide, taking visitors on a one-hour exhibition in the dark. The objective is to help normal people experience what it is like being blind and to educate visitors about the visually impaired in Singapore.

Both jobs bring with them different kinds of rewards. It is difficult to quantify. I enjoy my work and every day is a learning journey for me.

Have you ever had any unpleasant experiences with any member of the public?

This is part-and-parcel of getting around Singapore. Unpleasantness can come in the forms of remarks, insisting I must follow them without first finding out where I am heading to. I also experience people walking up to me and pulling me either by the cane or dragging me by the arm, as if I was dumb too.

Have you ever experienced any act of kindness and compassion from a member of the public that really touches your heart still?

Sure I have. I have experienced many incidences of kindness. For example, not too long ago, a six-year-old girl approached me while I was transiting between the Circle Line and the North-South Line. She offered to walk me to the platform and even accompany me to my destination.

While walking, she asked many questions which really touched me. A young child with such a big heart! I hope that her innocence will continue to touch the lives of others. While all these were going on, I questioned the young child: “How come you are out alone?” She replied that her domestic helper was with her. In fact, I knew this all along.

Was there a moment in your life that you felt like giving up? If there was, how did you get over it?

Many a time, I really felt like giving up. However, I know I can live only once. I wish to leave a positive legacy for others to emulate. My motto or slogan “Life is an art piece for one to be beautiful, why not decorate it?” exemplifies my life. If I were to expire, I leave with no regrets.

If there is a dream that you wish to still pursue, what would it be?

The main reason for pursuing the OUUK was my ambition of becoming a journalist. However, I was disappointed time and again by the rejections of my applications. I hope that Singapore-based employers will employ people with disabilities based on our qualifications and not turn us down because of our disabilities. I aspire to be an established writer in the days to come.
**Forex Talk**

For the majority, forex trading happens primarily when one changes currency for his holiday needs. With limited trade knowledge beyond the consumer’s perspective, the market resembles the pre-founding days of Singapore until her potential was uncovered by Sir Stamford Raffles.

On Feb 17, 80 alumni and guests attended an introductory seminar on forex trading by Mr Mario Singh, a successful international forex expert. He also writes articles on trading for the local newspaper My Paper and other overseas investment magazines and has appeared numerous times on popular business news channel, CNBC, to give his expert opinions.

Mario pointed out that forex trading is the largest financial market in the world with US$4.3 trillion being transacted each day. Unlike stocks and shares, forex trading can be carried out at any time of the day from Mondays to Fridays without the restriction of the closing bell.

Using daily news feeds, he demonstrated their usefulness as guides to aid individuals in their trading decisions without scrutinising complex financial statistics. Mario also gave tips on how traders can capitalise in all market situations - bullish or bearish.

To the speaker, his profession is not solely profit-driven. It has also taught him valuable life lessons. “I may not be too well-educated but I am able to engage people with great minds on CNBC. This is because I work hard and strive for success,” said Mario.

The seminar participants found the event insightful and which motivated them to trade. Kellyn, from the class of 2008, said: “This session is informative and it gave me deep insights on forex trading. I plan to trade after this (session) because its flexible schedule will not impact the time I spend with my kids.”

Ending the session, Mario offered a piece of advice to everyone: “As you get better, things get easier. So don’t wish things were easier, wish that you were better.”
A Walk with Helen Ong into Fengshui 2012

Welcome to the year of the Deep Sea Dragon (also known as 玄辰年 [xuán chén nián]). In ancient times, the Chinese believed that dragons either lived amongst the clouds or were rulers of the sea. The Western world believed that dragons were able to fly and breathe fire. In both the Eastern and Western cultures, the mystical dragon symbolises authority, strength and resilience.

Ms Helen Ong, a renowned Metaphysics consultant, was cordially invited by UniSIM again to share her predictions and insights with alumni and their guests on Jan 7.

According to Helen, the sea dragon reigns over 2012 and brings with it strong water characteristics. People may become temperamental and irational in making decisions as water controls emotions. With this in mind, Helen’s advice for the year was “lie low, be humble and follow the orders of people in authority”. Helen also envisaged the presence of emerging powers of authority and power struggles in 2012.

Despite challenges posed by the strong water element in 2012, the presence of the wood element favours industries in the development sectors, such as training and education. Helen suggested that the adjustment of one’s wardrobe may aid in harnessing the water element. According to her, solid green coloured clothes and clothing with vertical stripes, floral or printed patterns would help to bring out the wood element.

Helen further shared that the best fengshui and current wealth location this year would be facing the West. The top three performers of the Chinese zodiac signs are the Pig, Rooster and Horse while those born in the year of the Dragon and Dog are advised to lie low and be prudent in all their undertakings. The remaining Chinese zodiacs would generally enjoy a fairly good year ahead.

Ms Elizabeth Chan, a marketing graduate from the Class of 2011, remarked: “Helen has given fengshui a very new and fresh perspective. I liked her flexible but yet complete and interesting approach to fengshui. I also enjoyed her sharing and how she integrated fengshui into modern living.”

Also a jovial author who has published a new book titled ‘Chinese Astrology & Feng Shui Forecast 2012’, Helen thoughtfully penned each of her readers’ wishes for their loved ones during a book signing session. Full sales proceeds of Helen’s books sold at UniSIM’s Fengshui Talk 2012 will go to children homes in Sri Lanka.

Good luck to everybody in 2012!

Alumni Volunteers Gather with UniSIM Senior Management

On Feb 3, alumni volunteers gathered once again with UniSIM’s senior management in an annual New Year dinner, where Professor Cheong Hee Kiat, UniSIM’s President, took the opportunity to thank the volunteers for the hard work put in last year. Since the launch of the Alumni Volunteer Programme in 2008, the Volunteer Group has remained strong and connected with the University. Many of the volunteers had also forged and developed new friendships amongst themselves.
UniSIM Honours Former Patron  
Mr S R Nathan

On Jan 18, UniSIM hosted an appreciation lunch for former Singapore President Mr S R Nathan at Raffles Town Club to thank him for his dedication and support as the first Patron of UniSIM from 2006 to 2011.

During the appreciation lunch, Mr Nathan enjoyed musical performances put up by Mr Felix Lim, Ms Rachel Kang and Mr Syed Raizal, a faculty member, student and alumnus respectively. Associate Professor Neelam Aggarwal, Director, Teaching and Learning Centre, also recited a poem she had composed titled “Why we are here: Felicitations and Celebrations” and presented Mr Nathan with a framed memento of it. In addition, Mr Nathan was presented with a video and photo montage capturing his journey with UniSIM.

The Perfect Pitch

The School of Arts and Social Sciences hosted a media forum, The Perfect Pitch, on Jan 14 for media veterans to share their exciting experiences in the vibrant media industry. More than 100 students and alumni turned up for the event. The speakers include Mr André Ahchak, supervising editor of VOXSPORTS; Mr Jimmy Tay, a widely-respected public relations expert and founder of Tate Anzur; and Mr Neil Humphreys, a prominent British humour columnist-author who has written best-selling books about Singapore. The audience was invited to fire an unlimited range of questions on topics concerning the press, public relations and publishing. These included a day in the life of a media practitioner, and how journalists and public relations consultants work to inform, educate and entertain the public.

Launch of UniSIM’s Master of Community Leadership and Social Development Programme and Signing of MOU with People’s Association

UniSIM’s newest graduate programme, the Master of Community Leadership and Social Development (MCLSD), was officially launched on Feb 18 at the National Community Leadership Institute. The Guest of Honour for the event, attended by over 200 guests, was Senior Minister of State for Information, Communications and the Arts, and Environment and Water Resources, Ms Grace Fu. The launch also coincided with an MOU signing between UniSIM and the People’s Association (PA), with Professor Cheong Hee Kiat, President of UniSIM and Mr Yam Ah Mee, Chief Executive Director of the PA, as signatories.

Under the MOU, the PA will partner UniSIM in running the MCLSD, which is a multi-disciplinary programme that focuses on practical knowledge and skills required for sound leadership and an in-depth understanding of the social development of Singapore. Following the launch and MOU signing, a learning festival themed “Towards an Inclusive Society” was held, with breakout sessions by Professor Tan Ngori Tiong, Dean of UniSIM’s School of Human Development and Social Services, and Associate Professor Tan Khee Giap from the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. The final highlight of the day was a discussion forum that involved the two professors, along with Mr Yam Ah Mee and Ms Jean Tan, Executive Director of the Singapore International Foundation.
Contest Giveaways!

We are giving away 20 UniSIM business card holders. Simply SMS the answers to the two questions below to 9113 6795 in the following format:

Newsletter <space> I/C number <space> Email address <space> Answers for Q1 and Q2

Example: Newsletter 51234567X alumni@unisim.edu.sg Answers for Q1 and Q2

Questions

1. Name the establishment that was set up in Ngee Ann Polytechnic to educate the public on the visually impaired.

2. Name an alumni event held in February.

Closing Date: April 17, 2012

For advertising enquiries, call 6248 5782 or email alumni@unisim.edu.sg
**One-Day Johor Bahru**
**Premium Outlets Shopping Tour**

**Date**  
April 28, 2012

**Venue**  
UniSIM Campus, SIM HQ Blk A, Clementi Road (Tour will start and end here)

**Time**  
6:30am – Register at SIM HQ Blk A, Clementi Road  
7:00am – Coach departs for Johor  
8:30am – Breakfast at Gelang Patah Rest Stop (own expense)  
9:30am – Begin your shopping and bargaining day!  
  - Layang Layang - Fresh chips and snacks  
  - Jusco Tebrau City - Shopping Mall in Johor Bahru  
  - Lunch at Local Chinese Restaurant - Sin Hui Bin Restaurant (Halal)  
  - Yong Seng Confectionary Shop - Sweets, Chocolates, Cakes, Swiss Rolls, Biscuits and more  
  - Johor Premium Outlets  
4:00pm – Coach departs for Singapore  
6:00pm – Estimated time of arrival at SIM HQ Blk A, Clementi Road  

*Above timings are just estimations and will depend on conditions including the traffic.*

**Fee**  
Alumni - $25 per person  
Alumni Guest - $39 per person  
Child (4 to 11 year-old) - $37 per person  
* Each alumni is allowed to purchase a maximum of two tickets only.  
* Tour fare inclusive of lunch.  
* UniSIM alumni should present their NRIC on event day. Guests who are not accompanied by UniSIM alumni will not be allowed to join the tour.*

**Registration**  
www.unisim.edu.sg/alumniportal

---

**Unwind Saturday – THE AVENGERS**

**Movie**  
The Avengers

**Date**  
May 5, 2012

**Venue**  
Golden Village, GV Max Theatre, VivoCity

**Time**  
6:00pm to 7:00pm Registration & Tea Reception  
7:00pm to 9:30pm Movie Screening (Final screening time is subject to Golden Village’s confirmation)

**Fee**  
$7 for UniSIM alumni, $7 for guest  
Comes with free popcorn combo and tea reception  
(Each alumni is entitled to purchase a maximum of two tickets)

**Registration**  
www.unisim.edu.sg/alumniportal

---

Connecting UniSIM is published by SIM University’s Alumni Relations Department  
535A Clementi Road Singapore 599490  
6248 9215 • alumni@unisim.edu.sg • www.unisim.edu.sg/alumni

**NEWSLETTER EDITORIAL GROUP**  
**Advisor**  
Vera Kui  
Communications Manager, SIM University

**Assistant Editor**  
Ambrose Tay  
Gregory Athasaraj Francis

**Secretary**  
Charles Lee  
Denise Germaine Ong

**Members**  
Angie Ng  
Brandon Chew  
Kell Ong  
Kong Giek Suan  
Li Shwei  
Edmund Sim  
Lim Keng Song  
Melinda Kaur  
Tan Wei Boon  
Yong Yu Chin

Information is accurate at time of printing and is subject to change without prior notice.