

# Literary & Debating SOCIETY



A PUBLICATION OF ST ANDREW'S JUNIOR COLLEGE / JUNE 2021

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# *Interview with our Principal:* **Mr Tham Kine Thong**

By Tricia Teong and Sam Nicole Elizabeth (20A06)



## **Who Is Mr Tham?**

**Q: Starting off with a simple question, could you tell us a bit about yourself?**

**Mr Tham:** About myself, I studied in St. Andrew's from the junior school right up to the junior college. In fact, I was at this [Junior College] site as a secondary school student. After graduating, I was a relief teacher here with students two years younger than me. Then I took on various postings, and now I'm back in SAJC again. It has been like a 'homecoming' for me. Even some of my teachers are still around! It feels like a family.

**Q: Speaking of schooling, what was your fondest memory as a student?**

**Mr Tham:** When I was in SAJC, I was a student leader in Saints for Christ (SFC). Before ChrySALis, the CCA leaders, aided by the teachers, organised a leadership camp at NUS. It was great fun and made for good interactions across CCAs. When it ended, we had a night of celebration. If you're interested, go back to the 1992 school magazine and you'll find photos from that night! I'm the most nerdy looking one there.

**Q: So, now that we know a bit of your history and the fun times you had as a student, what do you like to do currently in your free time?**

**Mr Tham:** Spending time with my family is a precious joy to me. I've recently gotten a dog, and trust me, it requires a lot of effort trying to get it used to our routine. That's been occupying my time. But what I enjoy doing is going for runs, then maybe I'll indulge in eating and my guilty pleasures after.

**Q: Diving deeper now, what would you say is the value that's most important to you?**

**Mr Tham:** The value that very much guided me is the notion of humility – to recognise that I can only achieve whatever I've worked for with the help and support of others. Firstly, I recognise that all that I have is from God, which I'm grateful for. I'm also grateful for my family's support, as well as my friends and colleagues who have worked with me throughout the years. It should never be about me and what I can do, but about being thankful and working with everybody. It's a recognition that all of this is much more than myself.

**I'd like to prepare students for the future, and at the same time, encourage them to be a blessing to those around them...**



LEADERS' NIGHT 8<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 1992



<< Can you  
guess who  
our principal is?



## *The Principal Experience*

**Q: So bringing it back to school, what do you like most about being a principal?**

**Mr Tham:** I was sent this meme. There was a little kid who said, "I want to grow up to be a principal because he only eats doughnuts and reads announcements!" In SAJC, I don't even need to read the announcements. I just eat doughnuts! Jokes aside, the best part is working with people. It's a daily reminder that we're working with lives, and not just the lives of students, but the lives of the teachers and my colleagues as well. It's an honour. Everyone represents a unique story. To hear their story, to be part of their story, to experience their story... I think that is a blessing indeed.

**Q: Are there any challenges you face in your role?**

**Mr Tham:** It's the same thing – we're working with lives here, and the challenge is that ultimately, the school cannot solve every issue. We do what we can and draw whatever resources we have but sometimes, we can only do our best and commit it to God, and trust that down the road things will work out.

**Q: All in all, how would you describe your first five months in college?**

**Mr Tham:** I was in the [MOE] Headquarters for seven years, so there was a lot for me to pick up again. I'm reminded that I need to constantly learn from various people – students, colleagues and different partners, and so I try to connect with them. Before the school year

started, Mr Roland Lee helped me organise a chat with some students. That was a good starting point. It gave me great insight into the students' lives and what they're going through. I appreciated that and look forward to having more engagement sessions. Essentially, I'm still in the process of learning. That's how I'd describe my first few months.

## *The Man With A Plan*

**Q: Looking ahead, what plans do you have for the college?**

**Mr Tham:** I find that JC is an interesting stage of a student's life. Students are at a crossroad, having to start aiming for specific courses and figuring out career paths. I hope to help students in these two years to explore their interests and aspirations, to find their own dream, and thereafter, to give them the foundation to pursue their dreams. Growing academically, but also in terms of character and skill sets; these things are important to help students lay that foundation.

**Q: What are your hopes for our students?**

**Mr Tham:** In my twelve years at SA, there has been one story that left a deep impression on me. This area used to be a swamp and it would flood whenever it rained. The villagers needed somewhere to take refuge, and since the junior and secondary school used to be situated on a hill, the villagers would gather there and the students would help them. It's such a fascinating and wonderful story to me. That's why St. Andrew's is very much associated with Potong Pasir, and how it gives back to the community. So I'd like to prepare students for the future, and at the same time, encourage them to be a blessing to those around them.



# Open House 2021

By **Cozette Neo** (20A06)  
and **Lyssa Sorongon** (20S19)

"I would not change anything about the process and what happened on the day itself," exclaimed Gabrielle Ho, the Vice-President of the 43rd Student Council. This sentiment was echoed by Chris Akash, the Student Councillor in-charge-of Online Engagement, when asked about the 2021 Open House. This year's Open House was indeed one of a kind, as for the first time ever, the school hall was empty and the throngs of prospective students were nowhere to be found. Instead of the echoes of seniors' shouting "Welcome to SA!" and "Make SAJC your home!" reverberating down the corridors, there was only silence. In view of COVID-19, all activities were shifted online. While this presented a few obstacles, Open House was still a massive success!

Teachers and students worked hand-in-hand to create a new microsite devoted to giving prospective students a glimpse of life in SA, showcasing the school's facilities, its people and the culture of the College. Speaking for the Council, Chris elaborated, "our whole aim was to showcase the SA spirit, of being one big village with many different people, including the students, the staff and of course our non-teaching staff like our mentors."

Not surprising, showcasing the SA spirit in all its glory through a screen would prove to be challenging. With the core of SA's identity bring rooted in its sense of community, the Councillors conveyed this very unity through creative virtual means. This included a Telegram channel providing student testimonials. On Instagram we highlighted the seniors having fun playing inter-house games during Saints' Homecoming Day. We even had livestreams promoting the different CCAs.

Yet, the process of making Open House a success proved to be a rocky road fraught with bumps and hurdles for the seniors and teachers to overcome. As this was largely a virtual event, inevitably, network issues arose, causing the video quality of the CCA Runway livestream to drop drastically, compromising the viewing experience. However, the Student Councillors were quick to rectify the issue. This was no easy feat, considering the immense pressure the Council faced as hundreds of students watched their soon-to-be leaders handle problems in real time. Commendably, the Councillors persevered, bringing about a smooth Open House experience for all. All this amidst carrying out the Saints' Homecoming on the same day, attesting to the strength of the Saints' spirit.

Beyond the Councillors, there were also many students from a myriad of backgrounds who contributed to the Open House's success. Some students, who attended an internal videography workshop, produced fantastic promotional videos featuring many different aspects, such as the weekly chapel sessions, school achievements, and showcasing our campus grounds. This drew plenty of interest from the future students of SA. One of these videos - "SAJC Through Your Eyes"- was filmed in the first-person perspective of a JC1 student following their seniors on a school tour, adding a more personal touch amidst the multitude of virtual activities. For JC1 student Isaac Lee from 21S13, this video piqued his interest and helped him see the school in a new light.

Similar videos were also filmed by the CCAs to appeal to these prospective students. Without the ability to set up an interactive booth like previous years, the CCAs struggled to convey the same energy as past years. With little to no contact with the prospective JC1 students, it was difficult to gauge their reactions and the effectiveness of their interests. Mr Peh, the Teacher-in-Charge of Badminton, believes that the virtual nature of the CCAs proved to be a new test of the students' mettle as they faced the daunting task of capturing the essence of their CCAs within a short video and a brief writeup.

For the performing arts CCAs such as the SA Dance Society, unlike a live performance, every detail and slight movement would be extremely noticeable when filmed, meaning that their choreography had to be flawless. Members also had to find filming angles and perspectives that complemented their choreography, while grappling with technical issues like lighting and colour grading. Furthermore, there were anxieties over whether they could also top the brilliant performances put up by past seniors throughout the years. Yet, much like many other CCAs, the seniors came together and pulled through to put on a stunning display of their talents and skills, wowing everyone. Victor, the Vice-President of the Dance Society, added, "I saw all the takes and reruns, and looking at them made me feel proud because all our efforts had been worth the end result."

Every member of the SA family was instrumental in the collective effort to bring glory to the College. Even the alumni were involved! During the Live Panel on Student Life & Experiences, Saints past and present, shared about their time in SA. The panellists were selected from various batches and from different CCAs. Many offered their differing JC experiences to provide a well-rounded perspective of student life. Sam Nicole Elizabeth, the Panel Discussion Moderator, believed that having students who had been through the trials and tribulations of JC life share their stories made it more real and relatable for viewers. The discussion inspired an overwhelming number of live questions from enthusiastic viewers, which was especially heartening to see. "It reminded me a lot of my own eagerness and excitement during the 2020 Open House," added Nicole. "You can never take away the fervour of bright-eyed students taking the next step towards their future," she said.

For P. Keerthika Dana from 21S25, along with most of the current JC1s, the online events and livestreams promoting the school further convinced her to join as they were very engaging, entertaining and most importantly, very informative. The virtual tour of the campus especially helped her to navigate around during her first few days in school. "I hadn't visited SA before pre-Covid times, but was able to learn a lot about the school from the online programmes." Isaac concurred, adding, "I believe that the website should be maintained for future batches as it helps to shed light on the school's culture for prospective SAJC students." The grand success of the 2021 Open House has definitely set a high standard for next year's Open House, and the future looks bright for the incoming students of 2022.

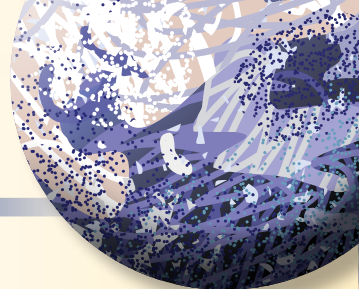




2021

## SAJC ORIENTATION: **COSMOS**

By Lee Yi Zhi (20S05), Chew Ee Ching (20S19),  
Cozette Neo (20A06) and Sankalp Behara (20A01)



Hidden deep in the corners of the vast unknown we call space, there lurks a mystery awaiting the newcomers of SAJC; a mystery unlike any other, brimming with action and suspense, all leading up to a momentous revolution. Organised by the 43rd Student Council and Orientation Group Leaders (OGLs), the theme for this year's orientation was "Cosmos", starring all five houses as they embarked on a voyage to explore the College together.

The story begins with a wizard's prophecy predicting the birth of five children, each with immense power. Knowing this, the power-hungry King Oldemort wanted their powers for himself. He employed Doctor Doofensmirk to extract the powers of these five children, representing the five houses, and sent his minions to spy on the planets of the Houses. Through a journey of discovery and friendship, the five children overthrew the evil King Oldemort and lived in peace and harmony.

Much like the five children from the story, the new JC1s united and forged meaningful friendships with one another. They worked together on the various tasks assigned to them participating in a series of inter-class challenges. The juniors pulled together in times of despair to overcome setbacks and cheered with arms around each other in times of success. Thus began a brilliant and heartwarming new chapter for the JC1s.

However, behind the joyous festivities and the forging of friendships between JC1s, was the blood, sweat and tears of the seniors. Great effort had been put into the planning and execution of "Cosmos". It was only with the 43rd Student Council's leadership in the planning process, with the added help of the OGLs, that the orientation was able to pan out smoothly.

A unique challenge the Student Council and OGLs faced was the Safe Management Measures which complicated many of their original plans. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, the team of OGLs, consisting of 98 students and 6 teachers,

could not assemble everyone together at one venue. There were also many missed opportunities, such as the cancellation of the orientation camp, which had been a long-standing tradition. Instead, a day camp was held during the dry-run programme.

Laura Lim, the President of the Student Council elaborated, saying, "Unfortunately, the need to adhere to the strict Safe Management Measures (SMMs), meant that games would not be as exciting as previous years. We also had to cancel mass games and external tours." In working around such tough restrictions, the Student Council came up with modified "inter-class games". Although the classes could not come into contact with one another, they could still see other people from their cohort enjoying the games, creating a sense of familiarity with their fellow peers despite the mandatory distancing.

However, some plans had to be entirely cancelled such as the OGL House Dance. Instead, a creative OGL Mass Dance was performed during the Orientation Finale along the corridors of the classroom blocks for the JC1s to see. This was testament to the importance of the role of the OGLs in ensuring a successful orientation. Daryl Tan, who served as an OGL, shared, "I was grateful for the opportunity to be able to contribute towards SA's vibrant student culture by welcoming the J1s and helping to create a wonderful experience for them."

Despite the challenges faced, such as the technical difficulties that arose during the online activities, the OGLs were undeterred. Through their dedication and hard work, the OGLs were able to leave a lasting, positive impact on the JC1s. While many of the JC1s had initially felt anxious over the prospect of entering a new school, the campus tours and their interactions with their peers made them more comfortable as they settled in.

"Orientation enriched my understanding of the school's culture and affirmed my belief that SA was the right school for me," said Pratibha Revi Shanker from 21S10, "the atmosphere was warm and friendly, and I found it easy to connect with



the people around me like my OGLs and my classmates, especially when it came to the final day of orientation.” On the last day of “Cosmos”, as the JC1s stepped up to the title of a “Saint”, their supportive OGLs taught them school cheers and led them in dance. As juniors and seniors alike chanted in unison, there was a collective sense of pride in the air as the JC1s would now start to carve out their own paths in SA.

Although “Cosmos” has since ended, the impact it had on those involved still remains. Gabrielle Ho Shan Yu, the Vice-President of the Student Council, believes that orientation had a great impact on the JC1s who participated actively in the games and events. “During my orientation, there were many last minute changes to the orientation programme as the COVID-19 situation escalated. So many of the seniors did not get the full SA experience,” she recounted. “In the midst of planning this year’s orientation, we wanted the JC1s to experience as much of SA’s school spirit as possible, while still abiding by the strict social distancing measures,” she elaborated. She was glad to hear that they had enjoyed “Cosmos” and added, “With SAJC as their new home, I hope they know they have each other and their seniors to guide them through their journey in SA as ONE FAMILY UNBROKEN.”

True to what was mentioned by Gabrielle, Pratibha mentioned that her greatest takeaway from “Cosmos” was the unmistakable sense of community and camaraderie she and her peers had experienced through orientation, as well as the friendships she would keep for the rest of her journey in SA.

While the pandemic does not seem to be ending anytime soon, the students look towards the future with the same hope as before, and some of the JC1s already have plans for next year’s orientation. Pratibha shared this, “I loved the enthusiasm and excitement the OGLs had despite the difficult circumstances and I would want to provide the same comfortable, caring and welcoming environment that my OGLs provided me for the next batch of JC1s.”

The future may be unpredictable and uncertain, but one thing remains constant; the fervent passion that drives each and every Saint will enable current and future waves of students entering these gates to ride out any storm that comes their way.





## GCE 'A' Level Results

By **Javier Nge** (20A04),  
**Sam Nicole Elizabeth** (20A06)  
 and **Tricia Teong** (20A06)

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of February, hundreds of jittery J3s flooded the school gates, eager to witness the release of their long-awaited GCE 'A' Level results. It seemed like the odds were stacked against them – with a pandemic which loomed over their final year at Junior College, and an extended Circuit Breaker period which disrupted some of the most crucial months of their education. The road that led up to this moment had been a long and onerous one. However, despite the many obstacles they faced, the class of 2020 still managed to tide over the toughest of challenges and perform exceedingly well.

"The Class of 2020 is an inspirational batch. They plowed through Home-Based Learning, the Circuit Breaker period and a pandemic the likes of which none of us have experienced, to emerge victors instead of victims. It is a lesson on resilience and hard work, in persevering even when the path is not paved and the road ahead is foggy. Well done! They have set a fine example for the Class of 2021 to emulate!" Year Head Mr Roland Lee commented.

Back in the classrooms, a lingering sense of anxiety hung in the air. For Vikhe Aryan Pramod of 19S20, the hectic demands of National Service (NS) had relegated worries over his results to the back of his mind. Instead, he found greater importance in focusing on the journey rather than the destination, and decided to be at peace with whatever the results may be.

Likewise, for Isaac Tan of 19A06, the reality of results day had yet to hit him until the moment he stepped into the classroom. Even so, he did not allow panic to get a hold of him. "In my mind, I had accepted the fact that nothing was going to change my results, and so I had this sense of peace that whatever it was, my identity was not anchored in my grades," said Isaac.

Despite the newfound freedom of extra time and the chance to be able to learn at one's own pace, Vikhe remarked that it became all too convenient for him to grab a snack and watch a television programme or to scroll endlessly on his phone. "It became more important than ever before to develop the self-discipline to study, especially since this was my final year of studying before National Service."

In facing these obstacles, students found ways to work around the tough circumstances they could not change. Circuit Breaker gave students the time to catch up with work and get back on track. While thinking back, Isaac noted, "My greatest challenge was trying not to sleep in class while doing work, but I managed to fix that over Circuit Breaker when I started to manage my own time."

As the students slowly but surely started to adapt to their new reality, they generally found that breaking studying sessions into blocks of time with periods of rest in between made studying for content-heavy topics more manageable.



A common consensus reached by the students was the importance of pacing themselves in their revision by doing consistent work. This eliminated the need to rush learning their material a few weeks before the examinations, and ultimately reduced their odds of burning out.

# 9th Saints MUN Conference

By Sankalp Behara (20A01)



People often unfairly characterise the youth of today as apolitical and uninterested in global issues, but you only need to take one look at our very own Saints MUN (Model United Nations) Conference to know this is not the case. MUN is a conference in which delegates take on the role of UN member states and debate on pressing global issues in the hopes of the Council passing a resolution that favours their interests. In the journey of cultivating students to become informed citizens of the world, our College has always had a healthy MUN culture since the first SaintsMUN conference in 2012.

This year's 9th Saints MUN Conference started off with a speech by Akashini, the Secretary- General. She expressed her hopes for the takeaways that the delegates would gain from the Conference. This was followed by a rousing address by the Guest-of-honour, our principal, Mr Tham Kine Thong. He emphasised the importance of fostering a caring community and being knowledgeable regarding global politics in order to find sustainable solutions to complex problems. In a subsequent Question and Answer session, Akashini conveyed the need to create an environment in our College where free and nuanced discussions can take place so as to foster social consciousness and political awareness.

After setting the tone for the rest of the Conference, the gavel dropped and the first MUN Council Session began. The Councils erupted into a flurry of activity: Chairpersons were talking to delegates; some early frontrunners eagerly solicited interviews from the press delegates, while others anxiously prepped their opening speeches. It was shaping up to be a fierce Council Session.

A ferocious session indeed as delegates fought against time and each other to pass their drafted resolutions with many interesting clashes that grabbed our attention. It was especially amazing to see our Saints without prior MUN experience holding their own in such a stressful and competitive environment. The Swiss delegate for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Council stood out as he had conducted himself with such confidence that many had mistaken him for a veteran MUN-ner.

Beyond UNESCO, many of the other Councils were also just as remarkable and thrilling to watch. Javier Nge, the Nigerien delegate for the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) struck me as someone to watch out for, especially after hearing his impactful opening quote by J. Robert Oppenheimer, "Now I am become death, the destroyer of worlds."

The Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM) was also just as intriguing with the Italian, Zimbabwean and American delegates going back and forth throughout the Council processions. The SOCHUM chair, Harper Chew, reminisced, "Having to navigate and diffuse certain rather tense situations and having to control the Council was rather difficult but incredibly rewarding."

Last but definitely not least, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) had a stimulating debate on their region's water security. Lieviana Djoli, the UNESCAP Chairperson stated, "Problems take a while to be tackled because of the separate vested interests each country has regarding issues. Consequently, an effective solution might not be able to be implemented once a country finds that it is against its other interests." Certainly words to live by for anyone - activists and politicians alike, working towards a common good.

All in all, participating in the MUN conference was incredibly exciting for everyone involved. Witnessing such passionate debates and experiencing it first-hand has truly been an enriching and eye opening experience. As the US delegate for SOCHUM, and the recipient of one of the best delegate Thaalinee Mohan exclaimed, "It was amazing and very exhilarating! I myself would like to continue participating in MUNs in the future and would definitely recommend everyone take part."

# CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

## Through **COVID-19**

### *Sports*

By **Tricia Teong** (20A06)

As a College that takes immense pride in sports, Team SAJC had high hopes for 2020, fuelled by the desire to strive for excellence in the National School Games. Ethan Anil, a member of the College's football team said - "SAJC had won the previous 'A' Division finals. We wanted to be the second team in history to win it again." With these aspirations in mind, training sessions were rigorous.

The Water Polo team's training at St Andrew's Village pool focused on swim conditioning and game strategy. "It truly made me believe that SAJC was home for us all," remarked Captain Giselle Wang. Although, the imposition of the Circuit Breaker (CB) changed the ball game for everyone, Team SAJC, as always, overcame all odds. During e-CCA sessions, teams built up their strength and fitness. With the resumption of physical training sessions came the restoration of some semblance of normalcy.

However, the effects of COVID-19 remained, and Team SA was dealt a crushing blow when the 2020 'A' Divisions were cancelled. Ethan lamented, "I believe we had a strong team and I genuinely think that we would have managed to go far this year, had we been given the chance." Like Ethan, Adam Ahmad, former captain of the Hockey team, was also downcast that the Nationals were cancelled.

Besides the 'A' Division, the Water Polo team also lost their chance to face off against stronger teams in international competitions. "I treasured those opportunities and used them to gauge how much I have improved and where my team stood relative to local and global competitors," Giselle said. Likewise, the Football and Netball Teams missed out on the chance for competitions and fun team bonding as well. Despite this, they chose not to despair over these lost opportunities, but rather to do their best with whatever they could.

When asked about their hopes for the future, Ethan had this to say, "We have always prided ourselves on our tenacity and never-say-die attitude, and we are intent on seeing this through."

That simple quote is the unshakeable spirit of our student athletes!



# Clubs and Societies, Performing Arts & Leadership

By **Brandon Lee** (20S14) and **Theodore M** (20S10)



**S**AJC is home to a rich and diverse selection of performing arts groups, clubs and societies and leadership-centred CCAs, many of which had been eagerly anticipating various competitions and events. However, all the plans our CCAs had in store became impossible when COVID-19 hit hard.

E-CCA sessions began with the imposition of Circuit Breaker (CB) and communicating via Zoom proved to be fraught with challenges. The Concert Band's conductor had to manage all 3 different instrument sections separately. "Our Conductor's goal was to make us better but trainings over Zoom were challenging. This was echoed by the Drama Club's Vice-President, Nana Siow.

Despite these hurdles, some CCAs managed to adapt more easily. Saints-for-Christ successfully conducted their activities all via Zoom. Despite the cancellation of the MOE-ACJC Intercollegiate Debating Championships, this did not shake the resolve of the debaters from the Literary and Debating Society. They participated in the 6th Oldham Cup, their first online debate competition.

When the Circuit Breaker period ended, opportunities were few and far between. "Unfortunately, with the cancellation of the "Rapture" concert, Dance Club was not able to perform, negatively impacting our level of team chemistry," sighed Hana, the Club's President.

Although the future may be shrouded with uncertainty, our CCAs remain hopeful. Lalita, Vice-president, of SAJC Concert Band, expressed her wishes for the future saying, "I want to make good friends and memories." Cayla Tan, Dance Captain of SA Dance Society, shared similar sentiments, expressing her wish for the dancers to have more time with the new J1 batch.

In the face of such uncertainties obstacles, our CCAs have displayed tremendous resilience, finding uniquely creative ways to adapt to their circumstances. It is heartening to see every Saint keeping the flame of passion they have for their CCA burning brightly as ever. We at LDS wish them the best and hope that together as One Family Unbroken, we can continue to excel and nurture our talents. Up and on!



## ONE FAMILY UNBROKEN, ONE FAMILY ABROAD

By Lim Wei Jie (Class of 2015)

The date was January 23rd, 2020. Singapore reported patient zero of COVID-19 and since then, our lives would never be the same.

My name is Wei Jie from SAJC Class of 2015 and I have been studying Dentistry at the University of Western Australia in Perth since 2018. Back home, the proactive Singapore government has always been trying their utmost to control and combat the virus. They have been implementing various measures like providing daily updates, ensuring sufficient medical supplies and reassuring people that hospitals had the capacity to take in intensive care patients if required. Despite the rapid spread of infection within foreign worker dormitories, contingency plans were swiftly put in place. I am proud to say that Singapore has done extremely well in such unprecedented times and deserves all the accolades they have received. As an international student, being stuck in a foreign country with no family to rely on made me fraught with uncertainties. Some international students chose to fly home, while some chose to stay. I chose to remain behind in Perth and I am glad that everyone managed to tide through that uncertain period safely and in good health.

Over a year has passed since the onset of COVID-19 and many countries around the world are returning to some semblance of pre-pandemic life. Wearing masks in public and using contact-tracing apps have become second nature. People are beginning to accept this as the new norm for the foreseeable future. That said, one big and important aspect of our lives, international travel, has yet to make a full return. As such, many Singaporeans living abroad did not have the opportunity to return home over the 2021 Lunar New Year period. For many, this annual trip is usually the only time where we get to reconnect with friends and extended families back home. Missing out was a devastating blow to us. Yet, every dark cloud has a silver lining and a group of old boys decided to make the most out of the situation at hand and organized a Lunar New Year dinner for the SA community here in Perth. This allowed us to savor the festive spirit and joys amidst the bleak circumstances.

When I first caught wind of the event, I was surprised to discover a substantial number of SA alumni residing here in Perth. Many of these old boys had in fact, migrated here quite a while ago and kept in contact in small groups, but this was the first attempt at planning something on a larger scale. It was safe to say that the response and support for the event was overwhelmingly positive, with around 50 alumni confirming their attendance within a few days of the announcement.

Fast forward a few weeks and the group was seated in a Malaysian food restaurant, in a nondescript suburb, south of the city. We occupied 4 large tables in a private room and the organizers had decided to allocate one of these tables to the younger generation of SA alumni. We aptly dubbed it the 'kids table', referencing a common sight at Lunar New Year gatherings in Singapore. This is where the younger generation, immersed in their own trendy topics, often sat away from the adults. A hubbub of laughter and friendly banter soon emerged, creating an atmosphere akin to a school canteen back in the SA village. The food was great, but nonetheless, it was not the main attraction. It was that familial feeling, one that many of us thought we were missing out on this year that became the lifeblood of the night. Eventually, when it was time to say our goodbyes, in the most fitting and arguably the only way to close the event, we all rose to sing the school song and hymn. Both songs were belted out with gusto at maximum volume, a truly hair-raising experience. I am unashamed to say that I had probably never sung the school song this loudly back in my schooling days. Singing these songs allowed many of us a glimpse back into the past, bringing back memories of our unforgettable days in SA, when we were younger and life was more carefree. That night truly embodied the spirit of being One Family Unbroken, One Family Abroad.

For the SA family back home, we are glad to report that the success of this event has spurred the alumni on to propose another event in August, to celebrate our country's birthday. Up and On!



### • P O E M •

By Daven Lim (20A06)

### THE FARMER

*The farmer rakes and ploughs the Earth,  
His hands are graced with toil;  
He sows the seed, receives Gaia's feed,  
He has no other need.*

*But Man has desire to consume  
As weeds swallowing land  
Nature's boundless bounty  
blooms far beyond sea and sand*

*The farmer plans and plots the Earth,  
by His hand nature twists,  
Feed's owner branches from plant  
to wrist, and flesh creeps over seed.*

*The branching path snakes and twines,  
the double-edged sprayed and spattered,  
what noxiously fortifies the green  
wilt the rest and everything in between.*

*And so the Golden Goose is whipped,  
contorted beyond recognition;  
What begins in ambition  
ends in inadvertent spoliation.*

*The farmer roils and scrapes the Earth,  
His hands are stained with sludge;  
He digs and tears and devastates,  
Yet there is naught but grudge.*

**LITERARY AND DEBATING SOCIETY TEACHER ADVISORS:** Ms Jessica Yim, Mr Randy Gill and Ms Hema Malini

**LITERARY AND DEBATING SOCIETY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2021:**

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