

Heritage Road Show IV Commemorates 50 Years of Singapore's Self-governance



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The many adversities in our lives, the day-to-day challenges that we face, are most often, unknowingly the source of our strengths. We draw courage from learning how to handle our fears. We build wisdom from the lessons that life has to give and the mistakes that we make. Life's curve balls may shake us with disappointments. Ironically, these setbacks

can surprisingly pave for us the way to success.

The former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, was imprisoned 27 years for the anti-apartheid cause that he believed in before his nation-building efforts towards the implementation of multi-racial democracy in South Africa was eventually recognised.

Singaporean merchant and philanthropist Tan Tock Seng, originally from Malacca, relocated to Singapore after which he became a successful businessman. He contributed his wealth to the construction of Tan Tock Seng Hospital. Today, the hospital is still standing strong and serving the needs of the nation's population.

Fighting for the right to live became a main mission in life when Singapore was faced with the grim situation of war during the Japanese Occupation from 1942 to 1945. The difficulty of getting sufficient food supply forced many to rely on tapioca plants for their main source of carbohydrate while religious buildings like mosques, churches and synagogues became a refuge from the brutality of bombings. Needless to say, the situation at that time forced the multi-ethnic society of Singapore to come together to battle not only the Japanese but also our former colonial masters, the British. By coming to terms with our own identity as unique citizens of Singapore, we achieved the right to self-government in 1959 before gaining full independence in 1965.

Our forefathers journeyed across the oceans and continents with a dream of building a better future in a faraway island that they barely knew – an island that is now known as Singapore. Today, this "faraway island" that they had set their eyes on remains as a small dot on the world map, equally vulnerable and fragile. However, this small island has weathered the storms of global recession, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), terrorism, bird flu and recently, the H1N1 flu virus and the economic recession. Still, it's too early to tell if there are many more that this small nation has to face in the future.

While weathering the unpredictable global economic climate, it is sometimes important and helpful for us to look inwards and trace back our sources of strength and inspiration to help us pull through the tough times.

The nation-building stories of this small nation started in 1959 when granted self-government by the British and the story of our success continues till today.

There are many more inspiring stories that we can draw from the unsung heroes of Singapore. Stories of courage and the memories that people hold on to, while being part of significant nation-building efforts make Singapore's unique history pieced together. This includes memories of establishing Singapore's National Library to what it is today. Once, due to lack of funds, Mrs Hedwig Anuar who was director of the National Library from 1965 to 1988, recalls having to mobilise 50 library staff to form a human chain to transfer the books when the National Library was being relocated.

This year's Heritage Road Show traces the journey of Singapore's history from 1959 till 2009 based on the personal recollections of Singapore memories that the man in the street has to share.

Our national anthem "Majulah Singapura", which means "Onward Singapore" when translated to English, was selected as the nation's anthem when Singapore attained self-government in 1959. Symbolising Singapore's rootedness to our identity, the same anthem has been sung for 50 years from 1959 till today, with tune and lyrics remaining unchanged in spite of the progress that Singapore has made through the years.

Perhaps, to reflect back, we ought to remind ourselves of our aspirations from the translated lyrics of our anthem and help us recall those personal stories that we can share at this year's road show.

*Come, fellow Singaporeans
Let us progress towards happiness together
May our noble aspiration bring
Singapore success
Come, let us unite
In a new spirit
Let our voices soar as one
Onward Singapore*
(Excerpts from "Majulah Singapura")

Upcoming Heritage Road Show Events

Photography Workshop: Changing Landscapes of Singapore

Saturday, 4 July 2009

10.00 am - 12.00 noon

Level 16, POD, National Library

Present today, gone tomorrow. As the rapid landscape changes and Singapore undergoes economic development, familiar buildings of today may some day make way for newer and more sophisticated buildings. Capturing the life and spirit of Singapore in this moment is what this workshop aims to do as today's masterpiece becomes tomorrow's treasure.

Themed to Singapore's 50 years history since its self-governance in 1959, the National Library Singapore invites the public to participate in our photography workshop led by professional photographer, Chris Yap. Aimed at capturing memories of Singapore from 1959 to 2009, Chris will guide photographers on how they can capture images of significant people, places and landmarks to illustrate their memories of Singapore.

Following the workshop, participants will also be encouraged to submit their photographs for a photography competition that will be held as part of the road show.

Due to limited seats, registration is required and can be made via <http://golibrary.nlb.gov.sg> and surf on to 'SG101'.

Changing Landscapes of Singapore Photography Competition

The National Library Singapore is going on a hunt for photographs that best capture the changing landscapes of Singapore via its people, places and landmarks. As part of celebrating Singapore's 50 years of self-governance, we are looking for photographs which illustrate the life and spirit of Singapore that are constantly changing and are at risk of being lost due to modernisation and globalisation. Interested individuals can submit their photographs as solo contestants or pair up with other individuals. Participants are to submit 24 of their best photographs, taken over a continuous period of 24 hours and include their personal stories of not more than 150 words to explain their choice of photographs and the memories of Singapore associated with it. Closing date for all submissions is 12 July 2009.

What's more, we're giving out up to \$5,000 worth of fabulous prizes! For more details, log on to <http://golibrary.nlb.gov.sg> and surf on to 'SG101' for more details.

Singapore Anthem 101

Saturday, 22 August 2009

12.00 - 2.00 pm

Level 16, POD, National Library

It has been 50 years since Singapore's national anthem "Majulah Singapura" (Onward Singapore) was first played. Till today, the song is symbolic of Singapore's self-governance.

Singapore Anthem 101 reveals the success story behind Singapore's national anthem. Showcasing the memories and political landscapes that influenced the composing of the national anthem, the talk will cover the selection and song composition process that its composer Zubir Said went through before his composition was eventually picked as the nation's official national anthem. Anecdotes of Zubir Said's life and personal stories and memories of his musical achievements will also be highlighted.

Due to limited seats, registration is required and can be made via <http://golibrary.nlb.gov.sg> and surf on to 'SG101'.

Grandmother's Storeroom: The Archaeology of Your Family

Saturday, 4 July 2009

2.00 - 4.00 pm

Level 16, POD, National Library

Remember that moth-eaten battered suitcase that used to sit under the bed? How about that ceramic dish with tacky floral prints? Recall that toothpaste did not always come in a tube? Was toothpaste the preferred oral cleaning agent in the first place? Strange as it may seem, the relatively short period of a decade or a quarter century has removed much from the living memory, yet there are many, when prompted, who can still vividly recall the not-so-distant past.

Join archaeologist Lim Chen Sian as he takes you on a trail of discovering artefacts, the past and lost memories of your own family! Grandmother's Storeroom is a fun-filled workshop for anyone (in particular the parent and child) to explore and uncover his own family history through artefacts found beneath the dust in the family or grandmother's storeroom. Archaeology isn't just for crusty old fogies poking about in the dirt. Be enthralled as you investigate the odd bits and curios found within your own home!

The workshop includes a slide lecture on archaeological research, archaeological recording sheets, "Storeroom Archaeology Booklet", and instructor's demonstration kits/trunks.

Due to limited seats, registration is required and can be made via <http://golibrary.nlb.gov.sg> and surf on to 'SG101'.

I Remember Singapore

Do you remember having a meal at the famous Satay Club at the old Esplanade and have nostalgic stories to tell and pictures to show? Were you or any of your family members enlisted in the first ever National Service call in 1967?

We would love to hear your stories and have your pictures as part of our heritage road show this year!

To submit your photographs and stories and obtain more details, log on to <http://golibrary.nlb.gov.sg> and surf on to 'SG101' for more details. Lucky winners stand a chance to win up to \$5,000 cash!

AsPI Singapore 1960s

Sunday, 23 August 2009

3.00 - 9.00 pm

Level 1, Reception Counter, National Library

Themed to Singapore in the 1960s, this special edition of AsPI will guide participants through a series of immersive experiences beginning from the time when Singapore attained its independence in 1965.

Experience Singapore's dying breed of cultural performers doing the Malay Bangsawan and hop on a trail to some of Singapore's historical landmarks that witnessed Singapore's countless transformations. Hear for yourself the humbling experiences of our pioneers who contributed extensively and significantly to Singapore's rapid development to what it is today.

Due to limited seats, registration is required. Please email Nurulhuda_SUBAHAN@nlb.gov.sg with your name, designation and organisation.