



**USM**

UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

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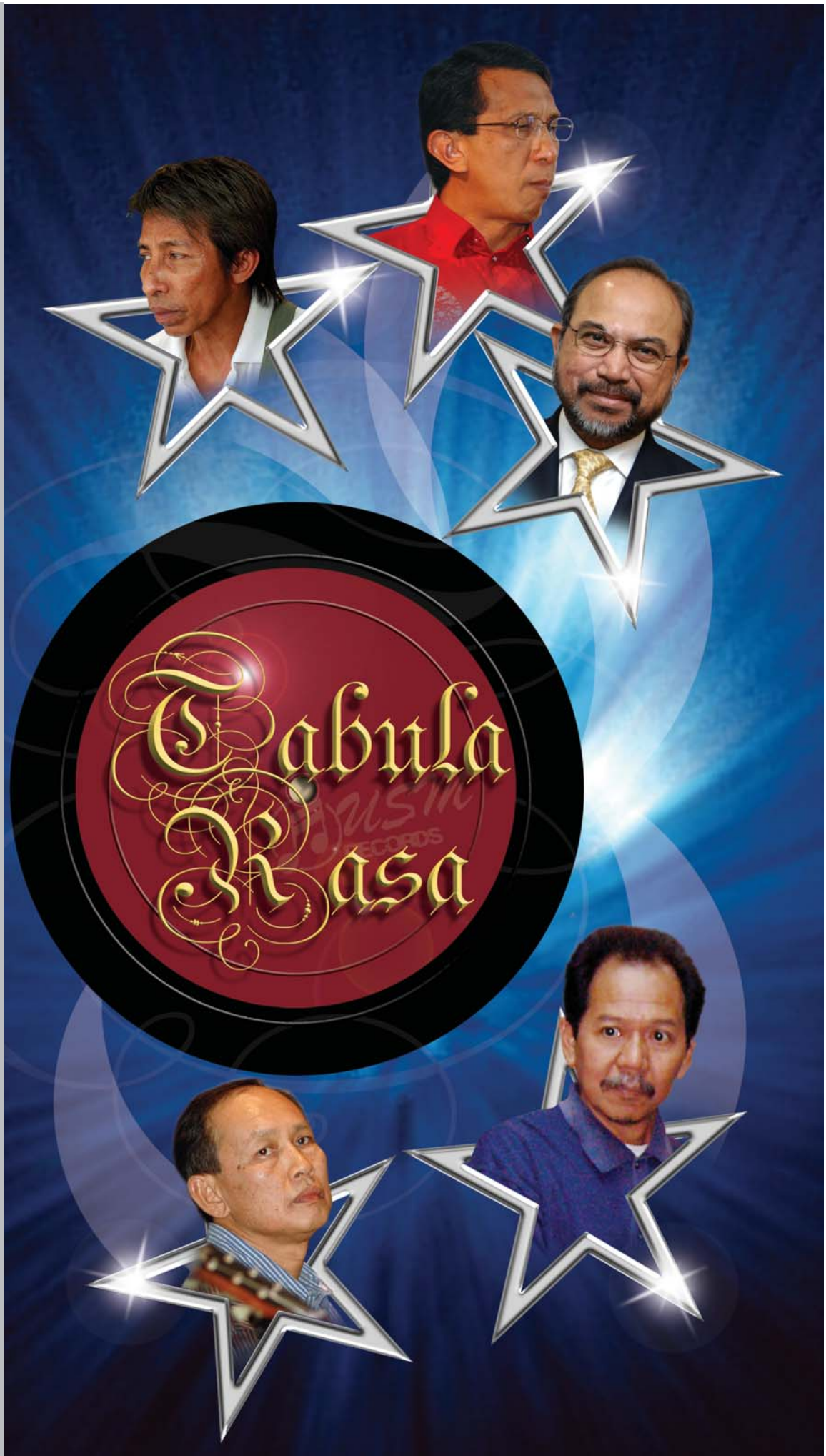
USM Alumni Magazine

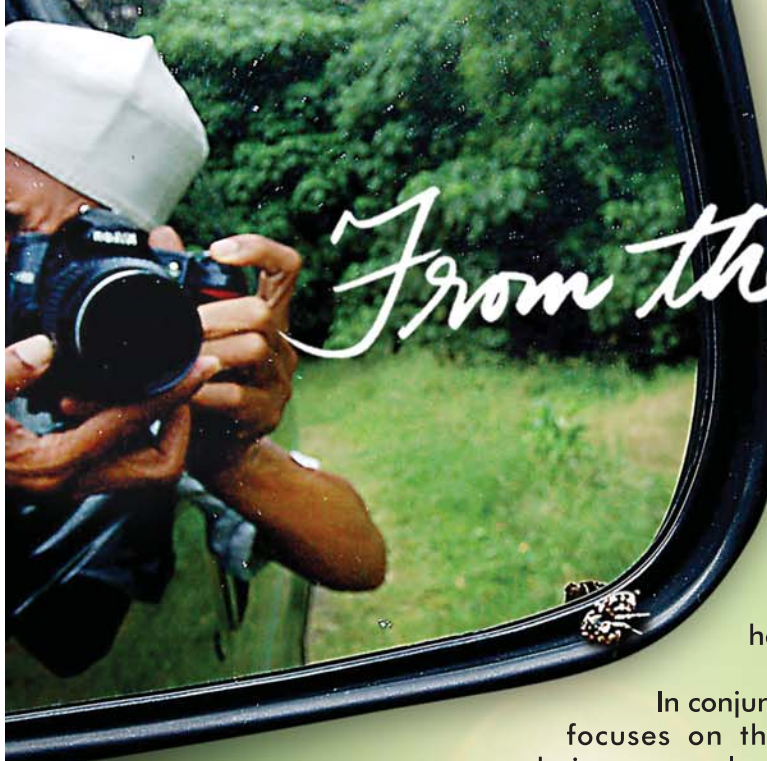
# The Leader

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# From the Editor

Selamat balikampus to all. *Balikampus 2007* may be the biggest alumni event so far. To those who are somewhere else, to quote Pink Floyd, "wish you were here".

In conjunction with this event, *The Leader* focuses on the spirit of togetherness and camaraderie among alumni. We hope the main feature, *Tabula Rasa*, USM's first rock band that unconsciously helped to mould USM's early lifestyle, managed to capture this spirit.

Producing the feature article itself proved to be more challenging than my "sessions" with the other residents. Bugs and birds would sometime "volunteer" for poses on my car or parts of my body with almost no coaxing! *Tabula Rasa* proved to be more difficult to photograph! Yet we manage to pull off another job. Thanks to the *The Leader's* editorial team which have so far managed to work around obstacles. The passion and dedication of the team members make problems forgettable, and producing the magazine and enjoyable endeavour.

We would like to repeat our appeal to alumni who have ideas, and who can write, to pen your thoughts. At the moment, the enthusiasm of the production team to produce quality articles is often hampered by the meagre number of editors who have to double up as writers too.

In this respect, our Vice Chancellor deserves a special a mention. Despite his busy schedule, he has been a consistent writer for every issue of *The Leader*, with little coaxing. Kudos and thank you.

Our next issue will be on alumni who choose to be their own bosses. Apart from a few who "promised" to share their experiences on this, we would like to hear from others on how the varsity motto has been inspirational in turning them from job-seekers to job-designers. So write in.

For others who want to write something else, write something else.

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Mohamed Talhah Idrus  
B. Soc. Sc. '74

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# Tabula Rasa

Artwork by Mohamed Talhah Idrus



If I were to save a particular time in a bottle, *Tabula Rasa* will be frozen in a big one. The band is good to be with again...and again....

The classes of '73, '74 and '75 particularly, would remember *Tabula Rasa* well. It was Universiti Pulau Pinang's first band. When the university changed its name to Universiti Sains Malaysia in 1972, they were even more recognisable.

*Tabula Rasa* was not just a rock band, it was an icon of university spirit. Many students relate to the seventies spirit that it managed to encapsulate rather well. The band made music that fellow students not only related

*If I could make days last forever  
If words could make wishes come true  
I'd save every day like a treasure  
then again, I would spend them with you*

*Jim Croce, "Time in a Bottle". 1972.*

to, but wanted to join in. Off-stage the band members were friends, classmates, and dorm-mates. The switch from stage performers to fellow students was smooth and casual, which drew audiences into a loose band of brothers and sisters. In present parlance, *Tabula Rasa* was a cool happening.

*Tabula Rasa Turns Brown Black Blues*

# turns brown black blues

Mohamed Talhah Idrus  
B. Soc. Sc. '74

The band started with the usual line-up of Hamdan as lead guitarist, Junian (to be succeeded by Ihsan) as rhythm guitarist, Rastam on bass, and Omar on the drums. But the ensemble expanded and contracted almost at will. Shahrudin often joined in, sometimes as a flutist. So too would Syed Ahmad who played the congas or bongo, while Ramli occasionally added percussion to the sound.

This casual and spontaneous approach to making music (despite Hamdan always looking stoic and serious on stage) made *Tabula Rasa* unique. Though the boys seldom smiled on stage, it was quite obvious *Tabula Rasa* and their band of brothers and sisters were having a good time.

Anyone interested would be given a chance to show their talent. Like *Delaney and Bonnie and Friends*, the short lived talented American band whose casual ensemble attracted greats like Eric Clapton and Leon Russell, *Tabula Rasa* was out to have a good time through music and friendship.

In the early stages, *Tabula Rasa* did not have a dominant singer, though Zulkifli (Zul) Itam was the first regular. Through time a number of singers would contribute their voices. Zabas, another musician eventually became the resident singer, performing more often than Zul. But the band continued to accompany a host of other singers like Chew Peng, Hamima Dona, Zubir, Johana, etc.

*Below: The free-wheeling open attitude of the band was best reflected when Rais who played the mandolin was given a chance to be part of a show! (Photograph courtesy of Hamdan Omar)*



*Right: Syed Ahmad playing the bongos (Photograph courtesy of Hamdan Omar)*



*Rastam and Hamdan hanging out outside "Block 10" (now H23) in 1972 (Photograph courtesy of Hamdan Omar)*



*Zulkifli Itam (Photograph courtesy of Hamdan Omar)*

*Tabula Rasa Turns Brown Black Blues*

*"...the concept of man brought to life like an empty vessel that can be filled with anything, a **tabula rasa**."*

In a concert in Alor Setar in 1972, a host of impromptu singers joined the band in a colourful rendition of "My Sweet Lord", showering the audience with confetti.

**How did it all start?**

A casual discussion about music by Hamdan Omar, Syed Ahmad, Rastam and a few others in 1971 led to the formation of *Persatuan Seni Muzika*, a music club. With the hearty support of the then student leader Farid Ariffin, musical instruments and equipment were bought, and a varsity band was hatched. But the band did not have a name. This changed when Dr. Suichi Nagata, a lecturer in anthropology suggested one.



*Suichi Nagata (Photograph courtesy of Siti Zaleha)*

Actually Dr. Nagata was merely going through his lecture materials in his Anthropology 101 class when he introduced the concept of man brought to life like an empty vessel that can be filled with anything, a *tabula rasa*. Hamdan was immediately struck by the term. His bandmates were also receptive to the name, and the band with no name was henceforth heralded as *Tabula Rasa*!



*Kak Ani and Johana added vocals to the ever receptive **Tabula Rasa** (Photograph courtesy of Hamdan Omar)*

And *Tabula Rasa* played and drew support from the campus and outside. When the class of '74 was about to leave campus, the students had a merry farewell concert.

Even as Hamdan, Omar, and Rastam were leaving, their talent and style of making music had already influenced a band of junior musicians who smoothly took over. This successors band was tagged Bad Taste. Though Bad Taste led by Ihsan, had good musicians capable of delivering great sound, the *Tabula Rasa* aura left together with Hamdan, Rastam, and Omar. Gradually the greater circle of brothers and sisters dissipated. Over the next few years, *Tabula Rasa* was a name no more. Bands changed in succession, but the spirit was gone.



*Friends join in to sing farewell to the class of '74 (Photograph courtesy of Hamdan Omar)*

**Tabula Rasa Turns Brown Black Blues**

It was not surprising that Hamdan, Omar and the former brothers and sisters who include Bob, Jenny, Ihsan and Zabas regrouped in 1986 when the same group tried to set up a USM Alumni association in Kuala Lumpur. The association did not materialise immediately, but the brothers and sisters rocked again.

They may not play as often as they used to, but they have a place to meet and make music. Their company, Brown Black Blues Music, deals in musical instruments or accessories sales and repair, event management and provides jamming studio space and equipments for young musicians to unleash their talents.

Tabula Rasa may have turned three shades, but their spirit is evergreen.



**Reenacting the seventies during Balikampus 2007.** Right to left, Ihsan, Zabas, Bob, Hamdan and Jennie. Omar as always is hidden behind instruments and other players. (Photograph courtesy of Hamdan Omar)

**Who is Who**



**ZABAS** is Zainol Abidin Ahmad Shariff (B. Humanities '75), Deputy Director/Senior Curator of Money Museum & Art Centre, Central Bank of Malaysia



**Omar** is Omar Haron (B. Soc. Sc.'74), Chief Operating Officer, Automotive Corporation (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd.



**Bob** is Dato' Abdullah Abdul Wahab (B. Soc. Sc. '76), retired from the post of Secretary of Parliament. Currently Marketing Consultant, Rafidah Abdullah Enterprise



**Hamdan** is Hamdan Omar (B. Soc. Sc. '74), is retired and currently CEO of Adant Logistics Sdn. Bhd.



**Rastam** is Tan Sri Rastam Mohd. Isa (B. Soc. Sc. '74), is the Secretary General of the Malaysian Ministry of Foreign Affairs



**Jenny** is Jenny Tan Suat Eam (B. Sc. '75), is retired and currently Chief Operating Officer of Adant Management Sdn. Bhd.



**Ihsan** is Ihsan Ibrahim (B. Sc. '79) Senior System Manager of Sepakat Computer Consultant

**Rais** is Abdul Rais Abdul Majid (B. Soc. Sc. '74), Director and Chief Executive Officer, Asset Cell Capital Sdn. Bhd.

**Taza** is Tazazuddin B. Noordin (B. Sc. '79)

**Zul** is Mohammad Zulkifli Itam (B. Soc. Sc.'74), currently Managing Director of Mark Edge Sendirian Berhad.

**Juhana** is Juhana Annuar (B. Soc. Sc.'74), runs a bookshop in Crans-Montana, Switzerland

**Syed** is Dato' Prof. Syed Ahmad Hussien (B. Soc. Sc. '73), Chief Executive, Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA)

**Kak Ani** is Datin Shamsiah Mohamed (B. Soc. Sc. '73), retired from the Institute of Diplomatic and Foreign Relations (IDFR)

**Chew Peng** is Soh Chew Peng

**Hamima Dona** is Dr. Hamima Dona (B. Humanities '73), currently with Pusat Penyelidikan Pembangunan Wanita (KANITA), USM



**Hamdan, Omar, Bob, Ihsan, Jenny, and Zabas gig at Brown Black Blues Music Sendirian Berhad located at 34-2, Jalan 27/70A Desa Sri Hartamas, Kuala Lumpur. The company is operated by some members of the group together with Taza and Rais. Jenny in the window**



Associate Professor Mohamed Talhah Idrus is currently a lecturer at the School of Housing, Building and Planning, USM. He can be reached at tolamhaha@yahoo.com



*The Leader* is the best example on how one can reflect appreciation towards individuals who have leadership qualities. It is an excellent medium to honour these unsung heroes as well as to nurture respect among the ignorant younger generation.

**Shahrill Ramli@Romli**

B. Sc '07

What is good about *The Leader* is that the magazine does not restrict its story ideas. Wide range of stories can be in it (something like *Readers Digest*). Anyhow, I found that is the layout and design is a bit old-fashioned, therefore it doesn't really attract the younger generation. Story contribution for the magazine should be made compulsory to mass communication students (maybe as an assignment or something) so that a 'hype' can be created among students using stories from the students/younger generation's point of view. Magazine also needs to interact with readers, perhaps have a section for Humour on Campus like the one found in *Reader's Digest*, It is something that people can relate to.

**Syazreen Sara Sukor**

HBP '05

The articles are great, but I wish more success stories from ex-students and more on how their career began. And the graphics are fabulous.

**Sharifah Nur Afzan Syed Abdul Rahman**

B. Sc '00

*The Leader* is a great network to help graduates keep in touch and stay close to the development of the university. After graduating, I am sure that *The Leader* will bring back many fond memories and what makes me proud is that there are many well-known leaders in Malaysia who are graduates from USM.

**Lye Yi Wen**

Second Year

School of Social Sciences



# *Congratulations*

The only  
university  
ranked  
5-Star in  
Malaysia.

by  
*Malaysian  
Qualifications  
Agency (MQA)*

**NEW STRAITS TIMES** SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2007

**Consistency and  
teamwork win  
USM 5-star rating**

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) attributes its five-star rating to consistency and teamwork.

shows that we are excellent and this can be due to the fact that our graduates are marketable and employable. "We are also excelling in improving in terms of achievement

# ROCK d'Amour No More

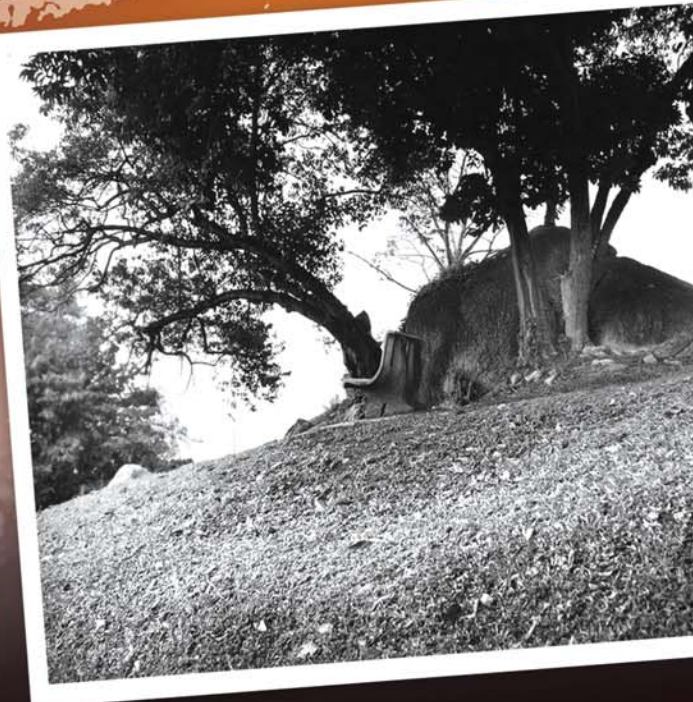
Text and Photographs by Rusly Jamaludin

The campus has its VC Rock, just as Penang still has its enthralling *Batu Uban* (Grey-haired Rock), *Batu Ferringhi* (Foreigner's Rock), *Batu Maung* (Bigfoot's Rock), *Batu Lancang*, and *Batu Kawan* (Thousand Steps Rock). The VC Rock is neither so fabled nor so magnificent. Indeed, it is by comparison humble and insignificant. But it is nevertheless worth preserving or at least remembering for their human associations and memorable charm.

VC Rock is more than just a misnomer of an amorous spot. The iconic landmark dubbed as such for it was just a stone's throw proximity to the old vice-chancellors' office. The craggy granite outcrops still stand like its former rustic elegance and cradled in the faithful arms of its quiet hilltop. Discovering the place identity, ironically, is like *deja vu*.

The VC Rock, perhaps more than any landmark around campus, has been endowed with an aura of its own beauty: one for its charming visitors and the other for its breathtaking panoramic sweep of mainland shoreline. The luscious dim, pale blue hills that rose above the mainland seashore were therapeutically

The 'sleeping beauty' has remained peaceful, if not untouched.



refreshing to the eyes. I have come this way a thousand times and that air of cheerfulness which pervades the scenes still it dazzles me. This location has certainly made a favorable impression to the beholder.

The place grew so vibrant during the 'hot, hippy and heated' days of the 70's that it became a favorite pastime of students for *makan angin* (way of catching the sights and taking some fresh air), evening 'rock-sitting', sunrise watch and a popular 'pit-stop' for both strollers & joggers. The uninterrupted picturesque sea view all along the old *Jalan Canselori* (Chancellor Road) driveway and the VC Rock counts itself the center of attraction in the campus then. As you can imagine, it was pretty much 'happening', so to speak.

This unique spot seemed to waken a while to life for it was a lively gathering space for students spend their

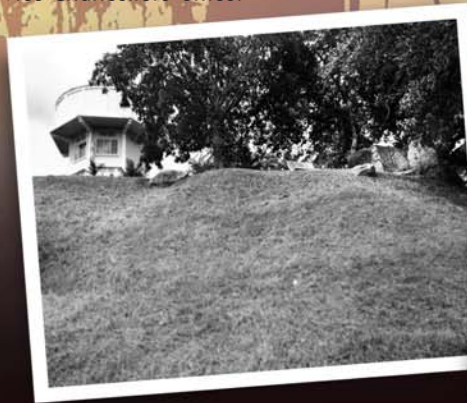
Artwork by Rusly Jamaludin

Rock d'Amour No More

The shuttle service once in a while breaks the Rock's slumber

The VC Rock in its sublime spectacle stands in the foreground of the old Vice Chancellors' office.

A concrete bench awaits its avid visitors besides the Rock, overlooking the tree-tops on the plunging slopes.



free time together rambling and slumbering or just about anything that muse themselves.

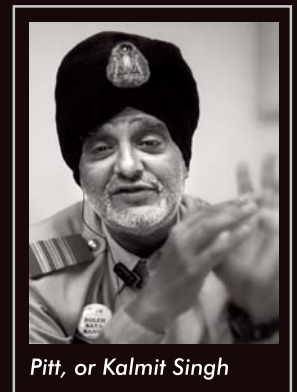
"It is here along the one-way promenade and the VC Rock, if it could talk, that history on the dance of life showcases itself", enthused Pitt, USM Senior Security Officer. Pitt or Kalmit Singh is a reputed 'sheriff' whom had first-hand account of the premise.

"As you pass the site, you are actually drifting back to past days, to the time of fascinating 70's hipsters displaying their 'free hours' anthem more often of a tease with their well-known trademark of 'peace' sign hand gesture," Pitt quipped.

The wind-swept VC Rock had once been pretty much praised mainly due to the absence of trees blocking its commanding view.

"VC Rock is still very much felt and at times, makes me smile. I recalled having a party with friends, like the late Yazan, Faridah, and Siti Aminah at the Rock.

I also remembered collecting our scholarships from the old Bursary, a small wooden structure about forty meters from the Rock. Delightful, indeed, were those days at the Rock and I cannot help but sigh that I might never be privileged to enjoy the likes of it again," lamented Puan Sharifah Munirah, remembering the days when she and her peers stood over the scenery. She loved what she called the 'happy-go-lucky' hours joyfully skimming over the glistening sea, the changing



Pitt, or Kalmit Singh

## Centre for Languages & Translations

Campus Life

Rock d'Amour No More

## The Old Chancellory

## The Old Bursary

# VC ROCK

Aerial view of the **VC Rock** and its immediate surroundings up to the early 80's. (Courtesy of USM Library)

skies, the delectable view of untouched forest-clad *Pulau Jerejak* (Jerejak Island) and the idyllic *Kampung Batu Uban* (Grey-haired Rock Village).

Today, gone were the gaiety, 'glossies' and the laughter of yesteryears. The mood and ambience of the place have changed. Instead, the Rock stands dark and desolate, crouched in firm resistance to the onslaught of overgrown trees which further obscure the distant horizon. The view that I enjoyed during my past strolls through the site has deteriorated; it would have been much better if the trees had been well-manicured and there is no imposing twin-tower-condominiums to obstruct the vantage view from the *VC Rock*.

In some ways I find the *VC Rock*, even in her splitting ruin and 'overshadowed' by developments around, still is in a class of its own. There stands the rock to give us faith, to inspire us and to bridge the chasm between the old and new, the past and the future.



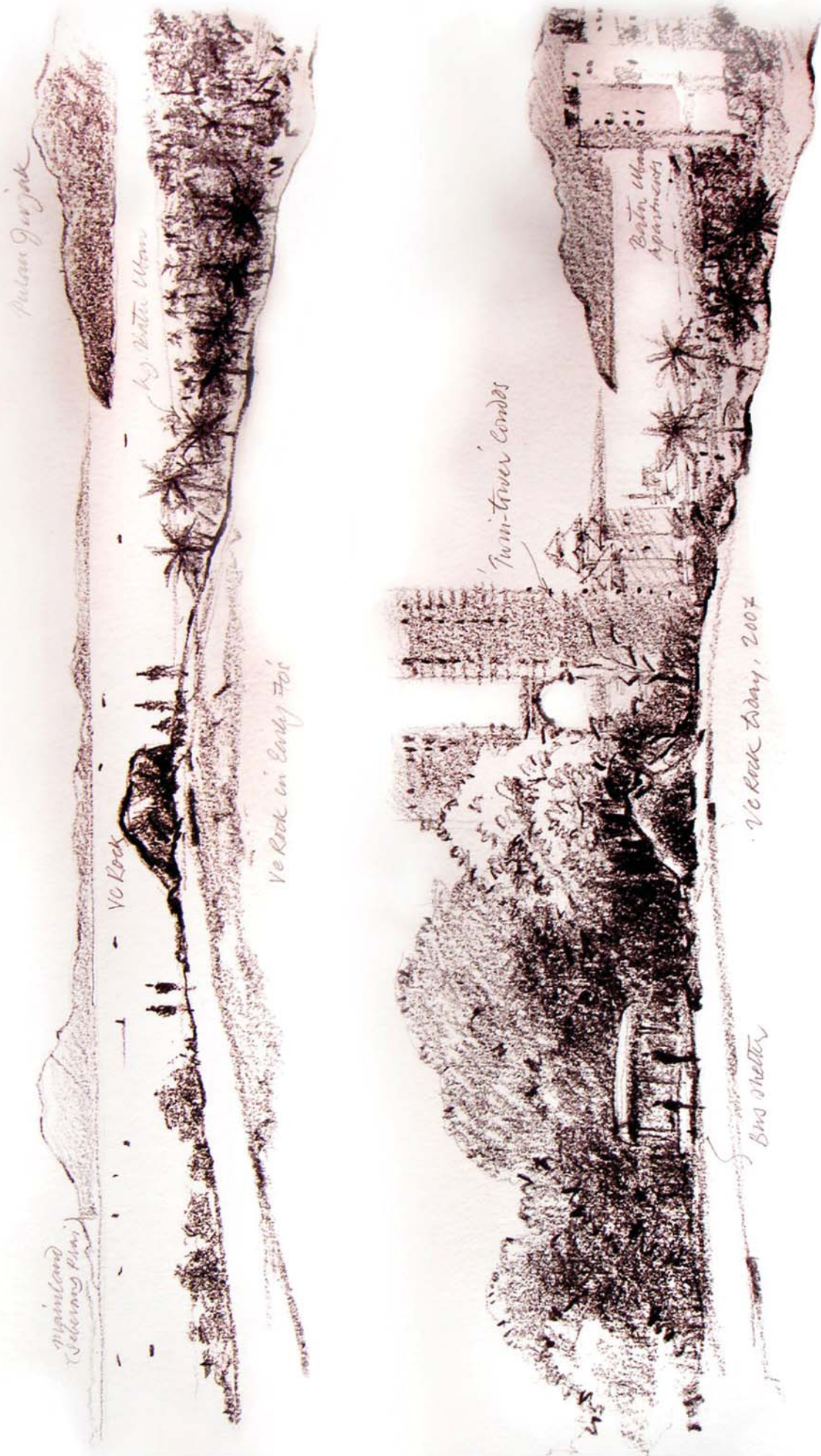
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The Rock's splitting beauty provides a unique feast for a dreamer's eyes.



Against the backdrop of scenic *Pulau Jerjak* and the graceful coconut trees, visitors in 1972, posed to capture memories near the *VC Rock* (Photograph courtesy of Hamima Donna Mustafa)



Charcoal sketches of reconstructed vistas of **VC Rock** in the early 70 and 2007 by the writer.



*Wishing our Muslims  
Hajj Mabruur  
& joyous  
Eid-ul Adha*

Mohamed Talhah Idrus  
B. Soc. Sc. '74

Photographs by Nazrul Hassan  
and Mohamed Talhah Idrus

# The Masjid Al-Malik Khalid During *Ramadhan*

Most Muslims aim to complete reciting the whole Qur'an at least once during Ramadhan; much of the day is spent in reading it

Ramadhan is not only a month of fasting, neither is it a month of feasting when the sun sets. It is actually a month of realizing the truth of one's existence through self-cleansing. This involves fulfilling a Muslim's sacred pledge that ALLah alone is to be worshipped (in various forms) at all times.

Through a scheme outlined in the Qur'an and demonstrated by Prophet Muhammad, every Muslim

is capable of returning to his *fitrah* (natural self). The attempt to reach this ideal is well seen among students, staff and visitors to USM during the month of Ramadhan 1428, especially in and around the *masjid* (mosque), where most congregational activities are performed. Masjid AL-Malik Khalid of USM too was abuzz with these activities, lending the campus a month-long festive mood.



**Sahur** (Pre-dawn meal)



**A kulliyah zuhr**  
(after mid-afternoon prayers)

The Masjid Al-Malik Khalid During Ramadhan



Arab students sell their products after Friday prayers



Zakat ul-fitr (personal tithe) is collected only during Ramadhan



Ramadhan is a time for sharing, especially with the less fortunate



Staff from a sponsoring department help to prepare for iftar (breaking of fast); volunteers waiting to cook



Other volunteers prepare to serve iftar



The Masjid Al-Malik Khalid During Ramadhan



Lining up for *iftar*

Female students along the corridor



Students and staff from different countries share food in the compound of *Masjid Al-Malik Khalid*



Special guests in front of the mosque



The Masjid Al-Malik Khalid During Ramadhan



Every night, after the last prayers of the day, the mosque is patronized by those who come to observe the additional **tarawih** (a special late evening prayers during **Ramadhan**) prayers

Students form small groups to practice **tadarus** (reading and correcting the recitation), each group normally completes a **juzu'** (one thirtieth) of the **Qur'an** every night



End of **Ramadhan**: a group making a **khatam** (completing the recitation of the last chapters) of the **Qur'an**



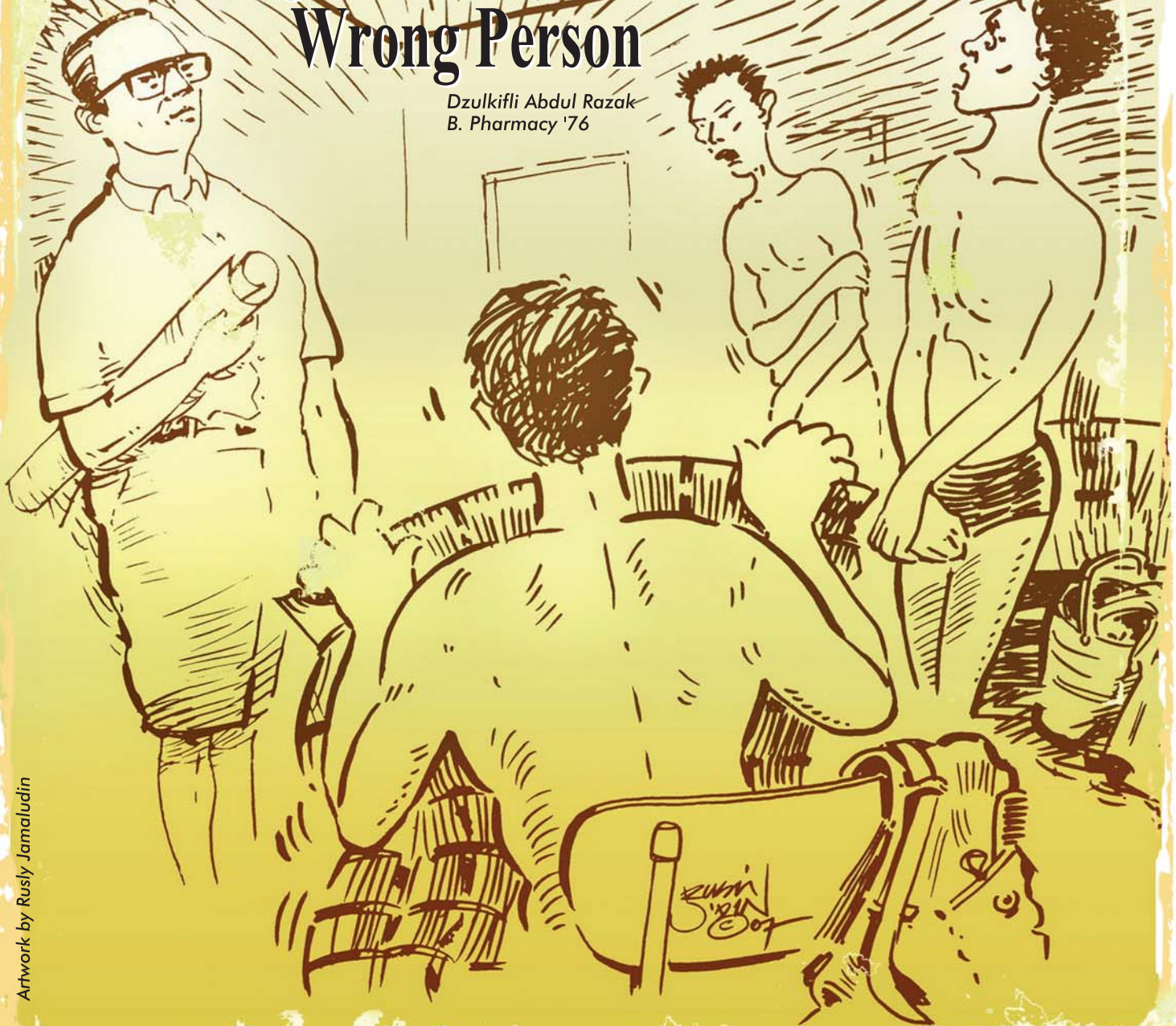
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# Right Question, Wrong Person

Dzul kifli Abdul Razak  
B. Pharmacy '76



Artwork by Rusly Jamaludin

Right Question, Wrong Person

*The British Army buildings which housed the earliest male students remain unchanged in structure and used 35 years on*

It was some thirty years ago when I first step foot in a place known as Minden. The foreign-sounding name added to the excitement, and this feeling was somehow intensified by the fact that one has to travel "overseas" to get there. Never mind the fact that getting to that "overseas" destination involved taking a trip on a bright yellow ferry that lumbered along slowly, going across a short stretch of sea. There was no bridge then. No one had any reason to dream of any.

Once in campus, Minden - named after a town in Germany - was actually a lush green "forest" and fruit orchard mixed into one. Universiti Pulau Pinang, or UPP, the place where I was to spend the next few years, took its name from the island. But it was a different Penang then - quiet, serene and peaceful. No factories, no beach hotels, no traffic jams, no high rise. The air was cleaner, so too were the beaches and the hills. It was a lot of fun to visit these places then with no worries about pollution.

Back then, the campus was still an active military barrack built by British soldiers. To add to the confusion, military personnel and trucks were still going about their business almost daily. There was a somewhat unique symbiotic relation between the academia and the military, which was not surprising considering that most of the buildings and facilities available were formerly part of their operations, be it the lecture halls (the so-called "Globe Theatre") right to the drinking holes (like the "Fu Manchu Canteen"). Once in a while some unique transactions

took place, especially when it comes to getting cheap booze and cigarettes.

As for the science students, the campus was merely a place of residence. Lectures and lab sessions were conducted almost entirely at the Malayan Teachers' College (MTC) campus, a stone's throw away. Shuttle buses were provided for this purposes, and for some people, these turned out to be mobile meeting points for dating. Others used the free bus services to eat out en route or just to ply the destination after a hard day's work. The library facilities which were also situated at MTC offered a good excuse for just any student to use the bus as a hop-on, hop-off service, the first of its kind in Penang. Given the limited space on campus with the presence of the military, the bus service doubled as a perfect escape!

Still campus life was not at all boring. With a student population of less than 300 then, everyone knew everyone else. Even lecturers and professors were acquaintances, if not close friends. Or at least one had a fair idea of who is who. The more glamorous ones had nicknames, sometimes more than one, depending on whether you are speaking to a friend or an enemy. Those who were lucky enough to possess a means of transport (usually boneshakers!) were more recognised, often just by the sound produced by their vehicle. This is more so for the students - after all, what do you expect from second-hand stuff intended just for campus use where one can save on road tax and license!

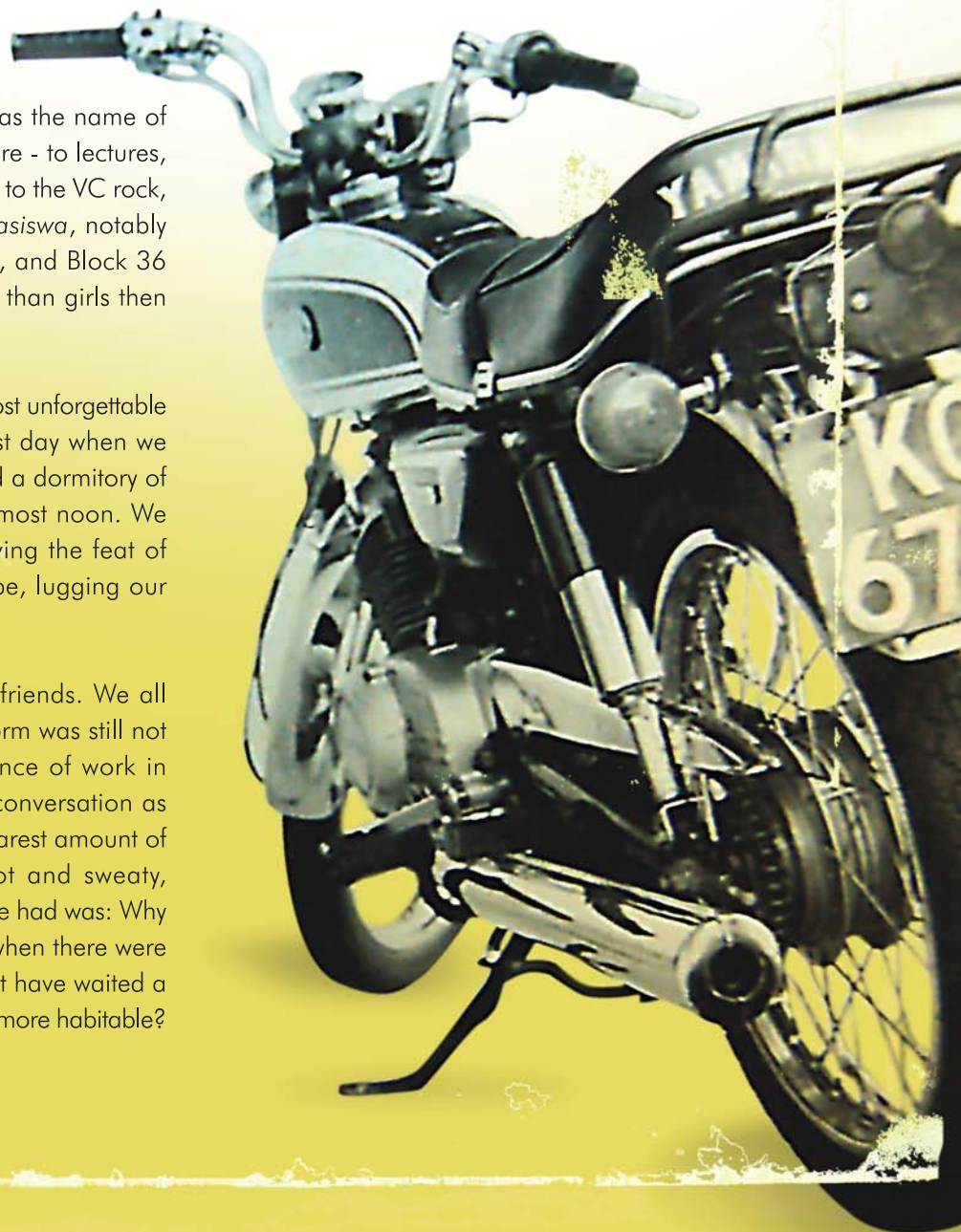
In fact, the more obnoxious the sound, the more well-known the owner became. The weirder the machine looked, somehow the more "market-value" it had, especially in attracting beautiful and adventurous pillion riders, especially those of the opposite sex. There were even those who eventually fell in love and lived happily ever after, thanks to the second-hand machine. In a sense, the campus provided the stage where life unfolds day in day out, often taking its own spin: juicy gossips and hot topics of conversations to be shared in between lectures for days on end. There never was a dull moment if you care to keep up with the latest!

For the majority however, walking was the name of the game. You walk almost everywhere - to lectures, to the cafeterias, to *Pusat Mahasiswa*, to the VC rock, and of course, from and to the *Desasiswa*, notably Block 39 and Block 88 for the boys, and Block 36 for the girls. There were more boys than girls then - how time has changed!

But it was in the *Desa* that I had my most unforgettable moments. It was in fact the very first day when we arrived in campus and were assigned a dormitory of eight people in Block 88. It was almost noon. We were all hot and sweaty after surviving the feat of inching our way up the Minden slope, lugging our suitcases and earthly belongings.

At the dorm we quickly made new friends. We all shared the same sentiments. The dorm was still not quite ready. There were still evidence of work in progress. That became a topic of conversation as the group got comfortable with the barest amount of clothing on their body. It was hot and sweaty, remember! The question that everyone had was: Why were we called to occupy the place when there were still work to be done? Could they not have waited a little longer, at least until the place was more habitable?

*"The weirder the machine looked, somehow the more "market-value" it had, especially in attracting beautiful and adventurous pillion riders, especially those of the opposite sex."*



Right Question, Wrong Person



Residents of Block 10 (now H93) trying to look cool in 1972 (Photograph courtesy of Hamdan Omar)

While this question was intensely debated, an opportunity to obtain the answer magically presented itself. The "contractor" stepped in just in time, perhaps to listen to our woes and worries. Immediately everyone stood up to pop the obvious question - Tauke, bila mau siap? The tone was almost intimidating.

But the "contractor" was cool and calm as he replied in perfect *bahasa Melayu*.

In fact he gave us an analogy that is good for all times. "*Kalau emak kita goreng ikan buat lauk, kita terpaksa tunggu dahulu sebelum kita boleh makan - bukan?*," came the polite yet firm answer. Rather unusual for a regular "contractor." But then it was university. For all you know the contractor too had a PhD! Still it was an anti-climax because the logic was so obvious that there is little room for argument. Quite disappointed, everyone went back into the sloughing position. There was little choice, after all!



Hamzah Sendut

Sensing the situation, the "contractor" was keen to move on and continue the diligent task of "supervising" the work in progress elsewhere - at least that was what we thought! Just about then he decided to formally introduce himself. "*Saya Hamzah Sendut, Naib Canselor Universiti!*"

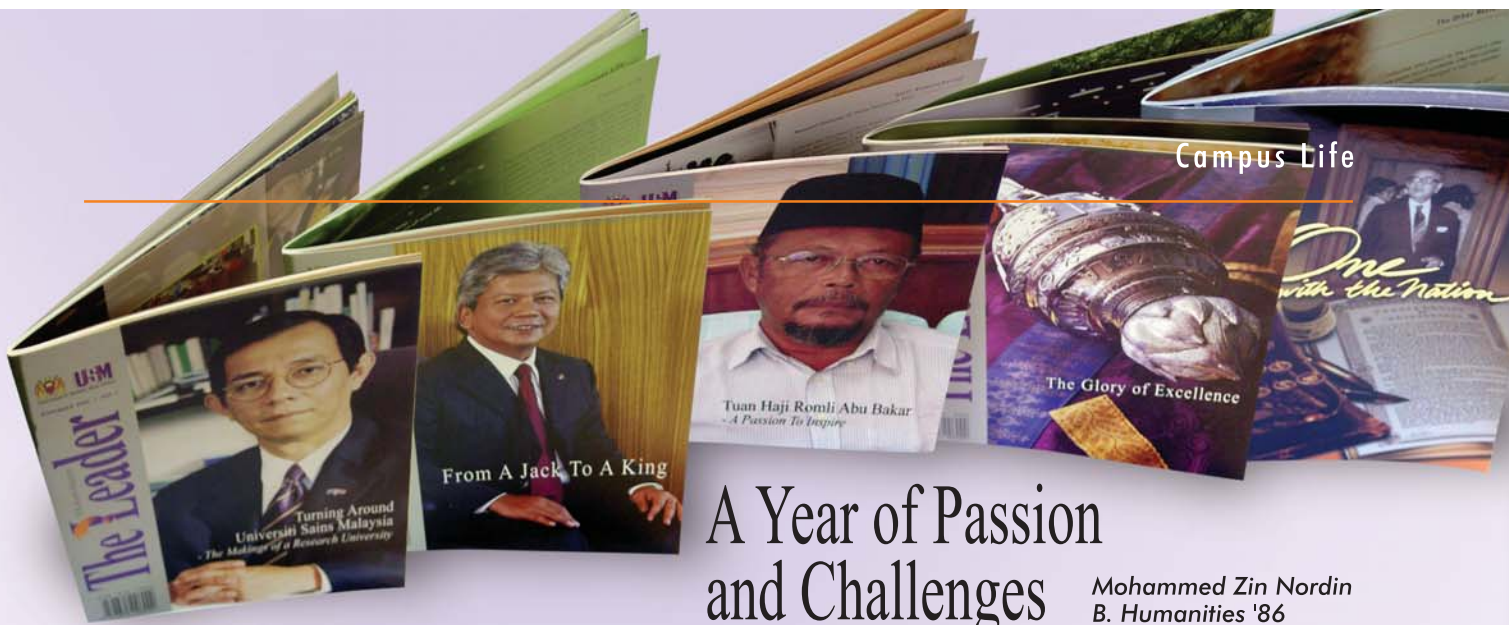
Almost instantly, everyone scrambled to grab the nearest thing available to make themselves look decent - towels, sarongs, even bed sheets. And then, almost instantly again, everyone stood straight with hands automatically extended for a quick handshake (or even apologies!). The Vice-Chancellor obliged and left, smiling and chuckling to himself. As soon as he was gone, the towels, sarongs and bed sheets fell to the floor, as was everyone else who nearly had a fainting spell after the interesting revelation.

The life-time encounter was a wake-up call. Welcome to Universiti Pulau Pinang! Little did I suspect that the experience would later unfold into something more meaningful in my life.



Prof. Dato' Dzulkifli Abdul Razak is currently the Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Sains Malaysia. He can be reached at [vc@notes.usm.my](mailto:vc@notes.usm.my)

Photograph of Hamzah Sendut courtesy of Centre of Instructional Technology and Multimedia [PTPM], USM



## A Year of Passion and Challenges

Mohammed Zin Nordin  
B. Humanities '86

The business of producing *The Leader*, or any magazine for that matter, is not an easy one. Ask any seasoned magazine editor or writer, and they will tell you a tale full of datelines, proof readings, layout designs, photo selection for articles, and a myriad of other seemingly unending tasks. It's like living in a pressure cooker. Yet, ironically, the magazine is expected to meet the needs of the readers. Such is the demand of magazine production. Nothing less!

A year has passed since the first issue of *The Leader* was published. Still in its infancy, *The Leader* has shown continuous improvement with each publication. This is commendable considering the team entrusted to produce it is non-professionals. In fact, they are volunteers from the rank and file of the university. For most of the team members, producing a magazine is a new experience. While they may lack the experience, it was amply compensated with a huge dose of passion within them for the magazine. They aspire for the magazine to touch meaningfully each and everyone who reads it. Nothing less!

The journey so far has not been without challenges. The team really needs more writers. They also need an editor. At the moment, *The Leader* relies mainly on volunteer writers and editors. The few writers have to cover three or four articles for every publication. With the increase in publication from two to three issues annually, the need for more writers becomes crucial. In fact, professional writers are needed as *The Leader* matures. There are plans to include permanent professional writers into the scheme of things down the road. *The Leader* cannot afford to rely on high turn over among volunteers as it grew. This has to be planned in order to determine consistency in quality at every issue. In the long term only quality will sustain *The Leader*. Nothing else!

The team is also challenged with a proper space of their own to operate. Although that might be the case, the Alumni Liaison Office (ALO) has managed to cater for every need of the team to conduct their editorial business. It is envisioned that an office will be set up soon for the editorial team. Hopefully this will enhance the esprit de corp of the members. This would augur well for *The Leader* when the team is united. Nothing else!

Stewardship is pertinent to guide the magazine to stay its course. The Vice Chancellor has been instrumental in supporting the magazine. Meanwhile, the current chief editor is also playing his role superbly. *The Leader* has developed well under his gentle guidance the past year. Yes, there are still "teething" issues in the magazine, but the team is confident that the leadership will correct the issues. More importantly, the team members are at ease with the leadership. This has made work fun and meaningful. This is the reward for the editorial team. Nothing else!

Generally, the past year has been good for *The Leader*. It is difficult to rate them at the moment. Nevertheless, rest assured that the readers are continuously assessing it. Good standard has been set. Better performance is only to be expected in the future. Nothing less!

Happy first anniversary!



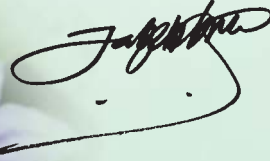
Associate Professor Dr. Mohammed Zin Nordin is currently a lecturer at the School of Communication, USM. He can be reached at [mohammed@usm.my](mailto:mohammed@usm.my)

# Giving Back

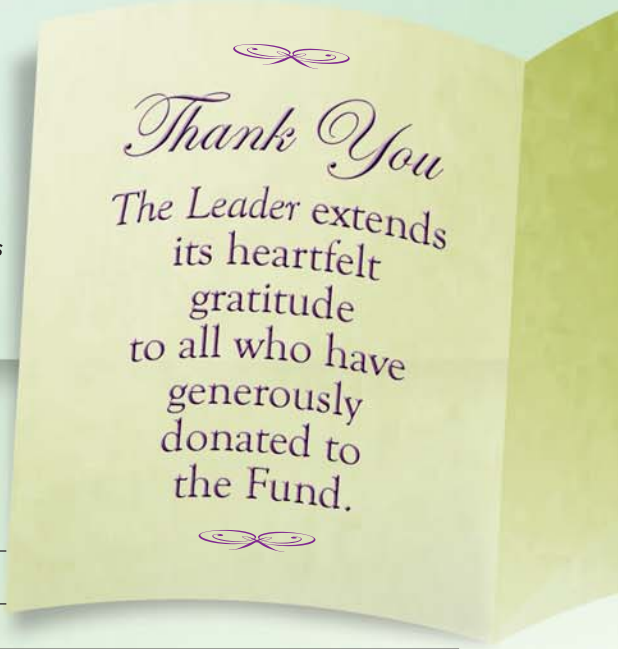
Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) has set up the Alumni Endowment Fund for individuals and corporate organisations to contribute towards the development and progress of USM. As an alumnus I am sure you would like to see your alma mater becoming a vibrant learning centre and a global university of distinction with state of the art resources and facilities. Every cent of your contribution will take USM closer towards realising the aspiration. Every donation will qualify for tax deduction.

*Let us contribute generously  
and make USM globally respectable*

*Sincerely*



Associate Professor Mohamed Talhah Idrus  
Chief Editor  
The Leader



*Thank You*  
The Leader extends  
its heartfelt  
gratitude  
to all who have  
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# Guess Who???



1973

1973



1981



*We are running short of photographs, please send in yours.*



Merry Christmas  
Happy New Year &



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# Natural Lovers

"We are greatly prejudiced by our size. We find it very difficult to believe that an animal that is many thousand times smaller than ourselves can have anything in a way comparable to our own motives, or to experience anything that resembles our basic emotions of fear and hunger, let alone aggression or sexual excitement"

*David Attenborough, 2005*

Text and photographs by  
Mohamed Talhah Idrus  
B. Soc. Sc. '74

A pair of common **koels** cooing and head-bobbing during a courtship ritual in the School of Housing Building and Planning

## The Other Residents

Falling in love is taken for granted as a human activity. Where animals are concerned, we are reluctant to see them as capable of loving, apart from caring for the young by the parents.

However, animals have been seen going through the same processes of attraction, having elaborate courtships, mating, and providing tender care after pairing up. Even though species may differ in acting out the phases of these activities, it is clear that romantic love may not be unique to humans alone.

Courtships differ enormously even among the birds. From what we understand of "mating", theirs are often natural acts of procreation. This is especially true in many species, particularly among insects and invertebrates. Procreation itself may take many forms than what humans are capable of perceiving.



This pair of **belalang kunyit** (grasshoppers) does not seem to mind passers by in **Desa Fajar Bakti**

Natural Lovers

The discovery of the placements of the sexual organ of a male snake, for example, would surely be "strange" to us, the self-centred species. What appropriate words would we ascribe to the act of the male millipede who transfers his seeds to the female by a special leg! Even though humans may perceive two interlocking dragonflies and damselflies as "mating", jaws may drop when told that this happens with the male lacking a sexual organ!

Even though we are uncertain about emotions in the animal kingdom, smaller residents like spiders can be observed to have individual characters including their behaviour during procreative phases.

A male **millipede** approaching a female



The name **ladybirds** maybe politically incorrect



In unison mating **handmaidens** make an interesting art form

There is an abundance of "strangenesses" in the many behaviours of the other residents of the Minden campus. Invertebrates, frogs, and birds seem to display affection and love during courting and mating.

Unlike humans, these residents court and mate unabashedly. Their acts occur spontaneously natural and most of the times quite beautifully - especially in their courtships - even among the invertebrates.

**Toads** are most noticeable after a rainfall, when they gather to mate. Note the string of eggs

### Natural Lovers

The elaborate courting and pairing of the dragonflies, for example, is artistically orchestrated. The male, hovering over a female flying in tandem, swiftly turns and hook the tip of its tail on her head before curling up into a wheel. The ritual can create songs in one's mind. Reducing this beautiful melody to "mating" also restricts our appreciation of one of the beauties around us.

**"go to the ants, thou sluggard: consider her ways and be wise" Proverbs 6:6**

To the informed, the slow leg-tapping of male millipede can also be an interesting start of an hour-long "romance". If you can have the patience to wait, you may notice a fascinating progression of tender loving in action!

Birds are especially amusing to watch. While some like the koels are noisy and rowdy, others like doves and pigeons are subtle and gentle. Even the flamboyant ones like the pied fantail can still draw admiration and smiles from an observer with their display restlessness and nervous wagging of the tail.



**Damselflies** are among the most beautiful in union. Here, the male (top) hooks the head of the female (bottom), while she collects his sperm from a "pouch" in his upper abdomen

In fact there is no shortage of entertainment from these residents. In the process we learn more about the environment and ourselves.



The **Tekukur** (spotted dove) are faithful spouses, almost always going in pairs.



The **Merpati** (common pigeon)



The **punai daun** (green pigeons) are not only inseparable once they pair up, they exhibit their "affection" by insisting on being close to each other

**Merbuk** (ring-necked pigeon) demonstrate the same behaviour as **tekukur**.





The ***gembala kerbau*** (common mynahs) also pair up for life



The male ***murai gila*** (fantail-robin) is boisterous but melodious during courtship

As a non-scientist, I am baffled by many of the bird behaviours particularly in their styles of partnering.

Why do some males leave their mates immediately after mating while others stay on? Why is incubation and feeding done by a female, while the male does the task in other species while yet in other species both male and female perform the task? Why is the common mynah notoriously monogamous, while the sparrow promiscuously polygamous?

Perhaps these mysteries are intended for their own welfare. Their wanton display of affection could shed light on our own relationships. While humans are capable of hypocrisy, the residents are natural in their relationship and we should fathom their wisdom in flaunting it.



Despite their size and menacing appearance, this pair of ***helang merah*** (brahminy kite) even took turns to share a meal of a monitor lizard on a dead branch along **Lorong Pegawai**



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GANESARATNAM  
ALAGARATNAM



KEE THUAN HEAN



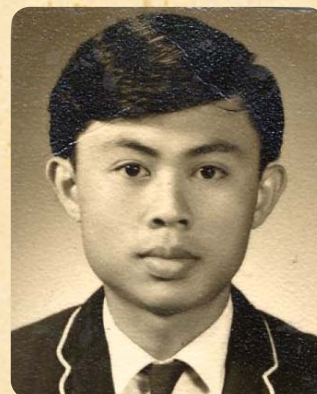
KOO WEE KOR



KUANG SING TEE



MOHD. YUSOF ABU BAKAR



NG CHENG EAP



OOI SEE HAI



QUAH LEONG CHUAN



SUKHESH SADANANDAN

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Compiled by Zamhari Ahmad (B. Mgmt '04). The editorial board welcomes updates on your photographs and biodata.



The Joy of  
Getting  
Together

## Ali Setan Days

Peggie Ng  
B. A. '86

Among some of my fond memories were Zailan Morris' lectures. On the first day of her class, she announced that her Introduction to Philosophy 101 will not be delivered in the lecture theater.

"Choose a tree," she said.

Wow!! How cool, I had thought. Since I was a child I've always been fascinated by the "Flame of the Forest" tree. There were many on campus. The one behind lecture theatre 'A', huge and wrinkled with age became our chosen tree. Under her low spreading branches laden with flaming blooms, we explored democracy, karma, moksha, reincarnations, vitamins in the beans, God, souls and everything between heaven and Earth. Occasionally, startled shrieks triggered by creepy crawlies punctuated the sessions. Quite soon, instead of flicking these tiny creatures miles away, we learnt to accept their presence. After all, we are sharing the same space. Under that wise old tree, Zailan taught us to live and let live. After each class we got up and limped away with butts aching from sitting on the buttress roots.

Another true to nature character whom I carry in my memory is Dr. Duncan Holaday. With him we were to learn film-making the Indies' way. It was the time when the Film Festival came to campus. By default, Duncan and his filmmaker wannabes were charged with drawing up the programme of the one-day seminar at the Tuanku Syed Putra Hall. Industry luminaries, such as L. Krishnan, Jin Shamsuddin, Rahim Razali, and Othman Hafsham were to speak on the evolution of film-making, from the beginnings



In front of the '**Flame of The Forest!**  
From left: Kim Tan, Cecie Lim and Peggie Ng  
(Photograph courtesy of Peggie Ng)

in Jalan Ampas, Singapore, to the then current "Adik Manja" (Spoilt younger sister/brother), a box office production.

The campus was abuzz with industry players, followers, observers, critics, and actors. We had to deliver a programme that measured up to the significance of such a gathering. The responsibility was overwhelming. What was a film festival without screening a film? With only days to go, we had no film, no projector, no screen and no budget. Just when the wannabes were to run out of steam, miraculously, Duncan, through his connections, secured a black & white classic from somewhere.

We were in business again! However, it was no cause for rejoice. A film without a projector and a screen? To stay in business, Duncan begged, and went to borrow a projector and a screen from a defunct cinema hall in Ipoh. With less than 24 hours to go, we still had one more hurdle. There was no frame to mount the giant screen. The wannabes were

*The Joy of Getting Together*



*Mass Communication class of 86. Clockwise from left: Kim Tan, Cecie Lim, Abang Sardon and Peggie Ng (Photograph courtesy of Peggie Ng)*

clueless. As we braced ourselves for the most shameful defeat four long bamboo poles, still green with freshness, came through the Hall. What a genius idea! Boy scout skills came to our rescue. Jute ropes held the four poles together to make a huge rectangle frame. Yards of nylon string secured the screen onto the bamboo frame. Even then, Duncan had no idea how we were to make the frame stand upright.

But it had to work. There was no time for re-dos. After midnight, with sheer force and orchestrated coordination, we hoisted the giant bamboo silver screen upright on the stage of Hall. It stayed and firmly too.

Hours later, we were back at the Hall, fresh in clean clothes to go about our respective duties. Duncan and the boys were in the backroom to take care of the projector. Lokman Muda and I went on stage to MC the opening ceremony. No rehearsal, projector untested and no stage manager on walkie talkie.

After the formality speeches, I remembered saying to a full house, "Let's watch this classic if Dr Duncan and his team are ready."

Lokman and I kept our fingers crossed. The house lights went down. Laila Majnun came on the screen. The movie rolled from opening title to closing credits without a glitch. Hooray!

For me, I learnt from Duncan 3X-Factors most required of an independent film-maker: perseverance, resourcefulness and a good threshold for stress.

The motto should be: "Never say die." Success that comes easy did not taste as sweet. It was a precious lesson that did not come in print.

Early in my 3rd semester, the boys were abuzz over a new lecturer -- a petite lady with a frizzy mop of hair, oversized spectacle frame and pouting lips. With made-up eyes and trendy clothes, she was a sight to behold. Sujiah Salleh was to lecture us on "Broadcasting."

At one corner of her office, she had a mengkuang (grass) mat and cushions. Wow! A nap corner in her office! As it turned out, she was a single mum to three young boys and that was where they would rest and play whenever she had to bring them along to work. Her doors were always unlocked and we were welcome to park ourselves on the mat in between lectures. This funky lady became more than a lecturer to some of us. She was a friend. We had a wonderful barbeque party at her house too.

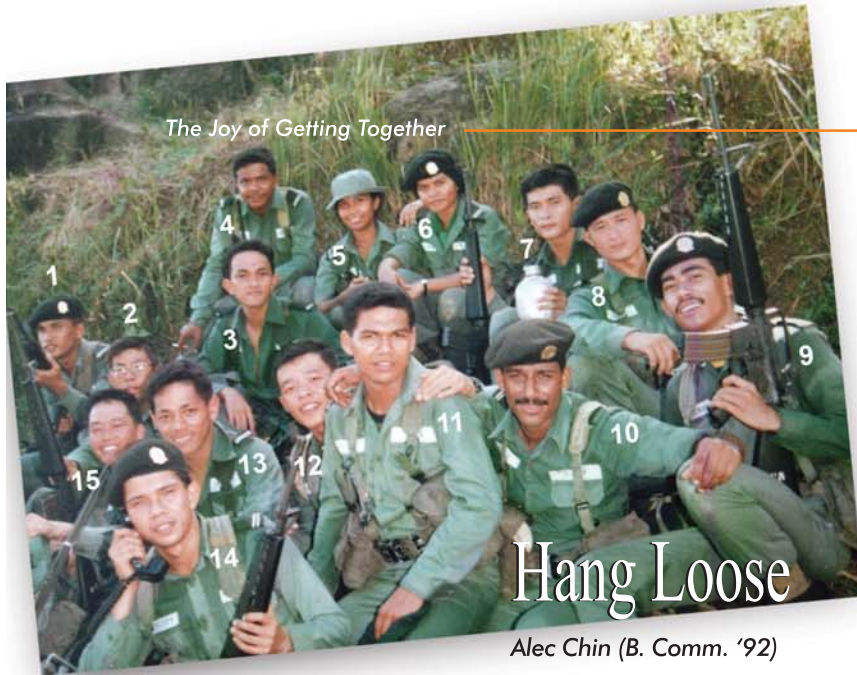
Sujiah was instrumental in the making of *Ali Setan* on campus. All of us were given scenes to write and some of us were casted to play minor roles. We quickly became familiar with the burning spotlights, glaring reflectors, camera, tracks and other production paraphernalia. On the flip side of Jin's signature, "Ready for Take!", over the hailer, were the tedious re-takes and long waits between scenes. Shooting throughout the day was anything but glamour. No grades were given and no money paid. It was an eye-opener into the hard work of film-making.

I didn't see *Ali Setan* as a big thing until now. More than 20 years later, it has not lost its appeal. It is being screened over and over on TV. USM, featured in the film, makes the alumni of different generations proud and nostalgic. Perhaps it should be screened as part of the orientation program of every student-intake.



*Peggie Ng is currently a performance consultant, Pritchett Rummler Brache. She can be reached at [peggie@streamyx.com](mailto:peggie@streamyx.com)*

The Joy of Getting Together



Taking a break during the annual camp training (Intermediate Level) in 1990, somewhere in Perak. From left: 1.Ashri Ismail, 2.Chong Chin Seong, 3.Arman Saat, 4.Ibrahim Mohamad, 5.Salina Budin, 6.Che Rohana Zakaria, 7.Tan Gim Chaw, 8.Tan Chin Wah, 9.Roziman Zainal, 10.Raj Anand, 11.Nizam Khalid, 12. The Writer, 13.Anuar Embong, 14.Aminudin Malik and 15.Wong Swee Peng.

For us hardcore moviebuffs, midnight shows downtown were the in-thing during the weekends; Rex, Odean, Capitol, Majestic and Dalit cinemas held many sweet memories for me and my wife who was my girlfriend at that time. Sadly most of them were closed down during the slowdown in the late 90s, or had been converted into shopping malls.

I first entered USM as a freshman in 1988, I was eager to absorb as much knowledge as possible and experience the excitement of campus life. Four years in the ivory tower has left an indelible mark in my life, culminating in my graduation in 1992. Being in the campus during the transition of different decades had, in many ways, allowed me to spot some significant changes in the campus life.

During the 'hang loose' days of the late 80s, you could actually wear torn jeans and round neck t-shirt to lectures and library. Some of my coursemates even wore bermuda shorts and slippers during night lectures. Sneaking out from the hostel (*desasiswa*) room in the wee hours of the morning for a late supper downtown was a norm, without any stern ticking-off by the *Pak Guards* (campus security guards), whom most of them we knew by names. For motorbikers, donning crash helmets were not compulsory unless you decided to venture past the campus gates. For those who dared make short trips beyond the gates without helmets did not need to worry because *Pak Guard* would give you an advance notice if they had spotted any traffic police around the gate area...

Food, glorious food was something that we couldn't live without in those days. Till the mid-80s KFC, McDonald's and Pizza Hut have yet to arrive in Penang. Other than the canteens in campus, the nearest hang-out 'cafes' were those makeshift shacks along the Sungai Dua Street, and the 24-hour restaurant Kampung Ku in Gelugor. The palatable *Char Koay Teow*, *Roti Canai*, *Sup Tulang*, *Nasi Paprik*, *Nasi Goreng Pattaya*...they were simply irresistible.

Coming to the early 90s, the situation was a little tense with rumours that the tuition fees for all programmes might be raised, and true enough, during the final semester in 1991, the fees were raised 100% across the board. For those students survived on FAMA (father and mother) 'foundation', the news sent them frantically looking for alternative financial sources. At almost the same time, new rulings came into picture: round-neck t-shirts were no longer allowed and donning crash helmets were made compulsory after a few tragic incidents involving motorbikers in the campus.

The three-year stint with ROTU (Reserved Officers Training Unit) was one of my most treasured memories, having to juggle between studies and military trainings was quite daunting but I enjoyed every bit of it while gaining tremendous knowledge in leadership, time management and strategic planning. In mid-90s, the University authority finally allocated a full-fledge ROTU hostel by the name of *Desa Kembara* for all the ROTU cadets, built along a wide marching ground (*padang kawat*) fronting the Bukit Gambir gate. I am proud to say that was, or maybe part of, the result of the frequent dialogue sessions with the then-VC Datuk Amir Awang during my cadet days. And the best of all, many of the ROTU 'comrades' remained as my best buddies till today.



Alec Chin is currently a designer and founder of Timur Communication. He can be reached at [alec@timurcomm.com](mailto:alec@timurcomm.com)

## Through Thick and Thin

Sharifah Darweena Syed Ahmad Amir Feisal  
B. Sc. '07



Our batch in Biology-Celebrate New Year at the fieldwork in Taman Negara, Pahang

**'As we go on,  
We remember, all the times we had together,  
As our life change, come whenever,  
We will still be friends forever'**

**Graduation** by Vitamin C  
(from the Album 'More' 2000)

That would precisely describe the joy of being together for me. As the time goes by, I really missed hanging out with my friends, going to classes with them, gossiping and eating roti canai at *Subaidah*, the only nasi kandar outlet on campus.

During my time, my friends and I were really anxiously waiting to see the new look of *Desasiswa Cahaya Gemilang* where we managed to stay for only one semester. But the precious times that I had went through with them remains until today.

Salina Zakaria of class 2006, both my senior and my room-mate, said, "I always missed practising for *Citrwana* (annual dance performance organized by the Hostelites' Council) and dancing with my friends at *Dewan Budaya* (Cultural Hall). I remembered, how we looked forward to rewarding ourselves, after a tiring practice session to hang out and eat 'bakso' (meatball noodle soup)



Boat trip to our camp site

at the premises of *Racun* as we fondly called the National Poison Centre. We did not leave the place until *Pakcik* (the elderly vendor) closed his stall."

A graduate of class 2003, Syazreen Sara Sukor said, "The joy is being together with my noisy and crazy batch of friends during convocation; moreover, we were privileged to be the last group to attend the one year matriculation in USM."

A biology graduate in 2007, Shahrill Ramli, commented, "The ecstasy of being together cannot be described. We literally went together through thick and thin. There are many memories I shared with my friends, but the one that I can't afford to forget was during my second year. My friends and I went to Gurney Plaza hunting for sponsors for our project, it went well at first but then all of us end up in a police station, because I lost my wallet. I was down but my friends helped to cheer me. Besides that, it was really nostalgic to reminisce our days of lectures and leisure."

In many ways we are really glad to be from the USM fraternity. We are thrilled to be together with our friends to recall what we had gone through since the first day we stepped into the campus and to relive the joys of campus life again.



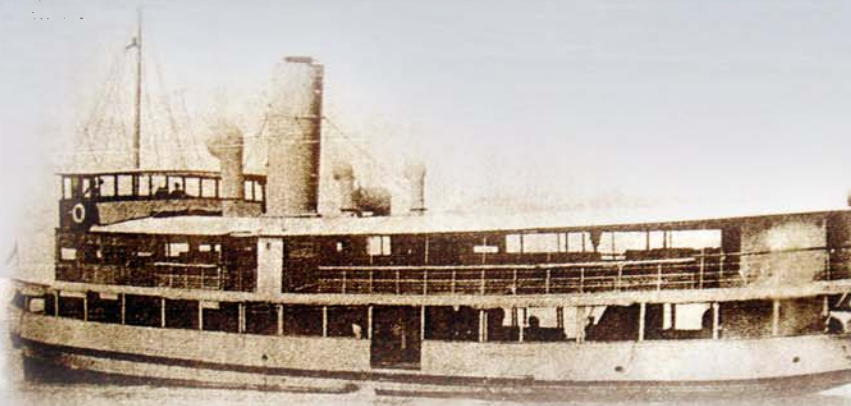
Sharifah Darweena Syed Ahmad Amir Feisal is currently a Assistant Registrar at Alumni Liaison Office (ALO), USM. She can be reached at [darr\\_wynn@yahoo.com](mailto:darr_wynn@yahoo.com)

Yong Chek Yoon  
Photographs by Rusly Jamaludin

# A Ferry Tale

It was my first time going over to Butterworth to work in the seventies and I waited patiently for a ferry to arrive. Those with names of 'Pulau Rawa' (Rawa Island), 'Pulau Langkawi' (Langkawi Island), and 'Pulau Aman' (Island of Peace) came and went. I continued to wait because mine would be 'Pulau Pinang' (Penang Island). To my thinking, Butterworth is part of Pulau Pinang. My long-awaited ferry did arrive. I was almost late for work. It was not until I arrived at the workplace that I was told all ferries go to Pulau Pinang despite the names of other islands painted on them.

Penang ferries can give you the nostalgia as you stand on the deck, caressed by the warm breeze that has an unmistakable smell of sea salt. Nowadays you seldom hear the boisterous squawking of the seagulls or get a glimpse of dolphins swimming ahead of the ferry. At night, as the ferry heads from Butterworth to Penang, you can see the city of George Town aglow with city lights.



*Ferry plying the Penang-Prai route in the old days  
(Photograph courtesy of Malayan Railway)*

The story of Penang ferry service transports us to 1893 when Quah Beng Kee and his brothers first introduced a regular steam vessel ferry service between Penang and Province Wellesley. It was operated between Kedah Pier in Penang and various landing places on the mainland.

*George Town aglow with city lights.*

## A Ferry Tale

It was eventually taken over by the Penang Harbour Board in December 1924 and for the first time facilities for conveying motor vehicles were introduced.

The new ferry terminals were at the Church Street Ghaut Pier (Penang) and Michell Pier (Butterworth).

Between 1938 and December 1941, there were three ferries operating: *Tanjong*, *Kulim*, and *Bagan*. In the early part of the Japanese invasion, *Tanjong* and *Kulim* were sunk in the harbour. *Bagan* was taken to Sumatra where it inevitably fell into Japanese hands. The Penang Port was damaged by the British and several vessels were rendered unseaworthy but were soon put into operation by the Japanese.

During the Japanese Occupation the port was in little use as trade dwindled to almost nothing. British forces landed in Penang on 3 September 1945 after the Japanese surrendered in August.

The Penang Harbour Board was reconstituted on 1 April 1946 by the British Military Administration after clearing the wharf premises of mines, wreckage and siltation.

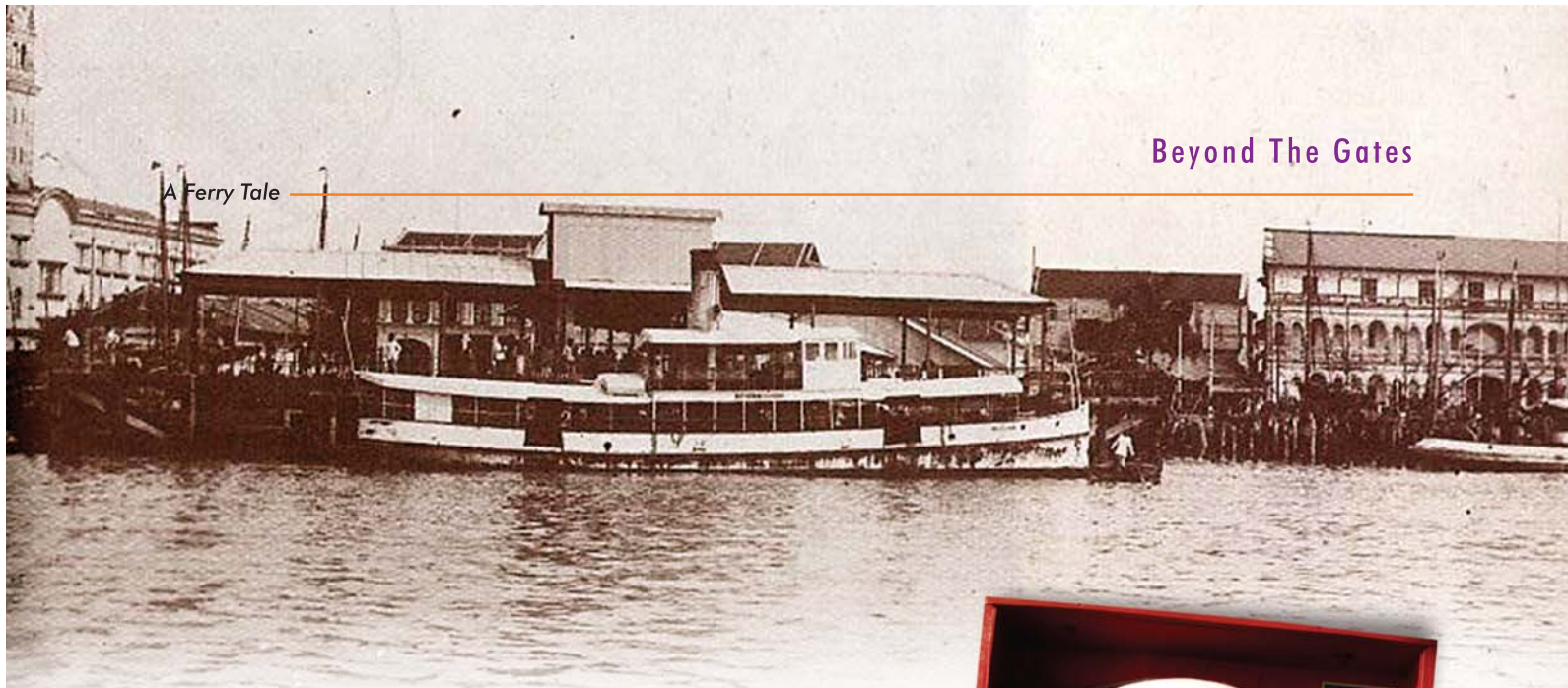


Rows of cars on board a ferry in 1958  
(Photograph courtesy of Malayan Railway)

For those who were born in the seventies they might not have experienced the days when Penang enjoyed the free port status. Mainlanders would try to smuggle duty-free sugar from the island and Thais make a beeline on weekends to Campbell Street to buy shoes from Crane Shoe Store, Zlin Shoe Store, or cosmetics from shops in the area.

Penang was declared a free port in 1872 in view of the increased volume of international trade with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. In 1890 alone, some 800 steamers and several thousand smaller crafts anchored in Penang. Hundreds of lighters of various types were employed to load and unload goods from ships which Penang was essentially a lighterage port with lighters operating from Weld Quay - a free landing place on the island. This also gave rise to the clan jetties that you see at Weld Quay today.

A Ferry Tale



An old postcard showing Victoria Pier with a ferry in 1910

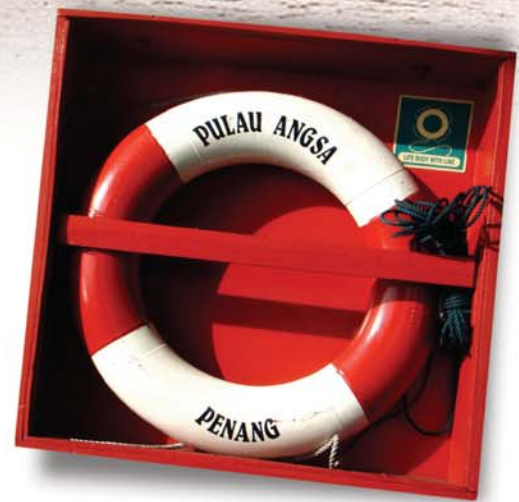
It was only in 1903 that the 1,200-foot Swettenham Pier was constructed by the Tanjong Pagar Dock Company. The facility improved the capacity and efficiency of the port but the business community continued to urge for greater development and better administration. That same year Prai was connected to the railway system of the peninsular and became a terminus for the Federated Malay State Railway (later to be known as the Malayan Railway).

The Prai Wharf facilities were taken over by the Railway from the Tanjong Pagar Dock Company in 1914 and were developed into a railway wharf.

*Penang ferries had been painted blue instead of the usual yellow-and-black.*



A Pulau Angsa lifebuoy ready on deck



The present ferries shuttle between the Raja Tun Uda Pier on the island and the Sultan Abdul Halim Pier in Butterworth since 1955. The fare was 25 cents as compared to the current fare of RM1.20. Even if times have changed, the charm remains. You cannot resist recalling those times when the ferries spew black smoke from its chimney stack and smell the diesel wafting from its engine room. Such ferries are antiquated but the ride was nonetheless fun.

Before the opening of the Penang Bridge in 1985, first timers who used the ferry to cross to the island enroute to USM may have faced the confusion of waiting for the arrival of 'Pulau Pinang'. It is an experience to cherish. Thanks to the person who had named the vessels after other islands.



Yong Chek Yoon is currently the Editor/ASEAN Fellow 2005 of National Poison Centre, USM. He can be reached at [cyong@notes.usm.my](mailto:cyong@notes.usm.my)



# BALIK KAMPUS 2005

Photographs by Zamhari Ahmad (B. Mgmt '04)



# Prof. Amir Awang

Recalling his services with USM, Dato' Prof Amir Awang said that he spent much of his time at one of the hotbeds of activities, the Students' Affairs Department (officially *Hal Ehwal Pelajar*, or more popularly known as HEP). Hence, it is natural that his recollections are about the time spent at HEP.

One of the memories he treasured most is the team spirit at HEP and the support received from supporting staff, including those from top posts.

"Such spirit is crucial in a department like HEP because it has been entrusted with the overall progress and development of the students other than their academic affairs," said Amir.

Literally the whole university cooperated in ensuring that that the students are well looked after. This would not have been possible if team work was lacking. And the team work involved strong bonds, cooperation, and through open horizontal and vertical communication, and interactions among individuals. Such cooperation and communication manifested from the Vice-Chancellor down to the officer of the lowest rank.

"HEP duties did not confine to within the campus. It communicates directly with a string of education

*A youthful Professor Amir Awang during his earlier days in USM. On his left is Professor Abdullah Hassan*

ministers. Among others we communicated with the then Dato' Musa Hitam (now *Tun*), Dato' Dr. Sulaiman Daud, Dato Seri Najib, and not least Dato' Seri Abdullah," said Amir.

He said that with good team work despite have such a large and complicated network that these seventeen years had passed without feeling stressed for a single day.



*Amir Awang*

Amir also remembered the day when Tun Thanat Khoman, a one time Prime Minister of Thailand, was invited as a special guest for the opening of the ASEAN Inter-Varsity Games in Chiangmai University.

During the march past on the day of the parade, Tun Thanat remarked, "Malaysian team march like soldiers...."

"I smiled, knowing very well that the Malaysian university teams had undergone a special marching drill conducted by USM Reserve Officer Training Unit to ensure that they all march well before leaving the country," said Amir. He added that this clearly demonstrated the all-round ability of Malaysian students when efforts are made, rendering truth to the "*Malaysia Boleh!*" ("*Malaysia Can Do It!*").



I have 6 children: 3 sons and 3 daughters. Five have graduated and are working. The youngest is still at school. Like Ani said when I delivered that one, 'U started 1st and finished last!' I am just a successful homemaker, I guess. Raised 6 kids without a maid most of my 36 years of marriage (29th Aug). Two daughters did law and the one born during my final year was practising for a while with her hubby, a partner in a law firm.

By the way, Tengku Khaulah and Tuan Ibrahim remain close to me and Shukor. Ani (Shamsiah) and Huzaimah keep in touch and we invite each other to our children's weddings, at least.

I met Shukor two weeks into University, we got married at start of my second year and I had our first child exactly two months before my final year examinations. When I was at my final stage of my pregnancy, one of the foreign (Canadian) lecturers asked how I was. When I told him that I couldn't wait to have the baby as I had a bad pregnancy, he replied, "Hah, you don't know what you are in for, the troubles start after the baby is born, not before!" What he said had been true but I forgot each time and continued to have 5 more kids. Sorry, I have many other fond memories but being more 'domesticated' I guess, this sort lingers on more.



Siti Zaleha Mohamed Nor  
(Courtesy of Siti Zaleha Mohamed Noor)



**NOTHING LIKE PRACTICAL TRAINING**

**UNDERGRAD Miss Heng Soo Koon, 20, (above) tries her hand on a lino-type machine at the production department of the Straits Times in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.**

With her are other second-year students from the University of Science, Penang. They are all majoring in communications.

During their two-hour visit yesterday morning, the 20-member group was also shown around the printing and editorial sections.

The group, led by Dr. John Lent, a lecturer on communications, arrived in the capital last Sunday for a one-week tour.

A New Straits Times coverage of the second group of Mass Communication majors in 1972 (Courtesy of Datin Siti Aminah Che Omar)

Students enjoying their food in the dining hall in the 70's

# Groovy Seventies

Goh Ban Lee  
B. Soc. Sc. '73

Scanning the photographs of the pioneers who enrolled in the School of Social Sciences' in 1970 (*The Leader*, October 2007), I cannot help but reminisced. There were about 80 of us. The University, established in 1969, during the aftermath of the May 13th bloodbath, under the name of Universiti Pulau Pinang, initially registered 60 students pursuing science courses. Later, amidst protests from students and lecturers the name was changed to Universiti Sains Malaysia. (At least, the proposal to call it *Universiti Langkasuka* was not adopted!)



Goh Ban Lee in the younger days

When we moved from the borrowed premises of the Malayan Teachers' College in Gelugor, to the Minden campus, there were no gleaming lecture theatres or rooms. Administrative offices, lecture and tutorial rooms were converted from buildings used by the British army. However, some of the structures were beautiful and magnificent. A good example is the *Muzium dan Galeri Tuanku Fauziah* (Tuanku Fauziah Museum and Gallery) which formerly was used as a library and subsequently as the office of the Centre for Policy Research. During colonial days, the building was a Sergeants' Mess.

The Globe Theatre, formerly used by the British Army for screening movies was the biggest lecture hall on campus. There, Mr. Chee Kim Loy taught us "Quatitative Methods" and the *Tabula Rasa* took to the stage whenever there was a performance. Later, the Globe was demolished to make way for the Dewan Tuanku Syed Putra (Tuanku Syed Putra Hall).



The Globe Theater built by the British Army was turned into the first lecture theater in campus in 1971, but was later demolished to make way for a car park near the present Dewan Tuanku Syed Putra

## Groovy Seventies

In the '70s, before the enactment of the University and University College's Act, we were allowed to form a Students' Union. Asairinachan a/l Kunjamboo (B. Sc. '72) was elected the first President. When his term ended, Mohd Farid Ariffin (B. Soc. Sc. '73) took the post. I was the Secretary General with the late, Abdullah Ismail (B. Soc. Sc. '73), as my deputy. The Treasurer was the late Ng Seng Kang (B. Soc. Sc. '73). Other office bearers included Ramli Mohamed (B. Humanities '74), Wong Yew Kong (B. Soc. Sc. '74), Tala'at Hussain (B. Soc. Sc. '73) and Hamima Dona Mustafa (B. A. '73). The main focus of the Union was the students' welfare. Although the student leaders were concerned about politics, with many taking a course in Malaysian Politics under Mr. Chandra Pillay, there was no partisan politics. If anyone had supported a political party then, it was not reflected in their Union activities.

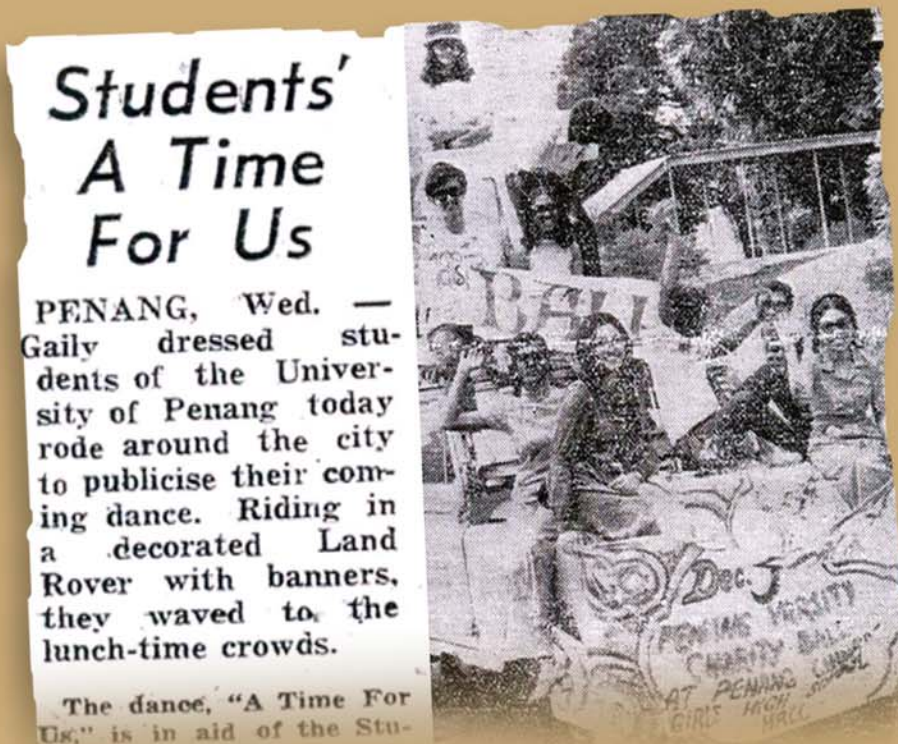
*A news coverage of the "float procession"  
(News clip courtesy of Siti Zaleha Mohamed Nor)*



*The Students' Union office in the campus.  
(Photograph courtesy of Goh Ban Lee)*

One of the "fun" activities undertaken by the Union was a fun-fair on the field near the Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah entrance. Then, it was no better than a marsh land. To publicise the fair, the organising committee announced in the press that the students would hold a float procession in George Town. As early as 6.00 p.m. people had begun lining along Jelutong Road, waiting for the procession. They might have thought that the float procession was something like the fantastic Chingay parade that Penang used to be famous for.

In reality, the students' "float procession" was no more than a convoy of two or three vehicles that were poorly decorated. In any case, the fair, itself, seemed a great success. There was a good crowd and the games' booths were well patronized. Many visitors took part in bashing an old car placed on the field, for a fee. The food and drinks' stalls also did very brisk business, particularly the one selling beer. The organizing committee members could not be happier. It was only at the end of the fair that the organisers realized that many of the coupons used to buy food and the crates of beer were counterfeits!



Groovy Seventies

Yes, beer could be sold on campus then. Besides that, the university boasted of a "rock" band, *Tabula Rasa*. In addition, the dinner and dance event, the Orientation Ball, culminating in the selection of a Freshie Queen was an annual ritual.

Many of the students, including those who had actively participated in the Union (which later was changed to the Students' Representative Council) and clubs graduated with flying colours. They went on to become very successful Malaysians, such as, professors, business tycoons, senior executives in multinational corporations, secretary-generals and director-generals in the federal and state government agencies as well as prominent politicians. Although many more do not get their names in print there is no doubt that they graduated and continue to be of service to the Nation, as good citizens and or as good family members.

The university has come a long way from the days of shared premises. Carrying on the legacy of the first Vice Cancellor, the late Tan Sri Prof.



Tunku Putri Jawahir (Soc. Sc. '73) being crowned Freshie Queen by the VC's wife in June, 1970 (Photograph courtesy of Siti Zaleha Mohamed Nor)

Hamzah Sendut and his team of administrators, such as Mr. S. Kandasamy, Mr. Noel Ogle, Mr. Cheah Hoong Tuck and Mr. Edward Lim the University thrived on the "we can do it" spirit. Today, we can all be proud that USM has been judged as the only university in Malaysia to be in the *cemerlang* (excellent) category. Congratulations are in order.



Dr. Goh Ban Lee is currently retired from the post of Lecturer in USM. He can be reached at [gohbanlee@yahoo.com](mailto:gohbanlee@yahoo.com)



Zaiton's house in Damansara

Highlights

Putrajaya

Peggie's house in Kampung Tunku

VC's residence in campus

Tan Sri Musa's residence in Kota Damansara

With Dato' Seri Mahdzir Khalid, Chief Minister of Kedah, in Alor Setar

Dato' Rahman's residence

Talhah's house in Penang

# Eid'ul-Fitr

## The Spirit of Alumni

Photographs by Zamhari Ahmad  
B. Mgmt. '04



**Dr. Goh Ban Lee**  
(B. Soc. Sc. '73)  
Current Status:  
Retired Lecturer of USM



**Masrah Abidin**  
(B. Soc. Sc. '74)  
Current Status:  
Retired Chief Librarian,  
USM



**Dato' Syed Jamal B. Syed Jaafar Shahab**  
(B. Soc. Sc. '74)  
Current Status:  
Chief Secretary,  
Ministry of Works Malaysia



**Datin Hj. Siti Aminah Che Omar**  
(B. Humanities '74)  
Current Status:  
Retired Headmistress of  
SMK Taman Medan,  
Petaling Jaya



**Abdul Rais Abdul Majid**  
(B. Soc. Sc. '74)  
Current Status:  
Director and Chief Executive  
Officer, Asset Cell Capital  
Sdn. Bhd



**Jenny Tan Suat Eam**  
(B. Sc. '75)  
Current Status:  
Chief Operating Officer  
(CEO), Adant  
Management Sdn. Bhd



**Haji Abdul Wahid Mohamed Noor**  
(B. A. '75)  
Current Status:  
Retired teacher



**Shamsina Md. Noh**  
(B. Soc. Sc. '76)  
Current Status:  
Retired Lecturer at Universiti  
Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)



**Prof. Datin Dr. Rashidah Shuib**  
(B. Humanities '76)  
Current Status:  
Director, Women &  
Human Resource Studies  
Unit (KANITA)



**Najamuddin Zabidi**  
(B. Soc. Sc. '82)  
Current Status:  
Project Manager,  
IBM (M) Sdn. Bhd.



**Dato' Syed Mohd Haris Barakbah**  
(B. Soc. Sc. '82)  
Current Status:  
Director, Blna Darulaman  
Berhad



**Dr. Mohamed Jafre Zainol Abidin**  
(B. Sastera Pendidikan '85)  
Current Status:  
Deputy Director, Centre for  
Languages & Translation





**Dr Rahmita Wirza  
O.K. Rahmat** (B. Sc. '89)  
Current Status:  
Senior Lecturer, Faculty of  
Computer Science and  
Information Technology  
Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)



**Mohamad Kamal Ithnin**  
(B. Mgmt. '89)  
Current Status:  
HR Director, SABIC  
Innovative Plastics



**Kamal Pardi**  
(B. Soc. Sc. '91)  
Current Status:  
Director, Industrial  
Harmony Division



**Suffian Hj Siman**  
(B. Soc. Sc '92)  
Current Status:  
Manager, Mitsui & Co., Ltd.



**Dr Hj. Kamal  
Hj. Ab. Hamid**  
(B. Soc. Sc. '92)  
Current Status:  
Assistant Director, Ministry  
of Human Resources



**Asha Suresh Chand**  
(B. Pharmacy '92)  
Current Status: Pharmacist



**Bazlan Hj. Abdul Wahid**  
(B. Comm. '93)  
Current Status:  
Director of Operations,  
AWS Jaya Sdn. Bhd.



**Zaini Bahrom Mohamed**  
(B. Soc. Sc. '95)  
Current Status:  
Principal Assistant Director,  
Ministry of Human Resources



**Sheikh Yahya Sheikh  
Mohamed**  
(B. Soc. Sc. 96)  
Current Status:  
Deputy, Head of Director  
Human Resources, Ministry  
of Human Resources



**Muhamad Fauzi  
Abd. Ghani**  
(B. Soc. Sc. '96)  
Current Status:  
Principal Assistant Director,  
Industrial Relations  
Department, Ministry of  
Human Resources



**Nasir Hj Kassim**  
(B. Soc. Sc. '96)  
Current Status:  
Principal Assistant Director,  
Industrial Relation  
Department, Ministry of  
Human Resources



**Nor Hanani Binti  
Abdul Ghani**  
( B. Applied Sc. (Maths) '04)  
Current Status: CAD Engineer,  
Motorola Technology Sdn. Bhd,  
Penang



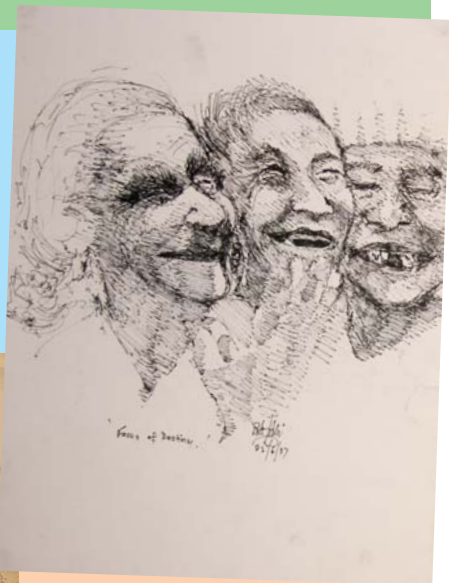
Guests helping themselves with the generous buffet spread

### Let's Get Together

On 31 October 2007, *Hari Raya* Open House was held at Dewan Tunku Syed Putra (DTSP) foyer. It was jointly organised by Alumni Liaison Office (ALO), International Office (IO), Alumni Association (AUSM) and Institute of Postgraduates Studies (IPS). The occasion was well received by our Alumni, staff, local and international students who had the rare opportunity to relish international cuisines from Indonesia, Palestine, Libya and Pakistan. Among the piping hot dishes served were *Daging Dendeng* (Fried Meat) from Indonesia and *kebab* from Palestine. Malaysian dishes gracing the buffet spread included all-time favourites: *Nasi Briyani*, *Ketupat and Rendang*, *Satay*, 'Kuih Raya' and cakes.

### "Sketches of Life"

A solo art exhibition "Sketches of Life" was held by Penangite, Shamsul Bahari at Muzium dan Galeri Tunku Fauziah in USM from 10 - 31 October 2007. Shamsul's exhibits consisted of a two-decade collection of sketches, including the ones he did while on a trip to England and Japan from the USA.



Photographs courtesy of Museum & Gallery Tuanku Fauziah

### "Pusaka Rimba"

Mohd. Shaparel bin Salleh, a.k.a Shaparel, (B. Arts, 1999) held his first solo exhibition at the Muzium dan Galeri Tuanku Fauziah, USM, 4-30 September. Themed *Pusaka Rimba* (The Rainforest Heritage), the exhibits aptly showcased acrylic paintings of the diversity of the Belum forest of West Malaysia. The opening ceremony was opened by well-known Malaysian artist Jaafar Taib, and attended by many of Shaparel's artist compatriots.



Shaparel beside one of his paintings



A banner of Shaparel's exhibition



Stadium

Lecture Theatres (DK)

- 1 DK A, B & C
- 2 DK D, E & F
- 3 DK G - R
- 4 DK S - W
- 5 DK X
- 6 DK Y
- 7 DK Kompleks Sains
- 8 DK Z
- 9 DK SK1, SK2, SK3 & SK4



Hamzah Sendut Library

Museum and Gallery Tuanku Fauziah



Balai Islam



Dewan Tuanku Syed Putra



Chancellery Building

# Getting Around USM

## Highlights

### The Appointments of New Deputy Vice-Chancellor

#### Prof. Ahmad Shukri Mustapa Kamal

Prof. Ahmad Shukri Mustapa Kamal has been appointed Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International Affairs) of USM, effective 1 September 2007. Prof. Ahmad Shukri was attached to the School of Physics for 21 years and later became Dean of the Institute of Postgraduates Studies (IPS).

Prof. Ahmad Shukri was appointed as Professor at the School of Physics, USM in 2000. He is a committee member of various organisations outside the university. He is also a Fellow of the Malaysian Institute of Physics and member of the Malaysian Medical Physic Association and the Malaysian Nuclear Science Association. He has published more than 60 research materials including research papers in international and national journal.



#### Prof. Dr. Lim Koon Ong

Prof. Lim Koon Ong has been appointed the first Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Industry and Community Network) of USM, effective 1 September 2007. This new post was created as part of a move to enhance the status of USM as a research university, in line with the designation of USM as one of the four research universities in Malaysia under the Ninth Malaysia Plan.

Prof. Lim joined USM in 1976 as a lecturer. He was also later appointed Deputy Dean and Acting Dean at the School of Physics. He is active in bio-physics research and has published more than 100 research materials consisting of research papers, journals articles and others. Prof. Lim has extensive experience in industry and community work and has established strong links with various industries and voluntary associations via his researches.

### November 2007

20 - 25 Nov 07  
25 - 27 Nov 07

Varsity Boat Race  
A Visit to UM

Tasik Putrajaya  
Universiti Malaysia Perlis

### December 2007

14 - 16 Dec 07  
20 - 25 Dec 07

USM International Hockey Festival  
Indian Rim Asian University Games,  
Perth, Australia

USM

Australia  
Dewan Utama Pelajar (DUP)  
Tasik Putrajaya

Semurni Lembaran  
Regatta Rowing USM-UM

### Minden Diaries

Every Tuesday on  
the first & third week  
of the month

USM Toastmasters Meeting

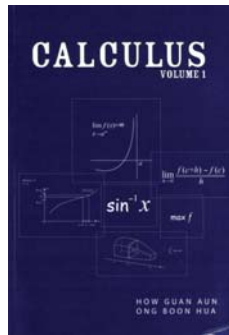
Meeting Room, International Office, USM

### Calculus. Volume 1

**Authors:** How Guan Aun,  
Ong Boon Hua  
**ISBN:** 978-983-861-327-9  
**Harga:** RM 79.00

**Synopsis:**

This book covers the content of the first part of calculus catering for mathematics students. It describes the concept and theory of limit, continuity, differentiation and integration of function of one variable up to the application of the fundamental theorem of calculus.



The first draft was used for the one semester course Calculus in 1999 offered to the first year mathematics students at Universiti Sains Malaysia. It was then used and modified every year till it appears in the present form.

We treat the theory of calculus rigorously. We take good care of the logical sequence of the theory, highlighting the fact that calculus is based on the completeness axiom of the real number system. Various examples are chosen to explain the subtleness of the theory. At the same time, we also emphasize on the applications of the theory.

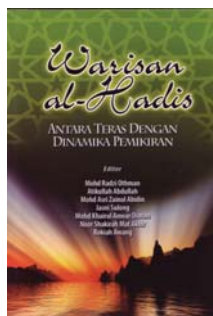
We hope that this volume together with the upcoming volume II will provide the students a strong foundation for courses in analysis.

### Warisan al-Hadis Antara Teras dengan Dinamika Pemikiran

**Editor:** Mohd Radzi Othman,  
Atikullah Abdullah, Mohd  
Asri Zainul Abidin, Jasni  
Sulong, Mohd Khairul Anwar  
Osman, Noor Shakirah Mat  
Akhir, Rokiah Awang.  
**ISBN:** 978-983-3986-08-8  
**Harga:** RM 20.00

**Synopsis:**

*Buku ini membicarakan beberapa dimensi hadis semasa yang dikaitkan dengan langkah-langkah penyelesaiannya menurut perspektif hadis. Beberapa topik pilihan dimuatkan dalam buku ini bagi menjawab persoalan-persoalan berkaitan hadis secara terperinci. Hal ini menjadikan buku ini istimewa dari segi isu yang dibincangkan dan penulisannya pula sesuai dengan perkembangan dunia semasa. Perbincangan bukan setakat menyentuh aspek-aspek teras yang biasanya dibincangkan oleh ulama tradisional, malah melampaui sempadan masa apabila fenomena semasa dan sikap pro dan kontra dalam dunia hadis turut menjadi bahan perbincangan.*

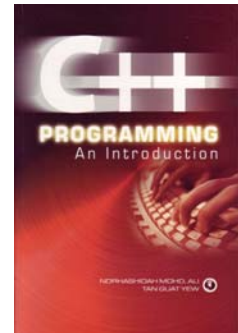


### C++ Programming An Introduction

**Authors:** Norhashidah Mohd.  
Ali, Tan Guat Yew  
**ISBN:** 978-983-861-332-3  
**Harga:** RM 60.00

**Synopsis:**

Now, to take advantage of Borland C++ Builder, the graphical user interface environment of the popular C++ programming language, this book introduced basic programming concept targeting first year undergraduate students with no programming background.



While other C++ books ignore the programming and language features you need, or use programs that are just basic examples, here you will find 90 practical programs and detailed coverage of the key concepts, including the language's input/output statements, function prototypes, debugging concepts, etc. But that is not all, look for additional features as follows:

- o 90 practical programs - console input/output statements, control structures and operators, external file manipulation, user-defined functions, arrays, pointers, classes and object-oriented programming concept.
- o Full coverage - major topics skimmed in other books but detailed here include data structures, basic concept in classes and object-orientation, problem solving and program design.
- o Clear illustrations - pictorial explanations clarifying data structures and algorithms as well as complex concepts such as problem solving, pointers and arrays.

Whether it is used in a self-study or course context, C++ Programming: An Introduction offers well-written, comprehensive coverage that will quickly enable readers to apply C++ to real world tasks on any machine.

**For enquiries, please contact:**  
**En. Norazam Ariffin at Tel: 04-653 4424 or**  
**na@usm.my**

JANUARY 2008						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

1 Jan - New Year Day  
23 Jan - Thaipusam

FEBRUARY 2008						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
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7 & 8 Feb - Chinese New Year

MARCH 2008						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
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APRIL 2008						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
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27	28	29	30			

MAY 2008						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
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1 May - Labour Day  
19 May - Wesak Day

JUNE 2008						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

7 June - DYMM Yang Dipertuan Agong's Birthday



NOVEMBER 2006 VOL.1

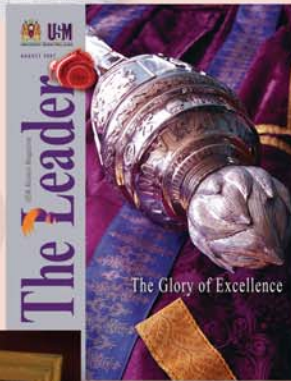
MARCH 2007 VOL.2 NO.1



JUNE 2007 VOL.2 NO.2



AUGUST 2007  
SPECIAL ISSUE



OCTOBER 2007 VOL.2 NO.3



JULY 2008						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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AUGUST 2008						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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SEPTEMBER 2008						
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OCTOBER 2008						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
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26	27	28	29	30	31	

1 & 2 Oct - Hari Raya Aidil Fitri  
27 Oct - Deepavali

NOVEMBER 2008						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

DECEMBER 2008						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

25 December - Christmas Day