

# Kuchikomi

## Former Singapore JET Participants Start Alumni Association



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### JILLIAN CHENG and WONG TECK ZHUNG

The Singapore Chapter of the JET Programme Alumni Association was officially formed on Friday, May 26, 2009 at the official residence of the Japanese ambassador to Singapore.

Interim President Wong Teck Zhung kick-started the two hour inaugural party with a speech fol-

lowed by introductions of the interim board members and the schedule of upcoming activities.

His Excellency, ambassador Makoto Yamanaka then gave a toast and congratulatory messages from Japan's Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone, Singapore's Foreign Minister George Yeo and Chair of the JETAA International Michael J. Adams were read out. >>continued on page 2

## JETAA Singapore booth attracts crowd at Summer Festival

### LEE SOOK HAN

JETAA Singapore's booth at the Japanese Association of Singapore's Summer Festival, its maiden public appearance after its formation, was a great success!

From the start until the end, there was always a crowd in front of the booth.

Visitors received an introduction about the JET Programme and JETAA Singapore and also played 5 stones, chapteh, a memory/matching game, and challenged JETAA Singapore's resident kuti-kuti grand champions, Medha Lim and Yap Teng Wui.

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Members of the Interim Board. From left: Wong Teck Zhung, Grace Tan, Wendy Sexton, Jillian Cheng, Lee Sook Han and Medba Lim.

**It's here!**

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A buffet dinner prepared by the resident chef followed and guests and members had opportunities to interact.

The official logo of JETAA Singapore was also unveiled after a round of voting by members.

The winning logo, chosen from four designs, is created by Tan Soon Cheng, who also acted as the Master of Ceremonies.

The night ended with group photo-taking sessions.

About 30 members and 40 guests attended the party, which was jointly organised by the staff of the Embassy of Japan in Singapore and the JETAA Singapore interim board.



Ambassador Makoto Yamakana (2nd R), his wife Yuriko (C) and guests.



Guests and members take food from the buffet spread.

**Interview with Tan Soon Cheng, designer of JETAA Singapore logo**

**Q:** What's the inspiration for the design?

**SC:** One of the main objectives of JETAA Singapore is to be a bridge between Singapore and Japan. I thought it would be good if the logo can amalgamate elements that are indicative of both countries. The national flag comes to mind. The main feature of the Japan flag is the red sun, while that for the



Singapore flag is the crescent and stars. Coincidentally, both countries use red and white colours. The end result is an amalgamation of the representative features of the two flags.

The circle signifies friendly relations between both countries.

The calligraphic brushstrokes fonts gives a friendly, not-too-stiff feeling, and symbolizes our Eastern culture.

**Q:** How did you feel when your design was voted by members?

**SC:** Definitely happy that people appreciated my design and I look forward to seeing it on official JETAA Singapore materials.

## JETAA Singapore booth attracts crowd at Natsu Matsuri



*The Summer Festival team.*



*A crowd gathers in front of JETAA Singapore's booth.*

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The Singapore trivia quiz also drew much interest. For example, how many official Merlion statues are there in Singapore? (Answer: five).

Approximately 150 adults, youth and children successfully completed all 5 challenges and received a pack of snacks and a decorative ketupat each.



Besides Singaporeans and Japanese, there were also visitors from Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, United Kingdom and others.

The annual event, also known as Natsu Matsuri, attracted some 7,000 visitors.

The event was led by Lee Sook Han and Medha Lim with assistance from Audrey Huang, Felicia Lee, Grace Lee, Jillian Cheng, Chong Koh Ping, Koh Yun, Mandy Goh, Olivia Wee, Tan Soon Cheng, T.Z. Wong, Wendy Lai, Wendy Praise and Yap Teng Wui.



*Playing Matching game.*



*Playing Kuti Kuti.*



*Chaptch.*



*Playing Five Stones.*

## Welcome Home, Fellow JETs

WONG TECK ZHUNG

Seven JET returnees were greeted with familiar and new faces, and the aroma of western food, at this year's Welcome Lunch organized by the JETAA Singapore and sponsored by the Embassy of Japan in Singapore.

The returnees enjoyed an afternoon of food and mingled with a l u m n i members and embassy staff Hirohisa Chiba, Motokawa, Abe and Yuko Kusaka san.



Following a speech by Chiba san, returnees gave a round of self-introductions and suggested activities the alumni could organize, such as karaoke competition, more meet-ups and home-stay and cultural programmes.

JETAA Singapore warmly welcome all returnees and hope to see them in future alumni activities.



*Hirohisa Chiba speaks to JET returnees and alumni members.*

## Embassy Staff Naoki Kuwayama Leaves For Tokyo After Two-Year Stay

JETAA Singapore members in September bid farewell to Naoki Kuwayama san with a seafood dinner and Tiger beer before he left for Tokyo.

Kuwayama san was in charge of the JET Programme and played a key role in setting up JETAA Singapore and supporting its activities.

Besides chili crabs and Tiger beers, he received an extra strength Tiger Balm shoulder rub, Tiger Plasters, ginger latte and a message board.



JETAA Singapore will miss Kuwayama san's cheerful disposition and wish him all the best in Tokyo. We look forward to working with Kusaka san.



*Naoki Kuwayama (4th L) and Yuko Kusaka (5th L) smile with alumni members before dinner.*

Also present was his successor, Yuko Kusaka san, who had no problems with chili crabs and said she enjoys eating spicy food.

## Meet-up with Japanese PM's Wife Mrs. Miyuki Hatoyama

WONG TECK ZHUNG and GRACE LEE

Mrs. Miyuki Hatoyama watches Korean television dramas more often than Japanese dramas.

The wife of Japan's Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama revealed this on November 14 to a group of Singaporeans at an informal and light-hearted chat session.

She had asked them why they chose to study Japanese. When one of them cited Japanese television dramas, Mrs. Hatoyama smiled and gave the unexpected reply; to the amusement of her audience.

Participants were also asked how often they use their Japanese as well as suggestions to improve the JET Programme. Majority of the

thirteen participants were former JETs as well as members of JETAA Singapore.

Mrs. Hatoyama was accompanying her husband to attend the Singapore APEC

Summit. She took the opportunity to have an informal interaction with Singaporeans at the session organized by the Embassy of Japan.



*Mrs. Miyuki Hatoyama (front row, C) and participants smile for a photograph.*

### OTHER EVENTS

#### Pre-Departure Orientation

Jul. 10 - A Pre-departure Orientation for this year's JETs was held at the embassy.

Grace Tan, Grace Lee, Felicia Lee and Amalia Yunus shared their JET experiences.

#### First JETAA Singapore Meet-up

Jul. 11 - Wendy Praise organised a get-to-know-each-other session for alumni members at the Mind Cafe in Boat Quay.

#### Farewell Party for This Year's JETs

Jul. 30 - A dinner was held for 22 JETs at a ballroom of the

Japanese Association of Singapore to bid them farewell.

Several alumni were at the dinner to share information and ideas with departing JETs.

Jillian Cheng and Wendy Praise were the MCs.

#### Dinner With CLAIR HQ and Singapore Staff

Nov. 24 - CLAIR Singapore hosted a dinner for visiting CLAIR HQ staff and alumni Board members.

All parties were able to share information on their activities as well as get to know the faces behind the organisations. CLAIR HQ's Hiroshi Narita even gave Board members an

impromptu nihongo tokkun (special training); much to the amusement of everyone.

The attendees were Hiroshi Narita, Sadami Mie, Ryo Kawakami and Atsuko Sasaoka from CLAIR HQ; Masahiko Sata, Sari Mochizuki Sari, Kengo Otsuka and Chua Hwee Teng from CLAIR Singapore; and Board members.

#### coming up

#### General Assembly and Elections

Feb. 27, 2010,

2 - 5:30 p.m.

CLAIR Singapore. 6 Battery

Road #31 - 02, S049909

**RSVP before Feb. 14.**

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