

17th CONFERENCE OF DIRECTORS OF NATIONAL LIBRARIES IN ASIA AND OCEANIA (CDNLAO)

COUNTRY REPORT LIBRARIES IN SINGAPORE 2008

THE LIBRARY PROFESSION IN SINGAPORE

Professional Development Scheme

The Library Association of Singapore (LAS) is the national organisation representing the interests of the library and information professionals in Singapore.

In August 2008, LAS established a Professional Development Scheme (PDS), which is an award that recognises the effort and achievements of librarians in their professional training and development effort. To qualify for the "Practicing Professional (PP)" award, a librarian needs to engage in 3 areas of professional development and training activities and attain points for each activity. When sufficient points are accumulated, LAS will confer the award to individuals on the recommendation of the PDS Board and their names will be gazetted and listed in the official LAS website. Employers will be able to use this as an indicator of a librarian's ability in keeping up with the rapid changes in the field and his/ her likelihood of performing their job competently.

To raise the professionalism of librarians, libraries in Singapore are fully supportive of staff in their pursuit of professional library qualifications. Both the National Library and The Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Library offer scholarships for staff to attend the Masters of Science in Information Studies course at NTU, while the National University of Singapore (NUS) Library grants no-pay leave or time-off for staff to attend the course.

Post-graduate Education

In 2007, 76 students enrolled in the NTU MSc (Info Studies) course and 103 students graduated from the course. Graduates from the course are pursuing careers as librarians, information specialists, IT professionals, record managers, information architects, knowledge officers among other fields.

VISITORSHIP TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Public Libraries

36.2 million people visited the public libraries and there were 1.97 million library members by the end of FY07.

COLLECTION PROFILE

National Library

In FY07, NLB received many valuable donations that included books, printing blocks, manuscripts, glass negatives and personal diaries.

Donor collections

The Donors Gallery was opened to the public on 11 November 2007. Occupying an area of 250 square metres, items and artefacts from 39 donors relating to Singapore and Southeast Asian art, literature, history and education are on display. These items include materials in different formats such as typed and handwritten manuscripts, sketch plans of residential estates, photographs, paintings and calligraphy. The Gallery also includes a special exhibition area that highlights periodically significant items from recent donations.

On 19 September 2007, the National Library Board (NLB) signed a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with Encik Abdul Ghani Hamid to formalise a partnership to preserve, archive and make accessible a selected collection of his rare books, manuscripts and other personal artefacts on Malay literature and the arts in Singapore and Southeast Asia. Encik

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Abdul Ghani also donated a personal collection consisting of approximately 2,000 items. Encik Abdul Ghani is a renowned writer, poet, painter and artist who has produced hundreds of poems in Malay and English, held many art exhibitions and has been awarded three prestigious awards: the Anugerah Tun Seri Lanang (1998) – the highest literary award for Malay literature, the Southeast Asia Write Award for Malay Poetry (1998) and the Cultural Medallion (1999).

The family of the late Kouo Shang-Wei donated over 7,000 photographs, negatives and slides of his personal collection to NLB. These items from the late Kouo, an award-winning photographer who captured sights and scenes of Singapore between the 1950s and 1980s such as the Singapore waterfront, Samsui women and the Singapore River.

Other notable donations:

- NLB acquired the digital rights of almost 1,000 photographs, hand-written musical scores, theatre scripts and newsletters dating from 1935, which were on loan from the Thau Yong Amateur Musical Association (陶融儒乐社). Thau Yong is one of the earliest music and drama associations to be set up in Singapore and its membership then comprised the prominent Teochew businessmen community. Its rich archives enhance research on the social history of the Teochews in Singapore and the development of music and drama groups.
- The family of Lin Chen (林晨), a prominent Chinese playwright who died in 2004, donated 8,602 items to NLB on 3 Jan. The collection comprises Singapore, Southeast Asian and Asian materials on drama, drawing and literature.
- Ustaz Ahmad Sonhadji, a prominent Muslim teacher, author and scholar, who has also written a Quranic translation, donated 698 books, dating from 1950s to 1980s, on the study of Islam and interpretation of the Quran in Arabic, Jawi and English, and loaned for digitisation about 7,000 pages of manuscripts, featuring his Singapore radio broadcasts and religious sermons, from 1960s to 1980s. This is a unique collection of manuscripts that reflects the development of Islam and Muslim culture in Singapore.
- The family of Eleanor O'Hara, from Queensland, Australia, donated 64 glass negatives on 21 February 2007, taken by Ms O'Hara's father during 1906 to 1919, capturing scenes from daily life in Singapore and Malaya. This is a notable set of images that enhances NL's research collection on early Singapore.
- Mr George Hicks, economist, editor and author of the internationally acclaimed publication *"The Comfort Women: Sex Slaves of the Japanese Imperial Forces"*, donated 4,000 publications to NLB. This collection comprises mainly monographs on Southeast Asia and Asian history, economics and culture, including 80 rare books, such as *History of Java*, *McCartney's Embassy to China* and *History of Japan*.
- At the Fang Xiu book launch and talk on 8 Mar 08, Mr Tan Suan Poh donated 410 sheets (306 sheets original, 10 sheets of galley-proof and 94 sheets of photocopy) of Fang Xiu's manuscripts to NLB. NLB was also granted the rights to digitise the manuscripts. Fang Xiu is one of our Pioneers in Chinese Literature.
- Feeha Cheng Seah Temple (飞霞精舍) donated about 300 printing blocks and related religious publications published in Singapore in the early 1950s. They are part of a larger collection of printing plates used by Feeha Cheng Seah Temple to print Chinese Buddhist, Taoist, Confucian and syncretic religious texts in the 1950s. These are significant because the printing was done in Singapore and distributed overseas.
- Datin Patricia Lim, former director of ISEAS library, donated 46 books on 18 Jun, including three rare books published in the 1930s and written by Shu Chiung, wife of Dr Wu Lien-teh, one of the earliest Chinese doctors in Malaya.

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- Donation of 6 volumes (over 800 pages) of documentary records, manuscripts, commentaries, congratulatory messages and eulogies related to the 60th birthday (1939) and death (1940) of Lin Kong Thing (林光挺), a prominent community leader in Pahang in the 1930s. Many of the manuscripts in the collection were written by famous personalities of that period, including Zhou Eng-lai, Soong Mei-ling, Yu You-ren and Yu Dafu. The donor also granted NLB the digital rights to the documents.
- Mr Lee Kip Lee, author and prominent Peranakan expert, granted NLB digital rights to 16 of his personal diaries, including his war diaries (1942-45), diaries from his childhood days (1930s) and a Chinese medicinal prescription booklet (1930s), with Peranakan translation for ailments.
- NLB and St Joseph's Church signed an MOU on 7 December 2007, for the digitisation of 29 volumes of marriage, baptism and death records of the church from 1848-1961. These items are significant for research on the Eurasian community.
- The Stock Exchange of Singapore donated IPO prospectuses, annual reports and newsletters of companies in Singapore and Malaya/Malaysia to NL.
- Lin Qiong (林琼) donated about 1,200 books and periodicals on Malayan/Singapore literature dating from the 1950s. He also donated 6 volumes of manuscripts and documents belonging to his father, Mr Lim Kong Thing (林光挺), a prominent Malayan businessman, who died in 1940. The collection includes documents penned by Premier Zhou En-lai, and Mdm Soong Ching Ling, wife of Sun Yat-sen.

Loan of private collections

An agreement was made with Raffles Institution (RI) and NLB on the loan of about 130 letters for digitisation, pertaining to the founding of RI, including letters from Sir Stamford Raffles, John Argyle Maxwell and John Crawford.

Book Donation by the Japan Foundation

On 6 June 2007, the Japan Foundation donated close to 450 books to the NLB through the Embassy of Japan to commemorate the anniversary of the state visit of the Emperor and Empress of Japan to the National Library in June 2006. This donation also stems from the 40th anniversary of the establishment of Singapore-Japan diplomatic relations last year.

French Corner at NLS

Mr Jean-Francois Copé, French Minister of Budget (2004-2007) and Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS) & Second Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts (MICA) jointly launched the French Corner on 28 March. The French Corner consists of 1,000 French books translated into Singapore's four official languages in areas covering French literary works and works in Humanities, Social Sciences and Philosophy.

Academic & Research Libraries

Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) Library

The ISEAS Library has a total collection of 551,394 multi-lingual and multi-format materials on Southeast Asian studies. Its Private Papers Collections include those of prominent personalities notably David Marshall, Singapore's first Chief Minister; Tan Cheng Lock, a Malayan nationalist; and Ismail Abdul Rahman, former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia. The Library also plans to digitise this collection.

National Institute of Education Library

The Library has a total of 371,150 volumes and 1,000 print journals. Special collections of the Library include the Singapore Educational Resources Collection, the C.J. Koh Collection

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which focuses on teacher training/ education and teaching methods, and curriculum resource materials for teachers.

National University of Singapore Libraries

The NUS Libraries collection as at 30 April 2008 stood at 1,420,473 titles.

Notable acquisitions

The Music Library has acquired the collected works of three of the most important composers of western music: Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Joseph Haydn, and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. It has also embarked on a project to acquire the thematic catalogues of major composers.

PUBLICATIONS

National Library

新加坡会馆书刊出版目录 (A Bibliography on the Publications of Singapore Chinese Clan Associations)

A bibliography on the Publications of Singapore Chinese Clan Associations was published and launched on 23 September 2007. The bibliography contains holdings of the National Library of Singapore, National University of Singapore Chinese Library, National Technological University Humanities and Social Sciences Library, Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations Resource Center and National Archives of Singapore. A talk on "Preservation of Publications and Documents of Clan Associations" was held in conjunction with the launch. An exhibition, "Roots & Records – the Exhibition of Publications of the Singapore Chinese Clans", was also organised in November 2007.

新加坡华文期刊 50年 (50 years of Singapore Chinese Periodicals)

This 328-paged illustrative bibliography was published on March 2008. The bibliography provides a master list of Chinese periodicals published in Singapore from 1940 to 1980. It contains scanned magazine covers, content pages, publishers' details and featured inaugural issues of selective magazines. A brief account of the 50 years of the publishing history of the magazines in both English and Chinese are included. It also includes accounts from past magazine editors on their experiences of publishing these magazines.

The Catalogue of Rare Materials

The Catalogue of Rare Materials collection at NL with a listing of 2,075 titles was produced.

Re-inventing Library Services: Continuity with Change, Case Study on the National Library Board

This case study jointly written by the Warwick Business School, Yale University and the National University of Singapore is a testament to NLB's success in the provision of library services.

Singapore: The First Ten Years of Independence

Jointly published by NLB and the National Archives of Singapore, this publication aims to raise awareness of the challenges that Singapore's First Cabinet faced in 1965, how they overcame them, the policies they implemented, and their contributions to Singapore's progress and prosperity. The publication includes a resource list of books, speeches, newspaper articles as well as oral history interviews and audiovisual materials.

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Public Libraries

- Recommended reading lists for primary schools to help them develop their own classroom libraries were compiled and sent to the Ministry of Education. These reading lists were based on the primary school English Language curriculum themes.

Academic & Research Libraries

ISEAS Library

The ISEAS Library published *S. Rajaratnam: A Bibliography* and *The S. Rajaratnam Collection in the ISEAS Library: a Catalogue*. The latter is a complete list of 4,506 volumes of books that were donated to ISEAS by the family of the late S. Rajaratnam, the first and longest-serving Foreign Minister of Singapore.

SERVICES

National Library

Collaborative Reference & Network Service (CRNS)

CRNS aims to bring NL's reference library services to a higher realm of experience for library customers, through the innovative use of technology. It enables librarians to pool their collective knowledge to solve complex reference enquiries and reach many channels and lifestyle spaces.

In May 2007, the Network of Specialists (NOS) was launched. This platform taps on social networking tools, such as wikis and blogs, to create an environment for members to learn and share information, pertaining to reference enquiries.

Phase 1 of CRNS rolled out on 18 July 2007 made available the following developments:

- The delivery of reference answers to users through additional channels like Short Messaging System (SMS);
- Using the collaborative tool, NL reference staff are able to tap on the collective knowledge of the subject communities to provide quality answers to reference enquiries. The discussions amongst members of the communities serve as a knowledge management and learning tool for staff.
- NL reference expertise have answered user queries relating to Singapore and ASEAN at Yahoo Answers; and
- NL-created materials are made more easily searchable by web search engines, resulting in a steep increase in their usage.

Inter-Library Loans and Document Delivery Service

The National Library (NL) offers an Interlibrary Loan (ILL) service to all its institutional members, comprising over 100 members to date. Libraries who are LAS members, Government ministries/ institutions and statutory boards are eligible for this free membership.

NL also provides a Document Delivery Service (DDS) to ILL members and to government organisations, corporate clients and overseas libraries and organisations. Regular users of the DDS are academic and institutional libraries.

Public Libraries

READ! Singapore was launched on 24 May 2007 as a continuation of NLB's efforts to promote the reading of fiction. Activities such as book discussions, meet the author sessions, road shows to libraries, hospitals, parks, schools, welfare homes, prisons, cafes and food courts were held. 24,000 participants attended 260 book discussion sessions and book-related activities.

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Friends of the Library or volunteers were offered a wider variety of tasks and the focus was on the youth segment or students, seniors and retirees. Volunteers assist the libraries in carrying out a wide range of tasks including shelving, conducting children's stories and craft programmes, creating artwork for book displays, recommendations of books through book reviews and library logistics. 10,170 volunteers were recruited in FY07.

KidsREAD is an effort to engage and train volunteers to read to children from lower income families. This is a collaborative effort between NL, community organisations and self-help groups. 75 reading clubs were set up in FY 2007, reaching a total of 5000 children over the past 4 years, with the aid of over 1600 volunteers. A Volunteer Appreciation Day was held on 28 April 2007 to thank volunteers for their support of the programme.

In FY 2007, public libraries focused on Services to Seniors. A roadmap outlining the vision, goals and strategies for the implementation of services to seniors over the next 3 years was endorsed for implementation. Various projects were carried out. With funding from the government, 9 learning resource kits in 4 languages were produced along with some very basic reading aids to be given to senior library users during library programmes and loan promotion drives. Library tours in Mandarin and tea sessions were conducted during the Active Ageing Festival in November 07. During the Silver Industry Conference & Exhibition in Jan 2008, NL's booth attracted an estimated 9,000 visitors and 44 volunteers were recruited.

The public libraries piloted Deliver Me for 3 months from June 2007. This project aimed to work with volunteers to deliver library items to the homes of the physically disabled and to encourage and facilitate an active citizenry by engaging community volunteers. During this pilot 65 deliveries were made with the help from 35 volunteers.

The Mobile Library Bus known as Molly was prototyped with the goal of reaching out to the less privileged and those with special needs, providing them with better access to library books, services and programmes. This was an opportunity to collaborate with organisations such as special education schools and institutional homes.

Junior Reading Ambassador is a programme where children between 9 and 12 years old were selected to be library ambassadors for promoting reading and libraries to other children. These children undergo a training camp to learn more about library services, fiction genres and awardwinning authors, storytelling and dramatisation techniques, and media handling skills. Subsequently, the ambassadors attended public platforms to share the benefits of reading, and hosted major children's events, such as the Asian Children's Festival's Opening Ceremony. They also introduced reading and the use of the library to other students at their own schools.

There were 14 new learning communities (which included book clubs and Family Interest Groups) set up and managed by NLB's Public Library Services (PLS) librarians and staff at Reading Initiatives. These learning communities included a Book Club for Hairstylists in Chinese, Seniors' Reading Clubs in English and Chinese at libraries and Community Centres, Teachers and Parents Support Groups Reading Clubs in English at schools and Self-help groups, English Reading Clubs for Civil Servants, Indian Book Club at Ang Mo Kio Community Library as well as 2 Children's Book Clubs in English targeted at school-going children. PLS is also the venue sponsor of another 13 book clubs in various branch libraries of the NLB. Monthly or bi-monthly book discussions were carried out.

Digital Resources and Services

National Library & Public Libraries

The website architecture was re-designed to enhance the discovery of NL's electronic content via search engines such as Google, Yahoo and MSN (GYM). A comparison of pages viewed

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before and after the trial showed a 362-fold increase in usage, from 400 to 145,000 accesses a month.

COLLABORATIONS

National Library

Raffles Institution

NL signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Raffles Institution (RI) on 26 April to formulate a strategic partnership to conserve and make available to the public an archive of significant heritage materials. This collection comprises over 100 documents and includes original letters written by Sir Stamford Raffles. Under the NL-RI MOU, NL will preserve, store and facilitate access for public viewing of these rare materials through digitisation or microfilms.

Singapore Press Holdings

NL signed an agreement with Singapore Press Holdings on 31 July to digitise Singapore's local English newspaper, The Straits Times (ST) archives, that date back to 1845.

EnterpriseOne Business Information Services

Launched on 2 August 2007, the EnterpriseOne Business Information Services (EBIS) is a multi-agency initiative to help enterprises in Singapore become knowledgeable, innovative and information-savvy. EBIS provides enterprises, especially Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), access to trusted business information to help them make better-informed business decisions. As at 30 April 2008, 263 SMEs have used the service and 1,234 people have visited the EBIS Centres.

S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University

NL signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), on 12 September to formulate a strategic partnership to preserve, archive and make accessible rare print and non-print information on international political violence and terrorism. As part of the collaboration, NL will provide public access to non-sensitive or de-sensitised information on political violence and terrorism in either print or electronic format through its libraries and digital channels. NL and RSIS will also work together to educate the public by staging exhibitions and talks in libraries.

Public Utilities Board (PUB)

NLB signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with PUB, the national water agency, on 11 October to formalise a synergistic partnership in several key areas. One of these is to build up a comprehensive collection on water and water management resources to meet the information needs of the water resources industry, researchers and the general public. To commemorate the MOU signing ceremony, NLB co-authored with PUB a bibliography entitled "Active, Beautiful, Clean Waters: A select annotated bibliography on water related resources at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, Singapore".

The European Union Information Centre (EUi)

An agreement was signed between The European Union Delegation (Singapore) and NLB to appoint the National Library as a host for a European Union Information Centre (EUi). As a EU depository library, the National Library carries electronics as well as hard copies of official EU publications, to raise the awareness of the EU among Singaporeans.

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Academic & Research Libraries

ISEAS Library

ISEAS Library is the first depository library appointed by the ASEAN Secretariat for its publications. It is also a depository for Asian Development Bank (ADB) publications.

MAJOR EVENTS

National Library

Lim Boon Keng: A Life to Remember Exhibition

Launched on 24 January, the 'Lim Boon Keng: A Life to Remember Exhibition' was jointly organised by NLB, Settlement of Dr Lim Boon Keng and the Singapore Heritage Society. In commemorating the 50th death anniversary of Dr Lim Boon Keng, the exhibition aimed to attract members of the public to visit the library to conduct further research and to discover more about this prominent pioneer.

新加坡华文期刊 50年 (50 years of Singapore Chinese Periodicals)

An exhibition on the "50 Years of Singapore Chinese Periodicals" was organised in November 07 to showcase periodicals published in Singapore between 1940-1980. The exhibition was organised in conjunction with the Hainan Hwee Guan and periodicals on exhibition were either on-loan or donated to NLB specially for the event by our local communities.

2nd Heritage Roadshow

NLB held its second Heritage Roadshow on 10 Nov 2007 and received tremendous response from the general public when donations were asked of old items of great cultural value, such as photographs, postcards, pictures, or illustrations of historic buildings, landmarks, places, or street scenes of Singapore that are no longer in existence (especially those before 1970). This was meant to coincide with the launch of NLB's Deposit Website that allows patrons to donate digitised items such as photos and documents virtually.

Managing Regional Change Colloquia: Singapore in a Larger Asia

On 17 May 2007, NLB and the Asia Competitiveness Institute (ACI) of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy jointly organised the 'Managing Regional Change Colloquia: Singapore in a Larger Asia'. Dr Surin Pitsuwan, former Thai Foreign Minister and Professor Phillippe Lasserre, Emeritus Professor of Strategy and Asian Business, INSEAD, delivered the keynote speeches which focused on the ASEAN Charter and its implications for the region, how democracies in Southeast Asia are managing globalisation, and the survival strategies of small states in an integrated region. The forum sought to address questions on how Singapore can ride the Asian wave of change and effectively engage Asia's rising giants.

The colloquia also marked the launch of two publications by the National Library: *Statistical Snapshots of Asia-Pacific Countries* and the *National Directory of Scholars: Humanities and Social Sciences Research*. The directory contains useful information for established and new researchers in arts, humanities and social sciences for networking purposes and for tapping into the various fields of expertise of other researchers. *Statistical Snapshots* provides a detailed comparative analysis of key socio-economic indicators in areas such as media, information, finance, healthcare, education, tourism and transport for 14 Asia-Pacific countries.

Dublin Core and Metadata Applications International Conference

Launched on 28 August by Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports and Second Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts, the International Conference on Dublin Core and Metadata Applications (DC-2007) was a three-day event organised by NLB and Dublin Core Metadata Initiatives (DCMI). The theme was

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'Application Profiles: Theory and Practice'. NLB also officially announced the incorporation of DCMI in Singapore as an independent legal entity by 2008.

10th IFLA Interlending and Document Supply (ILDS) International Conference

NLB hosted the 10th IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) Interlending and Document Supply (ILDS) International Conference on 29 to 31 October 2007. The conference met with an overwhelming response by over 200 international delegates to engage in insightful exchanges on the theme 'Resource Sharing for The Future, Building Blocks for Success'.

'KaalaChakra' Exhibition

NLB launched the 'KaalaChakra' Exhibition on early Indian influences in Southeast Asia on 17 November 2007. The exhibition offered a glimpse into the historical past of the Indian community and how its roots form part of Singapore's multi-cultural national identity and heritage. The exhibition focused on the cultural and religious influences as well as early trade related incursions from South India to Southeast Asia and vice versa up to the 13th Century. More importantly, it traces the influence of the Sanskrit and Tamil languages in this region and the spread of Hinduism and Buddhism. A bibliography titled "'KaalaChakra': Wheel of Time, Early Indian Influences in Southeast Asia, A Select Annotated Bibliography" was also launched to commemorate the opening of the exhibition. In parallel with the exhibition, an international academic conference was organised by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), on 'Early Indian Influences in Southeast Asia: Reflections on Cross-Cultural Movements' from 21 to 23 November 2007 and was attended by local and international historians and researchers.

David Marshall: His Life and Legacy Symposium

NLB and ISEAS, together with the Academy of Law, the MFA Diplomatic Academy and the Jewish Welfare Board jointly organised the "David Marshall: His Life and Legacy" symposium to commemorate the centenary birthday of the late David Marshall, described by many as one of the giants in Singapore's history. This symposium attracted more than 300 participants and revolved around the theme of Founding Fathers – which aims to reintroduce historical heroes that have made valuable contributions to the development and growth of our island-state.

Fang Xiu Exhibition and Bibliography

The launch of Fang Xiu's bibliography and related exhibition continues NLB's focus on Singapore's local literary heritage. The exhibition, together with the book launch, provided valuable insights into one of Singapore's foremost literary giants.

The Nanyang Pioneer Artists: Paintings and Heritage Materials in the National Library's Collection Exhibition

The goal of this exhibition was to encourage more people to come forth and donate their books and ephemera, and help preserve Singapore's published heritage on the arts. The exhibition featured paintings, books, journals and ephemera by and on 6 widely acknowledged Nanyang art pioneers: Lim Hak Tai, Georgette Chen, Chen Wen Hsi, Chen Chong Swee, Liu Kang and Cheong Soo Pieng.

Lee Kong Chian Research Fellowship

In its second year, the Lee Kong Chian Research (LKC) Fellowship attracted about twenty-two applications from distinguished scholars from Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, China, India, Russia, Poland, the United States of America and the United Kingdom. Lasting six months each, these candidates would undertake collection-related research on NLB's Singapore and Southeast Asian Collections, with the aim of creating subsidiary works. The National Library Board (NLB) has awarded 20 research fellowships since its inauguration in April 2006, of which 10 fellows have completed their fellowship and 10 are in the midst of their research work. Upon completion, the fellows have to give two presentations, to NLB staff

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and to members of public to present their research findings. In addition to these deliverables, they have to write an article for BiblioAsia, the National Library's quarterly news journal and submit a full report of their research findings.

Distinguished Readers Initiative

This initiative was launched on 24 April 2006 to recognise the contributions of prominent senior Singaporeans, for their leadership and professional success in their respective fields and outstanding contribution to the nation's success, whether in government, business, academia or the arts. These Distinguished Readers (DRs) are granted privileged access to the resources of the National Library and reference support provided by research librarians attached to them. To date, we have appointed a total of 16 DRs. Mr Tan Swie Hian and Prof Edwin Thumboo have donated some of their valuable private collections to the library. Others such as Ms Meira Chand, Mr R Ramachandran, Mr Yatiman Yusof, Ms Hedwig Anuar and Mr Lee Khoon Choy have also actively participated and lent their support to the many activities and events organised by NLB.

Public Libraries

Book Crossing was launched as a nationwide initiative in July 2007 to encourage a reading and sharing culture by the provision of quality books at designated hotspots. 3,145 books were released at the launch.

Asian Children's Festival

The 8th Asian Children's Festival was launched on 17 November 2007. The 9-day festival included fringe programmes at the libraries and the signature MRT Read-n-Ride event for 400 kidsREAD children. In addition, "The tale of the missing tail and other original Singapore stories", a compilation of stories written by staff and "Heritage Tales: Treasures of Singapore", a bibliography of local works, were published.

The Letters from Grandma and Grandpa programme aims to foster inter-generational bonding and serves as a platform for grandparents to contribute to future generations by sharing how certain life skills or values have shaped their lives. This also creates opportunities for seniors and youth to strengthen ties and appreciation of one another. Books in each of the 4 national languages, launched in November 2007 during Grandparents' Day, are compilations of thoughts on values that will be preserved as part of Singapore's *heritage of heartware*.

Submitted by:
Ms Ngian Lek Choh
Deputy Chief Executive & Director, National Library
National Library Board Singapore
Sept 2008

With contributions from ISEAS Library, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, Nanyang Polytechnic Library, Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Library, National Institute of Education (NIE) Library, National University of Singapore (NUS) Libraries, Ngee

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Ann Polytechnic Lien Ying Chow Library, Singapore Institute of Management Library,
Singapore Management University Li Ka Shing Library and Singapore Polytechnic Library.