

A sense of belonging

Sense



SGS CO-OP
A sense of belonging

**SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT STAFF CREDIT
CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED**

MAY/JUN 2016

MCI (P) 049/11/2015



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Special thanks to the six members for gracing our cover. Read about their stories on page 6.

*Photography by
RT Photography Services*

Printed by Xpress Print Pte Ltd

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

THE TIES

Now that we have concluded the hive of activities around our 90th anniversary commemorative book, Sense of Belonging: A 90-Year Heritage, it is timely to look back on this milestone project and take stock of what we have achieved.

As the first and oldest credit co-operative in Singapore, SGSCC has witnessed history. We were founded during the British colonial era, made it through the World War II, saw Singapore declare independence in 1965 and grew with it until today.

Our story is intrinsically tied to the Singapore story, so in March 2014, we decided to embark on an ambitious project to chronicle our rich heritage into a well-researched, highly-meaningful publication. We timed the launch of our book to coincide with SG50 and were deeply honoured to have President Dr Tony Tan grace the occasion.

GOING BACK IN TIME

Extensive research was required to understand what happened between the years 1925 and 2015. We formed a working committee led by SGSCC Assistant Honorary

Treasurer Mr Abdul Alim Karim and supported by Book Manager Mr Suresh Nair to lead the charge.

We are grateful to many past and present members who generously shared their knowledge and memorabilia. I am told that over a span of about 20 months, over 150 persons were interviewed.

Yet despite our best efforts, there remain half a dozen years for which our membership figures are untraceable.

If you have information relating to 1939 to 1940, 1942 to 1945, 1947, 1961 to 1963 and 1966 to 1967, we invite you to help fill the gaps for posterity.

At this point, I must also thank National Heritage Board whose Heritage Participant Grant helped defray some of the costs involved in this massive undertaking.

THAT BIND



Sharing our history and heritage at a public forum in April 2016.

BUILDING NEW TIES

With the book published, our first order of business was to share our heritage. Complimentary copies were distributed to public and institutional libraries in addition to Organs of State, statutory boards, distinguished guests and network partners. I invite you to visit a major public library near you to access a copy of the book.

Most recently, we held a public forum on 13 April 2016 at the National Library to share our research process and key highlights of our findings. We were delighted to have representatives from Singapore National Co-operative Federation and Registry of Co-operative Societies

join us that afternoon. Please read about the forum in 'Sharing our Heritage' on page 4.

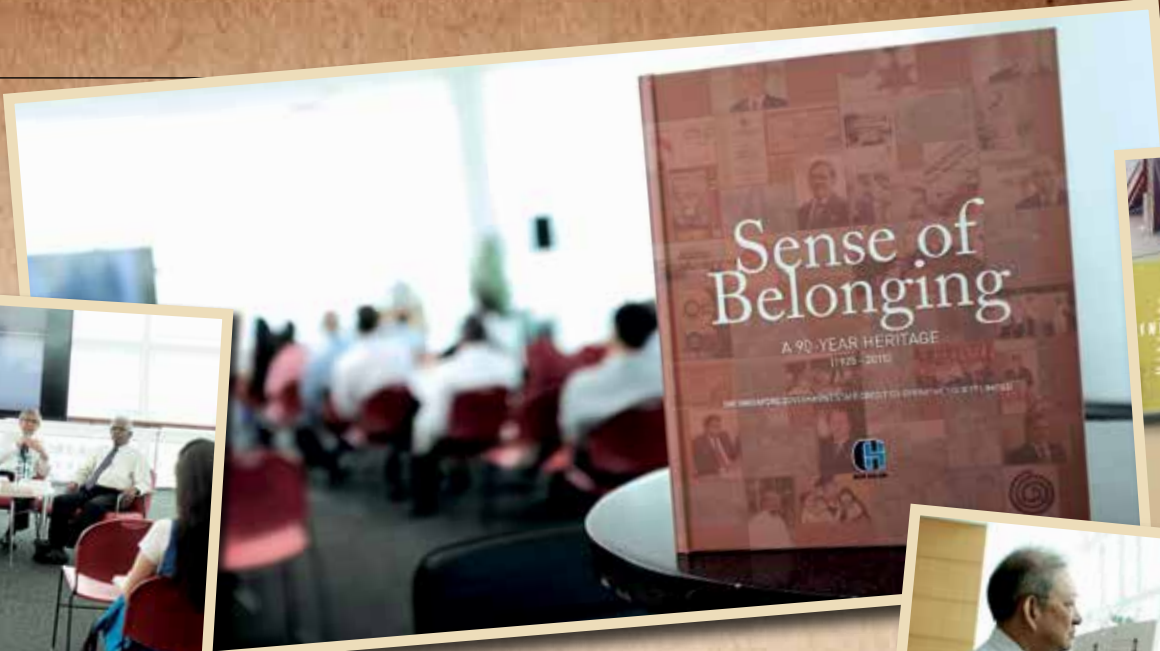
I am heartened that our efforts have seem to inspired many members to take a keen interest in our shared heritage. These are the ties that bind us as a family.



John Raghavan PB, PBS
Chairman

KEY PROJECT POINTS

- **Chronicles SGSCC's history alongside Singapore's growth, beginning in 1925**
- **Research and interviews took 5,000 man-days**
- **Launched in 2015 to commemorate SG50 and SGS90**
- **Supported by National Heritage Board through a \$27,000 grant**
- **Available in the reference sections of major National Library Board branches**
- **Available for sale exclusively to SGSCC members at production cost of \$59.60**



SHARING OUR 90-YEAR HERITAGE



The past, present and future are interconnected, according to SGSCC Chairman Mr John Raghavan. Last year, SGSCC launched its 90th anniversary commemorative book, *Sense of Belonging: A 90-Year Heritage (1925-2015)*, to chronicle its history as Singapore's first and oldest co-operative.

Mr Robert Conceicao was invited to share insights into the making and findings of the book at a public forum on 13 April 2016. Held at The POD function room at the National Library, the lunchtime talk was a journey back in time for almost 100 attendees, including representatives from Singapore National Co-operative Federation and Registry of Co-operative Societies.

Majic Communications Director and editor of the heritage book,

We are very proud that the first co-op in Singapore, SGSCC, has documented the journey that they have taken.

MS DOLLY GOH
Chief Executive Officer
Singapore National Co-operative Federation





After the presentation, Mr Raghavan led a panel discussion with SGSCC Assistant Honorary Treasurer Mr Abdul Alim Karim, General Manager Mr Martin Nathan and Mr Conceicao to engage the audience further.

Copies of Sense of Belonging: A 90-Year Heritage (1925-2015) are available for reference at major National Library branches. SGSCC members who wish to purchase a copy can also do so at the production cost of \$59.60 by contacting SGSCC at 6337 4936.



SGSCC MILESTONES

- 1925** ● SGSCC is registered as the first co-operative society in Singapore, on 7 October, with 32 members.
- 1946** ● SGSCC holds its first post-World War II Annual General Meeting in January and recommences operations in December with 438 members.
- 1949** ● Membership crosses the 1,000 mark for the first time.
- 1952** ● SGSCC appoints its first full-time clerical staff.
- 1965** ● Singapore declares independence. SGSCC membership reaches 5,000.
- 1973** ● SGSCC moves premises to Peace Centre. Opens membership to staff of statutory boards.
- 1974** ● Provides subsidised rice to members as the price of rice spikes from \$0.35 per kati to nearly \$1.00 at its peak.
- 1976** ● Membership hits an all-time high of 7,395.
- 1982** ● Introduction of Hospitalisation (Ward Accommodation) Benefits Scheme for members and extension of hospitalisation coverage to families.
- 1985** ● Introduction of Loan Default Insurance Scheme to allow borrowing without sureties.
- 1989** ● Introduction of Fixed Deposit Scheme.
- 1996** ● Introduction of spouse membership.
- 1999** ● Launch of SGSCC website and email at its 74th Dinner & Dance.
- 2012** ● SGSCC is featured on an International Year of Co-operatives commemorative stamp by SingPost.
- 2015** ● Singapore celebrates SG50. SGSCC celebrates its 90th anniversary and launches its heritage book.

We Are Family

The sense of belonging that members feel for SGSCC often extends to their own family members as well. Having enjoyed the benefits that come with being part of the SGSCC family, many members are encouraging their loved ones to join the Co-op as well. In this manner, SGSCC is growing not only in terms of membership count, but also in terms of familial bonds. *SENSE* speaks to the three father-daughter pairs who grace this issue's cover about how and why they joined the Co-op.

Chua Kok Sin & Chua Cheng Ying

Mr Chua still remembers joining SGSCC as a member in 1982. At the time, many of his colleagues in the Singapore Civil Defence Force were already members. He learnt about the membership benefits from them and was particularly attracted by how the Co-op encourages members to save.

"In addition to the various savings plans, my family and I have also benefited in other ways. All three of my daughters have been recipients of the Sinnathamby Bursary Awards, which was a good form of encouragement for them," shared Mr Chua.

When his second daughter, Cheng Ying, joined the public service as a teacher last year, he encouraged her to join the Co-op as well. The young educator is glad that she's now setting aside monthly savings: "We haven't talked about how I'll use these savings in the future. My dad believes in long-term savings, so for now, I hope to let it grow."



Ramasamy C Balasubramaniam & Rekha Mitrina Balasubramaniam



As a young man, Mr Ramasamy joined SGSCC for the safe and reliable loan facilities. Decades later, his daughter Rekha became a member for another reason.

“When I started working, my mother advised me to start saving and told me about my dad’s membership with SGSCC. It was easy—join, put in money and let it grow—so I sent in my application,” said Rekha, who joined as member within months of beginning her public service career. “The membership was also useful when I got married. Because I’m Catholic and my husband is Hindu, we held two weddings. The loans really helped.”

Repayment was also “very smooth and very comfortable,” said Mr Ramasamy, referring to both SGSCC’s salary check-off approach and the comfortable repayment terms that the staff had developed for them.

Now, both Mr Ramasamy and Rekha intend to focus on growing their savings with the Co-op and continue enjoying the other privileges that come with their membership.

Abdul Manaf bin Bakri & Nurliyana binti Abdul Manaf

Mr Abdul Manaf never thought of being a role model for his daughter Nurliyana, but she has clearly followed in his footsteps, first joining Tan Tock Seng Hospital where he works and later, joining SGSCC as a member.

“I knew my dad was a member of a credit co-operative, but I didn’t know the details. When I heard my colleagues talking about SGSCC, it sounded familiar so I went home and asked him about it. Sure enough, he was a long-time member. That’s when I decided to join the Co-op too,” shared Nurliyana.

With the goal of saving for the future, Nurliyana has voluntarily increased her monthly savings amount with SGSCC. “When I get an annual pay increment, I try to channel the extra funds into my savings account with the Co-op. I think it’s good to have backup savings since you never know when you’ll need it.”





Preparing *For The Future*

On 13 May 2016, SGSCC received the keys to a unit in Mapex, a new freehold B1 light industrial building at 37 Jalan Pemimpin that just received its Temporary Occupation Permit (TOP). The Co-op had invested in this property unit in 2014. The small but meaningful handover and ribbon-cutting ceremony was led by SGSCC Chairman Mr John Raghavan in the presence of his fellow Committee of Management members. The unit at Mapex adds to SGSCC's portfolio of property

investments, which also includes two units at Peace Centre and two units at Sunshine Plaza along Bencoolen Street. These properties are creating a steady stream of rental income for the Co-op.



Tour **Hong Kong** with Us!

Join us on a **4D3N** summer trip to **HONG KONG** from **15 July (Fri)** to **18 July (Mon)**! Members enjoy subsidised rates!

Hi, Hong Kong!

A short four-hour flight from Singapore takes you to the shores of exhilarating Hong Kong. This city of wonders is filled with something for everyone, from culture vultures to shoppers and foodies!

The best way to spend your summer is to join us on this exciting trip to Hong Kong!

Itinerary highlights

- Scheduled return flights, inclusive of all airport taxes
- 3 nights' stay in an international 4* star hotel
- Buffet breakfast, lunch and dinner
- English guided tour of Hong Kong and Kowloon
- Visits to The Peak, Repulse Bay, Aberdeen and other scenic spots!
- Free time to shop, shop, shop!
- Opportunity to sample local food

Register now!

Limited places available. Please contact Ms Shiqin at 6933 6776 or email shiqin@sgs.coop / admin@sgs.coop for more information.



Subsidised Rates for Members!

\$100 subsidy for first time participants and \$50 subsidy for repeat participants.

	Twin Room	Single per person
SGS member (first time participant)	S\$528	S\$780
SGS member (repeat participant)	S\$578	S\$830
Non member	S\$628	S\$880

Rates stated are per person.

News from around Singapore

Claim your Water Saving Kit from PUB!

National water agency PUB is giving away complimentary Water Saving Kits to help you reduce water usage. The kit is a set of thimbles that you can easily install on taps and showerheads to alter water pressure. According to PUB, participating households have saved up to 5% on their monthly water consumption!

There are also other ways you can trim your water bill:

1. **Collect rinse water from the last wash cycle** of your washing machine and use this to flush the toilet or mop the floor.
2. **Reduce your shower time by one minute** to save 9 litres of water!
3. **Water plants early in the morning (before 7am) or late evening (after 7pm)** to minimise evaporation loss.

Request for your kit at www.pub.gov.sg or call the PUB 24-hour Call Centre at 1800 2846600.

Source: PUB

Beat the Heat!

As temperature notches up, many of us are tempted to reach for the air-conditioning remote control. But there are cheaper and more environmentally ways to stay cool.

1. **Use LED bulbs instead of incandescent ones.** Compared to traditional incandescent bulbs, LED bulbs emit much less heat. They also use less electricity, so you'll save on your energy bill too.
2. **Make sure your ceiling fan is turning counter-clockwise.** This pushes cool air downwards to create a 'wind-chill' effect. Avoid the reverse! In a clockwise direction, ceiling fans channel warm air near the ceiling into the room.
3. **DIY your own air-conditioner.** Freeze a 1.5-litre PET bottle with 70% water and 10% rock salt. Place it in a bowl in front of a fan. As the ice melts, the fan will blow the cool air around the bottle at you.

Source: CNet.com and EnergyStar.gov

Benefit from Singapore Budget 2016!

The Singapore Budget announced in March 2016 includes measures to help people from all walks of life. Below are just some ways you could benefit. For details, please visit www.singaporebudget.gov.sg.

Service & Conservancy Charges Rebate

Eligible households will enjoy 1 to 3 months' rebate on their Service & Conservancy Charges.

GST Voucher Enhancements

A one-time Special Payment of \$200 on top of regular GST Voucher payouts (\$300 if your Annual Value of Home (AVH) is under \$13,000 and \$150 if AVH is \$13,0001 to \$21,000).

Workfare Income Supplement Enhancements

Income ceiling raised from \$1,900 to \$2,000 a month, with higher payouts to eligible workers and simplified qualifying criteria.

Silver Support Scheme

Eligible Singaporeans aged 65 and above will automatically receive between \$300 and \$750 payouts every quarter.

Source: www.SingaporeBudget.gov.sg

Be Money Smart!

More than 85,000 Singaporeans have overdue unsecured debts, according to figures released by Credit Bureau Singapore in October 2015. Here are some ways to help you deal with debt.

- 1. Instead of stressing over your total debt, divide them into smaller parts.** Consider loans, credit card bills, mortgage payments, etc individually.
- 2. Prioritise loan payments by interest rates** and strive to pay off those with the highest interests first. You can also work out your budget and negotiate a repayment plan.
- 3. Continue to save for the future.** Saving today could help you avoid taking a loan tomorrow. With SGSCC's optional Specific Deposit Account, for example, you can set aside a small amount every month through salary check-off and withdraw the funds as needed.

To understand how SGSCC can support your financial stability and security, please contact us at 6337 4936 or email admin@sgs.coop.



Quiz Time!

Prizes await 10 lucky submissions!



Multi-purpose mini rice cooker & steamer worth \$50!

Submit your answers by **21 June 2016**:

- Fax to **6339 6772**
- Email to **admin@sgs.coop** or
- Post to **1 Sophia Road #05-21 Singapore 228149**

Multiple entries will not be accepted. Winners will be announced in the next issue.

1. In the making of the SGSCC heritage book, Sense of Belonging, over how many people were interviewed?

2. On what date was SGSCC registered?

3. Why was the year 1946 significant to SGSCC?

4. Name the dates and destination of the next SGSCC members' overseas tour.

5. Name any two property buildings where SGSCC owns units.

Name: _____

NRIC: _____

Contact No.: (M) _____ (H) _____

(O) _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Congratulations Mar/Apr Quiz Winners!

Davadass Danapaul SXXXX842Z Fauziah Bte Abdul Mutalip SXXXX725G
Lee Foo Yong SXXXX682E Lee Quat Lian SXXXX749B Lua Bee Huay SXXXX166J
Rahman Beevi S. M. Ibrahim SXXXX472G Tan Chee Kong SXXXX126E
Tan Seok Hian SXXXX812F Teng Chwee Tee SXXXX062F Yap Chwee Hong SXXXX852E

Please collect your prize from **SGSCC office** by **24 June 2016**.



SGS CO-OP
A sense of belonging

Singapore Government Staff Credit Co-operative Society Limited

We are recruiting you to be financially resilient

Privileges

- **Effortless Savings**
High interest yields
- **Financial Security**
- **Financial Assistance for**
 - * Studies
 - * Renovations
 - * Weddings
 - * Financial education
 - * Thrifty spending
 - * Buy at our Co-op shops and save
 - * Be an owner member stake-holder
 - * Hospitalisation Benefits
 - * Bereavement Benefits

Good Interest for your Fixed Deposits & Savings – no time limit, no early withdrawal penalty

- Members receive good dividends

We are a Family Co-operative

- Family membership
- Educational awards and bursaries – no income ceiling
- Subsidised tours
- Subsidised annual Dinner & Dance

Who can join?
Public Officers – Singapore Civil Service, Statutory Bodies, Uniformed Services and Government-linked Companies

Recruitment Drive

Introduce your family and colleagues as members!
Be rewarded with **\$20** credited to your Specific Deposit Savings for each new member!

Transactions through salary check-off and GIRO

- Assist to attain a more secure financial future
- Talk to us to build your financial strength and resilience