

SMA NEWS



Vol. 46 No. 12 December 2014

MCI (P) 083/01/2014



THE HEARTBEAT OF SMA
A TRIBUTE TO OUR MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

December

By Dr Tan Yia Swam, Editor

“WHY ARE you wasting time with SMA stuff?”

This question has been posed to me countless times over the past seven years. I always smile, and give a non-committal reply. Those who understand will get it; those who don't, may never will. I look at the senior members of my profession who have committed themselves to this cause, and see for myself the good work they have done – as individuals, and as part of SMA. And I ask myself: do I want to do the same? Isn't it easier to just join the faceless doctor-in-the-street in complaining about how bad things have become, why isn't more done, and so on?

Staying in the SMA, contributing to the Council and the Ed Board, helps me see beyond myself and my own little problems. Yes, there are some areas in the profession that SMA can help to improve; and trust me, each active member serving in whichever subcommittee is already doing loads. But we still need every doctor to BE a member, to lend volume to our voice. I hope all physicians will reconsider their involvement in SMA. Consider joining as a member if you are not one yet; current members – do continue to give criticisms. That's how we will grow as an organisation. But also remember that all talk and no action is not very helpful!

In this special issue, we invite various SMA members and volunteers to tell us their thoughts on the Association. *What does it mean to you? What do you hope for? How has volunteering for it impacted you? How has it changed, and how else can we improve?* Go on, read for yourselves, and I hope you will be as inspired as I am by their words. I thank them for sharing, and will continue to do my part for SMA.

We report on the annual Inter-Professional Games, which continue a tradition of friendship and friendly competition among various professional bodies. SMA proudly brought back six titles this year, including three championships in chess, golf and soccer. We congratulate Dr Jeevarajah Nithiananthan, Dr Denis Christopher Nyam and Dr William Kristanto for leading their teams to such success! Dr Noorul Fatha As'art represented SMA at this year's Junior Doctors Network Meeting, held in Tokyo, and recounts what was discussed.

Some of you may have read about Dr Tam Wai Jia in the newspapers. She has put academic and career pursuits on hold, to attend to a higher calling – serving as missionaries with her husband in Africa. She relates a snippet of challenges faced, especially with Ebola being a very real and present danger in current times. She blogs at <http://blog.kitesong.sg>.

Now, as a special tie-in with SMA's exclusive members-only *Hobbit* movie premiere, we reprise some old favourites from the SMA Hobbit. Previously, some of you asked whether I was actually the Hobbit. I was torn between pride and anger: proud to be mistaken as the voice of the common people on the ground; angry to be mistaken as a short fat hairy fellow... Yes I may be a few kilograms overweight but that hardly qualifies me to be a hobbit! This is my special tribute to you, my dear Muse, whoever you may really be. Long may you continue to write, and be the witty and funny (sometimes acerbic) inner voice that reminds us to laugh at ourselves. ■



Dr Tan is now an associate consultant at the Breast Unit of KK Women's and Children's Hospital. She continues to juggle the commitments of being a doctor, a mother, a wife, and the increased duties of SMA News Editor. She also tries to keep time aside for herself and friends, both old and new.