

SINGAPORE

SEPT
OCT

AWA Magazine

2021

ALL WOMEN, ALL WALKS OF LIFE, ALL NATIONALITIES

Spicy Singapore

Finds

Sambal
Spiced Cocktails
Anthony the Spice Maker

Latin Infusion Boterismo!

On the Singapore trail of the
celebrated Colombian artist

Book Review:
The Code Breaker
The Story of Jennifer
Doudna and the
science behind
mRNA vaccines

AWA Groups Spice up your Fall

Find your next passion



AWA *Orientation*

Every First Wednesday of the Month
by appointment

Are you a Newcomer and
need a hand getting started with the AWA?
Please sign up for this Orientation session.

Register below to be assigned a timed appointment to meet with either our GM or a board member, who can walk you through everything AWA has to offer and how to attend our events.

If you have a timing request please indicate in the comments when booking
and we will do our best to facilitate.

www.awasingapore.org

All Women, All Walks of Life, All Nationalities





Editor's Note

SPICE UP YOUR FALL ISSUE

I guess you could call me a worrier – my husband does! As we planned our move to Singapore, I worried about our three boys: Would they like their new school, would they adjust academically, would they make friends? I worried about our two dogs and how they would adapt from roaming a country property and Canadian winter to living in a condo in tropical Singapore. I was so busy with the move and the worrying that it was only the week before we left Canada that I stopped to wonder how I would fill my days and make friends myself.

After our first month in Singapore, many of my worries had found a way to resolve themselves – as they usually do. My dogs rode elevators without skipping a beat and my boys were making friends. But now I began to worry that my relationship with my television might need an intervention.

After some hesitation about attending an event alone, I decided to sign up for an AWA Newcomers' Coffee. This was the turning point I needed in my relationship with the TV. Soon after, I was walking, hiking, joining a book club and attending local tours. I even gave tennis a try – after a 20 year break from the racket.

Though the unforeseen glitch of COVID meant that many of these activities had to pause or adapt to restrictions,

my involvement with AWA has continued to enrich my life here in Singapore. In this issue, we highlight groups you can join to rekindle an old passion or find a new one, and to meet new people along the way. Amongst others, we catch up with AWA's Bridge Group, the International Women's Choir and the Writer's Group.

We also welcome autumn as a time to spice things up and try something new. We feature spiced cocktails, sambal and a timely book review of *The Code Breaker*, a biography that follows the research of Jennifer Doudna, the scientist whose work led to the development of the mRNA COVID vaccines. We meet Anthony the Spice Maker and follow the Singaporean trail of Colombian sculptor, Fernando Botero.

Grab a chai latte and join us for some inspiration to spice up your fall!

Happy reading,
Jennifer

President's Message

AMERICAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE



Reaffirmation of Resilience

With the 4th of July and Singapore National Day having just passed, I am led to reflect a bit on the importance of these days.

This is usually a period of reaffirmation of the two countries' resilience. There are fireworks, parades, displays of national colors and, in Singapore, the unveiling of

an annual catchy National Day Parade ("NDP") song that replays in your head nonstop until Halloween (if you haven't heard it yet, I highly recommend it to brighten your day).

Each year's song is new and meant to seed hope and optimism for the upcoming year. This year's NDP 2021 song, "The Road Ahead," is in many ways no different from previous years' songs – it is uplifting, inspiring and unifying.

However, we know that this last year has been very different from others. We have experienced a global pandemic that has changed us and stretched tight the fabric of our resilience. Personally and professionally, physically and mentally, we have had to re-jig the way we work, play and live.

But thanks to all of you, the AWA has risen to the occasion and has continued to offer opportunities for our members to stay in touch -- virtually when necessary, and in groups of two, five or eight when possible -- all the while remaining committed to our AWA mission, and fostering community, connection and compassion in this time of need.

Over the past year, our AWA Chairs have quickly adjusted to the ever-changing environment and safety measures. They have continued to organize quality events and activities that have offered fellowship and support for our community.

I would like to specially recognize AWA Listen Ladies Chair, Andrea McKenna Brankin, for seeing the need to help members cope with their long quarantine stays by sending thoughtful care packages to their facilities.

Other wonderful examples from our active volunteers include: the Arts & Culture and International Choir groups have provided instructional and inspirational virtual events and performances; the Bridge, Walking and High Tea groups have alternated between virtual and in-person activities; the After Ni Hao group has continued to meet virtually to stay connected; the Community Service group has had waitlists for volunteers since last year.

As restrictions ease, be assured that the AWA Board and our Chairs are planning more exciting events and activities for our members to enjoy.

In conclusion, I'll refer back to the NDP 2021 song that brings me hope and optimism for the coming year:

"Come whatever on the road ahead

We did it before and we'll do it again"

In our 86th year as an organization, we at the AWA can also take the opportunity to reaffirm our resilience during these challenging times. As we look ahead, I know that no matter what comes, we will be prepared, and we will be there for our members and for our community.

Stay safe, stay resilient, stay connected.

Linda Schindler, AWA President

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FAQ's/Important Information

- The AWA welcomes all nationalities, not just Americans.
- AWA guest fees apply to Singapore residents. Out of town guests and family members pay the AWA member price.
- Guests are entitled to attend 2 events (in total, not per year) before we ask them to join the AWA to continue participating.
- You can register for membership and events any time on our website: www.awasingapore.org

AWA Mission Statement

The American Women's Association is a sisterhood of women from around the world, who come together to enhance their Singapore experience through fulfilling volunteer run events and activities.



Bulletin Board

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE AWA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AWA Board Game

Draw a line from the clue to the correct Board Member's name.

Need a hint? Visit the [AWA website](http://www.awasingapore.org) to meet the members of the 2021/2022 Executive Board.

She is AWA's extrovert.	Linda Schindler, President
She keeps records on us!	Kristen Mooney, Vice President
She knows how we can help.	Jane Kim, Secretary
She doesn't want your money, just your time.	Katherine McCall, Treasurer
She keeps track of AWA's net worth.	Typhaine de Bure, External Affairs
She is AWA's CEO.	Angela Chen, Social Chair
She can help you burn those calories.	Anita Young, Major Events
She knows the AWA FB password.	Kristin Bemowski, Corporate Relations
She is AWA's social butterfly.	Ashley Fagan, Community Service
She hopes for crowds in 2022.	Sarah Cockerill, General Manager
She has good Vices!	Meg Sine, Communications
She knows some Singapore CEOs.	Aarti Sonawala, Special Interest Chair
She has at least 13 special interests!	Jaclyn Muncie, Sports Chair
She ensures AWA runs smoothly.	Mel Rice, Volunteer Director

Answers:
Typhaine
Jane
Ashley
Mel
Katherine
Linda
Jaclyn
Meg
Angela
Anita
Kristen
Kristin
Aarti
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by Meg Farrell Sine,
AWA Communications Director
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Photo by Christi Elflein - visit her on Instagram @thegreatstreets

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Watering Holes

RAISE A GLASS AT SINGAPORE'S BEST BARS AND LOUNGES

BY *Lauren Raps*

We're so lucky to have many spices in our Singapore meals, an embarrassment of riches. Even better is that we also have an abundance of talented bartenders and restaurateurs, some of whom are using these spices to create new cocktails or to raise the standard of the tried and true.

Team Bar Night took our tough assignment in stride and found some creative cocktails at an array of the city's best bars.

Podi & Poriyal: **Cumin Baanam**



Cunim Baanam (in metal cup) at Podi and Poriyal

We couldn't help but fall in love with this beautifully decorated, cozy vegetarian Indian restaurant on Serangoon Road, that is gaining renown for its delicious cocktails, as much as for its delicious South Indian food. Savor lunch or dinner in their dining room or scoot around to the side of the restaurant to find the most precious bar where "Maestro" Mastroianni Gajendran Muttiah tends bar.

His Cumin Baanam is a combination of their homemade cumin-infused rum with their well-established mocktail, the Thenga Baanam. Highlighting a medley of twelve

ingredients and spices and taking three hours to prepare, this drink is a tropical coconut rush.

The staff at Podi & Poriyal also prepare an assortment of international cocktails, such as the Old Fashioned, the Negroni, the Dark & Stormy and the Gin Fizz. The bartenders offer singular flavors to their guests by subtly modifying each of these classic cocktails using spice-infused spirits.

"The historic spice trail has a meaningful connection to India. We wanted to showcase Indian spices in a unique context, especially while introducing cocktails



Podi and Poriyal bar tender - Mastroianni Gajendran Muttiah

and spirits to a South Indian vegetarian/vegan friendly dining experience," said Jamuna Raghavan, the founder of Arpanam, the organization that runs Podi & Poriyal. "We keep our collection simple, yet evocative. Spices are additive to the cocktail experience and create an ethnic connection that leads not only to discovery, but also to nostalgia, especially for those who regularly use these spices in their cooking. We are currently working on the next version of our cocktail and mocktail program and hope that when it's ready, it creates the same excitement the present program has."



Cocktails and bar bites at The Warehouse

The Warehouse Lobby Lounge: Singapore Sazerac

As guests enter the waterfront Warehouse Hotel at Robertson Quay, they are immediately drawn to the inviting lobby lounge. The lounge showcases an in-house cocktail program, featuring house-made alcohol infusions and essences that utilize local ingredients and spices. In homage to the three distinct eras of the hotel's past, the eclectic beverage menu is a journey through each of its incarnations. Guests take in the beauty of the restored heritage building and enjoy a taste of the spice trade, or drink to the underbelly of past illegal distilleries with a Havelock Highball. Finally, patrons can soak in the 80's, when the building housed Singapore's most renowned disco, with a Lady Luck – the most delicious concoction of vodka, gin, pineapple, ginger, coconut and lemon flavors.

The cocktails here cater to every individual's taste, with many guests declaring Forbidden Fruit, a balanced gin and rum-based drink, as their hands-down favorite. Steeped with bitter kumquat and pink peppercorn, the lime and orgeat (almond) syrup kick in with a sweet and sour hint after each sip. The glass is garnished with a tasty pink salt and peppercorn dusting, adding zing and giving the drink its addictive umami note.

Those who prefer something bolder favor the Singapore Sazerac for its complexity. The cocktail is as beautiful as it is delicious. The drink exudes Singapore flavor, with raisin bourbon, pandan bitters, rye, cognac, absinthe, and spiced demerara sugar.

The best way to sample them all is to clear the calendar for an afternoon of The Warehouse's bottomless



Singapore Sazerac at The Warehouse

offering, An Afternoon Soirée, which promises daytime reveries, with free-flow cocktails and rosé. Not for the faint-hearted, but a guaranteed good time.

AWA hosts Bar Nights once a month at different bars around town. Sign up on the AWA Calendar for a fun evening with friends - new and old!

Lauren Raps is AWA's Bar Night Chair. She moved to Singapore in January 2021 with her husband and three boys. She is the President and Founder of Travel Prospect, a full service leisure travel planning company.





Anthony in his Chinatown shop

Anthony the Spice Maker

"SPICE TO MEET YOU!"

BY *Meg Sine*

For some of us, moving to Singapore started a crash course in new tastes to try, new recipes to cook and tantalizing smells and spices all around. Some may call this assault on the senses from foods ranging from curry to durian a form of culture shock. However, the true expat experience demands that we try the unfamiliar and educate our palates. Food is often the first way to learn a new language and appreciate local cultural values. So, head to the hawker stalls! Survey and smell and make your choice of laksa or fish head curry, beef rendang or chicken rice, popiah or carrot cake. The choices are bewildering, but if in doubt, go to the stall with the longest line!

As the Autumn months arrive, for anyone who has lived or spent time in North America, our thoughts turn to cooler temperatures, colorful foliage and pumpkin patches. The scant change of Singapore seasons causes us to pause and reflect and maybe feel a bit homesick for some comfort food, like baked cookies. Ironically, our need for the common baking spices, such as nutmeg, cinnamon and cloves, connect us right back to Southeast Asia. These very spices originated on small islands to the east of Borneo.

The need for spices brings me to Anthony the Spice Maker, the number one Google search result for "where to buy spices in Singapore." Anthony's store is small and a bit hard to find, but it has the freshest, most natural and unadulterated raw spices and blends. His wares are very affordable because he sells in bulk to the grandmas and aunties of the Chinatown wet market. He's still close to his loyal, local Chinatown customers but also counts among his clientele Michelin chefs and international travellers who find him via tours. Once you try his wares, you will NOT buy grocery store spices again, whether they're for baking cookies or making tandoori chicken!

Anthony started his business 35 years ago, after learning the trade from his parents. His father emigrated to Singapore from China and met his mother, a native Singaporean of Peranakan descent. They operated a tiny stall at the Chinatown Complex in the 1970s. Anthony's inheritance are the customized rempah (spice paste) recipes that his parents curated while serving a variety of customers of Peranakan, Chinese, Malay, Indian and Muslim backgrounds. He fondly recalls his parents' old granny customers, and feels better able to relate to them now that he himself is a grandfather. Today, he



Spices for the BBQ lover



Anthony's signature mixes, many complete with recipe

hopes the heavenly smells of his fresh spices will inspire the younger generations to try some "old fashioned" home cooking like bak kut teh, laksa, and chilli crab.

Anthony sources up to 90% of his spices from Indonesia. He claims Indonesia's volcanic soil gives its spices powerful aromas and depth of taste, or 'umami.' He buys only ethically sourced products and mixes all his special blends right in his shop. His packages are all sturdy, resealable pouches or jars that come labeled with ingredients and nutritional information. His unique blends and rub packages also include his special recipes. His spices and blends make great gifts or can be used to create wellness tonics and teas.

Anthony the Spice Maker is located at 333 Kreta Ayer Road #01-25, phone 9117 7573. It's difficult to find so look for the signs and follow his website directions. Shop on his website, www.anthonyspicesmaker.com or, better yet, stop by his shop in person.

Meg Farrell Sine,
AWA Communications Director
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The Fork and Chopstick

HIGHLIGHTING OFF THE BEATEN PATH, HERITAGE, OR JUST PLAIN FUN CHOMPING GROUNDS

BY *Jenni & Eric Lee*

Co Chung

Vietnamese Restaurant
Plaza Singapura, 68 Orchard Rd, #B2-20, S. 238839



CoChung in Plaza Singapura basement

Usually, the basement of a mall is where you go to grab bubble tea or get chain restaurant food, but Co Chung attracted quite a following as soon as it popped up.

Weekend Lunch Chomp:

We think the first test of a Vietnamese restaurant is its mastery of Phở Bò – Phở beef soup (\$10.50). You could taste the mix of spices and herbs in this beefy, comforting broth. Extra chili and the must-have lime need to be requested. Another noodle dish to note was the Bún Riêu Cua, a noodle soup with deep seafood flavors, particularly shrimp -- a good alternative to phở.

Co Chung has a few street snack-type items not normally seen on Singapore menus. Bánh Bèo (water fern cake, \$7.90) is a set of small steamed cakes made from rice flour and other starchy flours. On its own, it's quite plain, but a topping of fried dried shrimp, scallion and dipping sauce transforms it into a sweet, salty, crunchy bite with a bit of fish sauce punch! Also on the menu is Bánh Bột Lọc (tapioca dumpling), made from tapioca flour that encases shrimp and pork. Again, the dipping sauce elevates this seemingly plain dish into something special.

Ambience, Service, Clientele:

More like an eatery than a restaurant, using quaint sewing machine tables. Mostly young shoppers and couples. Service was swift and efficient.

Digest: the Good the Bad and the Ugly:

This family-run restaurant is named after retired nurse Aunty Chung ("Co" means "Aunty" in Vietnamese), who was persuaded to open a restaurant to share her cooking (the Good)! We were not fans of the Vietnamese coffee (the Bad). Some felt that the prices were high, while others said it was worth it for the quality. However, the specialty Phở Revolution at \$19.90 was not revolutionary (the Ugly).

What Others Are Saying:

4.4 stars out of 5 on Google; 6/10 on Foursquare.

"The soup is sweet and has that depth of flavour which you can only get from boiling the beef bones overnight."
"Small restaurant so expect to queue during peak time."
"Authentic tasting food and some unique items not often seen in other Vietnamese restaurants." "Higher than usual quality of ingredients."

Honorable Mention, Farther Afield:

Co Chung has another outlet in Boat Quay (5 Lor Telok) with more atmosphere but less efficient service. For cheaper eats farther afield, try Cô Hai Bánh Mì (359 Beach Road, especially for inexpensive and tasty bánh mì sandwiches), and for an excellent and cheap Phở and Bún bò Huế at a hawker center, try Quan Co Ba 2 (153 Tyrwhitt Road). The Joo Chiat Road area also has many options for Vietnamese food.

Happy Chomping!



Pho Revolution

Jenni & Eric Lee live to eat and explore local eateries and bars. Originally from New York, they have lived in Singapore since 2012.





Spice Up Your Singapore Life with Sambal

DEMYSTIFYING THIS FIERY LOCAL CONDIMENT

BY *Helena A. Cochrane*

You've moved to Singapore, and now it's complicated. You're in an easy jump-off point to many exciting countries for exploration and vacationing, but the strategic location of the Red Dot has been made moot for the duration of the pandemic. Now you have to make this beautiful city in a garden your home, finding variety and excitement within its very small area. Lucky you! because the very location of Singapore at a trade and culinary crossroads has made it home to an abundant array of cuisines. You can try Singaporean Chilli Crab, Hainanese chicken rice, or any of the myriad Peranakan, Indonesian, or Malay dishes in areas across the island. It would require an extra article to include the splashy array of Indian options as well. Curiously, so much of the fabulous food within reach is hot, hot, hot.

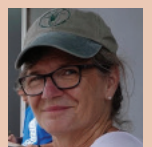
You will also learn that not all heat is the same. Singaporeans of all stripes will define and defend their particular favorites, so it may be good to get the primer and be prepared for the passionate conversations about your spicy Singapore sambal selections. Chilli condiments for your food come from thousands of unique cooks across Asia who have honed them over generations. They range in heat on the Scoville scale from mild (5,000 units) to fiery (100,000 units) or even higher. Scoville, an American pharmacist, developed his rating in 1912 based on how much capsaicin acid a pepper contains and how many dilutions the pepper requires to lose its burn.

A condiment that dominates local tables is called sambal belacan. The name comes from Indonesia, and means that the chili sauce contains shrimp paste, though it starts with peppers ground by hand using a mortar and pestle. Sambal oelek, also of Indonesian origin, is simpler, with chilis, salt, water and vinegar. Many recipes suggest shortening the painstaking grinding method by using a food processor, but traditionalists lament the loss of flavor when the oils are not slowly

released from the chili by the pestle. Several recipes also include garlic, vinegar or lime juice, galangal (a root like ginger, but not interchangeable with ginger), lemongrass, shallots, turmeric, and so on. A sequence of chopping, grinding, mashing and some stir-frying yields the smoky, layered condiment to ignite a base of chicken, rice, fish, eggs, noodles, vegetables and on and on. Web sites like thespruceeats.com, honeycombers.com, seriouseats.com, and asianaspirations.com offer detailed instructions on where to buy or how to make the best sambal.

For some enthusiasts of heat, Sriracha is a good sauce to liven up your meal. Eater beware! Sriracha is sweeter than sambal, and doesn't have the solid texture that pairs better with your Malay nasi lemak, or Peranakan rendang. Finally, sambal seems to have had a key role in the creation of Singapore's national dish of Chilli Crab. Food enthusiasts across the island express a reverence for Madam Cher Yam Tian, who developed the dish in the late 1940's in her home kitchen on Upper East Coast Road. The mud crab stir fry was a staple whose flavors she heightened with chilis in the tomato sauce. At friends' urging, she began to sell her fragrant fare from a pushcart and then in her zinc-roofed restaurant under a palm tree. Later iterations of the recipe included sambal and egg to thicken the sauce and dial down its sweetness in favor of heat. One Fullerton is currently where Palm Beach restaurant, a direct descendent of her humble eatery, serves chilli crab with mantou buns to enthusiastic diners.

Since moving from Philadelphia in 2018, Helena has been active with AWA's Walking with Women, Writers' Group and International Choir as well as with Urban Sketchers of Singapore.



Java Junkies

QUEST FOR THE PERFECT BEAN

BY *Liza Rowan*



Sandy Harford, Mo Lie, Kerry Lewry, Londa Matthieu, Jenny Ehrman, Liza Rowan, Keri Matwick at Common Man Coffee Roasters

Java Junkies was born in the spring of 2021 out of a passion for quality coffee and a love of the happening cafe scene in Singapore.

We meet every two weeks on Thursday afternoons, and despite the various changing COVID restrictions, we have managed to get together six times so far. Each of our host locations has gone to tremendous effort to share its knowledge of this popular beverage -- offering the group coffee tastings, complimentary coffee, roasting room tours and more!

Java Junkies' popularity is evident in that our outings are booked up almost as soon as advertised, and we always

have a waiting list! We truly are looking forward to when we can host groups again and continue on our learning journey. Until then, we keep connected and share anything java-related on our private Facebook Group, which is open to all AWA members and can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/awajavajunkies>.

We look forward to welcoming new members to the group!

Until then, keep brewing!

Liza & the JJ's

Want to know more? Join our Facebook group and sign up for our next outing!
www.facebook.com/groups/awajavajunkies

Liza Rowan is a holistic nutritionist, supporting Green Umbrella, an education NGO in Cambodia. You can also find her proudly holding a tennis racket or coffee cup!



Listen Ladies

LISTEN LADIES ARE LISTENING

The Listen Ladies took a short break this summer, but we were still listening on our WhatsApp Chat and offering our Quarantine Goody Bags. We'll be back with bi-weekly Zoom meetings in August/September and will surely keep delivering some chocolate, AWA swag and joy with our quarantine bags. Please sign up on the Listen Ladies page on the [AWA website](#) to get a bag. The bags are complimentary and include lots of Listen Ladies love!



American Association of Singapore

DISCOVER AWA'S SISTER ORGANIZATION

BY *Susan Williams*

Founded in 1917 as the American Association of Malaya, the American Association of Singapore (AAS) was the first association of American citizens residing in what was then Malaya. Over time, AAS has launched most of the American groups in Singapore (see image). We also work closely with the US Embassy and the US Navy based in Singapore.

AAS has recently relaunched and we are better than ever. Think of us as a 104-year-old start-up. We are pumped about our new and improved AAS, too! We've pivoted our offerings and events during COVID, hosting smaller groups and virtual events. Since May, we have celebrated Cinco de Mayo with a cooking class; introduced Hump Day Help (kid-friendly virtual events on Wednesdays); and celebrated the Fourth of July with a terrific virtual event co-hosted by The American Club. The Career Resource Center for Excellence (CRCE) has offered numerous talks, including advice on managing mental health and how to make yourself stand out in today's job market. Can you say "virtual interview?"

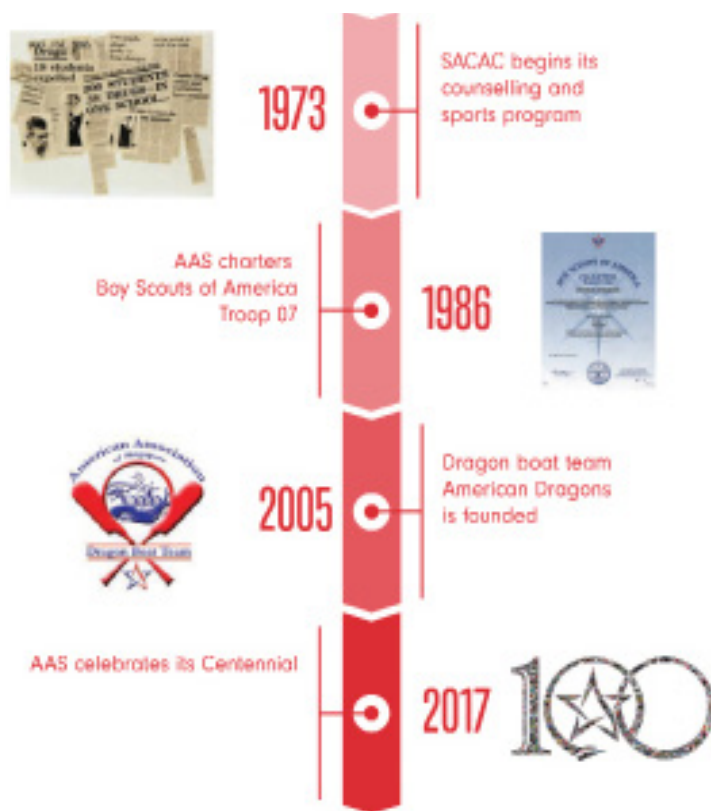
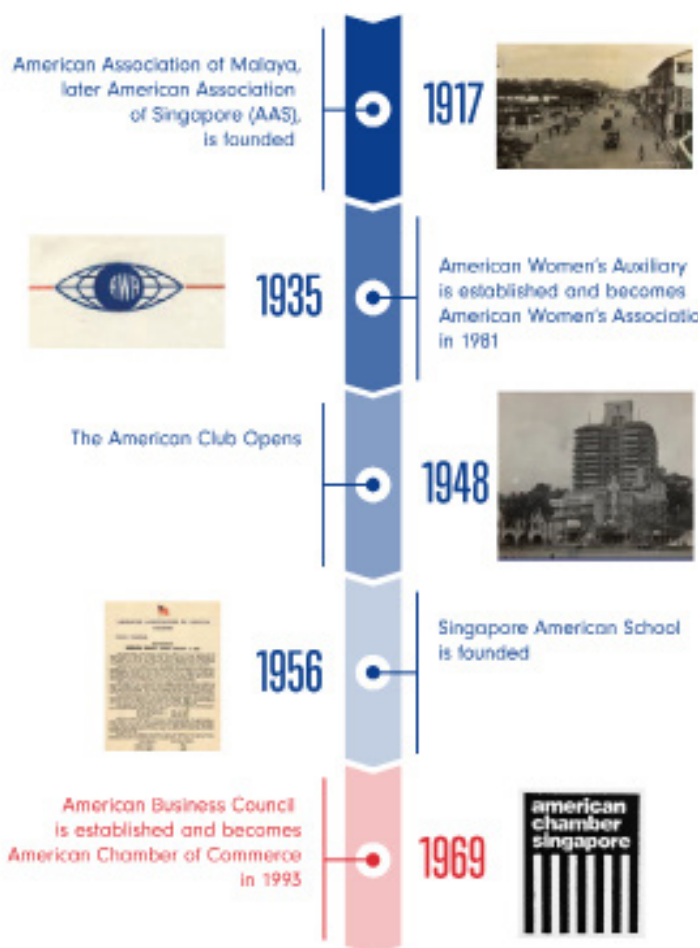
In the coming months, keep an eye out for a new and improved CRCE. We have so much in the works it'll make your toes tingle. We'll also continue some of the super-



AWA and AAS member Andrea McKenna with Georgia and Chris - Splat Paint event

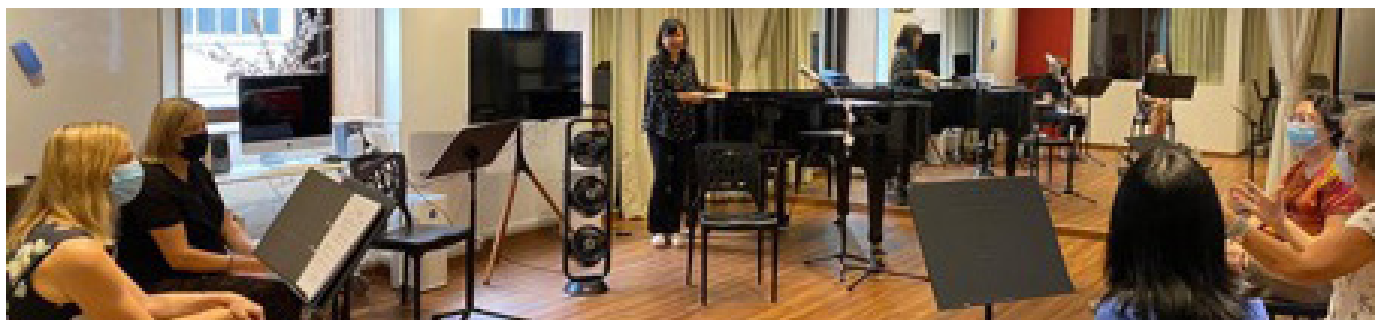
fun, smaller events like the ones we've done recently, such as the Bike & Bites and Chinatown Mystery Tours. Our mission is fun and connection, COVID or no COVID.

We'd love to welcome you to AAS! Become a member between August 1 and September 30, 2021, and you'll be entered in a drawing to win a staycation at the Sofitel Sentosa Spa and Resort or brunch at SO/ Sofitel. If you're already a member, refer a friend and be entered to win a \$100 gift voucher from Lawry's The Prime Rib. Not an American? No worries. AAS is open to all nationalities. Sign up now and let the fun begin.



International Women's Choir

PASSION FOR MUSIC AND SONG



Choir practice at Adelphi House

It's been an extraordinary first half of the year. Our production engineer, Tomoko Ichimaru, helped us get our songs out to you, with videos for Lunar New Year ("Gong Xi"), Easter ("Happy!"), and July 4 ("You Raise Me Up"). We improvised by rehearsing over Zoom and recording at home. Using this process, we were able to contribute our most recent song to the American Association of Singapore's July 4th celebration.

The beginning of June had us feeling very optimistic as we welcomed our new director, Josephine Sim of Voices of Singapore. Josephine is new to AWA but her musical expertise and enthusiasm for singing makes her a perfect fit for our choir.

We are hopeful that MOH rules will soon be modified so that we can commence practice in our studio space at the Adelphi House. We were so close to hearing one another harmonize in the same space, but circumstances in July forced a return to the Zoom practice room. We are optimistically planning to be in Adelphi House practicing in person by the beginning of September. Our upcoming productions will be available on our Facebook page.

If you love to sing and enjoy a supportive, international, musical environment, please consider joining us! We audition only in order to assess your range. Singers of all levels of experience are welcome! Please email intlchoir@awasingapore.org.

Bridge Ladies

FUN AND GAMES

Duplicate bridge and Couples bridge are still going strong! We play online with around seven tables. The upside to COVID restrictions is we are able to reconnect with AWA players who have left Singapore.

For example, Marianne Detheze moved back to France from Singapore this past July, but she still plays with us. Check the [AWA website](#) for our next game.



Amy Starling, Anne Gerardi, ChewLian Mills, Sock-Yan Sim



Mandy Noel, Maureen Bennett, Kirstie Schrueder, Marianne Detheze



Writers' Block

A CONTRIBUTION FROM OUR AWA WRITERS' GROUP MEMBERS

BY *Shahmaz Ali*

A Mother to Be

August 26, 2001, Pondok Indah Hospital,
Jakarta, Indonesia

"No epidural, no baby!"

My husband sounded quite adamant. Where was the anesthetist?

The nurses had tried convincing us that the epidural was not needed, besides which the anesthetist was delayed. The baby was ready, and the time left in labor, short. They were correct in all probability. But after having gone through two painful deliveries, the second worse than the first, I had been persistent about requesting the epidural, that seemingly magical intervention some friends had opted for to ease labor pains.

However, the delivery not going through without the epidural did seem a bit extreme. I looked at my husband as he spoke, rather taken aback. He too must be tired and at wits' end. But surely, he couldn't mean it? This baby was coming out, epidural or not!

I had been admitted at 9:00 pm with regular contractions, which were growing increasingly painful. It was now past midnight. Not only was the anesthetist delayed, so was the obstetrician. Where were they? For a fleeting moment, I remembered the friendly advice to fly into Singapore as many expatriate friends had done for deliveries. No, no, this was not the time, and frankly, it was too late to go down that line of thought. I had to remain positive.

And then, like peas in a pod, one came after the other. First, the anesthetist rushed in, still pulling on his doctor's coat and gloves, moved the three nurses present into action, and injected the epidural. It seemed like only a minute had passed, and the cooling effect of the epidural set in, finally relaxing my intense pain, when the obstetrician appeared, pulling on his coat and gloves and apologetically muttering "machtet-machtet"

under his breath. He was referring to that punishing traffic so well known to Jakarta's residents. Frankly, an overused excuse, but then, I could not dwell on that either for now. I was just relieved he had shown up.

He hurriedly assessed the situation, asked the anesthetist to leave, and instructed the nurses to guide and help push the baby externally with the coming contraction. He looked a bit worried, his expression making it clear that I had no time to rest under the now-soothing effects of the epidural. The baby had moved to the side, and I could feel and see my right side bulge to the optimum. I wondered if the baby was in distress. Something told me that this push had to be it. My pain and tiredness were now overridden by a new urgent worry for the baby. The contraction came. I took a deep breath and pushed my hardest with the nurses on my right guiding and manoeuvring externally.

Soon, a crying baby was placed on my bare stomach for comforting. "Sama-Sama daddy ... handsome like his father ..." went around. As I looked at my husband's delighted expression and the now-relieved faces of the obstetrician and the nurses, I felt a bit cheated. After having done all the hard work, look who walked away with the compliments!

"Don't cry, little one," I said softly, caressing the baby, surprised to see the newborn stop in his whimpering and crane his wobbly neck to try and peer towards the source of the sound. As if a familiar voice had brought in some calm to an exhausting journey. I looked down once again with wonder into the teary eyes of a newborn. I was now a mother the third time around. Yes, we were now complete and a full house.

The AWA Writers' Group meets the second and fourth Thursday of each month. For more information, send an email to writers@awasingapore.org

Book Review

"BOOKS ARE A UNIQUELY PORTABLE MAGIC" STEPHEN KING

BY *Neha Yadav*

The Code Breaker: Jennifer Doudna, Gene Editing, and the Future of the Human Race

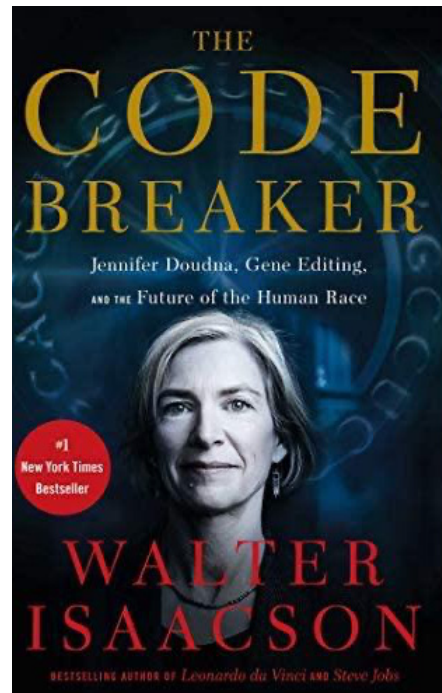
By Walter Isaacson

Walter Isaacson is a genius.

He profiles Jennifer Doudna, a lanky girl with blonde hair who felt out of place growing up in Hawaii and compensated by diving into books. Her father, a professor of English, left a copy of *The Double Helix* by James Watson on her bed. She thought it a mystery, and in a way it was, as it revealed how Watson and Crick unraveled the mystery of the genetic code. That set her on the path to become a scientist, leaving in her wake the high school counselor who told her girls didn't become scientists. She won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2020.

Isaacson traces her academic journey, including the crucial mentoring by her doctoral advisor at Harvard, Jack W. Szostak, who directed her research interests toward the study of RNA. She investigated the structural biology of RNA, first at Yale, and then at UC Berkeley, where much of the book is focused.

Isaacson portrays Jennifer Doudna as a fascinating, driven, and highly-respected figure in the scientific community. I enjoyed following Doudna's journey through her academic career and her foray into the business world. I also admired Doudna's idealism to help change the world for the better; the possibility that diseases and viruses could be eliminated through gene-editing is a stupendous breakthrough in science and human history. With the current state of the world, of course, the significance of CRISPR is more vital than ever. Though Doudna is the focus of this biography, I appreciated the



fact that Isaacson took the time to include other individuals in the CRISPR field, including Doudna's competitors and former colleagues.

Perhaps my favorite part of the book was the section that grapples with the moral implications of gene editing. As Isaacson reflects, editing genes for treatment/

prevention of diseases is different from enhancing them to produce desirable traits (eye color, height, intelligence, and so forth). At what point do we draw the line, and who decides if there is a line that cannot be crossed? I enjoyed Isaacson's reflections on the diversity of human nature, and the positives of qualities that are often seen as detrimental (for instance, his argument that mental illnesses can lead to astounding creativity and works of art, such as in the case of Van Gogh). How much diversity and potential would we lose if we eradicated "less desirable" genes? Moreover, do we have the right to "play God"? Could gene editing lead to a loss of empathy and humility?

My understanding of science is very limited and this is a very science heavy book, but it's been explained very well for readers like me. This book is an essential read. I'm giving it a 5/5.

Originally from New Delhi, Neha has lived in Singapore since 2019. When she gets time away from being a Tai Tai, she's usually seen reading a book or playing tennis. Do follow her Instagram page @supernehareads for her latest book reviews.



Writer's Group

"IF THERE IS A BOOK THAT YOU WANT TO READ, BUT IT HASN'T BEEN WRITTEN YET, THEN YOU MUST WRITE IT" TONI MORRISON

Writers' Group meetings are lively and enriching. Not even a pandemic can stop us from getting together thanks to Zoom! Beloved members now in the US can also continue to participate. Our warm smiles (see screenshot) greet all who join to share their work and/or listen to other members' writings followed by a vibrant exchange of positive and supportive feedback. A wide variety of literary genres (memoirs, short stories, novels, poetry, essays, articles) is represented within our group as well as writing knowledge and experience. To read a piece by one of our members, please turn to our



Mandakini Arora, Helena A Cochrane, Elissa Viorner, Amanda Jaffe, Sorelle Henricus, Shahnaz Ali

Writers' Block column featured in each issue of the AWA Magazine and enjoy!

If you wish to attend a meeting to get a taste of our group activity and exchanges and how they "Spice Things Up," contact: writers@awasingapore.org.

Book Club

"YOU CAN NEVER GET A CUP OF TEA LARGE ENOUGH OR A BOOK LONG ENOUGH TO SUIT ME" C.S. LEWIS



Jane Kim, Tori Nelson and Sandy Harford

For our July book, Tuesday Afternoon Book Club member Sandy Harford chose *Great Circle*, by Maggie Shipstead. Sandy had in mind that it would be the quintessential summer read, and her choice did not disappoint. The novel's 600 pages are packed with history, adventure, romance, travel, Hollywood scandal, wartime heroics and wonderfully-crafted characters. Taking an epic approach, the journey begins in 1914 with the sinking of an ocean liner and the rescue of infant twins, Marian and Jamie Graves. We follow Marian's unpredictable life as well as the lives of people who help to shape

this gutsy pioneer aviator daredevil. Her twin brother, her imprisoned father, her bootlegger husband, and even Charles Lindberg play a part in her ambitions and decisions. Marian's ultimate goal is to circumnavigate the earth by flying over the poles, though she perishes in the attempt. (Not a spoiler, as her death happens in the book's opening scene).

The narration moves between Marion's story in the first half of the 20th century, and the story of 21st-century Hadley Baxter, a former child star turned apathetic actress. Cast to play Marian in the film about her disappearance over Antarctica, Hadley immerses herself in the character, a decision that leads her on a path of self discovery. The weaving together of their lives, layering one woman's character over the other, reveals the connected fate of the protagonists of *Great Circle*. Our wonderful, though somewhat whittled-down book group may be stuck in Singapore, but this sweeping tale gave us a chance to "spice things up," and escape to Hangar 66 at the old Seletar Airport for lunch and a book chat.

AWA Book Groups meet once a month on various days and times. Go to the Book Groups page of the [AWA website](http://www.awasingapore.org) to register for one that suits your schedule. Happy reading!



You're Not Alone... Really

COPING WITH THE UPS AND DOWNS OF BEING AN EXPAT

BY *Andrea McKenna Brankin*

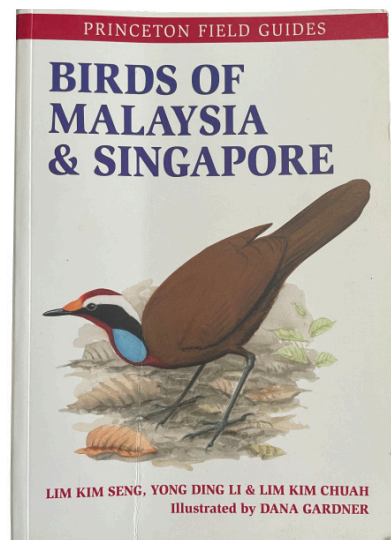
The Andrea Bird:

When You Think There's No One, There's Always the Birds

Earlier this year, as I was dreaming of home and knowing we wouldn't get there anytime soon, I bought a book on the birds of Malaysia and Singapore. It was time to "Rediscover Singapore." I guess I've always associated where I am with the birds I hear, so the time was right to learn more about Singapore's feathered friends.

Growing up in New England, we had the ever-present Robins, the inimitable Cardinals, the flashy Blue Jays and the gentle Mourning Doves. I later swapped them for ominous Crows, scruffy Seagulls and brooding Turkey Vultures trolling the city of Chicago, especially my beloved Humboldt Park. But all were sounds of home.

When we moved to Singapore, I learned of a different bird, aptly called the Andrea Bird by my husband.



For hours on end each morning, it squawked its unfamiliar and decidedly tropical hoots over and over, from the Banyan tree across from my new Singapore apartment on the corner of Sampan Place and the Geylang River. I was new to this country and I was alone. My husband worked 18 hours a day building

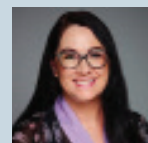
a financial services company. I had no friends, but every day, I heard a soon-to-be familiar and one-way conversation from the Andrea Bird. He/she seemed to be alone too, as I never heard any bird calling back in response to its endless, solo cacophony.

That sound was surely a discovery of the place I had landed. A new sound to mnemonically connect me to Singapore. That's a cool word, right? It means connecting you to something in your memory so you remember it; a prompt or cue, if you will. Well, cue the Andrea Bird to bring me back to the beginning of my Singapore journey. I started out alone, but happily, things have changed there. (Thanks, AWA!)

Now that I've been here for 10 years, I hear different birds on my walks in East Coast Park and on Meyer Road where my condo sits. I walk, sometimes with neighbors and sometimes with the AWA's Walking With Women group (though we're all on hold right now). The one bird that stands out to me now is the super-green Parakeet, which has a sometimes-annoying long chirp. But the interesting thing is that it is NEVER alone...there's always a troupe of them. As I've built my life here, I now have my own troupe of chirping peeps. And, though I'm happy to match the chatter of the Parakeets, I never forget where I started with the lone squawk.

To this day, I still haven't seen or identified the Andrea Bird, even from my new bird book. But when I hear it, I remember my early times here and know that I'm not alone.

Andrea runs the AWA Listen Ladies Group, providing confidential support for members at regular meetings.
listenladies@awasingapore.org



Member Spotlight

GETTING TO KNOW OUR MEMBERS BEYOND THE USUAL CHITCHAT

BY *Helena A. Cochrane*

Julie Samra

Julie Samra arrived in Singapore in December 2020, ready to hit the ground running, with her husband Boo and their children Avi, 12, and Jia, 10. Their puppy, Sherlock, was a moving present for the kids. Having been an expat in Shanghai and Tokyo, and lived in South India, she was accustomed to the many steps involved in resettling in a new place but, of course, not in a pandemic. From her hotel room during quarantine, Julie signed up for both AWA and the Friends of the Museums. Her family made the best of the time in their hotel, seeing it as a safe landing after all the upheaval of selling a home, choosing an apartment and schools, and making their way through the requirements that the Ministry of Health has for living in Singapore in the current circumstances.



Boo, Avi, Jia and Julie

Did you know much about Singapore before coming to live here?

We were in Chapel Hill, NC for four years, in a suburban house, but we had lived in Shanghai and in Tokyo. When friends asked if I would move back to Asia, I said 'only to Singapore.' I'm drawn to the safety and the clean water, and the many green places to walk. For me, it's like all the best parts of Asia all in one country! I really do love the multiculturalism here. People from different backgrounds accepting and embracing their differences and similarities.

What have you struggled with that you didn't expect to be challenging?

The hardest thing is for our kids to get settled into life here, though it is not a surprise. The puppy helps a lot, but they miss their friends from home. Their transition is still ongoing.

What habits make you feel most settled in Singapore?

What makes me feel most settled is meeting new people. For me, making connections and sharing experiences are what makes a house a home. The only thing that I miss isn't a thing -- it's my family.

What are you doing to meet people and form friendships in Singapore?

I have taken up pickleball and played with some fabulous ladies. I went on several of the FOM and AWA walking tours of neighborhoods. When I take my dog for a walk, it's natural to open conversations with other dog walkers. I also have volunteered to distribute food to Singaporeans in need, another way to connect to volunteers and recipients. I have an outgoing personality and know that I need to make good use of the time I will have in Singapore to make connections.

Have you tried something new here?

I have meditated off and on for years, but enrolled in a meditation course here, and it's wonderful. I also have begun to work with a trainer for the first time and I love it!

Did you work before you lived in Singapore? And here?

My degrees are in psychology, and I worked as a therapist on our other expat stints. In this wild and unpredictable year leading up to our move, I was homeschooling the children. I have written and published one children's book and will be publishing another one soon. See JulieSamra.com for more about Julie's books.

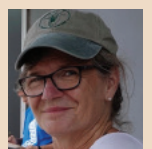


Julie's children's book

Any final insights to share?

My husband and I are from different continents, religions and cultures. We are excited about being able to raise our children to be global citizens in Singapore. We celebrate all the Jewish as well as Indian holidays. This year, we made pineapple tarts for the Lunar New Year, and we are looking forward to celebrating National Day in August.

Since moving from Philadelphia in 2018, Helena has been active with AWA's Walking with Women, Writers' Group and International Choir as well as with Urban Sketchers of Singapore.



Resident Crafter

MEET ONE OF THE ARTISTIC LADIES FROM THE CREATIVE HANDS GROUP

BY *Meg Sine*

Tammy Ramirez

"You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have." Maya Angelou

Tammy Ramirez epitomizes the creative spirit. Her unique style of creativity uses her inspirations, talents and curiosity to make something beautiful that wasn't there before. Art is not her livelihood. She doesn't sell her art, but rather, enthusiastically creates objects for her own sense of accomplishment and often makes gifts of her work.

She's retired from a career managing an American medical consulting firm in London that she founded



Tammy with her completed quilt



Tammy's needlepoint

with her husband in the 1990s. By the time she left London, she had grown the office to 16 employees from seven countries. Tammy pours hard work and passion into everything she touches.

Where to Start

Even as a young girl, Tammy was inspired to draw. She loves keeping her hands busy, so she also taught herself to knit, and knitting remains her most enduring creative hobby. She knits any pattern, and is skilled enough to change parts of a pattern to incorporate her own design. It's like knitting her signature into a special garment, as if signing her name on a drawing.

Her creative ambitions and skills have grown year after year as she continually challenges herself to learn ways to express her love of art. Sketching grew into watercolors, which in turn led to different painting media. She's spread beyond knitting into other textile crafts, such as needlepoint and crochet.

The craft of needlepoint stitches yarn through an open-weave canvas. Comparable to perfect brush strokes in a painting, the challenge of needlepoint is perfecting rows of tiny, uniform stitches. Tammy has the inclination and artistic confidence to turn this often tediously detailed needlework into beautiful tapestries. She's especially satisfied when she creates art with a pleasing combination of color and texture in her design.

New Places, New Inspirations

Upon moving to Singapore, Tammy was attracted to AWA's Creative Hands (CH) group. Finding like-minded friends is like striking gold, leading to the development of new sources of inspiration! She put aside her knitting needles and paintbrushes to learn handcrafts from CH friends: crochet and quilting.

Crochet, like knitting, uses yarn, but to crochet means learning a new language of stitches that are made one at a time with a hook rather than knitting a whole row at a time. Tammy became an accomplished crocheter, making beautiful items with delicate circular and lacelike patterns.

Several members of CH are quilters, prompting Tammy to join a subgroup of CH that calls itself the 'quilt brigade'. They sew colorful, child-themed fabrics into cotton blankets for babies in need at Ronald McDonald House charity. Without her own sewing machine at first, she was sewing the quilt pieces together by hand. She's since bought a machine, making the quilting labor much easier.

Integrating Art and Life

Even as she has expanded her skills, Tammy's first love remains drawing and painting. She maintains an art



Needlepoint pillow

workstation. Undeterred, Tammy has created another workspace in an available corner of her laundry room. In prioritizing artwork as much as clean clothes, Tammy builds a daily routine around her creative talents.

Finally, as a practical matter, rather than struggling to cram paints and brushes in her luggage when she



Crochet blanket

journal, endeavoring to add new compositions every day or two, as well as painting greeting cards. Springing from her cheerful personality, her paintings evoke happiness and natural beauty.

During these COVID times of stay-home mandates, Tammy's very grateful to take sanctuary in her artwork. She dedicated a workspace in her guest bedroom for easy access to art and craft supplies to work on projects.

Now on a visit in the USA, she gladly cares for her elderly mother, which means relinquishing her crafts



One of Tammy's greeting cards

travels, Tammy has discovered a more portable tool to paint with. She uses Tombow double-tipped "brush pens". Their flexible brush on one end and fine tip on the other paint both large areas and fine lines.

Meg Farrell Sine,
AWA Communications Director
communicationsdirector@
awasingapore.org





Standing Woman at OUE Downtown Gallery



Reclining Woman at the St. Regis Hotel

Hidden in Plain Sight

DISCOVERING SINGAPORE'S VIBRANT STREET ART SCENE

BY *Jennifer Williams* AND *Isabelle Tadhoury*

Boterismo is everywhere!

For a small country, Singapore has a high number of Fernando Botero's famous voluptuous sculptures. Botero is one of South America's best-known artists, recognized for his rotund and whimsical figures and objects that tower over their regular-sized observers. Along with the numerous Botero sculptures that can be seen in his native Medellín, Columbia, his multi-million dollar artworks can be found in key cities around the world. His statues grace the streets of New York, Paris, Barcelona, Madrid, and Jerusalem. Singapore joins this list with seven Botero masterpieces scattered throughout the city.

From the exaggerated nude Adam and Eve who welcome visitors to the lobby of Resorts World Sentosa's Hotel Michael, to the Reclining Woman who lies in front of the entrance of the St. Regis Hotel, Botero's statues

are the statement pieces of some of the finest art collections in Southeast Asia. The St Regis is home to two more Boteros; the Dancing Couple, inside the hotel on a table top and the Lady Lying by the Pool.

Size is Botero's trademark and, while some observers are inclined to call his subjects fat, Botero insists that he does not paint fat people. He says "I am interested in volume, the sensuality of form. If I paint a woman, a man, a dog or a horse, I always do with this idea of volume, it is not that I have an obsession with fat women." He manipulates space and perspective to show the monumentality of his subjects.

As with all great art, Botero is no stranger to controversy and sometimes beauty is in the eye of the beholder. In 2020, his Adam and Eve statue created a stir in Singapore when one man took offence to the large size of the nude statues. His criticism was reported online

news source, Mothership, where he registered his shock at the “indecent” statues with “huge private parts” in full display of children. He stated that the private parts “should be small if it’s art”.

Not all criticism of Botero’s pieces has been so benign. One of Botero’s most famous pieces is the “Bird” that stands along the river at United Overseas Bank (UOB) Plaza, directly across the river from the Asian Civilizations Museum. It is one of three dove statues that Botero made as an homage to peace. The first dove was placed in the center of Medellin, Colombia. In 1995, it was bombed during an outdoor concert, in violence that killed 30 people and injured more than 200. The leftist guerrilla group FARC initially took responsibility for the bombing, claiming it was a message aimed at Colombia’s then-defense minister Fernando Botero Zea, who is Botero’s son. In 2000, Botero responded to the attack by donating the identical, undamaged bronze dove statue to his country, and the new sculpture stands beside the damaged remains of the earlier work in Medellin. In Singapore, the third dove peacefully perches by the waterside.

Other sculptures to visit in Singapore include the Standing Woman at the OUE Downtown Gallery, Horse at The Metropolis, and the Dressed Woman in the Parkview Square Building, outside the famous Atlas Bar. Now in his late eighties, the artist, who has been married for more than 40 years to Sophia Vari, the Greek sculptor and jewelry designer, continues to work



Horse at The Metropolis

tirelessly. Demand for Botero’s paintings and sculptures remains strong and he regularly sells pieces at Christie’s. Just recently, on May 19, 2021, his Dancers statue sold at a Christie’s auction for US\$774,000. Luckily for us, we can just walk the streets of Singapore to see his work.

Isabelle and Jennifer share a love of art, good coffee and exploring Singapore. Both came here in 2019 and are always on the lookout for the next great statue or mural that is just around the corner.



Bird overlooking the Singapore River

Photography Group

PERSPECTIVES OF SINGAPORE

This year, the Photography Group has been on the streets and in the rainforest, exploring and photographing Singapore. We have walked in Tiong Bahru, along the Singapore River at night, up Mount Faber and along the Southern Ridges, through Sungei Buloh, through Chinatown at night for CNY, along Orchard Road to



Sally Steinthal, Christi Elflein, Cathy Barshop, Monique Lie, Noelle Spears, Peggy Kershaw

capture the Christmas lights, through the CBD to capture "Patterns, Textures and Reflections," around Little India, and in the Botanic Gardens.

In response to the constantly changing group sizes allowed by MOH, we have tailored the route, group sizes, and frequency of our walks to allow as many people as possible to participate. We actively use our waitlist as a guide to the popularity of a walk and sometimes have offered a second outing to accommodate more members. We also have tried to offer more groups on a given day by asking other volunteers we know to help us out. A huge thank you to these women!!!

Two walks provide examples of some of the things this group photographs and where we go to explore Singapore's culture, heritage, and natural beauty.

In April 2021, we led two groups of women to Little India. Cameras and phones were the equipment of

choice. This walk was full of color, street photography opportunities, and culture. We saw the Tekka Market setting up and the food merchants doing a brisk business. Colorful street art, murals, houses, and temples provided great photography opportunities -- notably Tan Teng Niah's house and Sri Veeramakaliamman Temple. It was a fabulous neighborhood walk that everyone wants to do again.

The Botanic Gardens was the venue choice for our July walk. Carol led a small group of four, with the idea of a more technical and learning-oriented photo shoot for participants to explore some of the creative functionality on their cameras. While it was a grey, drizzly morning, in the end we did get some beautiful shots in this UNESCO World Heritage site. Probably the most inspiring part of the walk was photographing glistening leaves after the rain. (Okay, sometimes we can be photo nerds.)



Lotus flower at the Botanic Gardens

The future is bright for the AWA Photography Group. We have a huge list of ideas to pursue, which we will vary in terms of time of day and what we are seeing. Looking forward, we hope to explore Tanjong Pagar, Everton Road, Geylang, and some sky gardens – just a few ideas to keep exploring Singapore.

Notably this year, Londa has revitalized our Facebook page by offering up a weekly theme to encourage members of the AWA Photography community to post their photos. This has been a huge success, with many members posting their pictures.

We love exploring the Red Dot. So much to see...so much to be creative with...whether using a phone or a camera. We welcome everyone to join us to walk, explore, and photograph Singapore.

Co-chairs: Carol Hamcke-Onstwedder,
Londa Matthieu, photography@awasingapore.org

Local Tours

GETTING TO KNOW SINGAPORE IN SMALL GROUPS

BY *Shadow Paul*

Getting Involved with AWA during the Pandemic

I've returned to Singapore after a ten year hiatus, and during the pandemic, so it's definitely been a challenge. We sold our house, packed out, moved across continents with three kids and a dog. We've said farewell to friends, and arrived in a futuristic city that is completely controlled by apps on my phone! I know you all can relate!

From living here before, I knew the first thing I needed to do was to re-join AWA. Doing so immediately would be the key to making new friends who shared the excitement for a new country. I signed up from my SHN hotel room and booked my first tour, Exploring Chinatown. I bumped into a buddy from my neighborhood on the tour and now we always check with each other when signing up for a tour to be able to commute together. I signed on to mahjong and tennis, shopping and art exhibition tours, which made for many exciting opportunities to connect through AWA.

I've also decided to take on a new AWA role as a Local Tours leader. I am excited to meet other ladies on the island and explore the local cultures and sights! It's a direct line to exploring neighborhoods and meeting friends.

The local tours of various areas of Singapore often highlight off-the-beaten-path aspects of local life



AWA Local Tour Leaders at the Pottery Jungle

and sights you'll miss otherwise. You'll get a close-up peek at local cultures and customs and find neat things to show your family. Local Tours also helps you find great little shops that would be hard for you to find on your own. Be ready: Tours conform strictly with the current government restrictions on social distancing, though even when as few as five people were allowed, Local Tours remained open for business. Check the [AWA website](#) for tour info.

Go all in for AWA to make your time here memorable. You never know who you'll meet!



The Goh Family Home from Crazy Rich Asians Tour

Wander Woman

LAUREN'S JOURNEY TO CROSS THE GLOBE, ONE AMAZING EXPERIENCE AT A TIME

BY *Lauren Raps*

They are ready when the world is...

While we still don't know when we will be able to travel, perhaps it's time to dream. Many travel destinations have become a casualty of COVID-19, though quite a few have used this opportunity to renovate and even build new properties. Wander Woman's last column showcased a local Thai holiday at the Dusit Thani Laguna resort located in Singapore. Now we feature exciting new openings to consider visiting in Thailand.

Explore another city: Capella Bangkok



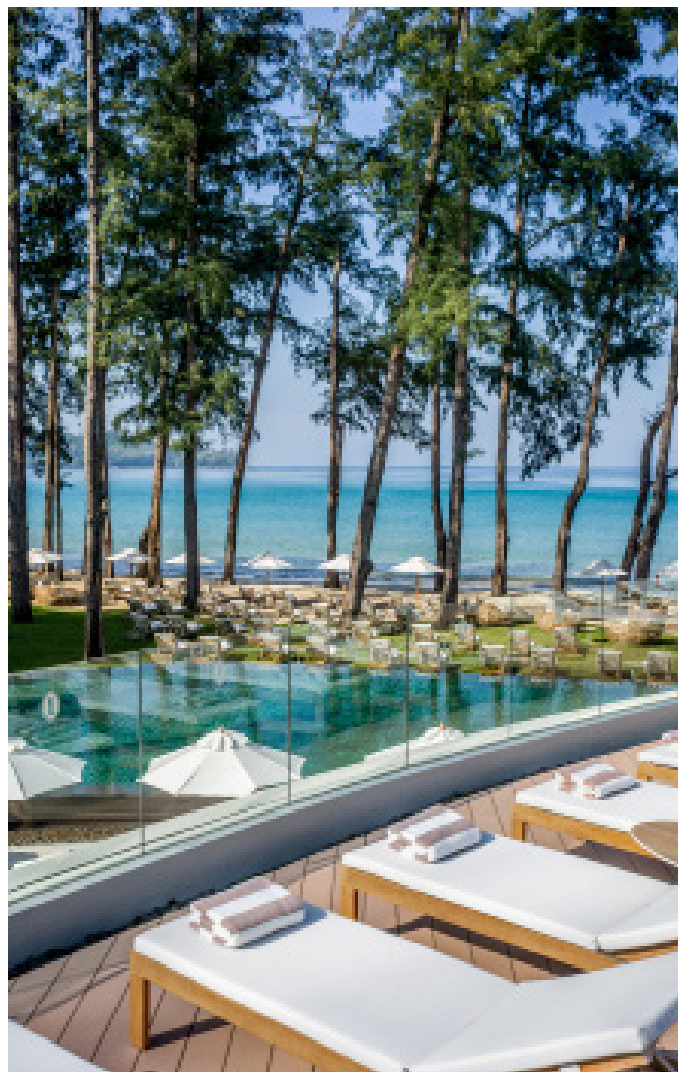
Stella at Capella Bangkok

Tucked away in Charoenkrung, on the banks of the Chao Phraya River, the Capella Bangkok opened its doors in October 2020 to tremendous praise from domestic travelers, as well as Conde Nast Traveler and Travel & Leisure. The property offers 101 guestrooms, suites and villas, each of which boasts uninterrupted views of Thailand's revered river.

With Phra Nakhon restaurant serving authentic regional Thai food, and the Mediterranean restaurant Coté, whose chef has three Michelin stars, in addition to a bespoke cocktail salon and a tea lounge, the Capella Bangkok is an enticing foodie destination.

Its spa, Auriga, features time-tested, authentic Thai experiences, including a "Hammer Massage" that might be the massage we all need to knock out the kinks in our bodies from the eighteen months of COVID living.

Family beach getaway: Intercontinental Phuket



Intercontinental pool

Inspired by Phuket's natural landscape, the new InterContinental Phuket Resort is a luxurious beachfront retreat featuring 221 elegantly appointed rooms and villas overlooking the Andaman Sea. Find it on Kamala Beach, between Millionaire's Mile and the Amanpuri headland, the most exclusive area on the stunning west coast of Phuket. It's been open since November 2019, just months ahead of COVID closures.

Intercontinental Phuket features four restaurants and bars with contemporary Thai and international gourmet fare, and poolside bites and cocktails at Pine Beach Bar. Kids will love the hotel's six swimming pools and the Planet Trekkers Kids Club. Parents will love the tennis offerings and spacious spa.

they are secluded on an island, very far away from their small loved ones at home, in a good way.

Destination Asia Thailand's General Manager, David Linde, lays down the red carpet in anticipation of your arrival:



Banyan Tree Beach

Romantic Alone Time: Banyan Tree Krabi

From the Banyan Tree group, this 72-room luxury resort on little-known Tukkaek Beach is a 45-minute drive from the Krabi Airport. Perched on a verdant hillside with a spectacular vista of limestone cliffs rising from the sea, the hotel opened to the public in October 2020, and the staff cannot wait to welcome international guests with their warm, Thai hospitality.

This enchanted resort backs onto a lush national park and Naga Crest Hill, offering three ultra-luxury beachfront pool villas, ten beachfront pool villas, and 59 suites. Each suite has its own private pool and westward-facing view of the sunset over the Andaman. A natural spring flows downhill into the property, where it is transformed into a flower-fringed canal ferrying spring water seaward.

Even Banyan Tree's most modest accommodation, the Deluxe Pool Suite, is the ultimate romantic getaway. With a private terrace, plunge pool and jet pool surrounding the bedroom, guests will feel as though

"While a lot may have changed, some things never do, and a trip to Thailand will still bring the same happiness and even more rewards. Visitors can now experience a much-rejuvenated country where nature has blossomed to new peaks and the warm welcome that made Thailand one of the world's favorite destinations is still very much alive. Neighboring Krabi and Phuket are two provinces in Southern Thailand where the silver lining of the pandemic is very much obvious with the beach, the sea and the jungle-covered interior looking more stunning than they ever were and two new properties are ready to welcome guests with the usual Thai warmth and a bright smile hidden under the face mask,"

Lauren Raps is AWA's Bar Night Chair. She moved to Singapore in January 2021 with her husband and three boys. She is the President and Founder of Travel Prospect, a full service leisure travel planning company.



Singapore Snippets

DISCOVERING ITEMS OF INTEREST ON THE RED DOT

BY *Marta Ferrer Lubeck*



Merlion Park

On the Hunt for Merlion

The Merlion, half-fish and half-lion, is a national icon of Singapore. It has been featured in many tourism and marketing campaigns. In 1964, zoologist Alec Fraser-Brunner created the Merlion design for the Singapore Tourism Board (then the Singapore Tourist Promotion Board), which holds exclusive rights to the symbol's use. The fish body is a nod to Singapore's humble beginnings as a fishing village. The lion head alludes to the 11th century sighting of a lion by Prince Sang Nila Utama, who subsequently renamed the island Singapura ("Lion City"). There are six official Merlion statues in Singapore, and I went on a quest to find them.

Merlion Park

The first official Merlion was built in 1972 and stood at the mouth of the Singapore River for 30 years. In 2002, it was relocated to its current home in Merlion Park at One Fullerton. The sculpture is over eight meters tall, weighs 70 tons, and projects seawater from its mouth. These striking features and the Merlion's proximity to Marina Bay make this a very popular landmark. The "Merlion Cub" is a smaller, two-meter replica of the original and is also located in Merlion Park.

AWA member Lynn LaBenz likes to spend time in Merlion Park. "I've always loved the vibe there. It is fitting to head to the most iconic Merlion. True to COVID form, the place was mostly empty [on a recent July visit]. No tourists, just locals enjoying their city. National Day dancers were practicing at the floating stage as well."



Merlion at Ang Mo Kio

Ang Mo Kio

The Ang Mo Kio Residential Committee constructed two Merlions in 1998. There was some controversy surrounding these statues originally, as the committee did not seek approval prior to building them. However, they are now considered members of the official Singapore Merlion family. These twin Merlions are located at Ang Mo Kio Ave 1, across from Bishan Park. An outing to the neighborhood would not be complete without a walk in the beautiful Ang Mo Kio-Bishan Park.



Merlion at Mount Faber

Faber Point

Faber Point, the highest point in Mount Faber Park, is home to another Merlion. This scenic area attracts large crowds due to its fabulous views of the city, the harbor, and the southern islands. Hikers and nature lovers also

enjoy the hilly terrain, trails, and biodiversity of Mount Faber Park. Faber Point has not been accessible to the public in recent months due to ongoing works. According to the National Parks website, repairs will be completed by the end of September 2021.

Singapore Tourism Board Headquarters

The sixth official Merlion is located on the grounds of the Singapore Tourism Board headquarters at 1 Orchard Spring Lane. I originally set out to visit this three meter tall statue just so I could complete my Singapore Merlion to-do list. After taking a closer look at my virtual map, though, I realized I was a mere 200 meters away from Tanglin Mall. What better way to conclude my outing (and my Merlion list), than enjoying a coffee at one of the various cafés at the mall!

There used to be a seventh Merlion on Sentosa Island, but it was closed to the public in 2019 and demolished to make room for a new project.

So, have you been to the six official Singapore Merlions yet? Perhaps you could rush to see them all as if you were a contestant in the Amazing Race. Or you might prefer to go at a slower pace and appreciate your surroundings. Either way, I recommend going on a quest to encounter these fun mythical figures while enjoying some of Singapore's most scenic locations.



Merlion at Singapore Tourism Board

Marta moved to Singapore with her husband and two children in July 2020. She loves to explore Singapore with the AWA walking, hiking and photography groups.



Family Fun Adventures

FINDING COOL THINGS TO DO IN AND AROUND SINGAPORE

BY *Christi Elflein*

Enter a Virtual Realm at ArtScience Museum

The ArtScience Museum has a new exhibit and it's out of this world. Literally. It's in the gaming world. It will intrigue your preteen or teenager and stretch your adult minds.

The exhibit, Virtual Realms, Videogames Transformed, is a curation of six interactive rooms that reimagine how we can play together both physically and virtually. Each realm is created by a different video game developer working with a media partner and video game technology and themes.

The experience will immerse your senses in light and sound. Expect it to take about one hour and be sure to buy your tickets and reserve a time slot on line before you go. Tickets for Singapore residents cost \$16 for adults and \$12 for children. The details can be found at www.marinabaysands.com/museumexhibitions/virtual-realms.html



In the Synesthesia room, titled Rezonance, participants, Jack and Phebe Elflein and Brynn and Maren Suttles, carry spheres representing the "seeds of life," interacting with each other to sculpt light and shape sound.



The Connection room, titled Wall, divides the biological world of cells and the galactic world of energy. Maren Suttles and Phebe Elflein are attempting here to communicate with their siblings in the other world on the other side of the wall. Their actions and imprints represent communication with signs of life in different spaces and times.



The Everything room, titled Eye, is a giant kaleidoscope in a lounge setting with synchronized orchestra music. The Elflein and Suttles kids are using the life-sized controllers to play with patterns of living and non-living forms.

Christi is an urban planner for an architecture firm in Florida. She moved to Singapore and joined AWA in 2019 and loves exploring her new city with her husband and two kids.



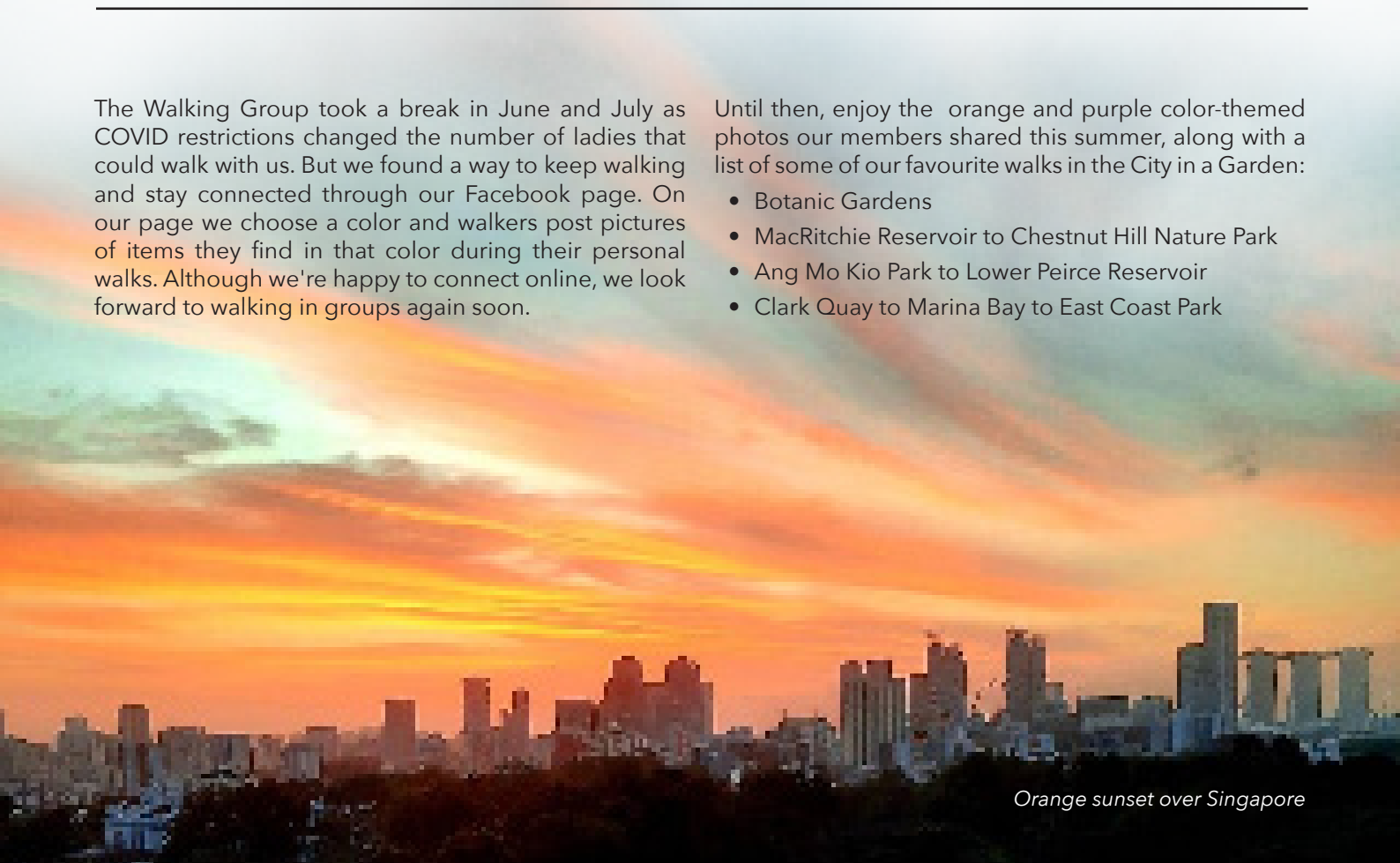
Walking with Women

WALK YOUR WAY AROUND SINGAPORE

The Walking Group took a break in June and July as COVID restrictions changed the number of ladies that could walk with us. But we found a way to keep walking and stay connected through our Facebook page. On our page we choose a color and walkers post pictures of items they find in that color during their personal walks. Although we're happy to connect online, we look forward to walking in groups again soon.

Until then, enjoy the orange and purple color-themed photos our members shared this summer, along with a list of some of our favourite walks in the City in a Garden:

- Botanic Gardens
- MacRitchie Reservoir to Chestnut Hill Nature Park
- Ang Mo Kio Park to Lower Peirce Reservoir
- Clark Quay to Marina Bay to East Coast Park



Orange sunset over Singapore



Purple elephant at Gardens by the Bay



Purple bike and bridge at Gardens by the Bay



Keri, Bernie, Marangeli- Steps Challenge win

Running Group

KILOMETERS OF FRIENDSHIP AND FUN

The AWA Running Club has been active! The ladies have been as resilient as ever in response to the changing restrictions, meeting at least three times a week with as



Botanic Gardens run

many runners as allowed. With positive attitudes and fun challenges, our group carried on! Main events included:

Run as One. Although the official 13km race was postponed, the women organized their own by running in pairs in 15-min segments apart. Some pairs ran the opposite way, allowing for multiple high-

fives and cheering opportunities. The route began at MBS, continued around to the National Stadium, and concluded at the F1 finish line. Flat whites from De Paolo's Gastronomica were the best medal!

Great AWA Relay Steps Challenge. Eight three-person teams stepped up their activity, whether it was taking the dog out or walking for coffee. All steps counted. The Chips and Walkamole team of Marangeli Rivera Wouda, Bernie Tretta, and Keri Matwick won with an astounding 1.6 million steps! Combined, the ladies walked 7,053,109 steps (roughly 3,527 miles).

MetaSprint Series Duathlon. Eight fearless women participated in a run/swim or run/bike event: Nikki Elliott, Claire Saf, Alfa Singkoh, Becky Martin, Dora Aris, Qian Marquard, Brenda Cowles, and Ginger Bethe. You all inspire us!

The summer also saw us bid farewell to five fabulous women: Marangeli Wouda, Becky Martin, Dora Aris, Louisa Marks, and Yaba Bouesse. A special thanks to Marangeli and Becky for their leadership!! You all will be missed!

Also, a big thank you to Suzanne Murphy for her leadership this past year! Her enthusiasm and creativity kept the team going!

Welcome to the new leadership team:

Caroline Beaumont & Bernie Tretta - Co-Chairs

Kate Breslin - New Members Coordinator

Keri Matwick- AWA Magazine Writer

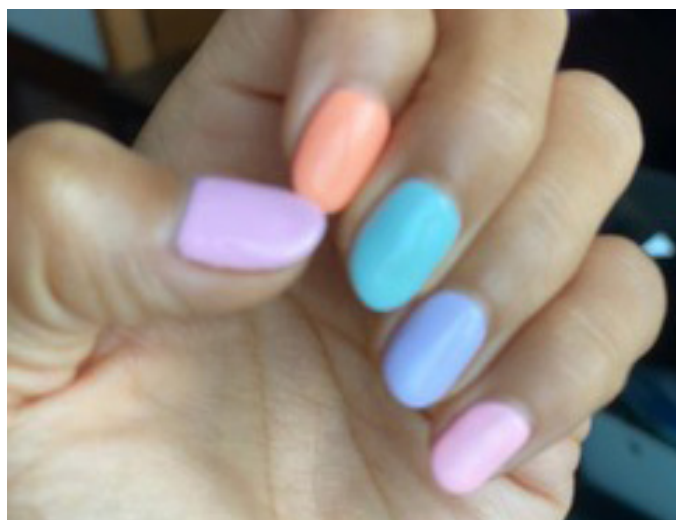
Interested in having fun while running? Yes, it is possible!! Join us Tuesdays at the Botanic Gardens. Then, explore new routes and see Singapore in a new light on Thursday and Saturday mornings.

BY *Dora Branyan Aris*



Becky, Ginger, Dora, Qian's early morning start

This year, other members of the AWA Running group and I participated in the MetaSprint Series Duathlon. It was motivating, then demotivating, then motivating

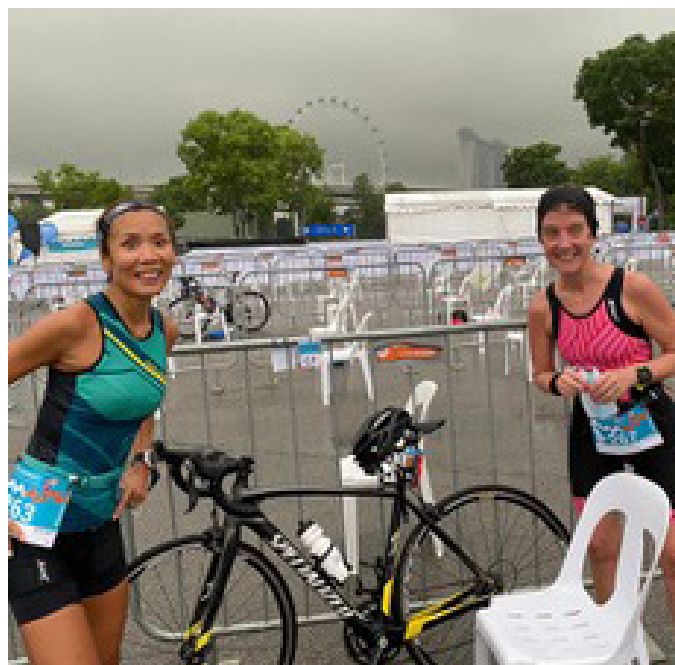


Qian's colorful nails kept her happy

again, as the race was pushed back, postponed, then finally happened -- with a bit of a twist. Either way, we were prepared. Qian had her colorful nails, I made sure my watch strap was a motivating color, and Becky was in her fabulously colored new tri outfit.

Due to COVID precautions, the typical "Run-Bike-Run" format turned into a "Bike-Run," with distances of 20km and 5km. The race was also extended to run over the weekend, with only a limited number of participants during each time slot. Half of our AWA ladies (the early risers -- Nikki Elliot, Brenda Cowles, Claire Saf, and Alfa Singkoh) started their race at 4:45am, while the rest of us (the late risers -- Ginger Bethe, Becky Martin, Qian Marquard and myself) started at 7:00am. To add to the drama, the drizzle at the beginning of the race gave way to downpours by the end.

We all finished strong ... results are posted online. I placed second of 146 women, and first in the 40-44 age category with an overall time of 55 minutes, 51seconds. The four-lap bike course had a lot of turns and was slick with rain by the end. The run, with a route right by the water, should have been beautiful, but the rain in our eyes made it difficult to see anything!



Qian and Ginger finished just before the storm

After finishing the dramatic "to race or not to race" saga, it was time to celebrate.

When it comes to training, I've really appreciated my Tuesday and Thursday runs with the AWA Running group. They've helped me increase my mileage -- and my intake of coffee!



The AWA Tennis Committee out for some social tennis: Jo Baughn, Paige Okun, Julia Maywald (convinced during the match to join the committee), and Suzanne Murphy

Tennis

FUN, FRIENDSHIP AND FAIR PLAY

AWA Tennis never stops! We cruised through the summer school holidays with Social Doubles, Team Tennis, Doubles Challenge and Discover Tennis Clinics. Now we are headed into the new school year / new season of tennis full of energy and ready to go.



Summer 2021 Social Doubles fun with Fiona Layfield, Abigail Monckton, Suzanne Murphy, and Jamie McGrath

For the latest information, sign up for our tennis-exclusive newsletter. You'll find the link on the [AWA Tennis page](#). You can also join our Facebook group @AWATennis.

Congrats to the winners of the Summer AWA Team Tennis league. The finals were nail biters in both the advanced and intermediate divisions.

Advanced Team Tennis

- 1st place: Court Crushers (winning the 3rd set at about 11:15am in peak sunlight!)
- 2nd place: Servivors

Intermediate Team Tennis

- 1st place: Singapore Slingers
- 2nd place: Pandemic Slammers

Here's what's coming up:

***NEW* Mixed Doubles Tennis League**

Looking for something different with your guy? This new league is for AWA members and the male tennis partner of their choice – husband, son, neighbor, colleague, or even Roger Federer if you can get him to Singapore. The season will run from September to December. Organizers will set the tennis rota and pairs will organize matches according to their mutual convenience. AWA Mixed Doubles promises to be a lot of fun, and we hope it will become a permanent fixture of our tennis offerings.

Social Doubles

This is a fun way to meet a lot of tennis-playing ladies. Each week, you will be teamed up with three other players to play three mini-sets to four games, switching partners after each set so that everyone gets to play with one another. This event is for beginner and intermediate tennis players. Watch the Tennis page on the [AWA website](#) for sign ups.



Summer 2021 Doubles Challenge: Jane Kim, Tania Lindsay-Jean, Anna Hultmann, Louise Agartson

Discover Tennis Clinics for Beginners and Intermediates

Our tennis clinics offered with our partner, Savitar Tennis Centre, are always a popular and sold-out activity! There will be two series of tennis clinics offered before the end of the year. Make sure to book your spot in the six-week series early.

Team Tennis

Team Tennis will be back at the end of the year with two leagues: one for Intermediate players and one for Advanced players. This is one of the competitive AWA Tennis offerings for the year and is always great fun.

AWA Doubles Cup

Our Advanced tennis tournament was postponed in May due to COVID restrictions. We are planning to hold it the week of November 29 on the courts of our sponsor, Savitar Tennis Centre. Watch the [AWA Tennis webpage](#), Facebook page and newsletter for more details!

Tennis Committee News

As the new season of tennis starts, the AWA Tennis Committee welcomes several new members (designated by the * next to their names) and says goodbye to two Tennis Committee mainstays. We wish Kanika Karu and Gigi Scott the very best as they relocate back to the US (in Gigi's case, after many, many years in Singapore). The current committee includes:

Committee Chair:	Paige Okun
Co-Chair/Communications:	Becca Meurer
Assessments:	Natalie Vulakh Ally Sweeney
Doubles Challenge:	Anthea Chan
Girls' Night Out:	Jo Breque

Mixed Doubles:

Jane Kim/Minh Tran*

Social Doubles:

Jo Baughn
Julia Maywald*

Sponsorship:

Alfa Singkoh

Team Tennis:

Kristine Aurora
Jamie McGrath
Tania Lindsay-Jean*

Tennis Clinics:

Suzanne Murphy

Tournaments:

Jane Kim/Anita Young*

Treasurer:

Angela Pera



Intermediate Summer Team Tennis action: Twyla Hartnell, Youmi Vasconcellos, Linda Warnke, and Minh Tram

With so much tennis being organized, we are a BIG committee of volunteers and spend a lot of time making sure AWA members have lots of tennis opportunities. If you see one of the committee members around, make sure to give her a big "thank you" for the time she spends making sure you can be on the courts!



Ghost Peppers

All Nationalities

CELEBRATING WHAT MAKES US UNIQUE AND WHAT BRINGS US TOGETHER

BY *Jennifer Williams*

Wilbur Scoville likely didn't realize he was making a lasting contribution to spicy chicken wing pub nights. In 1912, the Connecticut-born chemist developed the eponymous Scoville Scale to measure the heat of chili peppers. His test measures how much a spicy substance needs to be diluted by sugar water before its heat intensity is no longer noticeable. His contribution to the measurement of all things spicy earned him a Google doodle commemorating his 151st birthday back in 2015.



Carolina Reapers in the garden

Chili peppers aren't just used to prove who can endure the most pain in pubs and viral videos. Pure capsaicin has a rating of 16 million Scoville Heat Units and is used in tear gas and personal defence pepper sprays.

While an American created the universal scale that measures spiciness, which countries cultivate the world's hottest peppers?

Carolina Reaper:

Hailing from South Carolina in the USA, the Carolina Reaper currently holds the Guinness World Record for world's spiciest pepper at 1.6 million Scoville Heat Units (SHU).

Bhut Jolokia or Ghost Pepper:

These peppers caught fire in the Western World at the turn of the 21st century; however, they were well known for centuries in their native Northern India. In 2006, they were recorded as the world's hottest pepper, with 1,041,427 SHU.

Scotch Bonnet:

Named after a tam o'shanter (literally a Scottish hat), these spicy peppers are commonly grown in the Caribbean and originated in Brazil. 100,000-350,000 SHU

Habanero:

Habaneros are often thought to originate in Mexico, but their name references the Cuban city of La Habana (Havana). Although these peppers are spicy, they reach a limit of 350,000 SHU – far from the intensity of the world's hottest peppers.

A citizen of which country holds four Guinness World Records for eating chili peppers?

Non-spoiler alert – it's a man!

Answer to our July/August question:

Which two countries don't celebrate a National Day?

The United Kingdom and Denmark

AWA Group Activities

BE IN THE KNOW

Social & Special Interest Groups

After Ni Hao – Mandarin conversation every Thursday at 10am.
Hyesung Laffey & Manju Banka,
afternihao@awasingapore.org

Arts & Culture – Monthly talks focusing on Asian arts & culture.
Rosalie Kwok, artsandculture@awasingapore.org

Bar Nights – Ladies' nights, couples' nights each month.
Lauren Raps, barnights@awasingapore.org

Beauty & Fashion – From fashion talks to workshops, there's no age limit to brilliant beauty & unlimited style.
beautyfashion@awasingapore.org

Book Groups – Morning, afternoon & evening books groups, held monthly. bookgroups@awasingapore.org

Cancer Support Group – Meets the third week of the month, with a focus on mutual support and information sharing.
Rosa Liu, cancersupport@awasingapore.org

Christian Connection – Provides information and resources to help you connect with local Christian community groups.
Barbara Winkler, christianconnect@awasingapore.org

Coffee & Friends – Meets at various cafes around town. Join us on Fridays from 10:30 am -12:30 pm. Sign up required. Peggy Kershaw, coffee@awasingapore.org

Couples' Bridge – Meets monthly on a Saturday evening. Spouses are welcome. Currently suspended. Amy Starling, couplesbridge@awasingapore.org

Creative Hands – Bring your handiwork project to work on and share with other creative women every 1st, 3rd & 5th Thursday.
Meg Sine, crafter@awasingapore.org

DISH – Monthly lunches at a variety of interesting venues. Kristin Bemowski, dish@awasingapore.org

Duplicate Bridge (at home) – American Standard five-card major rules every Monday. You don't need a partner to join.
Amy Starling & Sock-Yan Sim,
duplicatebridge@awasingapore.org

High Tea – Enjoy monthly teas at Singapore's top hotels and interesting venues.
hightea@awasingapore.org

International Choir – Practices on Wednesdays 10-noon in person for fully vaccinated members, at Adelphia House on Coleman St. Performances recorded and presented by video. Auditions only to assess range, intlchoir@awasingapore.org

Java Junkies – Join the search for the perfect cup of java on 2nd and 4th Thursdays at 2pm. Liza Rowan,
javajunkies@awasingapore.org

Listen Ladies – A compassionate group of ladies who support one another with biweekly Thursday zoom calls from 5-6pm.
Andrea McKenna Brankin, listenladies@awasingapore.org

Local Tours – Professionally guided tours of Singapore.
Terry Young, localtours@awasingapore.org

Long Term Members – For women who have lived in Singapore eight years or more. Mary Rajkumar, noexit@awasingapore.org

Mahjong - International style in a low stress, friendly atmosphere. Monday and Thursday afternoons at AWA Office Function Room.
mahjong@awasingapore.org

Member Talks – Monthly talks given by AWA member experts on a variety of topics

Movie Lunch – Monthly lunch followed by a movie in Orchard Road area. Michelle Reeb, movielunch@awasingapore.org

New & Expecting Mamas – Currently enjoying coffee meetups. Kristin Bemowski, social@awasingapore.org

Photography – Meets once a month to have fun practicing and improving our photography. All levels are welcome. Carol Hamcke-Onstwedder & Londa Matthieu,
photography@awasingapore.org

Playgroup – For moms with kids under age three. Meets every Friday morning at a member's home plus a monthly "Moms Night Out". Ashley Hamlin & Morgan Steinman, playgroups@awasingapore.org

Workshops – Expand your mind and learn something new about yourself, about Singapore or about the world.
Leezibet Heinzraiden, workshops@awasingapore.org

Writers' Group – Beginner and published writers discuss their work the 2nd & 4th Thursday of every month. Mandakini Arora & Elissa Viornery, writers@awasingapore.org

Sports

Golf – The 18-hole group plays on Wednesday. 9-hole golf on hold indefinitely. Lily Giddens & Peng Pavie,
18holegolf@awasingapore.org

Hiking – Meets at MacRitchie Reservoir every 1st & 3rd Thursday morning. Marlene Han & Leanne Porter,
hiking@awasingapore.org

Running – Group runs for all levels on Tuesday & Thursday mornings at locations around Singapore. Bernie Tretta & Caroline Beaumont, running@awasingapore.org

Tennis – A variety of singles and doubles play including tournaments, and team tennis for players of all levels. Paige Okun & Rebecca Meuer, tennis@awasingapore.org

Walking – Walk all over this amazing island. Mondays are 10K, Wednesdays are 5K. Andrea McKenna Brankin & Mercedes Bainbridge, walking@awasingapore.org

Community Service

Community Service – Connecting AWA members to volunteer opportunities with AWA's featured organizations and more.
Ashley Fagan, commservice@awasingapore.org

Ronald McDonald House Charities – Support the families of children at Singapore's National University Hospital. On hold due to COVID. Qian Marquard, rmhc@awasingapore.org

Food From The Heart – Help pack and/or distribute food bags to families in Singapore who cannot afford to feed themselves. Janet Stride, ffth@awasingapore.org

Willing Hearts – Monthly shifts to prepare food for the less fortunate. Fiona Layfield, willinghearts@awasingapore.org

kidsREAD – Help local children develop a love of reading. Currently suspended due to COVID.
kidsread@awa.singapore.org