Name: Z
Age: 21
Weight: 83kg, 183 lbs.
Height: 1.85m, 6' 1"
Shrink's comments: A lean, mean, sex machine, with a healthy appetite for lurve and late night eats.
Editor's Note

Four months of holidays - a summer of decadence. Or so you think. Ever since the launch of the last issue of The MI-Sing Link, the editorial team has been working very hard for you. In spite of the soporific effects of the hot summer weather, the team somehow made it through. And now, we proudly present to you the summer 2002 edition of The MI-Sing Link. With immaculate care and mellifluous persuasion, we managed to convince debonair and Vice-President of the SSA, Tan Zhiyang, to be our cover boy. Then, what better way to introduce you to the Singapore community at the U of M than through the eyes of one who apparently knows it all - Alummi, Stan the Man. And to further enlighten the uninformed, we are proud to report on the SSA Committee's first and very successful event, Senior's Day 2002. Following that, we hope to induct you into "The MI-Sing Experiences" with news about the up and coming co-ed fraternity, Sigma Sigma Alpha. Also, we want to let you in on the art & architecture scene in good ole' Ann Arbor, as well as bring you the latest on the scandalous Hash Bash and Naked Mile. And as promised in the last issue, we give you the chance to find out a little more about our hot and hunky Singaporean basketballers. As if this is not enough, we also went on a journey to discover what the ang mohs think about sensitive issues like the Falun Dafa and also their perspective on Singaporeans. And last but not least, we let the experts, Chow TK and Peter Lim, speak about their passion for Anime and LAN-gaming. So, if I have not already overwhelmed you, and since you have come this far, I urge you to take a chance, walk on the wild side, and read this issue of The MI-Sing Link.

Enjoy.

Karen Lee
Editor SSA 2002

Menu

Appetizers

a. Good Riddance by Vikram Iyer
b. Life After Michigan: Homeward Bound by Stanley Lim

Entrées

a. Presenting Sigma Sigma Alpha, Mu Iota Chapter
   co-written by Karen Lee and Elizabeth Lin
b. The A-Z's of Art & Architecture by Lindsay Wai
с. Shanthan: Taking a walk on the "Otherside" by Shanthan Selvakumar (duh!)
d. Got Game? By Kevin Lee
е. Falun Dafa: The Real Story by Evan Mantyk
f. A White Dude's Perspective on Singaporeans by Todd Brunner

Desserts

a. Animania by Chow Tze Keong
b. LAN Gaming by Peter Lim
The Singapore Students’ Association paid tribute to the Singaporean Community’s senior citizens from the graduating class of 2002 by organizing and hosting the Geriatrics Awards Ceremony and Gala Dinner. This annual sendoff party made its debut as an event in the same vein as the Academy Awards, departing from the traditional soccer-and-picnic form that it has assumed in previous years. The exquisite dinner, courtesy of Kuang, and his posse of chefs, and heartwarming music, arranged by DJ Ken, set the stage for a memorable evening of fun, laughter, and emotional goodbyes.

A video presentation of memorable moments from recent years filled the room with an air of nostalgia, as the seniors used the chance to reminisce about memories of their University of Michigan experience. The following video presentation, a compilation of candid interviews of members of the graduating class, engrossed and tickled the audience as they watched friends, including a few caught in their pyjamas, stutter, mumble, and shy away from the camera as they attempted to offer their two-cents worth about their experiences, and wish their graduating class good luck.

The awards ceremony honoured outstanding seniors for their achievements and attributes. Among the unanimous winners were Tze-Shen, who walked away with the “What happened to my 10 dollars” award, Cleaven Yu, winner of the “Sexiest male senior” award, and Sim, who was always odds-on favorite to walk away with the “Most Hispanic-looking Chinese” award.

The inter-batch karaoke competition that followed showcased the vocal talents of Billy Tham, Jiaren, and Kevin Lee. Billy, with his rendition of “With or Without You”, beat stiff competition from Jiaren’s "Complicated Heart" and Kevin’s "Again" to take home 1st Prize. Billy, Cleaven, and Sim combined their talents to perform the Spice Girls’ “2 become 1” to resounding laughter and a cacophony of catcalls.

The evening drew to a conclusion with Leon’s masterful performance of Green Day’s Time of Your Life. This sentimental performance of a very meaningful song, was matched only by the final hurrah; the senior class, led by the enigmatic Cleaven Yu, performed “25 Minutes”. While the meaning of the song itself was inappropriate to thank the organizers, the seniors drove home the point that it is the thought that counts!

- Vikram Iyer
Homeward Bound

by Stanley Lim

Three long years...finally back to the place you truly call home.

All the friends that you have been desperately missing will be ecstatic you are back; your parents will shower you with boundless unconditional love and cannot wait to spoil their little boy boy rotten. Mummy cannot wait to cook all of boy boy's favorite dishes... daddy can't wait to buy boy boy a sports car... and you can finally stop fantasizing and actually start chiong to all your favorite local food places like Adam Road and Botanic Gardens to eat cheap and decent Roti Prata and not the over-priced microwaved ones from Jia Xiang. And how can you forget all the wonderful ah lians with their silky smooth sensuous dyed hair in orchard road. Life will truly become worth living again.

Then you realize this whole "Place you can truly call Home" business is just another piece of Singapore government’s ingenious propaganda crap.

Friends:

Remember those secondary school buddies of yours? Remember the good old days when you guys used to chiong at the school canteen, how Ah Soon lent you homework to copy, how you all had to crawl under the school fence together when you were late for assembly and how you all went Desker Road together in your school uniforms after 'O' levels to buy your 1st porno tape from the Indian man? Well, they didn't. These guys have met the love of their lives and have now no time for you. When you go for holidays with them, it is no longer 15 people squeeze into 1 hotel room. Now it's 1 room per couple then the losers get bundled together into some pathetic corner room. Apparently 10 years of friendship does give as much pleasure as 10 secs of procreation. And yes, the only ones that remember you are selling insurance.

Parents:

There's a reason why they spent a ridiculous amount of money to send you so ridiculously far away.

Ah Lians:

3 years is a long time. Many things can happen in 3 years. For example, Ah Lians can disappear. I have no idea how it happened as well, but it really is true. Some say they have all grown up and moved on to become housewives or SPGs. There are also some who say the discrimination and government simply got too much for them and they have gone into hiding...and to this day, there are still some who live here secretly amongst us. But whatever it is, they can no longer be found. And yes, that definitely pisses me off.

Food:

Ahh...the one thing that had not let me sing all the "Stand Up for Singapore" songs in vain. Despite the fact that Adam Road and Botanical Gardens are both closed down for upgrading, and Chom Chom will be too, despite the fact that prices have gone up by 20% to S$3.50 a bowl, despite the fact that Long House has moved to a place with neither an MRT nor car park, the Singapore "Grade C" hawker food still tastes greasy, unhealthy, unhygienic and second to none in the whole wide world!! And besides, there are lots more Hokkien mee Ah Mms with silky smooth sensuous dyed hair.
Presenting Sigma Sigma Alpha

By Karen Lee

Disclaimer: This article is not meant to deter or encourage participation in the Greek system, but merely to inform and entertain, and is accurate at time of publishing.

Fraternities and Sororities have existed for over 150 years at the University of Michigan. They exist to promote friendship, community service, leadership training, athletic competition, scholastic support and personal development. Members of the community are introduced to the Greek system during Rush week, which usually occurs in the first couple of weeks in Fall. During Rush, Sororities hold 4 types of parties, mainly mixers, second sets, third sets and preference parties, while Frats hold rush parties in a similar style. To learn more about these parties, visit www.umich.edu/~greeks.

Different frats and sororities have different personalities based on ethnicity (Indian, Asian), religion (Jewish), academia (like the National Honors Society), or even how much money daddy has (e.g. sorority SDT = Spend Daddy’s Trillions) But what are they REALLY about? To give you better insight, I decided to stalk the brothers and sisters of co-ed frat Sigma Sigma Alpha of the Mu Iota chapter.

PROFILE >> SIGMA SIGMA ALPHA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>110 members: 74 males, 36 females, and growing. Mostly Singaporeans. Some Indonesians and Japanese.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unofficial Frat</td>
<td>Willowtree, up north. A cesspool of engineers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>To create an understanding between Singaporeans, to find common interests among Singaporeans and create a sense of belonging in SSA, and to reach out to the school community to share what being Singaporean is about and to learn about other cultures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average GPA</td>
<td>very high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typical Majors</td>
<td>All kinds of engineering, Business, Economics, Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favourite</td>
<td>Hanging out at the media union or the UGLi (both places being libraries, for the uninformed.) Racing cars in deserted places late at night. Pimpin’ it out at Meijers or China Merch, ESPECIALLY during weekends. Watching more than 1 movie at Showcase on a single ticket. Basketball, Soccer, Tennis. Getting jiggy with LAN games at GG Brown/Cyber Lounge. Karaoke (pronounced Ka-ree-oh-kee.) Trying to get into the Angell Scholars hall of fame (getting straight As for at least 6 semesters.) Getting pervy at the Naked Mile, or getting high at Hash Bash.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastimes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our roving reporters Ramu and Leon have been doing their own snooping and have managed to catch some of the brothas and sistas in action.

Alumni, Jen, dressing up for an elegant night in town.

Yiping getting ready for his first day of class... ...Doesn’t he look excited??

Beware of the wild monkeys of Ann Arbor. They’re known to steal...

Making himself at home in the Media Union, freshman Yong Han.
Featuring the chefs with the long hair, freshmen Jill & Dao Song.

Leon & Caroline want to be just like their heroes, Phua Chu Kang & Rosie.

Resident stud, TC, getting decked out for Christmas.

Tennis hunks Vikram, Cleaven, Jon, Terence and Rainer.
Sigma Sigma Alpha will be part of Rush week this coming Fall, but we hear that they want to shake things up in SSA to become more "in line with the typical fraternity or sorority." (editor: STEREOTYPICAL, you mean.) We managed to sneak out parts of the completely un-revised and unedited copy of the pre-requisites for fall rushees. Why not give these questionnaires a shot?

**Questionnaire**

Are YOU a sorority girl? Let your clothes do the talking!
Give yourself one point for each of the following:

--- Hair in a ponytail with a thick cloth headband of some sort
--- Bonus (add 1 pt): a braided ponytail
--- Lots of makeup (in spite of your 8am class)
--- Hooded sweatshirt with your sorority letters on it
--- North face outerwear of some sort (preferably fleece or a puffy jacket)
--- Hold 2 of 3 of the following: coffee, cellphone, cigarette
--- Bonus (add 2 pts): holding all 3
--- A big, colored Herve Chapelier bag slung over your shoulder (THE sorority girl bag) or anything Kate Spade.
--- Booty fleece pants with your sorority letters on the butt OR jeans folded at the calves, clamdigger style
--- At a frat party: booty leather/pleather pants with hoochy (i.e. whored out) top
--- New balance sneakers OR flip flops super-duper platform style

Ratings:
0-3: I don't know that I can hang out with you...
4-7: You're kinda cute, but your pout needs a little more work.
   And while you're at it, maybe you can do something about your make-up and eyebrows too.
8+: Oh my gawd, you're like, so cool and so this week! I wanna do my hair just like yours!

Do you have what it takes to be a FRAT BOY?
Give yourself one point for each of the following:

--- Binge drink
--- Bonus (add 1 pt): own a funnel called "Gus" that you whip out at parties to guzzle beer with.
--- Dance like you would play basketball (think bouncing the ball without the ball, or executing the "bringing the house down" move with hands in the air.)
--- Own a chick-tionary: a little black book of pick-up lines and telephone numbers with bogus names (of girls, naturally.)
--- Believe you're suave and all that, even when all the girls think you're a complete sleaze ball.
--- Holler at anything that wears a skirt and moves (especially when you're drunk)
--- Hook-up with more girls than your best bud (or at least know how to lie without looking away)
--- Know how to back THEIR ass up.
--- Master the art of bumpin' and grinnin' without spilling your can of beer
--- Better still, master the art of bumpin' and grinnin' with FOUR girls without spilling your can of beer.

Ratings:
0-3: Sorry, geeks not allowed.
4-7: You're cool. If you can bring more girls to our parties, you're totally in.
8+: Yo man, you straight. Welcome to SSA.
The A-Zs of Art and Architecture

A is for Adolf Loos: he's the philosophizing architect of the 1900s who defined Art as emotionally arousing, either aesthetically pleasing or disturbing. Architecture, on the other hand, accommodates to our functional and comfort needs.

B is for Bauhaus, Germany's most important and most avant-garde art and design school which promoted quality in creating mass-produced goods. The school and its ideologies became highly influential to the fields of art, architecture, and industrial design.

C is for Ceramics, a class offered at UM which explores visual composition, and 2D and 3D space through clay forming techniques.

D is for De Stijl Movement or The Style, a movement headed by Theo Van Doesburg who wanted to create art through the principles of ordering. Their most influential works came from famous Mondrian paintings. Ever seen one of these replicated on bags, clothes and accessories?

E is for Expensive! With art supplies always running out, each student spends about $50 or more a term on pencils, paper, wood and glue! Ouch!

F is for Futurism, a celebration of the machine age, power and modernity. Coinined by Marinetti in 1909, its speed and energy influenced art, architecture, music and literature.

G is for Gothic Architecture, a style of building cathedrals with tall spires, vaults, arches, towers, flying buttresses and gargoyles. One famous gothic cathedral is the Notre Dame in Paris.

H is for "Huh??" Step into the Art and Architecture building and eavesdrop into a lecture or discussion. Everyone speaks in an entirely strange, new language. A quote from a real assignment: "The plastic artist investigates and represents ephemeral spatial conditions." Go figure!

I is for Industrial Design. Who do you think gave all of us great looking designs of bondi blue IMacs, teeny-weeny silvery cell-phones and bubble chairs? Industrial designers make everyday objects fashion must-haves!

J is for the Joy of creation! No one besides art and architecture students truly knows how much joy one gets from a finished model or sculpture. The finished product means sweat, hunger, cuts, bruises and many sleepless nights in the studio!

K is for KOOL computer graphics! Computers have become tools for artists and architects. Digital art, for one, is gaining much popularity. So, you don't have to know how to draw to be a great artist!

L is for Life Drawing, a class I took last summer that examined the human figure and composition. An absolutely fun class if you don't mind looking at nude models for 3 hrs a day! (Ooohohhhh.)

M is for Modernism, the period starting from the mid-19th century till mid 20th century, in conjunction with the industrialization era, architects called for mass production of houses like any industrial artifact.

N is for Neo-EVERYTHING: Neo-Renaissance, Neo-Modernistic, Neo-Gothic and Neo-Expressionism. The revivals of past traditions... Embracing history or just the lack of new ideas?

O is for Open space and free plan: This was all the rage when Modernism started. Reinforced concrete replaced load bearing walls in building construction. Walls, facades, and floor plans since then can take on almost any shape and form thanks to this revolutionary technology!

P is for Photography, a very popular class among many non-art majors. If you're willing to spend time, effort and loads of money, you're guaranteed lots of fun!

Q is for quality. Craftsman'ship, Craftsman'ship, Craftsman'ship! A good design is only great if it is accompanied by a model well-built!

R is for reviews and critiques, an art/architecture student's judgment day. 10 minutes to sell your idea in front of 2-3 professors. Well known for inducing tears, arguments, and fights--painful to watch! Pray lady luck is by your side when your turn comes!
S is for Still Life drawing: sketching of inanimate objects. Basic drawing courses mainly focus on Still Life.

T is for a typical Art student: Fashionably loud, acts cool and calm. Carries drawing pad and bag full of junk. Dirty hands from paint and charcoal. Typical Architecture student: Wears worn-out clothes, sports geeky specs and uncombed hair. Permanent cup of coffee in one hand but never quite awake. Full of worries.

U is for Uncountable hours in studio. No of Credits for an art class: 3 No of official class hours a week: 12 Actual number of hours spent for class work a week: 25++

V is for visually stimulating. Art speaks its own language and messages travels through space. The act of creating as well as looking at art is known for its therapeutic effects.

W is for Andy Warhol and Pop Art. The most extraordinary innovation in art of the 20th century derived from TV, magazines and comics.

X is for being X-cited about finding useless scrap materials to make models out of. Every art/architecture student subconsciously looks out for new materials every waking hour. If you see someone exploding with joy at the sight of finding scrap wood, that’s probably an architecture or industrial design student!

Y is for Your local University’s efforts to promote art awareness. The Schools of Art and Architecture invite many artists for lecture and display of their works. There are ongoing exhibits in galleries and museums on campus throughout the year for anyone interested in the arts! And they’re free!

Z is for Zzz or Zest: whether art makes you sleep or add spice to your life, it’s definitely a field worth exploring!

Shanthan: Taking a Walk on the “Otherside…”

Schoolwork is schoolwork - nothing new. So what stood out about Ann Arbor? For me, 2 very infamous events, namely Bash Bash and the Naked Mile.

Bash Bash: Sigh, where do I begin. Firstly, it must be made known that Ann Arbor has one of the most lax jurisdictions against the use of marijuana in America - possession of one joint is only a ‘civil infraction’ carrying a mere $30 fine. Hence, on the first Saturday of April every year, hippies, bikers, and adolescent pot-heads congregate in Ann Arbor to take part in what is known as Bash Bash. This annual ‘smoke-in’ began in 1972 to protest against marijuana laws, and ideally took place at high noon (get it?). The event has been as flighty and unstable as you would expect of anything organized by - and for - pot-smokers. What does one who does not smoke up, do at Bash Bash? For one, people watch. Think tall green and red smokehorns, t-shirts freshly tie-dyed, and brightly polished spindles and rings poking through lips and eyebrows. Also look out for the drum circles, formed with congas, bongos, bass drums, flutes. There’ll always be this one hippie chick who flings herself into the group of drummers as if possessed, dancing for hours, flailing and sweating and tripping over drummers. If you’ve been dying to see what life in the 60s was like, come on down next April.

Naked Mile: It started as a prank by the crew and lacrosse teams in 1966, grew for several years, peaking at between 800 and 1,000 runners four years ago and more than 12,000 onlookers, and took place on the last day of the winter semester. What I saw instead was the death of this popular college tradition. The very heavy police presence really choked out the real enthusiasts, and forced them to stand amongst the crowd. This inhibition of freedom was disappointing. Unlike Bash Bash, where pot heads were free to walk around with hemp wreaths around their necks singing songs like, “ohh, leave us pot smokers alone…” there was a lot of waiting around with nothing exciting or out of the ordinary to see during the Mile. After fifteen minutes, a few of my friends and I returned to the library to hit the books (yes, all Singaporeans! What a good guess.)
Got Game?

by Kevin Lee

What is the best thing to do on a Friday evening? I don’t know about you but basketball at NCRB seems to win hands down. What can be better than sweating it out with a great group of guys? For the uninitiated, Friday evening regulars include an interesting cast of characters: there is Low Jiaren, or JLow for short, who is the tallest Singaporean in Ann Arbor and President of the SSA. He can just about do anything with the basketball and he has a mean mid-range jump shot. There is Junwei who has about sixteen different pairs of basketball shoes (I swear!). He’s also a rock solid shooting guard. Lipkun, or just Lip, is crazy about basketball shoes too. He also never backs down from any of his opponents regardless of their size. He’s probably the most likely one to start a fight (Thank God he’s on our side). Then there is Leon who thinks he’s Superman. The feisty point guard does the most spectacular reverse lay ups. Billy the Man also makes appearances at NCRB on Fridays. He has all the sweet post moves but somehow he can’t make a lay up in the open court. There is Shen who is just a super quick scoring machine. He’ll probably beat you in a 100-meter race too. In fact I’m sure of it. Leonard, or A.I. (after Allen Iverson, because of the way he plays), is just a monster on defense and never gets tired. A piece of advice if you do play with A.I.: don’t let him guard you because he will make you look bad. Then there’s me, Frat Boy. Don’t ask. I only play defense because I have zero offensive moves. (According to Leon. Kevin is the strong silent type who prefers to let his action do the talking, and is a tough and aggressive defender. He warns that Kevin likes to come from the weak side and strip (no pun intended) or swipe the ball away from you.)

If hanging out with a motley crew like that is not a good enough reason for you to play basketball on Friday evenings, then play for the fierce competition. We have this ‘friendly’ rivalry with the Hong Kong players because they beat us in a tournament before. It’s not uncommon to see elbows sticking out and bodies bumping under the basket when we play them. Once, I almost dislocated my shoulder playing. But it’s all in name of fun.

After three hours of pushing our bodies to the limit, dinnertime is always something to look forward to. Dinner at Great Lakes is becoming a ritual amongst the team members. If you like to pig out on good Chinese food, then join us; you don’t even have to play basketball! It makes me wonder why we work so hard on the court when all our efforts to get fit go down the drain after dinner. Especially Leon - he eats all the skin off the chicken. His defense: “We’re all gonna die some time right?” (One thing that you should do when you eat with us is to offer to pay for Jiaren’s meal if he can finish all the leftovers. Do this when he’s really full and sit back and enjoy the show.)

Ok, so Friday evenings are not a good time for you. Well, there’s always Sunday morning basketball at CCRB. What better way to start the day than to play a little ball to get the blood pumping? During “training”, we do individual and team drills to improve our skills. But if that sort of thing does not appeal to you, don’t worry because we only do that to prepare for the Intramural Basketball competition. After the competition season, we only play games on Sundays. The great thing about playing on Sunday mornings is that we get a whole court to ourselves. Also, our Taiwanese counterparts will usually join us, which just adds to the fun.

The team has really bonded in recent months - now we hang out on and off the court. Don’t worry about feeling uncomfortable with this group of guys. Take it from me, one of just two freshmen on the team - these guys really make you feel like you’re part of the family. With so many great reasons to play basketball, why don’t you come down? You don’t even have to be good at basketball! Plus if you join us, Lip might share his FootLocker discounts with you. Oh, and girls are welcome too. I’m sure certain members of our team wouldn’t mind. ;)

Bloodbath on the Courts
Falun Dafa: The Real Story

Disclaimer: Contents of this article are based on the author's perception of events, and may not accurately represent the reality of the situation.

My name is Evan Mantyk. I'm a sophomore at the University of Michigan and I am majoring in English. I was raised in a suburb of Detroit, brought up in a Catholic family, and am half Polish and half Puerto Rican. I have been practicing Falun Dafa for the past two years.

Since practicing Falun Dafa, I've been able to answer questions that I had grown up asking but never had satisfying answers to, for example, “What's the meaning of life?” and “What's my purpose on this earth?” Before I would have fits of depression and feelings of intense boredom with my social life. Now, however, I feel a steady flow of energy, like I can overcome any conflict that might arise. In my day-to-day life, I feel more confident and at ease. The challenges and areas of my life that once made me afraid and confused are now like small grains of dirt - trivial and insignificant. How exactly did I achieve this? Simply put, I have assimilated myself to the universal characteristics of Truth, Compassion, and Forbearance, or Zhen-Shan-Ren in Chinese. I have put into action the principles and teachings of Falun Dafa's founder Li Hongzhi and I have practiced the five sets of Falun Dafa exercises that are composed of gentle movements and tranquil mediation.

What I have done is by all rational accounts, peaceful and non-threatening. Yet for doing these very same things hundreds of thousands of Falun Dafa practitioners in China are being persecuted. In July of 1999, the Chinese government outlawed Falun Dafa. Since that time, and even before, the Chinese government has been saturating China and as much of the world as it can with false information and propaganda about how bad Falun Dafa is, about how it threatens the country, about how it drives people crazy. To address just a few issues to help you understand the seriousness of these fabrications, I'll give some examples. In April of 1999, around 10,000 Falun Dafa practitioners gathered in a city in China called Zhongnanhai to appeal to the government. At this time the government had already been spreading rumors about Falun Dafa. These practitioners had experienced Falun Dafa already - they had their quality of life and health improved and through Falun Dafa, they had come to see how important it is to be a good person. When the government spread blatant lies about the practice and its founder, the practitioners just wanted to speak up for the truth. Isn't this a person's most basic right? In fact those practitioners who gathered there were very peaceful and orderly and conducted themselves in very upright manner, leaving the area that they occupied in a clean and orderly state. Another fact is that Falun Dafa is explicitly nonpolitical and nonviolent. Practitioners are not interested in political reform or in overthrowing any government. All practitioners wanted was to see Falun Dafa be treated decently. Is that too much to ask?

Another example of the Chinese government's fabrications is the "self-immolation" incident, where 5 Falun Dafa practitioners set themselves on fire. At least this is what the Chinese government would have the world believe. In reality, Falun Dafa explicitly prohibits all forms of killing, including suicide. Also, there are many facts surrounding the Chinese government's reports on the incident, like how the number of practitioners who set themselves on fire was upped from 5 to 7, which indicates that it was staged (for more information please visit http://www.faluninfo.net/devstories/tiananmen/immolation.asp). These are just a few of the many distortions of the truth that the Chinese government has come up with.

Do not mistake this for political aggression just because I repeat word “Chinese government” either. Practitioners realize it is not really the Chinese government who is doing this, it is a few chief individuals with power in the Chinese government like Jiang Zemin and Luo Gang who seem to harbor personal grudges against Falun Dafa. With around a hundred million people practicing Falun Dafa in China, these individuals feel threatened. Yet isn't this fear irrational and ultimately self-destructive? People who practice are healthier, more productive in their jobs, and closer to their families. Even some of the Chinese police who are arresting practitioners have come to realize this. They often say to practitioners something like, “I know you are good people, but I have to do my job.”

To close, I would like to invite anyone who might have been taken in by the Chinese government's stories or anyone who is interested to take a look at Falun Dafa. At places of higher education you often hear people talking about looking at both sides of the issue. In this case I suggest you talk to some Falun Dafa practitioners, or see what the teachings are all about. You won't find anything about lighting yourself on fire or overthrowing the government. In fact I can tell you exactly what you will find: Truth, Compassion, and Forbearance. (To learn more visit www.faluninfo.org, www.faluninfo.net, or contact me at emantyk@umich.edu, 734-764-3645)
A White Dude’s Perspective on Singaporeans

By Todd Brunner

Disclaimer: Please do not take offense to any stereotypes presented in this article; it is intended for humorous purposes only. Please direct all hate-mail to kmiz@umich.edu.

Singapore: the word strikes fear in many Americans. Singapore: the island, a military economic super-power of Southeast Asia. All of our associations with this small island country stem from one instance in the early 1990s, where some innocent American soul was caned for mild vandalism. Okay, so the kid was a hoodlum. I'm sure he deserved it, but in the American egocentric view of the world this sort of capital punishment is barbaric. With these preconceptions of the unjust, barbaric Singapore, I thought it would be easy to spot Singaporean students on the streets of Ann Arbor. The combination of their imposing stature, low booming voices, and propensity for being on time would surely tip me off.

So, imagine my surprise when I met my first three Singaporean friends. That day during welcome week 2000, I was greeted by three of the cutest girls you'll ever see. Talk about shattering stereotypes. In fact, it appeared I was all wrong. I was unsure because I couldn't really understand what they were saying. Their fast-paced, high, chirpy tone didn't automatically register. 'What is this, Chinese?' I ask myself. It takes a minute, after they decelerate to subsonic levels, when I finally realize that it is English... sort of.

The Singaporeans had to make a few adjustments for me and my American-English-speaking friends. Terms such as the "lift" and "handphone" weren't in our vernacular, but were easily understood. Phrases like "shiok, man!" gave us a bit more trouble. And I'm still trying to figure out who the hell "lah" is. But in addition to this slight vocabulary barrier, there were other things inhibiting us. For the life of me, I couldn't keep up with the pace of their speech. When they finally slowed down a bit, my comprehension increased. Additionally, they let me shorten the length of my speech in part to keep up with them. For instance, the word Singapore became "S'pore," which was later shortened to "Spore."

Over the course of that year, we all became very good friends, and I started to catch on to all of the quirks of the Sporean culture. From an episode of Phua Chu Kang, I learnt that in Spore, "when a man touch a woman's backside, it's called murrwarnest. When a woman touch a man's backside, it's called shiok man!" And the girls even had a cute nickname for me: tood, or sometimes toody. I thought it was the way to say my name without the Midwestern drawl. It made me feel special, since every time they said it the girls would smile and giggle, but it appears I was the butt of a cruel Sporean joke. Only later did I learn that "tood" is another word for nerd or square. Those sneaky Sporeans...

Just as I learnt a lot from Sporeans, they have gained a lot from being friends with me. I have proofread (read: "vetted") several term papers written in the past tense, a major American no-no. My parent's house and my car have served as vacation destination and transportation (respectively). And my most valuable trait, the ability to spot someone across a room stocked full of Sporeans, or any other Asian for that matter (I'm 6'3", or 190.5cm for you metric system users.)

Putting aside the lower drinking ages and lack of cold weather, I have begun to realize that Spore and U of M really have a lot in common. The surprises weren't only one-sided. I'm sure Sporeans had the preconception of fat, lazy Americans (half of which may be true), as does the rest of the world. Both in Spore and Ann Arbor, hard work, sincerity, and dedication are essential for success. And as my friends and I grow closer, I continue to see how similar our two cultures are. It has opened my mind and helped me develop as a person, and I know my Singaporean friends feel the same way. I'm culturally enriched to a degree I never imagined, and although it's coming slowly, I'm learning new words every day (wo hen ben!) But despite all my efforts, to this day when a group of Sporeans get together, much of their language escapes me. Maybe the air is thinner up here.
Another cold winter night in Michigan. Outside, the wind howls, casting an eerie spell over Ann Arbor. Thoughts of upcoming tests and half-finished assignments flood my mind, dampening my mood. Thankfully, there's a world of anime readily available to comfort me. As I sit eagerly before the GREAT ONE (my Toshiba 21" television set) basking in the multihued glow emanating from its screen, I am once again teleported into the mystical, magical and thespian world of Anime. Are you ready to join me?

For those wondering what Anime is, it basically is a Japanese animated film. Anime is not just any ordinary cartoon - themes addressing human ethics, moral conflicts, religion, and even politics, are woven into a very compelling story line. One gets emotionally drawn into the plot as they mourn the characters' downfalls and celebrate their triumphs. In fact, Anime has all the elements of a good soap opera - drama, ambition, human desire, self-destruction... On top of that, think out-of-this-world costumes, nuclear weapons, and mutant races of sea dwelling creatures.

Call me sadistic, but I love carnage. The more gore the better, and gore is aplenty when it comes to Anime. So expect dismemberment, blood, people getting beaten up, more blood, things blowing up, people blowing up, and did I mention a lot of blood? This, coupled with groundbreaking animation, creates a feast for the eyes that surpasses your usual action film.

If I have managed to rouse your curiosity for Anime, you are in luck because Ann Arbor has a number of Anime shops around to cater to your Anime needs. Wizzy Wig is one such store with a good range of Anime to choose from, and is located along East Liberty. So the next time you are in the mood for a movie with an intense story line, strong character development and action, take a chance and watch an Anime film.

co-written by TK & Yuesze

When the school decided to open the Cyber Lounge, many of us thought the administrators had gone mad. Free LAN gaming?? Many of you will be surprised to know that the Cyber Lounge (located in the basement of the Michigan League) has high-end computers dedicated solely to gaming, and comes fully equipped with padded leather armchairs too!! No more sneaking around GG Brown at midnight and abusing the school network. Gaming's legal now! The school is at last recognizing the importance of computers game as an intrinsic part of our education. There is justice in the world ...

Anyway, I am digressing. Whether you are a Counter-Strike fan, Star Craft fan, Quake fan, Diablo-2 fan, or (I hope not) Sims fan, Cyber Lounge is THE PLACE to hang out and interact with your friends. By interact, I mean staring at your screen, typing insults and taunting your friends, swearing, and of course, blasting your friends to pieces. In other words, it is marginally more socially productive than watching a movie, which fulfills only the first criteria.

We always complain of the lack of things to do in boring ole Ann Arbor. Well, times have changed. LAN gaming is a revolutionary form of entertainment that may very well take over conventional activities like movie-watching in the near future. If you haven't tried LAN gaming for some 'academic' reason or other, do come down and give it a shot. Grades are overrated. And to all those lovely ladies out there, what better place to pick up lonely hunks (not me) than Cyber Lounge?
The Culinary Team

Executive Chef: Karen

Sous Chefs:
Stephanie

Lin Li

Leon

Food Taster: Zhiyang

Cooks:

1 to r: Vikram, Stanley, Liz, Yuesze

Host Service Staff:

1 to r: Lindsay, Shanthan, Kevin, Evan

Dishwashers:

1 to r: Todd, TK, Ramu
The Back Page

Name: Zzz...
Age: 22
Weight: 91kg, 201 lbs.
Height: 1.85m, 6' 1"

Shrink's comments: 12 weeks, 39 pizzas later and 5 finals to go; depressed, obese and not getting any.