

NCBM OUTREACH



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To ensure blind people will receive appropriate training and enjoy quality services regardless of where they live in the country.



Wong Yoon Loong

Moses Choo Siew Cheong

Chin Yew Cheng

Wong Kwee Heong

The views expressed in this publication are those of the author/contributor and do not necessarily represent the views of NCBM.



The National Council for the Blind, Malaysia (NCBM) provides a vital link between the organisations serving the blind in this country by acting as the national coordinating body. Through NCBM, the organisations for and of the blind have a channel to discuss and formulate national policies and plans and to pioneer new programmes for the benefit of the blind and vision-impaired.

It costs the National Council for the Blind, Malaysia (NCBM) RM30,000 a year to produce the magazine in print and Braille.

Your financial support will, therefore, go a long way in helping to bring about new developments and progress for the blind. All contributions are deeply appreciated.

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** Note: NCBM has not appointed any agent to collect cash on our behalf.
Thank you.*

**SPEECH BY MR WONG YOON LOONG
ON BEHALF OF WORLD BLIND UNION
ASIA - PACIFIC (WBUAP) AT THE 50TH
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIETNAM BLIND
ASSOCIATION (VBA) ON
13 DECEMBER 2022**

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good morning. I bring you greetings from Mr. Peter Li, President of the World Blind Union Asia-Pacific (WBUAP). He is sorry he is unable to be with all of you in Hanoi as he is still under strict Covid-19 lockdown.

First of all, I like to congratulate Vietnam for being a part of the Marrakesh Treaty family. This significant achievement is testimony of the excellent cooperation between the Government, International Organisations, Civil Society Organisations and the Vietnam Blind Association. With this achievement, we will be able to see improvements in education, employment and leisure reading among the blind, visually disabled and print disabled as they are now able to get access to published works in accessible formats. I like to encourage countries which are still in the process of accession to learn from countries which have ratified the Marrakesh Treaty. Let's work together in this very important and beneficial treaty for our blind community.

In the past 3 days, we have been participating in the events towards equality, progress and inclusion of the blind in the Asean Region. The seminar on 9 December discussed on the Marrakesh Treaty and opportunity in higher education and employment concluded with a 10-point recommendation which will be presented to the ASEAN Governments. These recommendations together with the Jakarta Declaration proclaiming the 4th decade for persons with disabilities 2023-2032 will be the catalyst in realising full inclusion of persons with disabilities including the blind in the next decade.

The parade of more than 500 blind people using white-cane around Hoan Kiem Lake on 10 December raised awareness on the need for a barrier free and accessible environment for the blind to be able to travel independently and safely.

If you may recall, on the day of the parade, it was drizzling but it did not dampen the spirit of all of us to continue with the walk. This only shows that we, the blind people are very determined and have a strong will power.

Rainbow will only appear after the rain. Only with cooperation with the Government, private sector and non-governmental organisations can we see meaningful progress in our work for the blind.

Before I conclude, I like to wish VBA a successful 50th General Assembly. May the leaders who will continue to lead VBA work together through the WBUAP network to build a brighter future for all the blind people that we represent. WBUAP will continue to be the voice to amplify the needs of the blind people in the Asia-Pacific Region.

Thank you and may we meet again in the future.



By Dg Salwah Pg Abd. Razak and Nadirah Nissanto, Sabah State Library

The Sabah State Library and National Council for the Blind, Malaysia (NCBM) have been working together since 1997 through International Workshop of Computerised Braille which was sponsored by Japan Braille Library. Consequently, the Sabah State Library has been actively promoting and encouraging the usage of braille in order to accommodate users who are blind or partially sighted.

Over the course of 27 years, the Sabah State Library has been responsible for the storage of a total of 1,713 collections. These collections include braille textbooks, braille books, and special tactile books. Additionally, in 2020 and 2022, the Penampang Branch and Tanjung Aru Branch of the Sabah State Library hosted two workshops on the production of braille books for library personnel.

Since 2019, World Braille Day has been observed annually to bring attention concerning the importance of braille as a communication medium to achieve full human rights for people who are blind or partially sighted. People all across the world commemorate World Braille Day to pay tribute to Louis Braille, the man who invented braille in the 19th century in France.

Each letter and number in braille is represented by a series of six dots. Other symbols, such as those used in music, mathematics and science, can also be represented in braille. Braille is a reading system that enables blind and partially sighted people to read the same books and periodicals that are printed in a visual font.

As stated in article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the use of Braille is vitally important in the areas of education, freedom of expression and opinion, as well as social inclusion. In Malaysia, this meaningful celebration was celebrated for the first time this year. The celebration of World Braille Day 2023 took place in the Tanjung Aru Branch of the Sabah State Library on the 4th of January 2023.



Visit of booth by VIP



Donation of Braille story books



Braille used by the Blind



Public Awareness



Reflexology Corner



Following the opening remarks delivered by YBrS Hajah Fatimah Abdillah, Director of the Sabah State Library, the event was officially inaugurated by YB Datuk Abidin Madingkir, State Assistant Minister who came on behalf of YAB Datuk Seri Panglima Hj Hajiji Haji Noor, the Chief Minister of Sabah. Among other attendees who graced the event was YBhg. Datuk Sr. Lee Chun Khiong, Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Community Development and Sabah People's Welfare, YB Datuk Fairuz Renddan, Assistant Minister for Special Duties and Coordination, YBhg. Datuk Zainudin Bin Aman, Permanent Secretary of KSTI, YBhg. Datuk Rosalind Chew Bee Koh, President of NCBM, YBrS. Mr Wong Yoon Loong, Executive Director of NCBM, and YBrS. Dr. Kway Eng Hock, Head of Special Education Department of UPSI.

The World Braille Day included an exhibition, bookmark-making activity, reflexology corner, busking, talks by YBrS Mr Wong Yoon Loong, the Executive Director of the NCBM, and Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat (JKM). The Media and Press Outlets, including Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM), Jabatan Penerangan Malaysia (JAPEN), Deasoka, Sabah Media, and the Daily Express came to support and cover the event.

THE STORY OF A BLIND MASSEUR, LIM AH PEN

By Dr Gordon Tan Tok Shiong

Lim Ah Pen was born in Sekinchan, Selangor as a sighted person. He has five brothers and a sister. His parents worked as paddy farmers in Sekinchan in the paddy field owned by the family. However, his mother later moved to Kuala Lumpur city to join her siblings and worked as a vegetable seller.

Sekinchan has the largest Chinese village in the country and people of different Chinese ethnic groups live there. So when he was a young boy, Ah Pen could already speak all the Chinese dialects fluently, these include Hakka, Hokkien, TeoChew, Cantonese, Hainanese as well as the Mandarin language.

Just like most children of his age, Ah Pen went to a Chinese vernacular school for his primary education. However, he very much preferred to play with friends rather than study hard. After completing his Form class in the National secondary school, he told his father he would not go to school anymore. He then went to the city and helped his mother to sell vegetables.

Ah Pen's second elder brother worked as a tile setter in the construction industry, that is cementing new tiles on the walls or floors of houses and buildings. He joined his brother in the work when he was seventeen years old. When he was twenty five, he took over the business from his brother and became a sub-contractor himself. He had a good income and could begin to indulge in some of the pleasures in life.

Ah Pen was blessed with the talent in singing, and since young could sing many Mandarin songs as well as songs of various dialects well. Through singing, he drew admiration from many girls, and later one of them became his lover. One day, the lover told him that she was going to Singapore to work and Ah Pen tried to stop her but in vain. Feeling upset, Ah Pen then decided to leave Malaysia and go to Japan.

He took a flight from Kuala Lumpur to Tokyo and entered the country using a tourist visa. A job agent was already waiting for him in the airport. In Japan, Ah Pen worked as a labourer illegally in a construction industry. Food and accommodation were provided by the Japanese employer. He was



Lim Ah Pen performing

paid eight thousand yen per day, which was considered to be very good for him. He sent money regularly home to his mother in Malaysia, and could afford some entertainment after work.

The Japanese employer liked Ah Pen very much as he could work hard and carry heavy things. The dormitory where Ah Pen lived also had other Malaysian friends working illegally. Sometimes he found the work tiring when the construction site was far away from the dormitory and he had to wake up very early in the morning to commute to the place of work in a van.

During the four-year stay in Japan, Ah Pen regularly went to the bars to drink beer and sing Karaoke songs. One of the attendants in the bar who came from Shanghai, China admired Ah Pen's talent in singing and they regularly went out for meals and had fun together. One day, when Ah Pen came out from the bar after drinking some alcohol, he got involved in a violent incident which affected his eyes and caused him to become permanently blind. Many of Ah Pen's Malaysian friends in Japan were greatly shocked by the news and started raising funds in order to pay for his medical expenses and the flight home to Malaysia.

They also sought help from the Malaysian Embassy in Tokyo so that he could go through the immigration without any hassle. A Malaysian student studying in Japan happened to come back at the same time and he agreed to take care of Ah Pen while on flight. In the Kuala Lumpur airport, the student handed Ah Pen over to his younger brother who was already waiting there.

When Ah Pen came back home as a blind person, both parents cried. Ah Pen told them not to worry about him and he assured them he could take care of himself despite being blind. Back in Sekinchan, he regularly sought treatment from doctors to cure his eyes, and in every session he would request for a strip of sleeping pills. After some time, he managed to gather many strips of sleeping pills. One day, as he was feeling depressed, he swallowed all the tablets (about one hundred in all) at one go plus two cans of alcohol, with the hope that he would not wake up again. To his surprise, he woke up the next morning feeling wide awake and he realized that the doctors must have given him vitamin pills instead.

An old friend came over one day to visit Ah Pen and gave him an old guitar. He showed Ah Pen how to play the happy birthday song with just three simple chords, A, D and E. From that day onwards, the guitar has been his good companion.

After staying at home for about two years, Ah Pen received a letter from the Gurney Training Centre for the Blind in Kuala Lumpur, informing him of his admission to the Centre for training. Ah Pen was reluctant to go but eventually

he went after having delayed for half a semester. Before going, he hid a rope in his luggage bag with the intention of finding a suitable place in the Centre to hang himself. However, when he was in the Centre, he met new friends who were in the same condition as he. They were Ah Tan, Ah Liew, Osman, Ah Loy and Ah Chee. In fact, Ah Chee was Ah Pen's roommate, and Ah Pen found out that Ah Chee was in a worse condition than himself. Ah Chee had been working in a Singapore factory and a gas explosion blew up in his face, thus causing him to become totally blind.

Thus, Ah Pen decided to work hard and he passed all the exams. After one year, he received the certificate of massage from the Centre and became a qualified blind masseur.

Immediately after graduation, someone invited him to sell tissue paper in Singapore, which was a lucrative business for the blind in Malaysia at that time. Ah Pen was in this business for one year. Just like many other blind Malaysians, he was finally caught by the authorities and he was barred from entering the republic permanently ever since.

Forced to work as a masseur in Malaysia, Ah Pen knew that he had to be thrifty and to stop indulging in many of the unhealthy pleasures of life. Fortunately, as time passed, the number of customers he could serve rose, thereby raising his monthly income. To earn extra money, Ah Pen also partnered with Godfrey Ooi who is an accomplished guitarist, to perform in functions. "When I sing on stage, I'm excited and I feel proud," said Lim Ah Pen.

Ah Pen also attends the Church service in Brickfields regularly, and he has become a devoted Christian. "The teachings of my religion has changed my life and has given me a new spirit to live on", said Ah Pen.

One day, Ah Pen's younger brother was in financial difficulties as he was required to dispose of his old taxi in order to purchase a new one. Without hesitation, Ah Pen gave him a loan of forty thousand Ringgit to be repaid in instalments at his convenience. Ah Pen had saved this money from his earnings from massage.

Ah Pen also goes to the gymnasium at the Malaysian Association for the Blind (MAB) to carry weights three times weekly. Under the guidance of Mr Woo Chau Seng, a sighted senior gym instructor, Ah Pen has become a three-time champion in the weight lifting competitions organised by the MAB.

Now Ah Pen is fifty eight years of age and he is still single. "I find life meaningful, and I want to live as long as I can, the longer the better," said Lim Ah Pen.



By Cheah Kam Lin

It was Monday, 13th June 2022 when I felt a little bit of a sore throat. Then, the next day, which was Tuesday 14th June, I felt a great chill but still only a slight sore throat. Then on Wednesday 15th June, I began to feel quite feverish with a chill, a bad headache and a severe sore throat.

In spite of the illness, nonetheless, I still went to work on the morning of the fourth day, Thursday, 16th June. It was only in the evening of Thursday when I got home after work that I asked my daughter to check whether I had Covid by using the self-test kit. The two lines appeared which meant that I tested positive for Covid. So I had to update on MySejahtera to declare that I was positive. Thus, I was placed under the Home Surveillance Order (HSO) which required me to confine myself to my home and I could not go out anywhere for seven days – from 15th to 22nd June, (Thursday to next Wednesday).

And so it was from day 1 to day 3 when my sickness gradually worsened. But then from day 4 to day 6, I seemed to be gradually feeling better. On day 7, however, which was Wednesday, 22nd June, I started experiencing breathing problems even though my fever and sore throat seemed to have gone.

Then it was on day 8, 23rd June, Thursday, after getting ready for work and as I was walking to the LRT station, I had great difficulty in breathing. I was feeling very dizzy and wanting to faint. And so I asked my son to drive me to the Hospital in Ampang. I went to this hospital in accordance with the message that I heard on Hotline. In fact, I had called the Hotline on day 1 of my illness and it gave this message, “In case of emergency, you can go to the Government hospital nearest to your home or you can go to the CAC Covid Centre.”

At the hospital, the doctor checked my blood pressure and it was 190/100mmHg, which meant that my blood pressure was high. Normally, it would be 120/80mmHg. My heartbeat too was going at a rapid rate of 110 beats per minute – the normal rate would be 60 to 90 beats per minute.

Then one of the frontliners asked in a rude manner, “Why you come here?”

I replied, “I’m a Covid-19 patient. Now I’m in day 7 and I’m having breathing difficulties.”

He said, “You Covid patient? Then you must go to the CAC, not here!”

I tried to explain to him. “I called the hotline and they said that in the event of an emergency, you can go to the nearest hospital or the CAC. So because my house is near to this hospital, I decided to come here.”

He replied, “Cannot, cannot, you Covid patient, you must go to the CAC.”

I asked, “Where is the CAC?”

“Kajang,” he said.

“But Kajang is very far from my house,” I said.

“Far or near, you have to go there,” he replied.

So my son drove me to the CAC in Kajang. We saw the doctor and he asked, “Why do you come here?”

I gave him the same story. “I’m a Covid patient and I’m having breathing difficulties.”

The doctor said, “You cannot breathe, you’re an emergency case, you must go to the hospital.”

“But this is the CAC. They told me to come here,” I explained.

The doctor said, “This is all wrong. They should attend to you. Here we can only make assessment by doing the Covid Assessment Test.”

“So what can I do now?” I asked. I go to the Hospital in Ampang, I’m rejected. Now I come to the CAC, I’m also rejected.”

I really felt so stupid, being passed around like a ball.

Then the doctor said, “Never mind, you go home and you monitor your own heartbeat and blood pressure. You do this once every three hours. You make your own recording and if there is an emergency, then you can go and refer your case to the Hospital. They got no reason to reject you then.”

The lady doctor continued, “I can’t give you any medicine because I don’t know your problem.”

So I went home and I drank lots of warm water and I tried to lie down in bed without doing anything. But in the morning of the next day, I again had breathing difficulties and my heart was beating fast. When I walked, I felt as though my legs were not touching the floor and the people’s voices sounded very faint.

I called and woke up my son and I told him to take me to a private hospital near my house.

At the hospital, I was admitted to the emergency section. They checked my blood pressure which had gone up to 199/110mmHg and my heartbeat was 130 beats per minute.

Immediately, they put me on drips and after about two hours, my blood pressure had gone down to 152/95mmHg while my heart rate had gone down to 100 beats per minute.

The doctor advised that I be admitted to the hospital for observation. Then he tried to apply for medical insurance so that I need not have to pay. After half an hour, however, the Insurance said that I was rejected because I was still Covid positive and, therefore, they could not cover me.

So I asked the doctor if I was admitted, how much I would need to pay. The doctor said that by the time I get discharged, the amount would come up to 30 or 40 thousand Ringgit. This is because they would have to put me in a special room for isolation and each of the doctors and nurses would have to wear a special uniform known as the PPE.

I told the doctor of my hospital in Ampang experience and he said that he will write a recommendation letter to the hospital in Cheras.

He said, "I will say that your case is urgent and needs to be treated. This will be sufficient for them to see you."

After that, I felt a little bit better and I went home. By the time I was discharged from the Emergency Unit, my blood pressure had gone down to 135/90mmHg and my heart rate was 95 beats per minute. I was at the private hospital for only half a day and I had to make a payment of RM1,997.

The next morning, my son took me to the hospital in Cheras and I arrived there round about 9 a.m. I waited there for about four hours and by 1 p.m., I was feeling hungry – in fact, I was shivering with hunger. At the time, my son was not with me as he had to go back to work.

Therefore, I asked one of the frontliners to take me to the canteen. I told her I was going to faint with hunger and that I needed to buy something to eat. I bought one piece of bread and a bottle of mineral water. After eating, I felt a bit better. Nevertheless, it was only after seven hours when I managed to see the doctor at about 4 p.m. and I told her of my problems from a to z.

However, the doctor said that she was not eligible to give me medicine.

"If you cannot give me medicine or treatment, then why am I here to see you?" I asked. "This is an emergency ward and I arrived here at 9 a.m. this morning."

After looking at my report, the doctor said, “All I can do for you is to recommend you to a specialist.”

“So when can the specialist see me?” I asked.

The doctor said, “You have to come back another day to fix an appointment with the doctor. There may be a long queue so you may have to wait for five to six months to see the specialist.”

I said, “I don’t understand. This is the Emergency Ward. Why can’t the doctor see me rather than getting a medical officer to see those patients?”

The doctor replied, “We have to screen through the patients first before we allow them to see the doctor. I’m just a medical officer and I’m not eligible to prescribe medicine.”

However, I still felt that I needed to see a specialist for treatment. After thinking of having to wait for another five to six months and the queue would be too long, I decided not to go back to the hospital in Cheras. Instead, I went to another private hospital in Ampang, the next day and I saw Dr. Lee, who was a heart specialist

I waited for half an hour and I got to see the doctor. He did an ECG, Ultra and Echo Sound for me and discovered that I was almost about to get stroke. My heart muscle was already swollen and it was tense. The doctor said that if I had come later, I would have got stroke already.

And so the doctor prescribed medicine to slow down my heart rate and to lower down my blood pressure. He also gave me medicine for emergency purpose – I had to put the medicine under my tongue if I was going to faint or if I could not breathe and eventually I had to eat up the medicine.

The doctor said that I had to do a follow-up visit in two weeks’ time. On the follow-up visit, the doctor reduced the medicine because my blood pressure and heartbeat had gone lower than normal.

For the first two weeks, I paid RM798. For the second two weeks, I paid RM350. For the third two weeks, I paid RM462. Previously, at the 1st private hospital, I had to pay RM1,997 for the single visit. Altogether I had to spend 3,000 plus Ringgit. Even though this was quite an expensive affair, I felt that this was worth it because it saved my life.



THRUST BACK ON TO THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE

By Ivan Ho Tuck Choy

(Editor's Note:

Blind from early childhood, Ivan Ho Tuck Choy had the opportunity to receive his education at St. Nicholas' School for the Blind and subsequently to undergo rehabilitation and training at the Gurney Training Centre. Thus, he was able to gain employment as telephonist at Kumpulan Guthrie where he worked for thirty years.

While working, Ivan furthered his own education by taking up the correspondence education programme from Hadley School for the Blind in USA. While training and working, Ivan was actively involved in advocating for inclusion of the blind in the work for the blind and in setting up the blind people's self-help organisation. This led to the setting up of the Selangor Society of the Blind which subsequently became the Society of the Blind in Malaysia. He was the President of these two organisations for a number of years.

In the following, Ivan Ho tells us of his thrust back on the international Scene)

It was around April 1996 when Mr. Shahid Memon, the President of the Asian Blind Union (ABU), was on an inspection visit to Malaysia in order to see the preparations made by SBM for the upcoming General Assembly. He requested to meet with me as he was most disappointed over what he saw. Apparently, the leaders of SBM were waiting for the official confirmation and the financial commitments from ABU before proceeding with the costly arrangements. But nothing concrete came. On the other hand, Mr. Shahid Memon had taken for granted that everything was under control following their discussions in Cairo in 1994 and he was waiting to be informed of the specifics. In short, there was a total breakdown in communications.

Mr. Memon pleaded with me to save the situation. Indeed, much was at stake; for the delegates from countries in the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent and part of South-East Asia were keenly looking forward to attend the biennial event.

Taking everything into consideration – the credibility of the blind movement in Malaysia and that of ABU, how disappointed the delegates would feel after having waited for two years and be informed of the Assembly's cancellation –

I told Mr. Memon that I would try my best to let him have the answer within two or three weeks as I would have to seek the approval of the EXCO.

I could detect that he would not take “no” for an answer. Then, to my great astonishment, he took out US\$12,000 bills and pressed them into my hand. He said that he did not want to carry that much of money around as he was going to Bangladesh to sort out some issues among the blind leaders there. The cash was duly counted and a temporary receipt was issued with the clause that NCBM would not be held responsible for counterfeits. The money was then deposited the next day as soon as the bank opened its doors for business. Fortunately, only one defaced \$10 bill was rejected.

I hurriedly drafted a postal vote – explaining in detail the awkward situation, the pro’s and con’s, including the financial commitment – and requested for a budget of RM25,000. The major portion of the requested amount was to cover the expenses of local participants from member-organisations, particularly to pay for the airfares of participants from Sabah and Sarawak.

To my great joy, The EXCO gave their positive replies within the timeframe. I believe the confidence and trust that the EXCO had in me stemmed from the fact that I had just managed to get the Constitution amended, got the approval of the Registrar of Societies to insert the provisions to allow NCBM to borrow and mortgage property within a very short time; and having successfully negotiated for the loan of RM80,000 from HSBC.

Thus, the frantic work of organising the ABU Assembly went ahead full-steam and the sending out of invitations to local and overseas participants, the reservation of accommodation, finding speakers for the two-day Employment Seminar to run concurrently with the Assembly, and arranging with SBM and MAB to welcome the visitors and host the dinners.

It turned out that the most taxing task was, in fact, the recruitment of volunteers to help around, almost fulltime during the three-day events, which included accompanying some participants on their shopping needs. Apart from some volunteers recruited from SBM, I also had to call on my children and their friends for assistance.

Ultimately, the two events went off smoothly at the Grand Continental Hotel. It was officiated by Datuk Lau Hui Kang, the President of NCBM, and it was attended by around 120 participants from ABU and officers from WBU. Mr. Memon was returned unopposed as President, Mr. Kua Cheng Hock from Singapore elected as Vice President, and Mr. R.A. Sirisena from Sri Lanka won the treasurership. Although I did not relish the prospect of holding another important position, but I relented after Mr. Memon persisted and

proposed me for the position of Secretary-General. There were no other candidates and so I was once again back on the international trail.

Unfortunately, in 1998, over a misunderstanding with officers of WBU, Mr. Memon decided to resign. I tried my best to stop him from taking that decision; but as he insisted, I thus had to take on the unpleasant task of accepting his resignation. Then it was Mr. Kua Cheng Hock who assumed the presidency.

MY MEMORIES OF PHILIPPA KELLY

By Nicholas Lam Yew Khay

(Editor's note: Nicholas Lam Yew Khay, totally blind, was a student at St. Nicholas' School in Penang in the 1960's. After completing his form six education in the Integrated Programme at St. John's Institution in Kuala Lumpur in 1971, he worked at the St. Nicholas' Library as brailist and was promoted to the position of Librarian in the 1990s. Then, in 2007, he joined the MAB Library as Audio Technician.

In the following article, Nicholas Lam shares his experiences and memories of Philippa Kelly, the Christian missionary who was in charge of St. Nicholas' as Superintendent in the 1950s and 1960s.)



Ms Philippa Kelly

After my failed eye operation in early 1959, Dr. Wong Poh Lum, the eye specialist, recommended to my mother to have me admitted to a blind school so that I would have the opportunity to receive an education. Thus, in May 1959, my mother brought me to St. Nicholas' Home and there we met Miss Kelly and Audrey Lam, who acted as the interpreter. After talking for some time, Miss Kelly said that I was overaged and, therefore, I could not be admitted.

My mother was determined, however, and she got me registered with the Welfare Office in Kampar. She wanted to bring me back to St. Nicholas' for another interview and she sought advice from the Welfare Officer. Fortunately, the officer was very kind and helpful and, within a month, he gave my mother a recommendation letter for St. Nicholas' to have me admitted.

So off again we went to Penang towards the end of June. We met Miss Kelly once more on 1st July and I told her I had been to standard one in a sighted school. She tested my English by asking me to count in the language the number of rungs on the ladder of a toy fire engine. She was impressed and said that I would be given a trial period of one month. Thus, I was admitted to the kindergarten programme at the age of ten.

I was fascinated with the place – there were so many toys to play with and there was a big garden. Actually, I could not really speak English at the time and so I spoke in Cantonese to everyone I met, especially to the three children there – Muniandy, Yoke Lin and Ah Guan.

I could still see a little in those days. I remember seeing the boys dressed up in the scout uniform and I asked them what they were doing. “Oh, we’re the police,” they replied, and I believed them.

One day I played with the merry-go-round and I was happily paddling away when, suddenly, I heard Miss Kelly’s firm voice saying, “Hey, you boy! You’re too big to play with that! Get off that and play with other toys!” I did not understand all that she said but I got the gist of it.

On another occasion, I was sitting on a cane sofa and there was a hole in the middle of one of the seats. I did not know what made me do it but I just simply decided to put my foot in the hole. Miss Kelly saw me and she scolded, “You naughty boy! You’re making the hole bigger!”

When the month was up, I was allowed to stay on and I was promoted to standard one with Miss Mooan as my first teacher. I was very lucky to have such a patient and dedicated teacher. She even gave me additional classes in Braille and English during the afternoons.

I will always remember the early morning jogging exercise. Once or twice a week Miss Kelly would blow the whistle outside our window to wake us up. We would then quickly change into our t-shirts and shorts and then we would assemble at the sports field under the *jambu* tree.

“All of you, follow me!” Miss Kelly cried out and blew the whistle.

The pack of boys and girls would jog along behind her, following the sound of the whistle. First we went towards the boys’ cottage, then along the gate towards the girls’ cottage, then back to the *jambu* tree. We went round quite a big circle and we had to jog about four or five times round the field.

Most of the time I jogged barefoot – it was no problem for me because it was a grassy field. The grass was usually damp with the morning dew and it was wonderful listening to the early dawn bird chorus. There were so many types of birds chirping and singing. Nowadays when I pay a visit to St. Nicholas’ I can no longer hear the lovely bird chorus – I think because many of the trees have been cut down – I really do miss those beautiful sounds when I am on my visits there.

Nearing the end of 1960, Miss Kelly started the Catechism class for a small group of us in preparation for baptism. We were given a small booklet in Braille entitled “Catechism”. We learned about the four Gospels, listened to Bible stories and had to memorise The Lord’s Prayer and the Nicene Creed. Finally, we were given our Christian names. I was given the name of “Nicholas” and Miss Kelly was to be my Godmother. I was baptised in 1961 together with two or three other children. Benjamin and Joanna I remember well. After the church service, Miss Kelly took us to the Cold Storage for ice cream and cake in celebration of our baptism.

One of my schoolmates told me how he got his name one year before me – it was 1960 when he was supposed to be twelve years of age. Miss Kelly read out a list of names that she had selected and asked the students to choose the name that they wanted. This friend of mine was known as Guay See at the time. He was the last to choose a name and by that time, all the favourite names like Alfred, Joseph, Benjamin and Jonathan had been taken up and only the less known names were left like Godfrey and Dunstan. So he chose the name of Dunstan but Miss Kelly told him to take the name of “Godfrey”. That same year, he was supposed to make his Identity Card, being already twelve years of age. Fortunately, his father agreed to make available Godfrey’s Birth Certificate and he discovered that he was already 14 years of age and that his name was spelt as “Goat See”. When He was first admitted to St. Nicholas’, his father had refused to produce the Birth Certificate and so Miss Kelly spelled his name as “Guay See” and put him as two years younger than his original age.

After our baptism, I was not aware then that Miss Kelly would soon be leaving for England for good. Suddenly, I found myself in a farewell party in the hall.

“Farewell for who?” I asked.

“For Miss Kelly and Jane!” I heard many voices saying.

So Jane Chwee was also leaving – I did not understand why at the time.

Anyway, the party was a memorable one – truly out of the ordinary! At about 8 something in the evening, we suddenly heard the pao man shouting, “pao, pao!” I could not believe it, the sound was coming nearer and nearer to the hall. Normally, we would only hear the sound of the hawkers outside the gate of St. Nicholas’. Can it be true that this pao man is really coming to the hall?

At last, the secret came out. One of the housemothers told us that Miss Kelly had, in fact, invited the pao man to come to St. Nicholas’.

All the children lined up to get pao each from the pao man – wow! It was hot and delicious! Miss Kelly then asked the pao man to make his call once more.

“Pao! cha siew pao! The pao man called out, as he made his way out of the hall, on to the driveway, and out of the gate of St. Nicholas’.

A couple of days later, I was among the children who were privileged enough to bid farewell to Miss Kelly and Jane Chwee as they sailed off in the ship called *Chu San*.

Sixteen years later, in 1976, Miss Kelly paid a visit to St. Nicholas’ in November and December to join in the 50th anniversary or Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Home. She presented to each of us a little sachet of fragrant lavender flowers. I kept my sachet for many years until the lavender flowers had all crumbled into powder and dust.

Sadly, Philippa Kelly passed away in England on a day of December 2001 at the age of eighty-six. Miss Kelly really understood how blind children should be educated and trained. I believe that it was she who made sure that we had a lot of activities and experiences and she exposed us to all kinds of sounds, smells and even people.



By Loh Kong Ken

In 1982 I sat for the Sijil Pelajaran Tinggi Malaysia (STPM). In fact, we were the first batch of students that had completed our studies from Primary to Upper Six in Bahasa Malaysia entirely. When the results were announced in March 1983, I managed to get four principal passes - one B, two C's, and one D. So I applied for a place in University of Malaya (which was the only university accepting visually impaired students at the time). Unfortunately, the Unit Pusat Universiti (UPU) considered that my results were not good enough to deserve a place in the university. Thus, my journey in looking for a job had begun.

Prior to this, however, which was in 1981 while waiting for my Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) results, I had already requested for employment in the Publishing Unit of St. Nicholas' Home under the Work Programme. The objective of this programme was to expose the blind to working life experience and they would be given a small allowance as pocket money. I was accepted into this programme and I was, therefore, given RM60 plus food and lodgings. My responsibilities were to proofread a roomful of master copies of books before thermoforming them for release. The master copies were brailled by the staff of the Publishing Unit.

I also had to operate the Radio Kawasan St. Nicholas' by playing the pre-recorded programmes whenever the children were not preoccupied with their studies or extracurricular activities, especially during the weekends. After three months, I managed to clear nearly all of the master copies in the storeroom.

In 1983 while I was waiting for my SPM results, Miss Mavis Campos, the Principal of St. Nicholas' School, got me to stand in as a temporary teacher for Mr. P. Ramakrishnan who had accidentally broken his leg while pruning his plants. I was asked to teach English, Mathematics and Physical Education for standards four, five and six. After three months had passed, Mr. Rama returned and so I had to vacate my temporary post.

I then returned home and I spent much of my time reading Braille books and magazines and listening to the audiobooks that had been sent to me by the St. Nicholas' Library. I read *The Reader's Digest*, *Decision*, *Matilda* Ziegler and *National Geographic* from USA. This also gave me the opportunity to listen to many of the bestseller books such as *Godfather* and *Fools Die* by Mario Puzo, *Shogun* and *King Rat* by James Clavell, *Force Ten* from Navarone, *The Guns of Navarone*, *The Golden Gate* and *When Eight Bells Toll* by Alistair

Maclean, The Day of the Jackal and Odessa File by Frederick Forsyth, Les Misérables by Victor Hugo, and many more.

When I received the letter from UPU informing me that I failed to get a place in University of Malaya, I went down to Kuala Lumpur to register for the Telephone Operator Course from Metropolitan Institute. The Institute had been given the contract to train the new employees from Telekom Malaysia. The cost was only RM150 and I was, therefore, prepared to pay for the course by myself.

However, I was told by the Manager to get a referral letter from the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and the fees would be waived. I tried to reason with her that I was willing to pay the fee of RM150 by myself. Nevertheless, she still insisted that I should go to the MCA Headquarters to get the letter as they were more interested in getting the recognition from the Government than in getting my money. Thus, I had no choice but to comply with her wishes if I wanted to take the course.

Upon reaching Wisma MCA, the security guard escorted me to the 8th floor where the MCA office was located. I explained to them what I wanted. One of the MCA members there asked me whether I was a member.

I said, “No, but many from my family were members.”

Then I asked him, “Does this mean you will not help me if I’m not a member?”

To my horror, his reply was, “Yes. Why should we help you if you’re not a member. We only help our own members.”

I was seething inside. I told him that I did not want to deal with him and asked to see the Executive Secretary. He then instructed the security guard to take me to the eleventh floor where the Executive Secretary’s office was.

Upon reaching the Executive Secretary’s office, I explained to him once again the purpose of my visit. He, Mr. Pang Tong Yong, asked to see my Identity Card so that he could write the recommendation letter for me.

After seeing my IC, he remarked that he knew my home. In fact, he had been to my home and stayed there for several nights. He knew my father and uncle as they were in the MCA Perlis State Committee. Later my uncle had been elected as the Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri for the Titi Tinggi Constituency for four terms from 1990 to 2008. He had also been appointed to the Executive Committee (EXCO) in charge of the Housing and Local Government for two terms under the Menteri Besar, Dato’ Seri Shahidan Kassim.

I then told him about what the MCA member had said on the 8th floor concerning helping MCA members only. Mr. Pang said that those on the 8th floor were the MCA Youth. “They don’t know what they’re talking about and they shouldn’t have made such a statement,” Mr. Pang said.

So while waiting for my letter, I spent some more time talking to Mr. Pang. I told him of my failure in getting a place in University of Malaya and about the difficulty in getting a scholarship to study overseas. Mr. Pang actually offered to let me speak to the MCA ministers in order to obtain contributions to a fund to finance my studies if I was really keen on the idea. However, I no longer had the desire to study further as I was now only interested in getting a job to earn a living. Thus, the opportunity to gain further education was lost to me merely because of the pride in me.

When the letter was ready, Mr. Pang handed it to me together with RM300. I refused the money but he insisted that I should take it for my expenses and then he escorted me to the ground floor. Later, Mr. Pang Tong Yong stood for the election for a state constituency in Johor and he won in 1986 for one term.

Thus equipped with the recommendation letter, I completed the Telephony Course in one month. I did not apply to enter the Gurney Training Centre (GTC) to take up any vocational training as each course took about six to twelve months to complete. In the 1980s, the GTC under the Malaysian Association for the Blind (MAB) was the only vocational training centre that provided training for the blind in Malaysia.

After obtaining the Telephony Certificate, I started applying for jobs from my home in Perlis. Whenever I was called up for an interview, I would travel from Perlis to Kuala Lumpur and return home after the interview. Unfortunately, there were very few companies that were interested in taking in the blind as telephone operators. In fact, I only managed to attend three interviews in the two years when I stayed at home.

The first interview was with the British American Tobacco (BAT) Bhd. Followed by Antah Holdings Bhd. I also attended an interview at the GTC for an English Teacher. Unfortunately, I was not successful in all the three interviews.

Then it was in October 1984 when a friend suggested that I should come down to Kuala Lumpur and do job hunting from there. According to him, the chances would be much better if I were to stay in K.L. So with just RM1,000 in my savings, I rented a room in Brickfields and hoped for the best. I calculated that with my meagre savings, I would be able to last for about three months without a job.

So now you see the reason why so many blind persons choose to congregate in the major cities like K.L., Georgetown, Johor Bahru, Kota Kinabalu and Kuching instead of staying in their own hometown. The opportunity of getting a job in a small town is very slim to nil.

Unfortunately, after only two weeks of staying in Brickfields, I fell into a drain while going out for my lunch and my left ankle got dislocated. My leg was swollen and I could not walk at all. Fortunately, I got to call my younger brother who was staying in Taman Cheras and I asked him to fetch me to his rented house. Then he took me to the Chinese *Sin Seh* for treatment three times a week for a period of ten weeks before I recovered completely. Then I returned to Brickfields and resumed my job hunting.

The situation remained the same from January to April 1985. I was feeling desperate as I could not keep on asking my siblings for money even though they were willing to do so.

Then on 29 April (Thursday) 1985, another friend named Ang Kok Loy @ Ah Tuck called me up at 6 a.m. and asked me whether I would like to join his group in doing outstation sales. Actually, deep inside me, I did not feel keen to do it while I felt desperate to earn some income for my upkeep. Reluctantly, therefore, I accepted his invitation and Ah Tak told me to wait for his call as the van was in the workshop for servicing. He added that we would be departing in the afternoon.

I had never done any sales before and, in fact, I did not have the guts to do so. I really admired my blind friends who dared to go out every day to do sales in order to earn an honest living for themselves and for their family. I felt that not everyone was brave enough to do sales or busking for a living unless they were left with no choice because jobs for the blind were very scarce. Indeed, the employment rate for the blind in Malaysia generally is only around 30 percent. Therefore, should anyone come across a blind person selling tidbits or tissue paper or even busking at the roadside, I urge them to give a helping hand if possible.

Frankly, I had never prayed so much as on that day. Every fifteen minutes or so, I would say a prayer asking God to give me a job because I did not have the guts to do sales.

Then it was 4 p.m. when Ah Tuck called me and told me that the van was not ready. He said we would most probably be leaving at 8 p.m. Later on, however, I was told we would be leaving early next morning. So I continued to pray for a miracle!

The next morning at 6 a.m., Ah Tuck called telling me to be ready because once the van arrived in Brickfields, he would be calling me to go downstairs and wait for the van. I was truly feeling desperate as my heart dropped and I continued to pray.

Guess what? At around 7.30 a.m. on 30 April (Friday) 1985, my phone rang. I thought to myself, “That’s it was Time to go down!” But then the caller was not Ah Tuck. Instead, it was from Nelson Sek Kim Hin. He asked whether I would be interested in going for an interview at Multi-Purpose Holdings Bhd. for a telephone operator’s job. He said that the company was looking for an operator urgently. I was to wait at GTC by 8.30 a.m. and Mr. S. Radha Krishnan would be accompanying me and three other candidates for the interview. Ironically, MPH was majority-owned by the MCA members. Needless to say, however, I grabbed the lifeline and with joy in my heart, I called Ah Tuck to say that I was going for an interview and so I could not join him in doing sales.

Miracle of miracles! Immediately after the interview, I was called for the second time to meet with the panel of interviewers. I was then told that I had been selected to fill in the vacant post and that I was to start work on 3 May (Monday) 1985 as 1 May was a public holiday for Labour Day. My starting salary would be RM520 (which my telephone operator friends said “was high”).

Well, what do you think? Was it coincidence or was it the act of God? To my mind, it was God’s divine intervention that I got that job miraculously!

Therefore, who says that “Miracles do not happen?”



By Hng Tek Hing

(Editor's note: Hng Tek Hing has been totally blind from childhood. Fortunately for him, he had the opportunity to receive his education at St. Nicholas' School for the Blind in Penang and subsequently to have his rehabilitation and training at the Gurney Training Centre in Kuala Lumpur.

(He was thus able to get employment as telephone operator, get married and lead a normal and fulfilling life.

(Here is the sixth story of his life):

In the year of 1992, I was working as a telephone operator in a legal firm, Shearn Delamore, in Kuala Lumpur. As part of my job, I used to contact lots of companies and I spoke with many people. I had to talk to some people in order to get information or regarding certain matters.

One day I came into contact with a girl who introduced herself as Miss Yeoh. She was working in Chew Jugah, another legal firm and she was working in the Accounts Department of the company as the Accounts Clerk. I spoke with this soft spoken girl several times and she was very nice to me. Each time as we ended our conversation, I began to realise that she seemed to have a liking for me.

One day, after we had spoken with each other for a few times over the phone, she asked me one question about myself. So I told her, "I am blind, you know."

But she was very surprised and she could not believe what she heard at first. Only after a few more conversations and many more minutes of convincing her before she finally believed what I told her.

Then one day she asked me if she could pay me a visit. I told her that this was not possible as I was living in a one-room apartment at the Pekeliling Flats.

However, she said, "Oh, that's okay with me. I can use the hall for sleeping."

I insisted that she should not come as I could not provide her with any proper comforts.

"Oh, it's okay with me," she said.

Again I said, "No," and I was a little upset at her insistence. Anyway, she asked me for my address and she wanted to know how to come to my house.

I said, “Please don’t come,” and we ended our conversation.

Then one morning, to my amazement, I heard Miss Yeoh calling out to me from outside in the corridor. I asked her gently, “Hey, why have you come?”

She was laughing as I asked her the question. She said that she had brought another friend along with her by the name of Corina. Thus, I had no choice but to let them in and they stayed in the hall. Fortunately, my hall was quite windy because when I opened the back door, the breeze could come in.

Both of the girls stayed with me for about a week and they slept in the hall. During that time, my son was about ten years old and he really enjoyed their company and friendship.

For the next few days, I went with them around some places for visits in Kuala Lumpur and Pahang and they truly enjoyed themselves very much. I even took them to the La Village in Kuantan, Pahang, which is a holiday resort owned by Tanco Holdings. As I was a member of Tanco Holiday Resort, I had no problem making reservations for our holiday there.

In fact, we stayed there for three nights and four days and those two girls enjoyed themselves so much. They went to the seaside and swam in the sea and, to their delight, they found the water in the Kuantan sea to be so clear and clean.

Then they were very happy to be able to enjoy their meals at the stalls not far from our resort. They were especially happy to find that the seafood at the Kuantan beach to be much cheaper than the seafood in Kuching. Then when the four days were up, it seemed for them too soon to be leaving Kuantan for Kuala Lumpur from where they had to fly back to Kuching, Sarawak on the next day.

Anyway, some days after returning to Sarawak, Miss Yeoh called me up and she said that she had lots of stories about me for her parents. She told her parents how I took care of them, how we enjoyed ourselves so very much, and so on.

Some time later, Miss Yeoh extended an invitation for me and my family to visit them in Sarawak. Indeed her parents treated us very well when we were at their place in Sarawak. Truly, I could hear and smell the lovely food being cooked by her mother for our meals in their home. I especially remember the delicious aroma of the *Pucuk Midin*, which is something like our *Pucuk Paku* in Peninsular Malaysia. However, *Pucuk Midin* has a much softer and juicier stem than *Pucuk Paku*, which is harder, more woody and without any juicy stem. The bamboo shoots were also most delicious.

Then I was very surprised to discover that Miss Yeoh's home was located near to a cemetery. In fact, we had to pass by the cemetery on our way to her home.

I found that they had a very good water system. The water had to be drawn from a pond but the pond was covered with dry grass in order to protect the quality of the water. Moreover, the base of the pond was sandy which meant that the pond was not muddy. In fact, I was told that the water was crystal clear and that it was very drinkable. Indeed, when you drink the water, it has a kind of sweetness and it has a natural taste. Furthermore, the water is being filtered through a pipe-hose system by using a filtration cloth so that the water does not have any residue.

Then we visited some places such as the *Gua Angin* (or Wind Cave) where there were thousands of bats hanging on the wall on both sides of the cave. Outside the cave there was a stream flowing downhill.

Next door to the Wind Cave was the Fairy Cave. Here there was a Chinese statue which had been erected at the top of the cave. The Chinese would come here to pray for fortune and prosperity.

We also visited Semanggok where the porcupines would hide down in the holes that they had dug for themselves. We managed to see some of the porcupines as they ran down into the holes to hide themselves from the sight of humans.

Another place that we visited was the waterfront which I found to be very unique. At night, apart from the splashes in the pond, we could hear a very unique musical tone coming from the pond. And then around the waterfront area, there were many shops which were selling souvenir items such as hornbill carvings, baskets as well as beads which could be turned into numbers or alphabets for your name, birth date, and so on.

Towards the end of the visit, we went to a place called Thomson Road where we had dinner in the evening. The stingray was especially sumptuous with several other dishes. Then we stayed at the Damai Resort for two nights and three days where we enjoyed ourselves swimming in the pool or cycling around the compound of the resort.

And so after spending ten gorgeous days in Sarawak, I had to take a return flight to Kuala Lumpur. The two girls seemed to be very sad as they bade me and my family farewell. They asked me when I could have another holiday with them.

In fact, I heard one of the girls sobbing and I tried to joke with her. I said, "Are you crying because somebody passed away?"

She replied, "No!" And then she tried to deny that she was sobbing.

"So why are you crying?" I continued to tease her.

She remained silent for a while and then she finally said, "It would have been so nice if we could have prolonged our holiday."

Laughingly, I told her, "Sorry, I have to go back to work as my leave is only for six days, including the Saturday and Sunday weekend!"

Then I was somewhat surprised when Miss Yeoh asked my wife, "Are you jealous of Tek Hing being so close to me?"

Miss Yeoh was a little taken aback when my wife replied in a somewhat serious tone, "Yes!"

Then Miss Yeoh kept very quiet and she did not say anything else.

However, after that trip, Miss Yeoh would still call me up once in a while for a chit-chat over the phone. She told me that she had even informed her parents that she liked me very much.

Anyway, after some time, our relationship grew cold. I think this was because she had finally come to the realisation that I am after all a married man.

TECHNOLOGY UPDATE: ORBIT RESEARCH PRODUCES THE ORBIT SLATE FAMILY OF MULTI-LINE BRAILLE DISPLAYS

By Moses Choo Siew Cheong

Here is the Orbit Slate 520 and 340 Multi-Line Braille Display with five lines of 20 braille cells and 3 lines of 40 braille cells respectively.



ORBIT SLATE 520



ORBIT SLATE 340

The Orbit Slate offers all the features of the revolutionary Orbit Reader 20, including a book reader and editor and the ability to connect to a smartphone or computer via Bluetooth or USB and to access all the features of these platforms using the popular screen reader programmes.

It also includes features for productivity and for convenience such as onboard braille translation in over 40 languages as well as a clock with alarms, a calendar and a calculator.

According to Dr. Gina Spagnoli, Orbit Research's founder, "The Orbit Slate represents the next step in the evolution of the braille display. When the Orbit Reader 20 was introduced in 2016, it set the bar for affordable, high quality braille cell technology and it enabled a multi-line reading and writing experience, which is something that sighted people take for granted but which has never been possible for the blind.

"Now the Orbit Slate sets the bar for multi-line refreshable braille. Not only is it a game-changer in STEM education and professional applications but it also makes everyday reading and entertainment easier and more enjoyable. (STEM education is a teaching approach that combines science, technology, engineering and math.)

“It is another milestone in Orbit’s journey towards levelling the playing field for visually impaired students and for professionals.”

Both models feature a high quality 8-key Perkins-style braille keyboard, a cursor pad and rocker keys for navigation and panning, cursor routing buttons and a full-sized SD card slot for loading books and files for reading and editing.

When connected to a computer or a smartphone, the Orbit Slate leverages the extensive screen reader ecosystem developed for the Orbit Reader family of braille displays to provide instant access to Windows, Mac OS, iOS, Android, Chrome OS, Fire OS and the Linux systems. Its integration with all popular platforms means that users have countless ways of interacting with their favourite apps and software.

For practical reasons, NCBM will wait a while before bringing in such expensive products. As a guide, the price is estimated at RM20,000 for the Orbit Slate 340 multi-line Refreshable Braille Display.

The Orbit Slate 340 makes available three lines of real-time refreshable, signage-quality braille and 40 True-Braille™ cells per line, for a total of 120 cells.

This is ideal for spatial Math problems involving fractions, mixed numbers and matrices, reading and writing braille music, and for manipulating spreadsheets and tabular data.

It can be used as stand-alone or as connected to a computer or some other mobile device.

In the book-reader mode, it can read your favourite books and files from the SD card or USB Flash Drive.

In the note-taker mode, it can take notes and edit files.

In the braille display mode, it can be connected to five computers and mobile devices over USB and Bluetooth.

- It works with all popular screen readers on Windows, Mac OS, iOS, Android, Fire OS, Chrome OS, and Linux.

You can do the following:

- Read and send messages and emails;
- Browse the internet and social media;
- Control your smartphone or computer;
- Onboard forward and backward translation with support for 40+;
- Switch easily and instantly between modes.

You have the following:

- Languages;
 - Onboard apps;
 - Clock with alarm, calendar and calculator;
 - Cursor routing buttons;
 - Haptic output;
 - Full-featured, high-quality Perkins-style 8-key braille keyboard;
 - Cursor pad with 4-way arrows and select keys for easy navigation
 - Panning control rocker keys at each end of the display;
 - USB C port for charging and connectivity; Full-sized SD-card socket;
 - Fast-charging long-life battery;
 - Compact, light-weight and portable.
-
- Weight and Size:
 - 3 lb, 11.5 x 6.5 x 1.3 inch;
 - 1,400 grams;
 - 29.2 x 16.5 x 3.3 cm.
 - It is solid, of durable construction, and resistant to fluids and dust.

Price:

For the Orbit Slate 520 Multi-line Refreshable Braille Display, the price is estimated to cost about RM18,000.

Its features are as follows:

- Five lines of real-time refreshable, signage-quality braille;
- 20 TrueBraille™ cells per line for a total of 100 cells;

Its use of apps on board is similar to that of the Orbit Slate 340.



Looking for the Greatest General:

Mark Twain once told the story about a man who scoured the planet looking for the greatest general who ever lived. When the man was informed that the person he sought had already died and had gone to heaven, he made a trip to the Pearly Gates to look for the greatest general who ever lived.

St. Peter pointed at a regularly looking Joe.

“That isn’t the greatest of all Generals,” protested the man. “I knew that person when he lived on earth. he was only a cobbler.”

“I know that,” said St. Peter. “But if he had been a General, he would have been the greatest of them all.”

Buying a Photograph:

The children had all been photographed and the teacher was trying to persuade them each to buy a copy of the group picture.

The teacher said, “Just think how nice it will be to look at it when you are all grown up and say, “There’s Jennifer, she’s a lawyer” or “There’s Michael, he’s a doctor.””

A small voice at the back of the room sang out, “And there’s teacher, she’s dead.”

Blood Circulation:

A teacher was giving a lesson on the circulation of blood. Trying to make the matter clearer, she said, “Now class, if I stood on my head, the blood, as you know, would run into it, and I would turn red in the face.”

“Yes,” the class said.

“Then why is it while I’m standing upright in the ordinary position, the blood doesn’t run into my feet?”

A little fellow shouted, “Cause your feet ain’t empty.”



Kenneth Jernigan, leader of the blind people's movement in USA in the 20th century, on The Challenge for the Blind:

History, we are told, is the record of what human beings have done; literature is the record of what they have thought.

If we turn to the future, the answer is that the future – in literature as in life – is not predetermined but self-determined.

As we shape our lives, singly and collectively, so will we shape our literature. Blindness will be a tragedy only if we see ourselves as the authors see us. The contents of the page, in the last analysis, reflect the conscience of the age. The structure of literature is like a hall of mirrors giving us back (in images slightly larger or smaller than life) exactly what we put in.

The challenge for us is to help our age raise its consciousness and reform its conscience. We must rid our fiction of fantasy and imbue it with fact. Then we shall have a literature to match reality, and a popular image of blindness to match the truth, and our image of ourselves.

Poetry is the song of the spirit and the language of the soul. In the drama of our struggle to be free – in the story of our movement and the fight to rid the blind of old custodialism and man's ancient fear of the dark – there are epics which cry to be written, and songs which ask to be sung. The poets and novelists can write the words, but we must create the music.

We stand at a critical time in the history of the blind. If we falter or turn back, the tragedy of blindness will be great, indeed. But, of course, we will not falter, and we will not turn back. Instead, we will go forward with joy in our hearts and a song of gladness on our lips.

The future is ours, and the novelists and the poets will record it. Come! Join me on the barricades, and we will make it come true!



Ow Holmes:

It is the province of knowledge to speak, and it is the privilege of wisdom to listen.

Anonymous:

An idle brain is the devil's workshop.

Dalai Lama:

Take into account that great love for great achievements involve great risk.

Anonymous:

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Anonymous:

Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration.

Ralph Waldo Emerson:

Common sense is genius dressed in its working clothes.

Anonymous:

Laugh and the world laughs with you. Weep and you weep alone.

Anonymous:

The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be.

Socrates:

The secret of change is to focus all your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new

Albert Einstein:

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science.



President
Datuk Rosalind Emelia Chew Bee Koh

Vice-President
Prof. Datuk Dr. Veeraramani a/p Ondiveeran

Hon Secretary
Mr. William Chan Yeok Beng

Hon. Treasurer
Mdm. Jasmine Khoo Khin Sheen

Malaysian Association for the Blind/
Persatuan Bagi Orang Buta Malaysia (MAB)
Dr. S. Hadi Abdullah

St. Nicholas' Home, Penang (SNH)
Rev. Dr. Stephen Soe Chee Cheng
Mr. Roy Chai Heng Hock

Sabah Society for the Blind/Pertubuhan Bagi Orang Buta Sabah (ShSB)
Mdm. Vilina Passon John
Mr. Jimmy Ng Kich Sheng

Sarawak Society for the Blind/
Pertubuhan Bagi Orang Buta Sarawak (SkSB)
Dato' Dr. Hsiung Kwo Yeun

Society of the Blind in Malaysia/
Pertubuhan Orang Cacat Penglihatan Malaysia (SBM)
Mr Khairul Azwan Bin Wahab



REPRESENTATIVES OF NCBM TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS, 2021-2023

The following persons were also appointed as Representatives of NCBM to local/international organisations:

World Blind Union/World Blind Union Asia Pacific (WBU/WBUAP)
Datuk Rosalind Chew and Mr. Wong Yoon Loong

World Blind Union Asia Pacific Massage Commission
Dato' Dr. Hsiung Kwo Yeun and Mdm. Norimah Hj Ahamad.

Malaysian Council for Rehabilitation (MCR)
Secretariat of NCBM

Majlis Kebajikan dan Pembangunan Malaysia (MAKPEM)
Secretariat of NCBM



AUDITOR 2021-2023

Inpana & Associates,
Kuala Lumpur



Readers are invited to write for our publication, NCBM Outreach. For articles published, payments are as follows:

1. Original articles on the achievements of blind people or of an inspirational nature - (about 500 words) - RM 80
2. Articles containing ideas and suggestions for the improvement of NCBM or its member-organisations (about 500 words) - RM 80
3. Articles on funny or unusual experiences (250/500 words) - RM 40/80
4. Articles of an informative nature written in your own words - (about 500 words) - RM 80
5. Poems which are personal compositions depicting experiences of a blind person (About 50/100 words) - RM 40/80
6. Interesting tidbits, jokes or other information taken from magazines or other sources of limited circulation - RM 15

Note:

Articles submitted by officials of NCBM or its member-organisations will not qualify for payment unless the submissions have nothing to do with their daily office duties.

Also, full payment will be made if the article requires little or no editing.

