Editor’s Say
January 2006 Issue 4

Welcome to the fourth issue of The Pineapple. The past year was filled with many exciting news, events and new development.

With the FST Programme turning to 6 years old, our FST family also grows at a fast pace. In 2005, we happily witnessed the graduation of 21 B.Appl.Sc, 12 B.Appl.Sc (Hons.), 5 MSc and 1 PhD who subsequently joined the FST Alumni league. Congratulations to all on the commencement of your new chapter in life! There were also 38 new first year undergraduate students and 5 new postgraduate students joining the NUS-FST family. While A/P Barlow left (read the story about the farewell party), there are two new faces among the FST staff – A/P Kasapis and Dr Popovich. The opening of the Kikkoman-NUS Collaborative R&D Laboratory, being the first of its kind in the Faculty of Science, was a significant step in the development of the FST Programme.

Enjoy reading in this issue the results of our first job survey – find out how high in demand our graduates are and how well they (you) are paid. The FST staff are certainly very proud of your standings and achievements.

Ernest Qush Wei Siong has done the FST Alumni a proud as a member of the NUS Centennial Everest Expedition Team. Read his exciting story in this issue about the unique feeling of being on the top of the world (that is really “cool”) as well as how FST study helped!

During the year, quite a number of the FST alumni proudly and joyfully became a wife/husband/parent, our heartiest congratulations!

Last but not the least, wishing all of you and your loved ones very happy holiday seasons ahead!

Dr ZHOU Weibiao
Director
Food Science and Technology Programme

Remembering My Exchange Semester at FST

I came to FST in August 2005 to do research in Process control for my master thesis at Technische Universität München (TUM). My study program at TUM is Technology and Biotechnology of food. So why did I choose FST for writing my thesis? Well, I have to admit in Munich / Germany it is around -10 °C at the moment so I guess the decision to come to Singapore can easily be understood 😄. Apart from getting interested in Asian culture when spending a few days in Singapore last Christmas.

After hearing that there are actually relations between NUS and TUM I decided that this should be the place to go.

Prof. Zhou was very helpful and uncomplicated; it just needed a couple of Emails to organize my stay here at FST. Now as the “Blaster Freezer Man” I am simulating freezing of food to develop a new controller for freezing processes. Apart from working at FST I try experiencing as much as possible of Asian culture, which already led to an extension of my stay at FST. And thanks to Yeting I have already tried a lot of Chinese food I would never have touched before. (I still don’t like meat with bones though 😄)

I am very happy for getting the opportunity to do research here at FST. The welcoming manner of FST staff and students made me feel part of it since the first day. I am looking forward to many good experiences still to come next year.

Patrick Bindewald

The Wedding Bells and the Stork

Over the past 4 years, a few of our graduates have tied the knot or become proud parent.

Our best wishes for a blissful marriage to: Atikah, Dewi, Kit, Hui Wen and Lena.

Congratulations to the arrival their little ones to the following graduates and staff: Atikah, Dewi, Hui Wen, A/P Zhou and De Leong.

The Commencement Ceremony was held on 8th July 2005 at the University Cultural Centre. We witnessed with pride, the graduation of our 3rd batch of honours students and our 4th batch of non-honours students. We have our very own first class honours student, Ng Lai Ying, Caroline. Congratulations to all. We have one Doctor of Philosophy graduate, Shui Guanghou, and five Master of Science graduates, Bheemaraju Amarnath, Cui Min, Lim Tez Han and Nang Sabei Myint, Md. Abul Haider Shipar. Congratulations to all and best wishes for your future endeavours!

As of our custom, we had a lunch celebrations for the students and their family members before the commencement. Below are some snapshots taken on the day.

We are pleased that the majority of our graduates have found job in the industry or pursuing their further studies. Below are their employment records:

For the Honours graduates, we have Caroline Ng working as a research officer in IMRI, Angela Li, working as a Scientific Officer in Health Sciences Authority, Hui Ling working as an Environmental Health Officer in National Environment Agency, Raphael Ho working as a marketing executive in GlaxoSmithKline, Shirley working as a Scientific Officer in Health Sciences Authority, Hui Ling working as a Environmental Health Officer in National Environment Agency, Raphael Ho working as a marketing executive in GlaxoSmithKline, Shirley working as a Catering and Business Development Executive in Singapore Food Industries Ltd., Wiardi as a product Specialist in BST Scientific, Lew Ker working as Scientific officer in Agr-Veterinary Agency, Bai Xue as writer in Lifestyle Magazines Publishing Pte Ltd, Wan Peng working as a Research and Development Technologist in Fraser & Neave
It seems strange to be writing this letter to all my FST Friends from some 7000miles away! Pleased to say that Jill and I have finally settled in and have received our shipment of furniture from Singapore and so our house is beginning to look like home. It is with great memories that we are unpacking all the things we bought in Singapore and they will serve as a constant reminder of the super 6.5 years we spent with you.

One of the things we have noticed is how the plants and small shrubs we planted in our garden in 1999 have grown to be really mature and strong. Little shrubs are now mature trees and ready for pruning and it reminds me of how all the FST students have grown and achieved since the beginning of the FST programme - what has happened to those first year students who were shy and retiring (well some were!) but have now become confident men and women with responsible and important jobs. Congratulations to ALL the FST graduates old and new!

I did not get the chance to thank you all personally for the splendid evening that you gave me back in June for my leaving party. I was greatly touched and much honoured by all the kind words said and for all the time and trouble you put in and for the wonderful gifts that I received. It was a real highlight of my time with you and we shall recall the evening for a very long time to come. It was very good to see so many of my FST friends there and I thank you all again for giving up your valuable time to spend it with me.

Greetings from Lincoln, England!

season coming to an end, Lindley and myself form the first team to position ourselves at camp 2 ready to make the summit bid whenever the wind dies down. After staying 5 days at camp 2, we make our way up the mountain. Both of us arrived strongly at camp 4 and attempt the summit bid the same night. Conditions were not perfect that night, but we had to give it a shot. We departed camp 4 at around 10.30pm. Moving slowly and steadily, I arrived at the balcony, halfway up towards the summit shortly after Lindley, where I had to make a tough and heart breaking decision to turn back. I could not proceed as one of our oxygen bottles malfunction. It appears to be the one carried by my sherpa. Without the 2nd bottle of oxygen, I will not be able to get down the mountain safely. I gave my wishes to Lindley and we both hug and cried. For me, I knew there isn’t enough time for a 2nd attempt, even if there is I was too disappointed to garner enough strength to do it again. Maybe Mother Nature has other plans for me as I tried to console myself. Looking back, I considered my Everest climb a success even though I did not reach the top. I did fulfill my dreams to climb Everest, just that it would have been sweeter if I were to summit.

I am glad and very fortunate to be given a chance to be part of this rewarding and life changing project. It definitely marked a significant milestone in my life. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to NUS, mentors, friends and all supporters whom in one way or another encouraged me throughout the 3 years.

I would love to visit the mountains whenever I have the time, money and opportunity. I hope more people will be able to share the same passion as me. For the rest, I wish all of you success in scaling your own personal Everest. May we all scale to greater heights in whatever we do.

Best wishes,
Ernest Quah
2003 Graduate
My Everest Story...

Hello my dear friends and professors from FST. I am here to share my experience as part of the NUS Centennial Everest Team where 3 of my teammates successfully reached the top. It was a triumph expedition and everyone was elated that we had put not one but 3 persons on the top of the world. As training in charge throughout the whole project, I was delighted and relieved to see 3 of my strongest teammate plant the NUS flag on the summit. More importantly, the whole team returned safely back home without any major injuries. For NUS, we had achieved what we set out to do.

It started as a dream in 1997 when I first knew about the 1st Singapore Everest expedition. I was an active boy since young who loves the outdoors and sports. Never did I thought of myself being able to do high altitude climbing until I chance upon a poster recruiting to be mountaineers after my first year of studies. Without much hesitation, I immediately sign up and was part of the Make It Real 2 (MIR) student mountaineering programme. Now MIR had become a sub club and is in its fifth year running trains and nurtures students who wish to climb a doable mountain. Coming from the pioneer batches of MIR, it gives me great pleasure to see the increasing number of hopeful mountaineers locally. Half a year later, in Dec 2002, it seems like a gift from heaven when NUS announced to form a NUS team to scale Everest in 2005 to commemorate its 100th year’s anniversary. I was drawn by the University courage to take this bold step and at the same time did not want to miss the opportunity. Naturally, I signed up for the project and was determined to make my dream turned reality.

The goal to reach the peak of Mount Everest had spurred me on throughout the 2 and half years of preparations. The countless hours spent training, meetings, planning and interviews is to prepare for the ultimate challenge. On top of the weekly 10hour local training regime, we went on 6 overseas training expeditions to Nepal, Pakistan, New Zealand and China to hone our mountain fitness, skills and knowledge to better prepare us technically, physically and mentally at increasing altitude. Besides studies, I literally eat, sleep and dream of Everest. There was practically no leisure time left for other activities. I was very fortunate to be in the final team of 5 to climb Everest. At the same time, I felt sad for those aspiring mountaineers who had been either eliminated or left the team for a variety of reasons and other commitments.

I did not enjoy all my climbs. Two of the most memorable ones are climbing Mera peak and Cho Oyu. Mera peak is the highest non technical trekking peak in Nepal at 6400m. During that trip, I summit twice and completed the fastest load ferry assessment. It was my first trip to Nepal and that climb paved the way for more to come. Cho Oyu in Tibet is the 6th highest mountain in the world. I did my best ever climb during that expedition. Blessed with good weather and some amount of luck I summit twice with the second summit without supplementary oxygen. I had my worst experience on Gaserbrum 2 in Pakistan. The mountain stand just over 8000metres being the 13th highest in the world. I suffered terribly on the way to base camp, with bouts of diarrhea and vomiting. The food poisoning persisted a few days and affected my acclimatization plan. I only managed to reach below camp 2 when I was hit by a cold badly the same night and leaves me resting at camp 1. The team proceeded to camp 2 but due to poor weather and time limitation, all of us withdrew and aborted the climb.

The most unforgettable climb would definitely be to Everest. She is such an awesome mountain, so beautiful and mystical, unpredictable and always incredibly tough to scale. We encountered the worst of all weathers in 50 years. There was practically no ideal summit window period. With the climbing expeditions...
Professor Philip John Barlow was honoured by the Food Science & Technology, National University of Singapore on the occasion of his Farewell back to England in June 2005. I am indeed honour to be writing and share with all of you a bit on this great man, Prof Barlow.

I have known Prof Barlow for almost 5 years now. Under his leadership, till date we have coming to twenty postgraduates and still growing, with intake of six different level of students with some already graduated. We are indeed thankful for his kindness and his effort in growing the FST student group. He has truly imparted us with lots of knowledge and wisdom. I must say, we are all pieces of clay, which he has moulded.

I can recalled when I first met him out of his busy schedule... he give me a very warm feeling and I am very certain I want him to be my mentor and supervisor for my postgraduate studies. He has always given everyone warmth and make everyone around him feel very easy and relax with him. In his days with us, he had far exceeded our expectations and contributed even more, he is not only a mentor but is also truly a leader and a very fatherly figure.

He is a person whom believed in Freedom to chose, he advises but does not impose, he creates opportunities and expose us to ideas but does not 'spoon feed', and lastly he helps but does not ask in return. In this we are trained to be independent, responsible and confident.

I remember he once advice me, it goes like that: "Research is like planting a tree, whereby trees will branch out with many branches and leaves, similar to research, it must start from somewhere and will eventually branch out into many areas for discoveries" He also mentioned, "there is always light at every end of the tunnel" He constantly encourages us and never fail to be our supporting pillar.

In June 2005, we did a survey to find out how well our graduates fare in the job market after graduation. We are very happy to see a very positive job market for all our graduates. However, the base is small with only 54 responses. Nevertheless, we appreciate the help of all the graduates for making this results possible!
and magnificent castles. One of the tours organized by the conference is a tour to the 18th century home of the Marquess of Anglesey which has a mixture of classical and Gothic design (great if you want to see the bedroom, bathroom, dining hall and etc. of the lords and ladies). The medieval conference banquet held in a Ruthin Castle is a must go. The evening’s feasting begins with fully costumed Ladies of the Court and the Court Steward then lead us into the Banquet Hall where they entertain, sing (Welsh people can sing very well) and jest. We ate Welsh lamb (yummy yummy) with dagger and fingers; drank mead (delicious honey wine) from clay cups and wine in pewter goblets.

The best reward from this conference is gaining the right to host the 9th International Hydrocolloids Conference in June 2008. Hurray and congratulation to Prof. Kassapis and Food Science and Technology Programme. I am looking forward to this conference.

Tay Sokli

Graduation Dinner of Class of 2002-2005

On 16th May 2005, the most happening FST class of 2002 – 2005 got together to experience a memorable night for their graduation dinner. Together with many of the FST staff members and friends, we enjoyed a night of fun entertainment, food and a nostalgic sharing session.

The event was held at Mu Chuan music lounge at Apollo Centre, which provided a cozy ambient for us to mark the end of our FST degree course and at the same time, welcome a new beginning of working life for many of us. It was indeed a night which we shared both joy and tears through the recollection of fond memories of being classmates for the past 3 years.

The night took off with an opening speech by our respected Prof. Barlow followed by a simple presentation ceremony which the students received IA certificates from their respective supervisors. After which, a series of fun interactive games were played to liven up the spirit for the night. Other forms of exciting entertainments include cat walks by Dean and Liyan, song performance by Yvonne, Liyan and Wen Wen as well as a hip-hop dance competition by the 8 macho guys of the class.

Along with great entertainment, good food could not to be missed out. Everyone present was treated to a sumptuous 8 course buffet dinner comprising of delicious and nutritional local delicacies. To add icing to the cake, 5 lucky winners took home attractive lucky draw prices sponsored by companies like Asia Pacific Brewery, Gold Roast, Sin Hwa Dee and NTUC Fair Price.

The highlight of the night was none other than the 30 minutes video presentation which captured the 3 years journey that our class has gone through together. Photographs and video clips from various class gathering, major school functions and excursions were displayed to stir up the great memories we shared during the wonderful time with FST.

News flash

Our Food Science and Technology programme will be introducing a new minor in Nutrition in the coming academic year 2006-2007 in August.
**Bonjour!**

The sky was not as blue as usual; the air I breathed was fresher; the people on the street were blonde; and the buildings were of European style. There was a sign ‘Bienvenue à Genève’. There I was, in the French-speaking state of Switzerland, Geneva on the 16 June 2005. I was having trip to Firmenich Headquarters in Geneva, on my way to the Weurman flavour symposium in Denmark from 21-24 June 2005.

Firmenich has 3 centres in Geneva, namely La Plaine where the chemical factory is; La Jonction where the research labs are located, and Meyrin-Satigny, the centre for flavour creation. On the first day, I visited La Jonction and I met some Firmenich scientists. It was a great time spending the day with them as they explained to me about their job, showed me some of the lab facilities and not forgetting, bringing me for lunch at the company. For the rest of the afternoon, I spent my time touring around city of Geneva and visited the famous Lake Geneva. The next day, I went to Meyrin-Satigny and spent a day with the senior flavourist of Firmenich. I had a wonderful time with him as he was sharing about flavour creation and the part and parcel as flavourist. We also had a simple sensory evaluation session from which I knew the difference between cranberry, blueberry and raspberry. Again, in the afternoon, I indulged myself touring around the neighbouring towns, Lausanne and Montreux. Before I left to Copenhagen, I spent the weekend visiting my friends at Zürich, one of the major cities in Switzerland.

Good bye Switzerland and it’s time for me to attend the 11th Weurman Flavour Research Symposium in Roskilde, Denmark. This symposium was held every 3 years to bring together researchers from academia and industry working in the field of flavour science to exchange and discuss recent results and experiences in a formal and informal atmosphere. This was a closed symposium in which the participants must present the paper, either oral or poster presentation. In this symposium, I had poster presentation on my research entitled ‘Citrus flavour of Asia’.

When I arrived at the Copenhagen airport, I accidentally bumped into an Italian young lady who was attending the same conference. After talking to her, I found out that she was actually a researcher whose paper I’d been using for the reference. What a divine appointment. She shared a lot about her knowledge and gave me some advices on the research. In the conference, I also met a number of famous flavour scientists around the world, including Dr. Hanny, visiting lecturer in FST. Most of the participants came from Europe and US while only a few were from Asia. It was a great privilege to be able to attend such a ‘world-class’ conference in my first conference. The conference itself also gave me an insight and overview of what was happening in the area of flavour research. I was very inspired to pursue further research in this area.

Apart from attending the workshop and a number of lectures, there was also a time of fun, leisure and sight-seeing during the conference. I had the opportunity with other participants to have dinner at Copenhagen City Hall, ride the thrilling roller coaster at Tivoli Gardens, visit the Viking Ship Museum, see the bonfire in the middle of the night and also, row the Viking boat as if we were ones. The trip had to end here but the memory lasts. Indeed, I would like to show my heartfelt appreciation to Firmenich Singapore and FST Department for sponsoring this trip. I’m looking forward to the 12th Weurman Flavour Symposium in Switzerland 3 years later. Auf wiedersehen!

Jorry Dharmawan

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**Wrexham Conference**

On the 20-24 June 2005, Prof. Stefan Kasapis and I attended the thirteenth Gums and Stabilizers conference held in the North East Wales Institute in Wrexham, United Kingdom. Prof. Kasapis presented a topic on bridging the divide between the high and low solid analyses in biopolymer preparations and I gave a presentation on the foaming, emulsification and gelation properties of commercial soy isolate and its fractions.

Anyone involved with hydrocolloids will benefit from attending this conference. Gums and Stabilizers conference is held in Wrexham every two years. It is one of the conferences where all the top hydrocolloid scientists in the world will be attending. In addition to the normal conference sessions, the first day of the conference consist of a Master class which consists of a series of lectures that aims to provide a basic knowledge of the characteristic, function and role of the hydrocolloids in food systems.

This conference had increase and broadens my understanding of the hydrocolloids and it is very special as it provides an opportunity for me to meet Prof. V.J. Morris, Prof. K. Nishinari, Prof. J. Mitchell and other scientists. It is great to be able to talk to brilliant scientists, but it is wonderful and amazing to be able to meet and talk to the authors of the references you always cite.

Wrexham has breathtaking beautiful scenery (provided that it does not rain) and with a lot of sheep along the highway from the Manchester airport to the North East Wales Institute. There are plenty of beers and wine, medieval market town...