Welcome to Graduate House!
Welcome Home!

Hard copy available from Graduate House Office (A4 $15 each)

Message from the Master

SIX YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE TO GRADUATE HOUSE

How would you describe Dr. Helen Law – a counsellor, a close friend, a family member ...? I know Helen just before I assume my duty as the Master earlier this year. However, to me, Helen is such a person one would admire and respect. Helen is a role model for all of us, as she does put all her heart and soul in a task once she has committed to it. This is evident when she performs her duty as the Resident Fellow of Graduate House, as she really cares for the residents and the House. Dr. Law is a person who can chat with a resident for hours in late night, a person who is prepared to accompany someone in need to hospital, and a person who spends lots of her time assisting the Management Team in every key decision made. I am so fortunate to have such a good ally and friend, and I am sure many residents would feel the same too. While we hope Dr. Law can continue to serve the Graduate House community for many more years to come, she has decided to take on a new challenge and will leave the House by the end of September 2008. I am sure that Dr. Law has left many good memories to all of us over the last 6 years. For that, I would like to thank Dr. Law sincerely for her dedicated service to the House, and wish her all the very best with her future endeavour. Everyone who knows you will surely miss you a lot, Helen.

Thomas Ng (Dr)
Master of Graduate House

Farewell lunch – Dr. Thomas Ng (Master), Dr. Jennifer Gao (New Resident Fellow)
Mr. Dick Chow (Manager); Dr. Helen Law (Ex Resident Fellow)
Easy come ... Easy go?!

After I graduated from the University of Melbourne, I joined the Department of Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine in HKU, first as a post-doctoral fellow and subsequently as a Research Officer. My research on cord blood immunology used to require me to collect samples at odd hours. So, my first intention to become a Resident Tutor was to save time on transportation. Secondly, I am interested in tertiary administration and student affairs so I want to make use of the Hall experience to learn how to teach outside the classroom. I was lucky to have served as a Resident Tutor for Lee Hysan Hall (1999-2002) and as Resident Fellow for Graduate House (2002-2008). Sure, I have spent long hours on Hall matters, such as counseling students, and some of my research work has been affected. Yet, I treasure the experience very much. I have learned to see things from different perspectives ... to accept that every resident has different characters and personalities. Indeed, the Hall experience brings colours to my life and I appreciate the support from my colleagues and fellow residents.

Ten years is a long time and I think it is time to move on ... I will be moving to Institut Pasteur (Paris) to learn more advanced technology in infection and immunity research. Dr. Jennifer Gao Xiaoli from the Faculty of Dentistry is now the new Resident Fellow of Graduate House. She will also take over my job as the Chief Editor of this Newsletter. Looking forward for her self introduction in the next issue.

Helen Law
Ex-Resident Fellow

Farewell and Welcome ...

September is a very special month. Accompanied with the beginning of new academic year, many old friends are leaving us for their bright future meanwhile new faces are joining the big family of Graduate House. First of all, I would like to express our warmest welcome to all new residents. Graduate House is the only resident hall dedicated to serve postgraduate students in the University of Hong Kong. We have the most heterogeneous culture as our residents are from different countries over the World. I hope you will enjoy the life in Graduate House not merely because the attractive views outside our window, but the multi-cultural atmosphere where we can meet and share our experiences with people from diverse backgrounds.

Being a tutor of Graduate House for just a few months, I am already deeply impressed by the versatile and talented postgraduate students. The residents of Graduate House I meet everyday further broaden my knowledge to the world. I truly believe our residents will be the future leaders in their fields and will definitely influence the world positively. Graduate House is not the most glamorous place, but surely it will become part of the graduates’ memories of their postgraduate life. I hope that I will be able to share with you the joyful, stressful, or even silly moments you encounter in the coming year.

Dr. Jack Wong
Resident Tutor (Room 1011)

Manager's Corner

Time flies and I have joined Graduate House for one year. Over the past year, I have spent much time and effort on House management. Due to the heavy workload associated with the cyclical renovation and staffing matters, I have been ignoring my family; in particular, my wife and my new born son, Samuel. I really appreciate my wife’s understanding and support.

Samuel joined the family in late June. Although very green, he has been experiencing many ups and downs in life. Life risks but God’s salvation grace. What I now treasure most is that Samuel could be healthily and happily growing in a family with love. This is a genuine wish of a father. Now, it seems that I know my father more than any time in the past.

I hope one day, my family including my little son could join Graduate House activities, sharing the joy with fellow residents.

Dick Chow
House Manager
Can you recognise all our staff??

Office Staff
Siu Bing Chiu
Rex Lau (Senior Technical Officer)
Thomas Tse
Dick Chow (Manager)
Maggie Sze

Cleaning team – Residential Block
Cheng Fung Fan
Siu Bing Chiu (Senior Attendant)
To Wai Ching
Ng Choi Ying
Wan Yuen Yee Tina

Out sourced cleaners – Non residential Block
Chow So Ying & Li Yin Nui

Catching up with old friends ...

Don’t be surprise to see Uncle Ming (Cheng Chi Ming) in smart uniform!!
After retiring from the hall attendant position, Uncle Ming obtained the security guard licence and his company deploys him to Graduate House because of his experience with us.

Amy (Ho Mui) working part time for Robert Black College!
I bumped into Amy one afternoon. She is working on campus and will occasionally have afternoon tea with friends.

Dr. Desmond Hui back from a cultural tour to Venice!
Lucky things usually happen more than once! After catching up with Amy, I met Dr. Desmond Hui (Ex-Master 2001-2007) and Mrs. Hui outside Graduate House. This is a picture taken in front of the tree that he has planted for us.
Cyclical renovation – Phase One completed

With the co-ordinated effort of different parties, Phase one of the cyclical renovation was completed one time in early September. The next Phase in winter will involve the replacement of air conditioners in student rooms. External scaffolding will be set up and residents are reminded to lock up their valuables.

In House Management

Rooms have been repainted

Shower cubical improves water seepage problems.

Solid bathroom door improves sound isolation.

Access Control of Graduate House

The success rate of Graduate House residency application is usually ~15% (100 out of 650). Scholar with extra-curricular interests and needs were selected as residents. Living in our community is indeed a privilege. In the past, some residents believe that living in Graduate House is just a renting of room. They took the House rules casually and brought in their guests without signing up at the counter. We have dealt with cases that have brought in the whole family to live in the single room illegally. Visitors and illegal residents often cause tension between room-mates and we are alert of strangers loitering in the House. To improve our security, we have renovated the P1 Foyer and implemented a 24 hour access control in the House. As approved by the Committee of Management, we have to block Lift #2 so as to maintain a single entry and exit door for the House – a reversion back to the same practise as for 1998-2005.

In September, an Access Control Concern Group was formed and proposed some changes to the current arrangement for the lifts and the visitor registration. The Management is now contacting the lift vendor for possibilities to reprogram the lift while the Concern Group will conduct a survey to seek residents' opinion on overnight guest policies. Let's participate fully and work together to make Graduate House a better place for us to live together!

In House Management

The Green Move

With the help of the Estate Office, we are adding a lot of plants to our terrace.
RESIDENTS’ CORNER

A time for everything...

The last phase of my PhD work passed rather quickly. From submission of thesis, to oral defense, revision of thesis and final submission, the whole process took only two months. After rounds of farewell dinners and lunches with my fellow comrades in HKU, on 13 August 2008, I took the evening flight, waved goodbye to Hong Kong and headed back to Singapore for good. One of the fondest memories for me in HKU is the 11 months of self-imposed ‘imprisonment’ in my room on the 10th floor of GH during the writing up phase of my dissertation. My window over looked the peak dressed in a green dress. Almost daily, white parrots flew in front of my window. Such scenic view brought inspiration and serenity that was so important for my writing. What a great gift from God! Since 1 September 08 I have started work at the National University of Singapore as an assistant professor. I missed my life as a full time research student as I could sleep, work, eat ... almost doing everything in the small, cramped but comfortable single room in GH. I was literally ‘room bound’! Now I am trying to get adjusted to travelling 3 hours on the road to and back from work with public transport. Do you think I should contribute to polluting the world by buying a car? Love to hear from you guys and all the best for your research work!

Esther Goh (Singapore)
Email: swkegcl@nus.edu.sg

The lighter side of the illegal occupant

Could the strong cigarette smell that polluted corridors of first floor from them? They seem to be everywhere. Installation of the security cams does not seem to be very effective. They (probably) managed to sneak through under the scrutinizing eyes of Uncle Chan et al under their very nose. I doubt the outsourcing the watchmen could have any effect on them either!

What a fitting time this is, a transition of two way movement, in and out, to write this. Those of you have completed your memorable time here; this is what you have missed (or overlooked, perhaps encouraged!) and to my fellow resident comrades on-board, welcome to GH! This is about something you are bound to see during your stay. At the end of a hard days work in the heat of summer what better place there could be other than a cozy bedroom in the graduate house where one can enjoy the spectacular harbour front or the breeze through the greens of the Victoria peak among many other things.

Like all good graduate students, foods (and space) are the scripts of the invitation letter (Can you remember what the major attention at the last departmental seminar was?). Good cooks attract (good) friends. You share the joys of your cooking with them, they love the taste of food from different cultural origins. They wont go complaining around the quality and quantity of the food they are given. After all who is going to risk the free food by lodging complaints? Warnings sent, first as gentle reminders to everybody followed by strong worded emails to the persons concerned seem to have no effect on them. The other day a friend of mine told me that he heard weird sounds in the neighbour’s washroom later to find out it was one of them in the shower cubicle. Even the uniformed battalion that seems to be everywhere has thus far not noticed them, or perhaps they may have thought that they are the legitimate members of the GH community? As the things happen now, perhaps they have their voices heard in the RC. Who knows?

Well my friends, if you thought ‘they’ were Homo sapiens you are probably mislead. GH is much more diverse than the 99.9% DNA similarity shared between more than 20 nations who constitute the community. I am here talking about the other phyla, largely Insecta and the occasional Vertibrata like the salamander couple my friend found trapped between her table and the wall and making a noise akin to a.....well you guess!!!

Nipuna Parahitiyawa
PhD Student - Faculty of Dentistry

Have you joined the Graduate House Facebook??

Looking for a new way to connect with fellow Graduate House residents?
Look no further: Welcome to the “Graduate House (HKU)” Facebook group!

Facebook is one of many online social networking networks. The wonders we can perform with the Facebook group include planning activities, sharing photos, posting messages, creating an online "buy and sell" section, and not only keeping in touch with each other, but also with our dear alumni. To sign up for Facebook, go to http://www.facebook.com/ to create an account. If you already have an account, simply search for the "Graduate House (HKU)"!! This group was created by Seb Ko (Student representative of Residents' Committee 2007/08).
My Volunteer Days in Sichuan

14:28, May 12, 2008, a century earthquake (Wenchuan Earthquake) happened in Sichuan Province, China. Over 80,000 people were killed in that disaster, and Sichuan became the focus of the world. Ever since knowing this earthquake, I have always wanted to provide my personal help there. In later June, I got an email from university, recruiting people to help students in Sichuan for their first after-earthquake summer holidays. I signed up right away and became a volunteer of this team.

This volunteer work was called "川港连心行动，向日葵儿童夏令营", which was part of a cross-county volunteer work in Sichuan and held by the Hong Kong Salvation Army. Our whole volunteer team was composed with students, doctors, teachers, and people from many other fields. I was quite inspired that so many people in Hong Kong would like to put away their work and devote into this volunteer work. We were divided into three groups, A, B, and C, and went to Sichuan consecutively. I was in group B and our service time is from July 24 to August 2. A two day training were held in early July before we set out. Another two inner group discussion and preparation were held afterwards. We prepared a lot of stories, songs, team-work games, books, scientific experiments, and gifts.

Our target place is Weicheng, a little town in Youxian District Mianyang City. It locates in northern west of Mianyang, not far away from the center of this earthquake. It is a secondary disaster area, and there were 14 students killed by the 5.12 earthquake. Hot and rainy weather, unpredictable aftershocks, spicy foods, and unknown mental states of the students, would be quite a challenge for whole team.

July 24, after a four-hour flight and a two-hour bus trip, we arrived at Weicheng. A 6.3M earthquake happened while we were on our way from Chengdu to Weicheng, and also another 6.3M one when we left on the last day. We took about an hour for a field survey in Weicheng Middle School, which was our encampment during the following days. Just after a big rain, some "classrooms" were filled with water, and some have funguses growing on the grounds. They were dark, moist, hot and smelly. Those so called classrooms are actually made of iron sheets and bamboo poles aftershock. Also, we tried to find some other open areas for outdoor activities. After dinner, we were divided into seven subgroups, as there would be seven camps.

Our "students" are about 8 years old to 16 years old, and they are from primary school and middle school. During those days in Sichuan, we got up around 6 o'clock in the morning. Morning session started from 8:30 to 12:00, and afternoon session was from 2:00 to 17:30. Every night from 7:30 to midnight were used to summarize that day's work and prepare next day's plan. It was hard to go to bed before 1:00am every night.

(To be continued ...)
My Volunteer Days in Sichuan (cont’d)

I was in Camp 7 with another five volunteers. We had around 60 students from 3rd grade in primary school to 1st grade in high school. They were quite active, and we had to increase our voice. Just after one or two days loudly talking, our voices became raucous. On the beginning several days, two of the daylight lamps and all the ceiling fans were out of work. All students looked sleepy and could not concentrate. In order to mobilize their enthusiasm, we tried to have most our activities outside. Students were quite interested in Cantonese songs, and those team-work games. Those were quite new and some had little challenges to them. We told them how to show a "love encourage" to each other no matter after a success or even a failure. A proverb was given out everyday, such as "Seize the time", "Nothing is impossible", "Yesterday is a history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift, that’s why we call it present". A great friendship was settled up between us volunteers and all students. During the lunch-time break, they happily showed us around their little town, told us about their own lives and future expectations, and bought us some local foods sometimes. On the last day, we wrote some special words for each student. Most of them cried before our departure.

On the final day in Sichuan, we took one afternoon in Mianzhu, one of the most serious earthquake damaged town. A bell tower stopped right at 14:28 on May 12. Two months after the earthquake, we can still saw those broken buildings. We were told that one new mountain was just newly merged by two mountains at that time. Although having seen a lot of pictures before, we were quite shocked again and again there.

Ten days are quite short, but that volunteer trip became a great fortune in my life. New reconstruct plans have been established recently. That will be a brand new start there. I miss those lovely boys and girls.

Welcome Party – 19th September, 2008
The RC election results are in!!

This year 118 residents participated in the election which makes for a 62.7% turnout rate.

The results are as follows:

CASHIN, Brian..............................72 Votes (ELECTED)   CHAN, Kwannok Norbert...........64 Votes (ELECTED)

LOASBY, William.........................75 Votes (ELECTED)   WOON, Thean Hung Wilson.......61 Votes (ELECTED)

WU, Huijun.................................76 Votes (ELECTED)   WU, Yunyu Sudalina...............77 Votes (ELECTED)

Thanks to all residents who voted, and Congratulations to all the newly elected members of the Residents' Committee! (Hurray! I can finally retire :-) If you need to contact the new Residents' Committee please email ghrescom@hku.hk

Howard T. Tam
Ex-member, Graduate House Residents' Committee

p.s. The Residents' Committee met on the 7th of October.
Brian Cashin is the new Student Representative.
William Loasby is the new Financial Secretary.

If you have any ideas, articles, or images to share, please email the new Editor (Jennifer Gao) at gradhse@hkucc.hku.hk