Teaching Marine Boys

Like most of my classmates who had to help out with the family expenses, I had to quickly look for work the moment I finished my last A-Level examination paper. I managed to get a job as a trainee accounts clerk in Stratton Shipyard. My A-Level results impressed Mr. Ton Lauers, the shipyard's MD and he offered to transfer me to the shipyard's Technical Department as a Trainee Design Draftsperson and to sponsor my studies in the Diploma in Ship Construction course at the Singapore Polytechnic. I accepted his kind offer and thus began my journey in the world of work.

On account of my A-Levels, I obtained direct entry into the 2nd year of the Singapore Polytechnic Day-Release Diploma Course in Ship Construction. I was then the only female out of 33 students. Sadly for Mr Lauers, Stratton went under two years later. Fortunately for me, the company accountant, through his contacts in Promet Shipyard, arranged for my "bump-less transfer" to Promet. I was retrenched on a Friday and began work at Promet the following Monday! My studies in the Polytechnic was uninterrupted; I had to pay my own course fees but Promet sponsored the weekly day off when I had to attend a full day of classes at the Polytechnic. For all of us on the Day Release Programme, it was really tough, balancing family, work and studies. By the final year of the course, there were only 11 of us left in my class. All of us studied equally hard but my A-Level Science background really helped to give me an edge in the engineering subjects. I managed to top the class and was awarded two gold medals, one from SNAMES and the other from the Singapore Chamber of Commerce. While at Promet which built mostly tugboats, utility vessel, barges and oil rigs, I worked in the Design and Drafting Department. In those days, everything was manually done – design calculations, drafting general arrangements, machinery layouts, seating arrangements, etc. I had to use the planimeter and Simpson's Rule to calculate the vessel's displacement, volume of tanks and other irregular spaces. How can I forget! How tedious!

Here's some other unforgettable experiences. In those days, workmen in the shipyard were not used to see a female shipyard apprentice in overalls, hardhat and safety boots wandering about the yard or climbing on board vessels being constructed. There were always catcalls and hoots from them which I took good naturedly and got used to after a while. One of my memories of the early days in the shipyard was having to climb into a vessels' enclosed space to take measurements necessary for detailed drawings I had to produce. Some of the men working on board the vessel used their hammers, or whatever, to bang on the steel walls/decks. Definitely deafening! However, the harassment stopped when they realised I also had a job to do and was determined. They eventually became really helpful! I also recall that I had to work overnight in the drafting office to finish a general arrangement required for an urgent proposal. I can remember being scared because it got really spooky and I was on my own in the large drafting room. The stories I heard of ghosts lurking in the shipyard did not help! Fortunately, none dropped by, and thank goodness for the security guards who popped in now and then to check on me. Other memories are assisting in Inclining Tests and Sea Trials; these were quite fun for me but perhaps not for my bosses, the Naval Architects. The vessels had to meet performance specifications and I always thought my bosses crossed their fingers during these events! The years as a Day Release student and a shipyard apprentice allowed me to learn not just technical skills and knowledge. The challenges I had to managed and overcome helped me to develop the life skills and effective attitudes which continue to grow and to sustain me.

Not long after I graduated from the Singapore Polytechnic, my Naval Architect Lecturer, Mr. Rajakulendran was seconded to NOL. He was keen to go but needed someone to teach the subjects he was teaching. He must have spoken to the Head of Dept., Mr Cheng Huang Leng because one day, out of the blue, I received a phone call at work in Promet, from Mr Cheng. He called to offer me an Instructor's position in his department, to take over the subjects Mr Raja was teaching. I remembered what he said "the pay is lousy but I will do my best to get you a staff scholarship for instructors to do your degree in Naval Architecture". This was the hook for me; I had always wanted to have a university education but could not afford one. I accepted the lowly paid Instructor's position and began my career in Polytechnic education.

One of my first teaching assignments was to teach Naval Architecture to marine engineering students. My room mates in the staff room, Mrs Cheng and Mrs Ong, had both taught Maths to marine students before. They warned me to be prepared for the worse! My

Formatted: Font colour: Auto
Deleted: Thus while waiting for my A-level results,
Deleted: got
Deleted:
Deleted: in the Accounts Department at
Deleted: I did very well and my
Deleted: MD
Deleted:
Deleted: was so impressed that he re-assigned me to the Technical Department to do drafting. He also offered …
Deleted:
Deleted: .
Deleted: I was therefore among the lucky ones to be paid to work and study….
Deleted: got
Deleted: 2
Deleted: but I was not left high and dry. Our
Deleted:
Deleted: A
Deleted: ,
Deleted: who of course knew about Stratton's situation … [1]
Deleted: . He
Deleted: "
Deleted: .
Deleted: .
Deleted: continued to be funded. In (which year?), I … [2]
Deleted: as
Deleted: with straight A's and won the (what?) prize.
Deleted:
Deleted: ¶ … [3]
Deleted: .
Deleted: ,
Deleted: …
Deleted: P
Deleted: !
Deleted: S
Deleted: …
Deleted: !
Deleted: !.
Deleted: learned … (What did you design? What skills … [4]
Deleted: :
Deleted: U
Deleted: E
Deleted: it
Deleted: persuaded me to replace him at the Singapore … [5]
Deleted: I was assigned
Formatted: Indent: First line: 1.27 cm
Deleted: .

first encounter with marine students was those who had seen the world after a year of sailing as cadets. I was 23 at the time and my students would have been at most a couple of years younger than myself. When I entered the lecture theatre for my first class with them, I was greeted with wolf whistles. Confronting me was about 120 students. They looked matured and quite a few sported long hair. Some looked quite rough! I introduced myself and even before I began teaching, the students seemed bent on giving me a tough time. It did not help that I was really a rookie lecturer. On one occasion, while writing on the chalk board, I smelt cigarette smoke. I turned around but failed to spot the culprit. I did "catch" him on my second attempt and told him to leave the class. He refused and I too refused to continue with the lecture till he did so. It became a game of who blinked first. All the other students were waiting to see what would happen and the tension grew until his batch mates took pity on me and began to hassle him to leave the lecture hall. He eventually did, slamming the door behind him. Several students saw me quite visibly shaken and after the lecture was over, a few of them came to comfort me with "It's OK Ms. Lim, not all students are like him". On another occasion, Mr Cheng caught some students gambling in the lecture theatre after my class. They were flipping their thick text books and betting on the highest total when you sum up the page numbers; I remembered being told off by Mr Cheng for not locking up the lecture hall after my class. But I learned to really like teaching the marine students; they were fun to teach once I got over my nervousness and they settled down. Valentine's Day was special with flowers and cards from some of them!

Another notable experience during my first year at the Singapore Polytechnic was sailing on the Anro Temasek. The Head of Department believed that it was necessary that I experienced the ship environment marine engineers work in. With the help of Neptune Orient Lines, Mr Cheng managed to secure a "bunk" on board for me. Travelling as a supernumerary on board, I had a suite all to myself. It was luxury! More luxurious than the cabins assigned to the cadets and junior engineers! The 33-day voyage took us from Singapore, up to Penang, down and around Australia, back up to Tanjong Priok and back to Singapore. It was a memorable voyage for me in many ways. The captain and some of the engineers had their wives sailing with them and they provided the "motherly" touch in the social gatherings in the evenings. Life onboard did not seem too much of a hardship but I realised then that it could get very monotonous and lonely. It would be hard for young cadets if they were living away from home for the first time in their lives and if they were not prepared to socialise with others on board.

The Singapore Polytechnic wanted me to qualify as a Lecturer. This meant having to graduate with a university degree and I was awarded a scholarship to do so. Mr Cheng kept his word. I left for Newcastle University in the UK in 1980 and graduated with a 2nd Upper Honours Degree in Naval Architecture in 1982. I returned to teach in the Marine Engineering Department for the next six years.

Besides teaching the returning cadets, I also taught Naval Architecture to returning engineers preparing for the Certificate of Competency examinations. I was more mature and experienced and managed my classes a lot better than when I was a rookie teacher. I made the CoC students work hard for their Naval Architecture subject. For them, after learning the theory for each topic, it was practice, practice and more practice at solving questions on the topic. One of my "special talents" was to spot questions. I developed this "talent" like most Singaporeans at the time. Most of us became "exam-smart" through not only solving questions from the 10-year series but also analysing the questions. And I was often quite accurate at spotting the Naval Architecture questions for my CoC students!

After teaching for a few years, I decided that I should develop myself further but in the field of Education, not Engineering. It was a logical decision as I had been teaching since returning from my degree course. I was allowed to transfer from the Marine Engineering Department to the Education and Staff Development Department where I was given a post graduate staff scholarship in Education. I obtained a Masters in Education from Indiana University, USA, in 1989 and returned to serve a further six years in Singapore Polytechnic before leaving to join a similar department at Temasek Polytechnic.

My career in the marine industry was definitely filled with many interesting and memorable events. When I accepted Mr Ton Lauers offer to work as a trainee in Stratton Shipyard's technical department, I had not known where this would lead too. But I believed, and still do, that if something is worth doing, it is worth doing well. And when the going gets

Deleted: ere
Deleted: who
Deleted: W
Deleted: I shared an office with Maths Lecturers Mrs. C ... [6]
Deleted: C
Deleted:
Formatted ... [7]
Deleted: .
Deleted: i
Deleted: ¶
Deleted: When I entered the lecture theatre, I was greet ... [8]
Deleted: m.v.
Formatted ... [9]
Deleted: It was
Deleted:
Deleted: It
Deleted: s
Deleted: (1st Class?)
Formatted ... [10]
Formatted ... [11]
Deleted: .
Deleted: d
Formatted ... [12]
Deleted:
Deleted: for another
Deleted: (how many years?)
Deleted: a lot
Deleted: could handle
Deleted: them
Deleted: And one
Deleted: right
Deleted:
Deleted: More anecdotes of your teaching to CoC stu ... [14]
Formatted ... [13]
Deleted: be an academic
Deleted: and decided on
Deleted: a
Deleted: Curriculum Development Department
Deleted: . I
Deleted: d
Deleted: another
Deleted: 6
Deleted: the Singapore Polytechnic
Deleted: the (Temasek?)
Deleted: (You should add a closing paragraph)
Deleted: ¶
Formatted ... [15]

tough, the tough gets going, sometimes with tears. It was a challenging journey but no regrets for me.

Evangeline Lim Mui Cheng
21 October 2014

Evangeline graduated with a diploma in Ship Construction from the Polytechnic's Marine Engineering Department in 1979 with the distinction of being Singapore's first female to do so in this predominantly male domain. She also became the first female teaching staff of the Polytechnic's Marine Engineering Department when she joined the department in 1979. She then when on to become Singapore's first female Naval Architect in 1982 when she graduated with a B.Sc (Hons) Degree from the University of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, UK. She continued to teach Naval Architecture to marine students at the Polytechnic until 1988 when she joined the Polytechnic's Education and Staff Development Department. She obtained a staff scholarship for post graduate studies in 1988 and completed the Master's Degree in Instructional Design at Indiana University, USA. On her return to Singapore Polytechnic in 1989 she continued to serve in the Education and Staff Development Department. In 1995 she joined Temasek Polytechnic where she served in the Staff and Education Development Division and the School of Engineering. In 2005 she and her husband moved to Australia so that the family can remain together while their children studied there. They plan to move back to Singapore once their youngest completed his studies.

Cheng Huang Leng
Co-Editor
Maritime Stories of Singapore

Deleted: ¶

Deleted: September

Deleted: (let's target this date!)

Deleted: *(This is my introduction of you)* ¶

Formatted: Font: Italic

Deleted: Evangeline is our 1st female Singaporean female to graduate with a diploma in Ship Construction in 1979. She also became the 1st female teaching staff of the Singapore Polytechnic Marine Engineering Department when she agreed to leave her design job at Promet Shipyard joined the Department to teach Naval Architecture. She went on to become our 1st female Naval Architect in 1982 when she graduated with a a 1st Class B.Sc (Hons) Degree from the University of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, UK. She continued to teach Naval Architecture to marine students before leaving the Marine Engineering Department until 1988 when she to joined the Curriculum Development Department Polytechnic's Education and Staff Development Department to pursue a career in education. She obtained a staff scholarship for post graduate studies in 1988 and completed As part of her preparation, she was sponsored to do a degree at masters level the Master's Degree in Instructional Design at the University of Indiana University, USA. On her return to Singapore Polytechnic in 1989 she continued to serve in the Education and Staff Development Department. In 1995 she joined She did so in (which year) to serve another 6 years before leaving to join the Temasek Polytechnic where she served in the Staff and Education Development Division and the School of Engineering. In 2005 .¶
In (which year), Evangeline left Singapore to follow her husband, Michael Goh, first to Indonesia and then to Malaysia where he served as a Military Attaché. In 2005, when Michael retired from Mindef, she and her whole family moved to the Gold Coast, Australia with her family so that their family can remain together while their children studied there. There they bought over a business to supply goods to be sold as souvenirs by theme park operators and others including "Mom & Pop" outlets. It is a difficult and competitive business. They are kept busy 24/7 especially when they have added an on-line outlet on the Internet! Despite this, Evangeline welcomes mariners, especially those whom she had taught, to stopover and share memories of her times as a teacher of Naval Architecture at the Poly. She has promised not to take revenge on the marine boys who had "ragged" her! They plan to move back to Singapore once their youngest completed his studies.¶

Page 1: [1] Deleted	**User**	**16/10/2014 18:57:00**
Page 1: [2] Deleted	**User**	**16/10/2014 18:59:00**
Page 1: [3] Deleted	**User**	**21/10/2014 09:28:00**
Page 1: [4] Deleted	**User**	**19/10/2014 17:31:00**
Page 1: [5] Deleted	**User**	**17/10/2014 18:35:00**
Page 2: [6] Deleted	**User**	**17/10/2014 18:38:00**
Page 2: [7] Formatted	**Cheng Huang Leng**	**21/10/2014 10:38:00**

Font colour: Auto

Page 2: [8] Deleted	**User**	**20/10/2014 09:05:00**
Page 2: [9] Formatted	**Cheng Huang Leng**	**21/10/2014 10:38:00**

Font colour: Auto

Page 2: [10] Formatted	**Cheng Huang Leng**	**21/10/2014 10:38:00**

Font colour: Auto, Superscript

Page 2: [11] Formatted	**Cheng Huang Leng**	**21/10/2014 10:38:00**

Font colour: Auto

Page 2: [12] Formatted	**Cheng Huang Leng**	**21/10/2014 10:38:00**

Font colour: Auto

Page 2: [13] Formatted	**Cheng Huang Leng**	**21/10/2014 10:38:00**

Font colour: Auto

Page 2: [14] Deleted	**User**	**17/10/2014 19:27:00**
Page 2: [15] Formatted	**Cheng Huang Leng**	**21/10/2014 10:38:00**

Font colour: Auto