

## *A Glowing Night at the Lower Selatar Reservoir*



Lantern festival also known as the Mid-Autumn Festival Mid-autumn festival is held under the full moon in the fall of every year. It falls on the 15th day of the 8th lunar month of the Chinese calendar (usually around mid- or late-September in the Gregorian Calendar), a date that parallels the Autumn Equinox of the solar calendar. In Singapore, the venue is at the Chinese Gardens, where a huge lake floats dozens of lanterns in all shapes and colours. It's a regular carnival, with food, lots of children running around, and even the obligatory lion dancers wandering around. The crash of the cymbals and the beat of the drums means the lions are approaching. Behind them come the celestial prince and princess.

Nee Soon South Zone D Residents Committee had its lantern festival at the Lower Selatar Reservoir on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2006. The festivities started at 7.30pm. The guest-of-honour was Adviser to Nee Soon South Grassroots Organisations and MP for Ang Mo Kio GRC, Er. Lee Bee Wah.

Families were greeted with an extraordinary entrance depicting racial harmony. There were coconut woven leaves

“thoranam” hanging across the entrance between two banana trees on either side from the Indian culture. Colorful Chinese lanterns were hang all the way down the path while Malay oil lamps lit the dark night.

At the lantern collection booth, people lined up to collect their goodies, which included lanterns with joyous music. These items were contributed by Nee Soon South Zone D Residents Committee. The tickets also consisted of a lucky draw to try their luck. Opposite the entrance, mats were laid on the grass where young and old sat and enjoyed the screening of the cartoon, Tom and Jerry.

At one pavilion, there were two ladies preparing Don-Ding Oolong tea. Our guest-of-honour joined in the festivities by carrying a lantern and tasting the freshly brewed tea. Meeting her at the pavilion, prompted me to ask our MP what she thought about the lantern festival.



Miss Lee replied: *quote* “It was a very good environment and would be happy to invite more Indian, Malay and foreign friends. The whole event was situated in a non-hectic environment apart from the flats and roads. This event is a racial harmony event as it has decorations from the Malay, Indian and Chinese cultures. I was happy to see many people of different races.” *unquote*

Chinese tea is a favourite hot tea, which is most of the time drunk with moon-cake, a Chinese delicacy only baked during the lantern festival. When making the tea, the Chinese usually soak the leaves for 5 minutes and wash of the first layer but drink the second.



In front of the pavilion, people from McDonalds came down and did face and hand paintings and also balloon sculpting. Many children queued up to get their faces painted.



Later there was a magic show on the stage in front of the grass patch. The magic show was fun and exciting. Both children and adults enjoyed it. Then right after the magic show was the first round for the lucky draw. After the first lucky draw people walked around while waiting for the second round of the lucky draw.

Our Nee Soon South neighbourhood police too took this opportunity to bring awareness to the residents by setting up a booth. They had leaflets to reach out to the residents on outrage of modesty, robbery and pick pocketing. Families were happy to walk home with free umbrellas as a token from the police when they completed puzzles.

Everyone who came took back with them something special, like the gifts from the lucky draws and/or the memorable family event of the lantern festival and the glowing night by the reservoir.

The festivities came to an end at 10.30pm. As for me, this was my first task as a young roving reporter, thus the experience is indeed everlasting.

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**The End**