

LIFE &
TIMES

SATURDAY, MAY 14, 2016

PULSE

To sir,
with love

A teacher takes
a hand, opens a mind
and touches a heart

PAGES 2&3



LIVING PAGES 4 & 5

**GO PLAY IN
THE MUSEUM**

WELLIT, PAGE 9

**WHAT GWYNETH
PALTROW READS**

SHOWBIZ PAGE 12

**HANDS UP FOR
DRUMMING**

BROUGHT TO YOU
BY LIFE & TIMESPULSE *living*

THE DREADED ROTAN

I was in Standard 5 and he was a Practical teacher. If you think male Practical teachers are all cute and dreamy, well, this teacher definitely wasn't. He was the stuff that nightmares are made of. He'd punish the whole class for the smallest mischiefs (not me, I was "baik"). Once, two classmates whispered during his lesson and he made the entire class stand up on the chairs with our hands straight, parallel to our shoulders. And for 40 minutes of his 45-minute class, that's what we did.

Before leaving the class, he asked us to line up and come forward one by one so he could rotan us on our palms with the feather duster. For that brief period he was in my school, I think we got the rotan more than five times. No, we never complained and no, our parents didn't come to school and attack the teacher. We weren't that spoiled! We took whatever he threw at us. Until now, I don't remember what he actually taught me, but I'll never forget that "rotan bulu ayam".

Zuliantie Dzul



THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

"The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires." (William A Ward)

LOVE 'em or hate 'em, where would we be without our teachers? They're the next most influential people in the line after our parents. They may have been the bane of our existence throughout our tumultuous school days and made us hate maths with a vengeance. But there are also those who've inspired us with their passion and dedication and made us who we are today. And for that, and more, we salute you, oh teachers far and wide, on your special day.

In honour of Teacher's Day on May 16, the writers of PULSE & PLUSH recall some favourite memories of their schooldays

KINDRED SPIRIT

In the Visitor's Room of my boarding school, I felt lost and alone in a place so far away from the tropics. I sat down on the floor as near to the fireplace as I could to read a book. When the door opened, I looked up into the face of the other "new girl" in the school — Mrs Abbott.

There were many differences between us: I was a student and she, the new principal. I was of average height and she, statuesque and beautiful. I was one of the few coloured foreigners in this sea of white Australian girls. She was well-acquainted with the New England region of New South Wales.

In the next two years, of all the lessons I learnt from Mrs Abbott, the most important ones were self-worth and self-respect. Today, we're friends and, as it's customary in Australia, we call each other by our first names. Even so, I find that I have to summon my courage each time I phone to say, "Hello, Anna." I'm always tempted to fall back on, "Hello, Mrs Abbott."

That first day, though, we were strangers. In spite of all the challenges ahead for us both, I saw something in Anna that I'd rarely seen in any teacher in the past: A mixture of compassion and empathy. I knew then that I'd met my kindred spirit.

Aneeta Sundararaj



THE BEAUTIFUL GAME

My favourite subject at my all-girls secondary school in northwest London, aside from PE (Physical Education) was History. But to this day, I continue to wonder whether it was because I had a crush on the history teacher, whom at the time I thought was the next best thing to fish and chips, or whether it was due to my childhood appetite for going back in time, to when great English kings ruled or when madmen, like Hitler and Stalin, blazed the earth.

As a bright-eyed 11-year-old, Mr Call-Me-Geoff-if-you-like-Castro, with his twinkling eyes, perpetual grin, pepper blond hair and penchant for donning extremely tight grey pants, was the answer to every teenage girl's dream. I still recall the way his grin would spread across his face and how his squinty eyes would dance as he stood in front of the class, delivering his lesson in that endearing north-London-twang. I was always his captive audience but Mr Castro

often found himself bellowing in his fevered attempts to awaken the dead in a classroom of young girls more intent on staring out of the windows to see whether the boys (from the school next door) had emerged for their morning session of PE.

What made us connect more than anything else was the fact that he was a huge football fan. Like me. After a weekend of Barclays Premier League action, I'd be the brunt of his friendly teasing the next day should my team, Tottenham Hotspur, have lost on the weekend. He was a die-hard Wolverhampton Wanderers fan, and I found pleasure in chiding him for that. Mr Castro was the one responsible for triggering my passion for collecting football souvenir programmes and team pennants back in the days when my peers were collecting lipsticks.

For inspiring my love of history (regardless the reasons!) and knowledge of football, thank you Mr Castro — wherever you may be today.

Intan Maizura Ahmad Kamal

