

# TRIBUNE

Ngee Ann Polytechnic's campus newspaper

Volume 35 - Issue 1 - March to May 2007

## Poly Grads Command Higher Salaries

But increases are far lower than for fresh varsity grads

BY BENJAMIN TAY & DANIEL NG  
benjamin.tribune@gmail.com / daniel.tribune@gmail.com

Graduates from polytechnics are receiving better starting pay but the pay rise of \$52 is far lower than the \$300 varsity graduates enjoy.

According to an annual survey among the five polytechnics here, fresh polytechnic graduates employed in full-time jobs averaged a gross monthly income of \$1,711 for 2006, compared to \$1,659 for 2005.

The latest Graduate Employment Survey (GES), jointly conducted by Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP), Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP), Singapore Polytechnic (SP), Republic Polytechnic (RP) and Temasek Polytechnic (TP), took place between October 2006 to January 2007, and the results were announced in February.

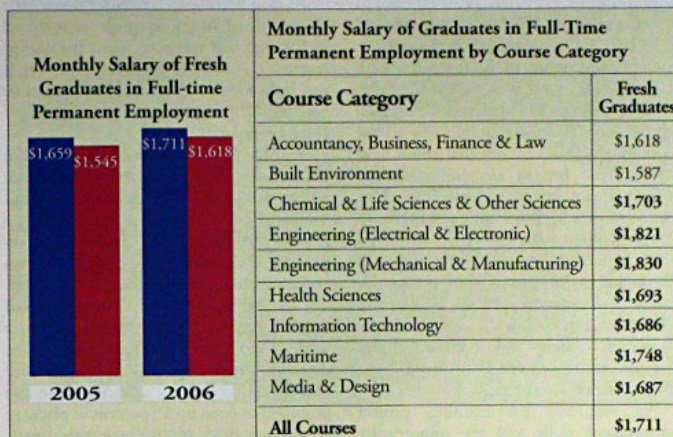
Among the 7,231 graduates who participated in the survey, 91.3 percent of the respondents found jobs within six months after graduation.

Survey results also indicated that Maritime, Health Science and Chemical & Life Sciences graduates brought in the highest pay ranging from an average of \$2,169 to \$2,251, while Media and Design, Information Technology and Built Environment course graduates commanded the least, the average ranging from \$1,945 to \$1,956.

Post-National Service (NS) graduates also drew a higher starting pay, with an average gross monthly salary of \$2,029, up from \$1,975 in 2005.

However, the GES also showed that pay increases for polytechnic students lagged behind the increases for that of university graduates.

The latest salary survey by Singapore Management University (SMU), revealed that 100 percent of its graduates in 2006 were able to find employment within six months of having graduated, compared to 91.3 percent for fresh polytechnic graduates.



Source: Graduate Employment Survey 2007

According to Channel NewsAsia, some 353 SMU survey respondents who graduated between May and September last year enjoyed a 13 percent increase in their average starting pay. This meant a jump from \$2,520 to \$2,850 in 2005. For polytechnic graduates, however, the pay rise was just \$52 or 3.1 percent, up from \$1,659 in 2005.

At press time, the National University of Singapore (NUS) and the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) had not released their graduate employment survey for 2007.

However, according to the survey results for 2006, NUS graduates enjoyed more than a five percent increase from the previous year in 2005.

Polytechnic graduates are aware of the stark differential but are prepared to further their studies to boost their earning power and job opportunities.

Christopher Toh, 21, a recent Banking & Financial Services (BFS) graduate from NP currently working in a local travel firm said, "I'm aiming for a post-graduate degree as it will mean more than a basic degree."

"Most employers look at grades first and foremost. That is probably why they

prefer university graduates rather than polytechnic graduates."

Another NP graduate, Tay Wee Cheong, 21, felt that polytechnic graduates, despite having lesser qualifications than university graduates, are more ready to handle challenges at work.

"What sets poly grads apart from others is the level of independence they acquire over the years," he said.

Mr Raymond Tan, an executive in charge of hiring employees for an events company, said that employers nowadays do not base their selections of employees solely on academic achievements.

"Polytechnics offer a great deal of learning beyond the classrooms and are as concerned with the overall development of students as universities," he explained.

The Straits Times has recently noted that employers who employ polytechnic graduates now prefer those who had taken the poly-university route.

This is because the three years in the polytechnic offer youngsters the basic technical and practical know-how, while an undergraduate degree offers the relevant conceptual grounding in their chosen field.



THE GRIME BENEATH THE GLITZ

Page 5



GROW A POLYTECHNIC

Page 6



GYM WERKZ @ NP

Page 12

TRIBUNE  
Ngee Ann Polytechnic's campus newspaper

## NP Outdoes Itself With Record Enrolment

BY STEPHANIE GWEE  
stephanie.tribune@gmail.com  
Additional reporting by Addison Wong

Thanks to new courses and a reputation for achievement, Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) enrolment soared to a record 4,800, up from 4,500 last year.

According to NP's Corporate Communications (CC) officer May Goh, a key reason is the high level of interest for the new courses introduced by NP this year and the continued demand for popular diploma courses.

Students also told an informal survey by *Tribune* that the primary reason they decided to pursue an academic diploma in NP is the teaching quality and good track

record of the various courses offered.

New courses such as Psychology and Community Services (PCS), Digital Visual Effects (DVFX) and Aerospace Technology (ATP) attracted many applicants, she said, with DVFX and ATP heavily oversubscribed despite having only 30 and 80 places respectively.

Mr Marc Jonet, Course Manager of DVFX said that during the Joint Admissions Exercise (JAE), he received 366 first-choice applicants for 30 places in the new course. As the diploma was given the green light only last December, such response came as a delightful surprise, he said.

According to the survey which covered 50 first-year students during the annual Freshman Orientation Camp, six in 10 said that they enrolled in NP as they believed

that NP would provide a solid and well-rounded education.

"My cousins and friends who were former NP students told me that the School of Business here is one of the best in Singapore, and that the business diploma offered here is highly valued in the industry. They also mentioned that the [teaching quality] in NP is very high," said Nurul Jannah, a first-year ACC student.

Also, half the students surveyed stated that they had visited NP during the annual Open House and were impressed with the spirit and enthusiasm of its students in promoting their courses.

About one in five students said they liked the social climate. Said Lim Ying Hui, a first-year Tourism and Resort Management (TRM) student, "To me, the students in

the other polytechnics only study, study, study. But NP has a good balance of work and play."

The surge in the enrolment has also sparked fears of overcrowding.

"When I step into Canteen One at lunch, I get a headache as theatre so many people! If there are more people crammed into classes, would that not reduce the efficiency of teaching?" said Benson Ang, a final-year ACC student.

But it seems unlikely that popular courses will be increasing their student intake any time soon.

"Currently, we feel that a group of 30 students is a comfortable number to work with," said Mr Jonet, adding that "we wouldn't want to saturate the DVFX industry too fast."



# Standing At The Crossroads



BY JARRYL CHIA  
jarryl@tribunediabuzz.com

Is a junior college (JC) education losing its shine? Maybe, if a letter by an upset parent is anything to go by. Dated March 8 and titled "Poly route shut for average student", a Ms Mathiyazhaki expressed unhappiness over the fact that her daughter, who scored an aggregate of 20 points, was unable to make it to all nine of the polytechnic courses she put down. The reason according to polytechnics is that, increasingly, students who qualified for a JC education are opting for the poly route instead.

Why? After all, it is an extra year of study, three years instead of two in a JC.

And that is not all. Priority for university admission is also given to JC students who make the cut. Only polytechnic students with an outstanding Grade Point Average (GPA) score can hope to make the cut.

Yet, an increasing number of people—one in three—who can make it to JC are going to polytechnics. Some popular courses, such as Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) Mass Communication (MCM) course, have a cut-off point of 11 this year as compared to 13 last year, according to media reports. Students who score 11 points could have easily made it to any JC, save the top five.

Take Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) Denise Tan, 20, as an example. She scored six points for her O-levels that could have easily placed her in any junior college of her choice but she chose instead to pursue Molecular Biotechnology (MBIO). Denise graduated last year with a Diploma with Merit and has been offered several scholarships, including the prestigious Public Commission (PSC) Scholarship (Open) (See story below).

Indeed, there are some things that JC students can learn from their polytechnic counterparts.

An emphasis on learning project management skills and the opportunity to do more practical work seems to be the key draw of a polytechnic education. Apart from this, polytechnic students are also able to hone their leadership and people skills which are essential to success in a working environment. Academic excellence is not the only factor deciding success later in life. Knowing how to inspire and communicate

with people is more important.

To be fair, JCs started introducing the Project Work (PW) component in 2002 but its success is doubtful.

Andrew Chu, 23, a final-year MCM student and once a student in Catholic Junior College (CJC), was in the pioneer batch of PW students. When asked to compare project work in JC with project work in polytechnic, he said, "Being part of the initial batch of students involved in PW, we had free rein when it came to research and creative direction. However, it was only for the PW examination, unlike here at NP, we carry out project work almost every day."

A student, when choosing between the JC or polytechnic route, has to weigh the opportunity to do practical work and build industry experience with that of getting a good degree quickly and then learning on the job. Ultimately, it depends greatly on an individual's attitudes and preferences.

In 2006, The Straits Times reported that 10 percent of polytechnic graduates made it into the three local universities, doubling the number as compared to five years ago. In addition, authorities have also promised to open up 15 percent of places to polytechnic graduates in three years' time.

After all, in a meritocracy, universities should accept students based on their capability and not based on the institutions that they were educated at.

Now that one-third of JC-eligible students are opting for polytechnics. It is high time that universities relook their cap on admissions. ■

Tribune is a publication by third-year Print Journalism students of the Diploma in Mass Communication course

**TRIBUNE**  
Ngee Ann Polytechnic's campus newspaper

Advisors: Robin Yee  
Koh Joh Ting

Editors: Jarryl Chia  
Paul Edward Chia  
Eva Nastassia  
Tony Thio Yu Xian

Designers: Nur Hafizah A. Hamid  
Stephanie Goh

Advertising: Antoinette Patterson

School of Film & Media Studies  
Blk 52, #07-01, Ngee Ann Polytechnic  
535 Clementi Road  
Singapore 599489

Letters should include your full name, contact number and school. The editorial team reserves the right to edit all letters where necessary.

For more stories: <http://www.theurbanwire.com>

Tribune, Mar to May 2007

# A Scholar With A Difference

BY BENJAMIN TAY  
benjamin.tribune@gmail.com

Friends label her as "She-Hulk" for two good reasons. Her fervent passion in pursuing her Co-Curricular Activity (CCA), Canoe Polo and her ability to score a multitude of As.

At first glance, 20-year-old Denise Tan may seem like your average girl next door, with a demure exterior, straight hair and sporting a healthy tan. But don't be fooled by this cool exterior, because what lies beneath is nothing short of extraordinary for somebody her age.

Her accomplishments—both in and out of the class—far precede that of many. Captain of the Canoe-Polo club, academic ace, Ngee Ann Kong Si Gold Award medallist, gold award for the Inter-Varsity Polytechnic games. She is popular and well-liked by both her peers and lecturers alike.

Fuelled by an earnest desire to learn and excel, Denise, who scored 5 points for her O-levels, had a 4.0 grade point average (GPA) for five of her six schooling semesters—and a 3.974 for the other. Graduating with a Diploma with Merit in graduate in Molecular Biotechnology (previously known as Diploma in Biotechnology) last year, her CCA portfolio was no less spectacular, achieving a grand total of 131 points by the end of her three years in Ngee Ann—nearly doubling that of the requirement for a CCA Gold Award.

While many may automatically assume that she probably spends half her time buried in books, Denise is in fact quite like the average teenager in many ways; one

who enjoys hanging out, watching movie and shopping, along with the occasional clubbing with her friends.

"Of late, I've been to pubs more often, mainly to catch up with old friends and to listen to live bands play," says the outdoor enthusiast, who also worked as a part-time private tutor.

Time management and proper planning are the key to having the best at play and at work, according to Denise. They are the key elements in her push for excellence. To date, her accolades have included two Lim Song Scholarships as well as the OUE-Lien Ying Chow Scholarship.

Her greatest achievement, however, is being awarded a Public Service Commission (PSC) Scholarship (Open). The scholarship will be officially awarded to her on July 21. She will be the second polytechnic student to receive this honour, with the first recipient in 2005 coming from Singapore Polytechnic (SP).

This effectively makes her the first ever PSC scholar produced by NP. The PSC scholarship, one of the most prestigious scholarships attainable in Singapore, will allow her to further her education in any top University in the world.

Denise also hopes to pursue a Masters Degree in Cell Biology and Genetics upon completion of her undergraduate degree in Biotechnology at the University of Melbourne, her university of choice.

Driven by personal satisfaction, Denise strongly believes in hard work and commitment, stressing that these two factors go hand-in-hand to be successful. "You have to set your goals high. Start preparing early and know what you want



CHEERS TO ME: Denise Tan, both athlete and scholar, celebrates with a drink in hand. (Picture by: Denise Tan)

and do your best to maintain your grades. With regards to CCAs, well, for me being in a team sport like canoe-polo, it all boils down to teamwork. If you don't give your

hundred percent, you're letting your seven other team mates down."

"Anything is achievable so long as you are willing to work for it," she stressed. ■



# NP Graduate To Compete At Cannes

BY ADDISON WONG  
addison.tribune@gmail.com

A short film by a Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) alumni bested 3,000 international competitors to be selected to compete at the annual Cannes Film Festival, making him the first Singaporean director to make it through to the Official Selection of the prestigious festival.

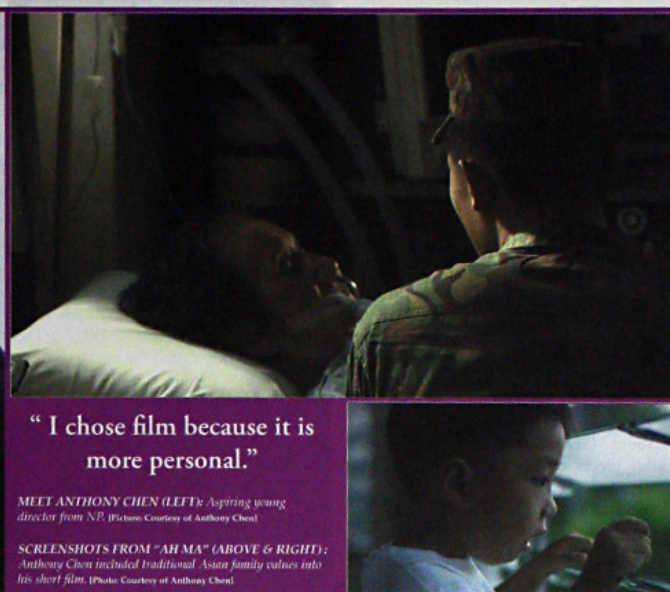
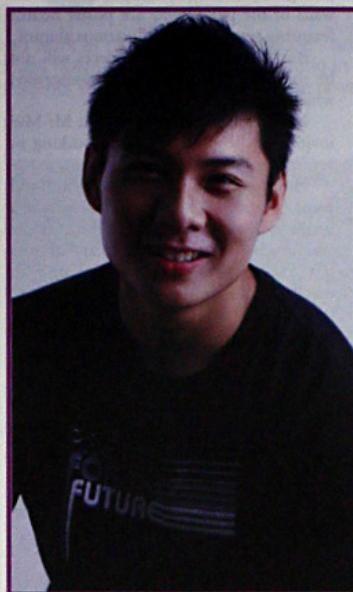
Mr Anthony Chen, 23, who graduated from NP in 2004 with a diploma in Film, Sound & Video (FSV), will be competing alongside 10 other international short films in the "Short Film Palme d'Or" category, with his film, "Ah Ma" (Grandma), based on memories from his grandmother's death in 2005.

The filmmaker told *Tribune*, "My crew and I were stunned by the news that our film was selected. We certainly did not expect such recognition and acclaim, especially since we are still relatively new to the industry."

"At the same time, there is this sense of elation among us because it is every filmmaker's dream to have his or her film selected for Cannes, and we were no exception. The festival is like the Olympics of the film industry, so being a part of it is really something huge for us, or for any filmmaker, for that matter."

This, however, will not be the first time Mr Chen is attending the festival. His graduation film, "G-23", was selected for the Tous les Cinemas du Monde (All the Cinemas of the World) sidebar last year.

When asked if this time around he felt a certain responsibility as a representative from Singapore, Mr Chen explained, "I don't think so. I think that making it that far and to be one of the 11 films short-listed from a collection of more than 3000 entries is, by itself, an extraordinary recognition. The opportunity to even be there and



"I chose film because it is more personal."

MEET ANTHONY CHEN (LEFT): Aspiring young director from NP. (Photos Courtesy of Anthony Chen)

SCREENSHOTS FROM "AH MA" (ABOVE & RIGHT): Anthony Chen included traditional Asian family values into his short film. (Photo Courtesy of Anthony Chen)

to meet filmmakers from all around the world is huge enough an achievement for myself and the people who did so much for the film."

Mr Andrew Millians, Course Manager of FSV, who once taught Mr Chen, said that he "feels quite strongly that [such achievements] will grow more and more common as FSV graduates from the last 10 years permeate every nook and cranny of the local industry".

"In FSV we're constantly looking at the industry and preparing students for the challenges they face. This type of success clearly shows we're on the right path and getting better," he added.

Anthony Pang, a final-year FSV student, said that Mr Chen's achievement

*The festival is like the Olympics of the film industry, so being a part of it is really something huge for us, or for any filmmaker, for that matter."*

Anthony Chen  
Filmmaker/FSV graduate

was "very encouraging for [him] as a student currently doing the course and as an aspiring filmmaker".

"It shows that FSV is providing me with tools that will instill in me the potential to excel as a filmmaker. Mr Chen's achievement also brings about a sense of prestige and pushes me to be more creative, experimental and daring when making a film."

The 60th Cannes Film Festival will take place from May 16 to 27.

Attending the festival with Mr Chen is theatre veteran, Mr Ekachai Uekrongtham, whose film "Pleasure Factory" will also be shown in a category for alternative film. Eric Khoo's "12 Storeys" was also shown in this category in 1997. ■



BEWARE: The spot where Leong Jie Wei fell and hit his head. (Picture by: Stephanie Goh)

## Watch Your Step

BY DEONE EE  
deone.tribune@gmail.com

Rainy days have proven to be a hazard as students to fall due to slippery surfaces.

On a rainy April 24, Leong Jie Wei, a Molecular Biotechnology (MBO) student, was walking down the pavement along the slope at Block 72, near Canteen 1, when he slipped on the metal drainage grills and fell backwards, hitting his head on the hard surface.

To his horror, when he touched the back of his head, there was blood all over. "The blood was flowing down, and the back of my ears as well as my t-shirt were bloody," he explained.

He was sent to National University

Hospital (NUH) in an ambulance. Despite the significant loss of blood his head wound was not that severe. Thus requiring only two stitches and outpatient care.

Jie Wei was lucky not to have been more seriously injured. He advises fellow students to "be more cautious and walk carefully, especially during rainy days to prevent such accidents from occurring again".

This recent case is one of the three serious reports in the past two years received by Student Services (SS).

Another student, Joelyn Yep, 19, a final-year Mass Communication (MCM) student recounts her fall during the Red Camp in December 2006. "It was raining heavily and floors were very slippery. I was rushing over to prevent some displays from falling. That was when I slipped backwards and blacked out for a couple of seconds."

Fortunately, doctors said that she did not suffer any serious injury - just a large bump on the head.

Regarding the issue of NP's structural safety, Mr Mui Cheng Hock, Director of Estate Management (EM) said: "Generally, the school premises are safe. But like anywhere else, students must be extra careful when it is raining and the floors are wet." He added that the department is open to suggestions for issues that concern the safety of the school.

"Ngee Ann is as safe as any other place, but at the end of the day, students must take safety as their own personal responsibility," Mr Mui concluded. ■

## Shockwaves Through NP

BY CHANG QIAOLIN  
qiaolin.tribune@gmail.com

When an earthquake measuring 6.6 Richter Scale hit Padang in Sumatra, Indonesia at around noon on 6 March, the tremors were felt not only in the Central Business District (CBD). Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) campus buildings as well.

"I saw my laptop screen shaking and felt my chair vibrating. I looked around and saw that the clock on the wall was shaking too. I ran out of the room and dashed down the stairs, along with my lecturer and a few other classmates, although I had no idea what was going on. We were all freaked out," said Benjamin Tan, 19, a third-year Mobile Business Solutions (MBS) student who was in school for a briefing.

Although there were considerably fewer people on campus as the earthquake happened during the semester break, the few students, administrative staff, lecturers and children at the childcare centre located at Block 53, were in school during the tremors and they evacuated the buildings as quickly as possible.

There were calls of concern from the school body to the Estate Management (EM) Office regarding the safety of the NP campus buildings and structures, which Mr Mui Cheng Hock, 55, Director of EM

described as "normal reactions".

"Although not designed to withstand earthquakes, all buildings on campus are able to withstand minor tremors and are safe. It is the same for all buildings in Singapore," he assured.

Every building has its emergency escape routes, and as tremors are "just another emergency situation", Mr Mui encourages staff and students to react as they would in any other emergency.

Stressing the importance of emergency drills, Mr Mui urged students to "take emergency drills seriously".

EM tries to "cover as much as [they] can" and makes sure that most areas on campus get to go through an emergency drill.

"In any emergency, always be calm. Don't panic," Mr Mui advised. ■

### Standard Emergency Drill

Follow the 'Exit' signs placed all over the NP campus. They are will lead you to safety. Stay away from fixtures or structures that might drop and cause hurt, for example glass windows, and leave the building through emergency exits in an orderly and calm manner. In any case where escape routes are blocked, get under a solid fixture, like a sturdy table. If in a laboratory or workshop, turn off any gas outlets or machinery that might cause an explosion.



## Creating A Buzz In The Underground Passageway

BY DENISE TAN  
denise.tribune@gmail.com

Budding artists and aspiring musicians can do their thing in the newly-opened underground passageway between the Atrium and the Student Plaza, said the Estate Management (EM) office. The office is inviting suggestions from students on how to liven up the relatively bare passageway.

On the first day of the school term, when the passageway was officially opened, Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students returning from their holidays were greeted with music, cheers and balloons at the Student Plaza. The passageway links the Atrium with the Student Plaza, saving students a mad dash across the road on rainy days.

The Student Development & Alumni Relations (SDAR) office selected three graffiti pieces created by students to be displayed specially for the opening.

Mr Thomas Tan from SDAR chose to feature graffiti for the opening because he



NEW TALENT SHOWCASE: Busking will be allowed in the underground passageway. (Picture by: Jarryl Chia)

felt that the more "traditional art forms are quite boring".

The art pieces show NP in 10 to 20 years' time, as the students envision it. They were displayed in and at the entrance of the passageway as part of the Student Plaza's opening ceremony on April 16.

VIPs at the event were NP Council Chairman Mr Tan Hup Fui and Principal Mr Chia Mia Chiang.

Mr Mui Cheng Hock, the Director of the EM office, wanted to showcase art that will "inspire students who use the

passageway". Already displayed on the walls of the passageway are poster boards featuring some of NP's illustrious alumni.

But EM hopes that art pieces will not be the only attraction in the passageway, which cost \$819,200 to build.

Nothing is set in stone yet but Mr Mui invites, "If people want to do busking or something, let us know."

However, musical instruments and paint brushes could take a back seat if a better idea comes up. Mr Mui believes the various schools and Co-Curricular Activities (CCA) clubs within NP can come up with excellent and innovative ideas for what can be showcased in the passageway.

Mr Mui said his office is open to new ideas as long as the displays do not obstruct the passageway. Alluding to the primary purpose of the underground link, Ms Lee Juat Lan of the EM office said that the passageway was constructed to provide "a seamless sheltered passageway".

However, time will tell if the passageway will be well-utilised or if students are more willing to brave the elements. ■

## Students' HDTV boost

BY GOH YINGMIN  
yingmin.trimedia@gmail.com

A team of 10 Film & Media Studies (FMS) students did production work in High-Definition (HD) for Hi-Def Showtime to promote High-Definition Television (HDTV) in Singapore.

The Hi-Def Showtime is a competition by the Media Development Authority of Singapore (MDA) as part of its ongoing efforts to encourage HDTV locally. From March 10 to April 14, contestants could visit Hi-Def Showtime roadshows in shopping malls and Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP), to stage a 30-second creative performance on the features and benefits of HDTV.

These were where the public viewed and voted for their favourites.

Armed with JVC HD cameras, the FMS students captured performances by over 200 individuals and 36 groups. The edited clips, when posted on the Hi-Def Showtime website drew "about 242,000 votes", by March 29, according to an article in Today quoting Ms Cassandra Tay, MDA's communications director.

FMS Director Mr Henry Tan said, "We are proud to be part of this Hi-Def Showtime initiative. Besides helping to raise awareness of this advanced technology among the general public, this project also gives our students an excellent opportunity to learn about the production process and gain first-hand experience of this new technology."

To prepare for their filming and editing roles, the students were trained by staff from Apple in editing on Macintosh computers, while a JVC trainer taught them to use the HD cameras. The experience gave them the opportunity to do production work in HD which is the future broadcast standard.

Seetoh Jia Yao, 19, a final-year FMS student who was part of the crew that was paid more than \$1,000 for their effort, said, "MDA is actually quite innovative and creative to use such a concept to advertise for a technology, instead of a specific tangible product. The HD videocameras are actually quite heavy... They require a special kind of HD-ready recording tape to capture the full HD essence, which is quite costly, of course, since it is a relatively new technology in [the] local market."

The winners of both individual and group categories, each went home with a Chimei HD-ready TV, plus \$500 worth of Courts vouchers. They were unveiled at the Grand Finale on April 14. ■

## Advertise Your Events On MeL

BY PAMELA WOO  
pamela.tribune@gmail.com

You won't ever have to miss prizes worth hundreds of dollars, fantastic offers and unique events.

That's the idea behind giving Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students control over the advertising space on MeL's front page. They will be able to post ads on contests, freebies, events and targeted offers to the whole school.

"This can potentially reduce school spam, while increasing attendance at the many events on campus, and improving our bargaining power with companies so we can secure better deals for NP students and staff," said Mr Robin Yee. The Film & Media Studies (FMS) lecturer advises TriMedia Publishing, the student editorial consultancy tasked with managing demands for the ad space.

As a sign of contests to come, the MeL site will offer students the chance to win \$300 worth of Aspire Café vouchers, courtesy of www.theurbanwire.com, the e-zine published by TriMedia that also produces Tribune. Simply click on the banner in MeL before Jun 30 for your chance to win.

Mr Yee explained that he had proposed the idea after noticing that a lot of student-initiated events organised for their Co-

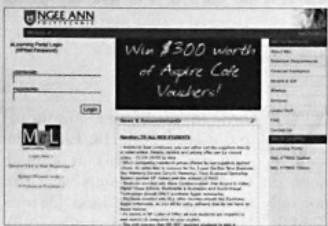
curricular Activities (CCAs) or to fulfill Innovation & Enterprise in Action requirements were poorly attended.

This was despite student organisers offering attractive prizes or interesting vendors. Traditional publicity efforts such as posters, cloth banners seemed to be ignored by a student population often unaware of the vibrancy of the campus.

Lai Jia Hao, 19, a final-year student in Business Studies (BS) who has organised events in school, is, therefore, receptive to the idea.

"Most students usually don't read the posters that we put up or the flyers that we give out to promote our events. But more people will read it if it's online since we use MeL every day."

Mr Ch'ng Beng Hin, the Deputy



MeL FRONT PAGE: Advertise your events and activities to your peers (Picture by: Nur Hafizah Abdul Hamid)

Director of the Teaching & Learning Centre (TLC) affirmed that MeL is a very popular website "with an average of 90 million page views monthly".

Previously, the advertising space on the front page of MeL was mainly for announcing important school events. It also has a news and announcement board.

Mr Ch'ng said that TLC will only be involved in facilitating the site. He added that they were happy to "surrender" the front page of MeL.

"We leave it entirely to the TriMedia team. The only thing we're concerned with is the security issues, so we will set some guidelines for them. The standard procedures apply," he said.

Mr Yee assured that he and the student editorial team at TriMedia will be guiding students on what they can post.

He said, "Just as with the content in all our other publications, we have to ensure that we don't post anything offensive, libellous, or detrimental to others. The team will be involved as gatekeepers."

Any staff or students interested in reaching the school effectively through MeL can do so by contacting TriMedia's Publicity Advertising & Promotions specialist, Antoinette Patterson.

The final-year Mass Communication (MCM) student can be contacted at antoinette@trimediabuzz.com. ■

## NP Students Perform For Commonwealth Day

BY JAIME LIM  
jaime.tribune@gmail.com

Nine students from Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) were chosen by the National Youth Council (NYC) to represent Singapore at the recent Commonwealth Day Celebrations 2007 in Sri Lanka from March 11 to March 15.

Mr Andrew Choo, Manager from the Student Development & Alumni Relations (SDAR) Office, said the NYC had attended some performances by NP students and felt that they embodied the spirit and culture that they would like the other countries to see. NYC subsidised 40 percent of the cost

of the trip with the other 60 percent paid by the school.

Coming together from different courses but with a common goal to present the talent of Singapore, the students put everything together themselves from scratch – choreography, music, some of the costumes, and even posters depicting the history of Singapore for an exhibition, all in three weeks.

"Singapore is a melting pot of different cultures, so we are diverse and unique. Hence, we decided to put all our cultures together and this resulted in a fusion of Chinese, Indian, Malay, and even Eurasian dance," said Mr Choo.

The 11-minute routine started out by



CULTURAL MELTING POT: The team shows off Singapore's diverse heritage. (Picture by: Andrew Choo)

introducing dancers from the four different ethnic groups moving to the same classical melody, signifying unity in diversity. Then, it takes a dark turn as Singapore faced a period of turmoil, with the nation

eventually picking up as the dancers change into groovy retro outfits to suggest a turnaround. Finally, the pace picks up with them executing hip-hop moves as well as classical steps to hip-hop music to represent the modern Singapore as it is now.

"For me, as a musician, I think this is the first time I've ever danced; and to learn a dance routine in three weeks from scratch was quite difficult," recalled Frans Li Zhaoxiang, 19, a final-year Mechatronic Engineering (ME) student.

The performance, which was held at the Marhargama Youth Centre in Colombo, saw an audience of over 800 with more than 100 delegates from the Commonwealth countries. ■



# Dancing Into The Flames

Like moths to a fire, students are drawn to work at nightspots to earn good - and easy - money. But the recent death of a club manager in a bar fight has exposed how things can easily go wrong in a glitzy environment full of alcohol and thrills. **GOH YING MIN** finds out how students weigh the risks against the rewards.

Lerine (not her real name), a final-year Information Technology (IT) student in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP), is used to customers fighting over her all the time as a bar-top dancer serving drinks but that night, it was different.

Holding her last tray of tequila shots for the night, Lerine entered the room of the small Joo Chiat KTV pub where the seven men stopped singing and started to ogle and make lewd comments about her body.

Thrusting half a bottle of whisky at her, one of them, a regular called Alan, said: "You finish this and I will buy all the shots you have." Lerine declined as she had already drunk too much that night. But he persisted and Lerine offered to drink half a glass of whisky instead, at which Alan bellowed, "Think I don't know the difference between half a bottle and half a glass? You better finish up this half bottle of whisky."

Feeling more humiliated than frightened, Lerine turned to leave the room but soon saw a glass bottle thrown at her. She dodged just in time as the flying bottle missed her by inches and smashed against the door.

As Alan called her a "filthy girl," Lerine ran out of the room and tried to seek help from her pub manager. The manager scolded her for offending the guests and forced her to apologise to Alan and his friends instead.

In another incident, at a small KTV pub located in Chinatown, Harry's (not his real name) colleagues did nothing as he was punched and kicked relentlessly by a group of drunken customers. The second-year NP student tried desperately to block the blows and was subsequently rushed in his manager's car to a nearby clinic. Harry's injuries were not life threatening although the assault left him with a 7 cm long scar across his left thigh.

Harry recalled, "It was so unpredictable! They were our regulars who had never given us any sort of trouble. So, even though I could see that they were already quite drunk, I still served them the extra jugs of beer they ordered. Just as I was about to place the jugs onto their table, I was suddenly kicked in the stomach and I found myself on the ground being kicked and punched."

The assaults were terrifying enough to convince both Lerine and Harry to quit their jobs.

Said Lerine, "That incident made me very afraid because it made me realise the dangers I was exposed to. So when a private tutor job came along, I gladly took it." She never told her parents about the incident.

Similarly, Harry lied to his parents that his injuries came from a fight he had had with his classmates. "But guilt and fear overtook me and I decided to leave my workplace for good and concentrate on my studies instead," he confessed.

## Party town

Lerine and Harry were luckier than Mr Eugene Chua, a bar manager who died on April 25 after being brutally beaten up by six people outside The Geographer's Bar in Clarke Quay. (See above side story)

But these departures are unlikely to leave a dent on a pulsating nightlife



FRENZIED PARTYGOERS: The draw of the nightlife comes with its hidden dangers. (Picture by: Winnie Leong)

## The death of Eugene Chua

Mr Eugene Chua, 31, a Que Pasa bar manager, was attacked by six men and women outside The Geographer's Bar, a Thai disco at Clarke Quay, on 23 April 2007. He was on life support for two days before he died. Two people who allegedly assaulted him have been charged with murder in district court while another four are still at large.



industry worth some \$250 million a year as Singapore gears up to be a party town with lots of buzz.

The lucrative local nightlife industry has recently seen the emergence of many new players such as the Ministry of Sound (MoS) and St James Power Station with hundreds of jobs created. For instance, the opening of St James in March 2007 created some 350 jobs.

And while many in the nightlife industry say police should do more to protect clubbers, the big players are also protective of their reputation. They have threatened to sue websites hosting videos of scuffles purportedly filmed on their premises.

## Easy money

Lerine is just one of the many polytechnic students who have worked part-time in Singapore's booming nightlife industry. Students are usually hired as bartenders, barmaids or servers.

Lerine signed on with a small talent agency which provided nightspots with bar-top dancers. She was paid \$80 for each bar-top dancing assignment she took on. She also received commission for the trays of drinks she sold. She had a quota of three trays to sell in a night. If she sold less than her quota, her commission would be \$1 per shot sold, but if she hit the quota or exceeded it, she would get \$2 commission for each shot.

Lerine said, "The quota was easy to reach because all I needed to do was to humour the guests, make small talk with them and drink with them and they would buy. For each assignment, I could earn up

to \$200 including tips. In a month, I got about eight assignments which meant I had \$1,600 to spend."

She admitted she also enjoyed performing, insisting, "Being a bar top dancer is not cheap at all. A bar top dancer, like any other job, is a profession."

And it is a profession subject to police control. There is a regulation that paid bar-top dancers are not allowed to chat or drink with customers before, during and after their performances unless they have been endorsed by the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) and sought permission from

## How the rewards stack up

Student bartenders and barmaids typically earn between \$7 and \$12 an hour while servers earn slightly less at between \$5 to \$10 an hour, depending on their experience.

They typically work for eight hours a night from 6 pm to 2 am. Usually, their management requires them to work three nights a week, including Fridays and Saturdays, making it a total of 12 nights in a month.

Their monthly salaries range from \$700 to \$1500 which includes the basic pay, commission and tips from customers. Tips can range from as little as \$2 to \$100 per table, so the higher the turnover of customers, the higher the amount of tips the students earn.

the Police Licensing Division.

A spokeswoman from the Singapore Police Force confirmed that bar top dancers must not mingle with the audience while dressed in the costumes used. The penalty is a fine of \$500 and three demerit points. If a nightspot accumulates a total of 24 demerit points within a two years, she added, the licence may be revoked.

However, many local nightspots pay little heed to this regulation.

## Clubbing culture

What is disturbing is that polytechnics are a favourite recruitment ground for patrons as well as part-time service staff at nightspots.

Lured by the free entries and free flow of drinks on Ladies' Night, polytechnic students queue up outside popular clubs such as Zouk, MoS and St James Power Station every Wednesday. Several NP students have even admitted to Tribune that they try to arrange classes such that their Thursdays are clear so that they can recover from their hangovers.

It is also fairly easy for the students to get a job in the nightlife industry. They only need their friends' recommendations and access to the Internet to land their jobs.

For example, Felicia Goh, 19, a final-year NP Mass Communication (MCM) student who works as a barmaid at a pub in Tanjong Pagar, simply found her job from NP's online career portal.

Felicia said, "I applied for a waitress position but my manager decided to train me as a barmaid instead. I am currently paid \$6.50 an hour which is actually the pay of a waitress."

## Friends to count on?

Not all pubs and clubs seem to be as heartless as Harry's and Lerine's. Felicia said, "I never got into a fight before although my colleagues do so very often. I think my colleagues fought quite a lot, to a point where our manager have banned us from drinking in the building."

"It is always the case of too many drinks and people start fighting," she said. "There was once where the fight was so bad, I was told, my colleague threw a rock glass in the customer's face."

All the workplace supervisors of the students interviewed here have refused to comment.

Ultimately, it appears, it is how one handles potentially explosive situations that determine the outcome.

The police spokeswoman told Tribune, "If staff working at the nightspots find themselves in a tense and difficult situation, they should always walk away and get assistance from the in-house security officers instead of trying to overcome it themselves." She also said that the police is monitoring the situation and if fights break out, staff should call 999 immediately.

Despite what she has seen at her workplace, Felicia denied she is at any risk.

She insisted, "Chances are, I won't get into a fight. Even if I do," she reasoned, "my management and colleagues will protect and fight for me."

One can only wonder how her bosses and workmates will hold up at the time she needs them most. ■



# NLB Collaboration Leads To Stellar Portfolio

BY AW CHENG WEI  
chengwei@trimediabuzz.com

Students who have worked with external organisations to produce a professional video will have no trouble getting a job in the film industry.

So says Mr Craig McTurk, lecturer of final-year School of Film & Media Studies (FMS) elective, Documentary Production.

He is hoping that a documentary made by Film, Sound & Video (FSV) student director Azlilah Jaffar will help her along.

She and four other group members had spent their final semester working with National Library Board (NLB) to produce a video on the evolution of the local music scene. This was done as part of their coursework for the elective.

The exhibition, now on at library@esplanade, is open free-of-charge to the public and is scheduled to run till the end of the year.

However, grades aside, there was another driving factor that motivated the students to work harder.

According to Mr McTurk, "Working

with external organisations helps to keep the project on track because the students know that they have an appointment with the supervisor and they have to be ready for it."

"There's more pressure on the students and they try harder to get things done. They knew that their work will be seen when they finish it. That was the pressure they felt and had to create the best work they could."

"They also get the experience working with somebody who is evaluating them not just for grades. They knew [NLB] wouldn't settle for sloppy work."

The collaboration came about when a former employee of NLB, Ms Andrea Wee, who was an FMS graduate, approached Mr Leonard Yip, another FSV lecturer who redirected this piece of information to Mr McTurk.

Mr McTurk felt that the industry experience has tremendous benefits in store for his students and agreed to do it. One of such benefits was that, "[they] had to interact with all the musicians; some of them were even older than their fathers." The students were also given a chance to interview living legends of music here in Singapore, he added.

From the point of view of client Ms Georgiana Glass, the supervising librarian from NLB, "the students were very professional and fully committed to the project even though they had other class assignments".

She added that the project gave the students "an opportunity to work under real life conditions, which will benefit the students as they graduate and enter the working world".



EVERY LECTURER'S PRIDE: Lecturer Mr McTurk, standing proudly next to his five outstanding students. Azlilah is standing third from right. (Picture by: Aw Cheng Wei.)

She added that she was also "very satisfied with the output".

Mr Mel Ferdinand, a member from the local band, Gypsy, was also impressed.

"It was a very good experience working with these students. They carried themselves well... After working with them, I have a very high opinion of the standard of FSV students from NP," he said.

When the video was launched at the library@esplanade, Mr McTurk was very impressed with the quality produced by Azlilah and her group.

However, he emphasised, that was not his primary concern.

Instead he explained that, "The main thing is that their skills improved over the course of the semester and that's the most [lecturers] can hope for."

"I think they did a nice job with the

organising. They had to juggle about 20 different video shoots whereas other groups [who were working on the other in-house projects] had only, say, five or less." He also added that the editing was well done and "the shooting improved over time".

With regards to the students' experiences, Azlilah spoke for her group when she admitted that although this might be the "toughest project [they] have done", she felt that the exposure provided by the production was well worth it.

At press time, there are no current plans for external collaborations.

Nevertheless, Mr McTurk said he is "on the lookout" for further opportunities for the students. This time round, he hopes to work with non-profit organisations as he feels that "both the students and organisations will stand to benefit". ■



YOUNG TALENTS: Building film producers busy at work. (Picture Courtesy of Craig McTurk)

## Sowing The Seeds of Hope

BY MOHD SHAM ABDUL MAJID  
sham.tribune@gmail.com

Come September, School of Film & Media Studies (FMS) students will take part in a community service project in Indonesia which aims to sow the seed for a polytechnic to educate a small island for generations to come.

According to Mrs Sng-Fun Poh Yoke, the lecturer-in-charge of the trip, 20 students will help villagers plan for a polytechnic of agricultural sciences for the villages of Nias, a tsunami-ravaged island off North Sumatra which is known for great surfing and frequent earthquakes.

"Students from FMS have skills such as writing, shooting [videos], event organisation and public relations. So, they will help to design brochures, create websites and develop a documentary about Nias and produce training manuals for the farmers," said Mrs Sng.

Such efforts will go a long way in helping to educate the people of Nias on how to cultivate the land, provide farming jobs and stem the massive migration from the island to the cities, said Mr Lester Chew, the man behind the project.

Mr Chew, the Chief Executive Director of Yayasan Anugerah Hidup, a non-governmental organisation, will oversee the project dubbed "Project Livelihood".

He said, "Nias is a remote island many times the size of Singapore with a population of only half a million people. Natural disasters such as the 2004 tsunami



NATION BUILDER: The future of Nias lies on young children like this boy. (Picture Courtesy of Sng-Fun Poh Yoke)

and 2005 earthquake have left the island's economy in disarray."

Mr Chew feels that the mission of Project Livelihood is helping to rebuild lives through sustained education.

He explained, "Project Livelihood aims to educate the villagers in areas such as farming, agriculture and education so that they can learn to be self-sufficient. It also aims to develop the social cohesiveness of the community."

The project has led to the construction

of a Farmer's Training Center (FTC), which will allow the villagers to pick up and apply new skills and achieve better crop yields. "By keeping up with modern farming techniques to grow cash crops or tropical fruit during the off-season, villagers can then sell more crops and earn decent money for themselves," he said. "Thus, I feel that education is the best way to eradicate poverty and give villagers a better life."

He hopes that the FTC can be converted into a polytechnic in five to 10



NIAS: This map shows the location of the island. (Picture by: Stephanie Goh)

years' time. By then, he hopes to pass on this development project to the Indonesian people. It is slated to be launched by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in September.

He explained, "I believe that if the villagers want to prosper... [they] must be open to new ideas and it's our job to constantly educate them... we want this project to continue to the next generation, so that villagers will keep on learning and move forward."

The funding of Project Livelihood costs \$2 million, with contributions made by Singaporeans through the Singapore Red Cross and the Evangelical Fellowship of Singapore.

There will be a briefing conducted by Mr Chew for parents of students participating in the Nias community trip on June 6. More details will be announced later. ■



# 浸濡之行 让青春飞扬



义安理工学院中文系的42位同学将会在浙江大学城市学院浸濡一个学期。

整理: 廖玮珍

3月的杭州,春寒料峭,宁静的西湖畔,轻烟漫笼,柳芽吐翠,一群年轻的新加坡学子,跨越浩瀚的南中国海,让青春飞扬,逐梦在西子湖畔。

3月2日,新加坡义安理工学院人文学院中文系42名学生抵达浙江大学城市学院,将展开长达一个学期的浸濡计划。学习的内容包括《中国古典文学作品选读》、《中国哲学精粹》、《中国通史》、《阅读与写作》、《华文新闻采访与写作》、《当代中国》等课程。此外也将进行相关的文化考察及交流活动。

3月5日上午,浙大城市学院为新加坡留学生举行了开学典礼。这是杭州的首个“新加坡留学班”,在杭州引起了媒体的广泛注意。《杭州日报》、《钱江晚报》、《青年时报》等当地知名报纸以及浙江电台对新加坡的师生进行了采访和报道。

离别的心情总是愁,让我们一起聆听他们当时离别前的心声吧。

## 有人担忧。。

蕙君:

“中国没有卖咖啡!”  
“中国的交通很乱。过路时要小心哦!”

“中国治安不好。你最好不要一个人出门。”

以上都是热心朋友提供他们对中国的一些想法。有的想法是道听途说,有的则是他们到中国旅游时的亲身体验。我不曾到过中国,但从历史课本中读过中国的历史,所以多多少少对这个国家有单薄的认识。

## 有人愁。。

武琦:

一到机场,我就看到一大票熟悉的脸孔。一下子道别,一下子拍照。这更让我感觉到离别的真实。入关的时候,突然觉得我的双脚变得好重。

踏入这道玻璃门,就要等4个月才能再踏出来了。再一个重重的满满的拥抱。“爸爸妈妈,我亲爱的大家!我会保重,我会加油的!”

终于,飞机狠心地飞了起来,把我的人也带走了。我不敢想像那些爱我的人是如何血性地哭泣着,或是如何无声地默然着。我只会在腾空后,将泪腺的闸门打开,然后哽咽着吞下微凉的飞机餐,木然地摊在失眠的座椅上,无神地看着小窗口外的云海,开始数云,一团、两团,突然觉得靠枕上凉凉的,原来是自己撒下的晶莹。

原来我还没有长成坚强的女生。

## 抵达杭州,从惆怅变喜悦



杭州的纯朴街景和本地的高楼大厦相比,显得截然不同。

佳惠:

“杭州之行”不仅是在语文上,也是在文化上的一种彻底的“浸濡”。第一次来到了古色古香的清河坊,体验的是浓浓但又带点现代气息的中国传统文化;搭巴士(这里称为公车)体验的是一种“争先恐后”、“蜂拥而上”的生活文化;煨狗肉和猪耳朵等特色小吃所体验的是一种全“新”的饮食文化;斑马线的“乏力”和川流不息的车辆让我体验了什么“乱中有序”的街道文化。虽然来得时间还不长,但在这里我深刻地了解到何谓“Culture Shock”。常常埋怨新加坡四季如夏的闷热天

气,但接近零度的冷天气让我霎时发现,原来夏天才是我最真挚的“好朋友”!不过,这种“醒人”的体验,我想人生中难得碰到了也是一种“缘分”呵呵。

## 女生最爱一杀价万岁!

玉晶:

我最爱的休闲活动就是逛街。一个非常有趣的发现就是,在杭州的有些地方购物还能“讨价还价”。能以廉价的价格购买自己所喜爱的事物的确是一个非常快乐的事情啊!在杀价的好些时候,我就觉得人生好比杀价式的购物:为了要得到自己想要的东西而努力的去争取最理想的结果。

## 桃花盛开的感动

佳惠:

周末与同学和老师们来到有“人间天堂”雅号的西湖游玩。景色怡人的西湖在朦胧的雾气中更有一种的幻美之感。

导游阿姨滔滔不绝地说着,但我总觉得西湖的美不光是用看和了解其背后的历史那么简单,需要的是一种心灵上的交汇。在这里,感觉很诗意,让人很难从这种虚幻中抽离,而西湖的柔美也似乎让粗枝大叶的我有些微微的柔和起来。

西湖的小瀛州岛上迎来了第一株盛开的桃花树,这也是我生平第一次看见美丽的桃花,但愿,我此次的出行也能像这一朵朵盛开的桃花一样留下绚烂、美好的回忆。

## 博客网址

想认识杭州多一些,想了解更多关于浙江大学的校园生活,中文系的同学与你分享那里所发生的点点滴滴。

网址 <http://www.hms-chsdeblog.blogspot.com/>

## 浙江大学城市学院老师寄语



中文系的学生在浙江大学专心上课的模样。

张卫中教授:

新加坡的同学比较独立,成熟,有礼貌,守秩序。希望你们能更多地融入到中国文化之中,满载而归。

范展:

欢迎大家的到来。希望大家可以努力地学习,开心地生活。

楼毅生:

“读万卷书,行万里路。”大家可以多出去走走看看,尽情享受在这里的每一天。

戴红红:

大家有备而来,希望也可以满载而归。

龙长征:

新加坡同学可爱又认真,汉语很棒!寄语:加油!做文化使者、育开放心态、拓国际视野!



# 与大自然“零距离”

林佳惠 报道

都市喧嚣，正当许多年轻人都在“寸土如金”的城市里寻觅着一个能够让自己喘息的小小空间时，陈忠财（21岁）却已在树梢上找到了属于自己的一片园地，享受着与大自然一同呼吸的频率。

刚毕业于义安理工学院机械工程的忠财第一次在电视上看到“骄阳岛爬树运动俱乐部”（Sunny Island Tree Climbers Society）所开办的爬树课程时，向来爱好户外活动的他便对这项运动产生了兴趣。于是，他立刻上网查寻有关爬树运动的资料。

目前已有两年爬树经验的他，是该俱乐部的中级学员之一。也许我们的记忆还停留在几十年前的甘榜年代，觉得爬树不过是以前小孩子的玩样儿，轻而易举便能爬上去。但是，现在的“爬树”却不能与以往相提并论。他们得利用绳索和一些辅助工具，配合脚和手臂的力量一步步往上爬。



忠财觉得爬树能让他更贴近大自然。

“起初我在电视上看到时，觉得这个活动和rock climbing（攀岩）相似，都是‘爬类’，但是爬树并不是我想象中那么简单。开始时，我们得学习一些基本技巧，例如在不同的阶段，学习绑不同绳子的方法，并如何利用绳子爬上树。”忠财兴致勃勃地说。

已达到爬树中级程度的忠财觉得最有趣最好玩的地方，就在于每棵树的“构造”都不同。因此在爬树的过程中他们往往得先计划和思考，该利用那棵树干才能顺利爬到顶端。

新加坡虽然处处都可看到一排排的树木，但对他们来说，并非只要有树，就可就地乱爬。他们最常到肯特港公园和滨海城公园进行活动。当被问及令他最难忘的爬树经验时，忠财笑说有一次他试过在树上绑上吊床，悠悠闲闲躺在树上的感觉真的很棒，什么都不去想，让时光停驻，就仿佛回到儿时，大自然就是他的摇篮，舒适、安逸，让人回味。

虽然有时爬到一半时感觉很累，但一切的辛劳都在爬到树的最高点时消失殆尽。“在树上你所看到的风景很不一样。而这是与攀岩最大的不同，我们能够更贴近大自然。在树梢上，你可以感受到微凉的风轻轻的吹拂在脸上，闭上眼睛听一听四周传来的虫鸣声时，感觉自己的灵魂获得了一次洗涤。”

忠财觉得这项运动非常不错，因此也力邀他的朋友林明瑞（20岁）一同参加。目前也是学员之一的明瑞说，起初也只是抱着好玩的心态去尝试。但是，上了几节课后，他深深感觉到走出户外的的美好，他说：“这项运动远比我呆在室内玩电脑游戏来得更有意义，在爬树的过程中也让我学到了耐力和毅力。”

当然，每一项运动都有一定的危险性，爬树也不例外。不过，忠财透露除了在爬树过程中会碰撞到树干或因为摩擦到树皮而有些许的擦伤之外，基本上他们都非常注意安全。除了检查绳索，他们也会注意四周是否有蜂窝和蚁巢等。不仅如此，他们也会注意到大树的“安全”。他们所使用的绳索有一种特制的护套，因此并不会对树木造成任何伤害。

身为忠财的指导老师，也是“骄阳岛爬树运动俱乐部”创办者的罗敏之（27岁）觉得，现在多数年



忠财示范高难度动作——倒挂金钩。

轻人的生活环境优美，能够与大自然接触的机会并不多。她说：“很高兴能有像忠财他们这群喜爱大自然的年轻人，他们都学得很快且富有热忱。”她也借此与学员们分享户外的新鲜空气和大自然的美好：“我们不该对大自然所赋予的一切当做是理所当然，反而更应该懂得去学习如何珍惜和保护它。”

课业、家庭和情感等，都是一些牵绊着年轻人生活的主要束缚。虽然忠财也与时下年轻人，但通过爬树这项另类的运动，不仅让他暂时挣脱这些束缚，也让他走出不大的“生活圈”，在大自然中找到一个让他静心思考未来的一片天地。总喜欢听老一辈提及他们是如何在“甘榜”的大树上攀爬、采野果。。。那种纯粹的玩乐，消失已久的朴质感，在大自然中找回。

## 青春的比拼

武琦 报道

人物特写——20岁的残疾女游泳选手吴蕊思。

在新加坡体育界，有一颗潜力无限的新星。她就是20岁的残疾女泳手吴蕊思。她曾获2005年度青年女性成就奖，及新加坡杰出青年奖。她自信一百，笑容阳光，毅力满分。在追求理想的道路上，蕊思要和其他选手较量，和时间较量，和先天的障碍较量！2008年北京残奥会的100米蛙泳世界纪录正等着她去刷新！

在多个区域和国际赛事中，蕊思凭着绝不屈服的双臂和奋勇向前的上半身，为她自己，更为国家夺得了无数金牌。在2006年的美国残泳锦标赛中，蕊思成功摘取了6枚金牌，更打破女子200米蛙泳的世界纪录。

蕊思是如何一路走来的？记者和她进行了年轻人之间的对话，请她分享背后的点滴。

蕊思患先天性脊柱裂疾病，双足残疾。6岁时，她开始学习游泳。在水里，她可以和别人一样自由地前行。慢慢地，她爱上了游泳。12岁那年，她游出了生命中第一枚金牌。游泳照亮了她的人生。那时的她，已经有泳坛小将的风范了。

和多数本地青少年一样，蕊思也面临着学业压力。2004年，雅典残奥会就在O水准考试前不久。凭着不服输的拼搏精神，蕊思成功打入所有参赛项目的决赛



蕊思在去年参加马来西亚FESPIC Games的游泳比赛，夺下金牌。

并名列前茅，同时也取得了优异的O水准成绩。

之后，蕊思进入了淡马锡理工学院。但1个月后，她退学了。因为她要进行全职游泳训练，备战2008年的北京残奥会。在这件事上，蕊思很感谢她的父母：“无论什么时候，他们都会支持我，给我最温暖的鼓励。”

蕊思的妈妈表示：“我们都看到了她的决心。只希望她能健康、快乐，做自己想做的事。”

蕊思也提到她的教练Uncle Siong，亚洲飞鱼洪秉祥。“Uncle Siong给了我很大很大的帮助，他是我感谢的人。”洪秉祥也曾公开称赞蕊思的表现，对她的斗志赞许有加！

蕊思的朋友说：“她可以为了体育牺牲。”蕊思表示：“游泳不仅让我的身体变强，也使我的个性变得更加自信开朗。我也结识了许多新朋友。对于一个先天不足的人来说，这些都非常重要。所以，即使有牺牲，也很值得。现在，我的目标更明确，那就是赢得北京残奥会的奖牌，为国家争光。”如果成功，蕊思将会为新加坡拿下北京残奥会的第一枚金牌。

现在，蕊思如鱼得水地进行着密集训练。看着蕊思在泳池里，用双臂不停地拍打出动人的水花。我可以想象她比赛时的飞鱼姿态。

游泳是她生命的尼采，除此之外，她还有生活。现在，蕊思在特许银行工作，也在业余学校修读心理学。这个小超人还有时间休息吗？“只要良好地安排时间，再‘自动’一点，时间还是有的。只是没有太多的时间剩下给我享受生活。”

闲暇的时候，她喜欢观察不同的东西，然后用画笔把它们记录下来。她也喜欢听音乐。生命是那样的饱满充盈，活力四射，和同龄的我们没有任何差别。

未来的路，她会用自己的方式坚忍不拔地走下去，走出更多精彩。“以后，我想成为游泳教练，培养下一代。这几年，新加坡的体育事业变化很大。未来一定会发展得更好，也需要更多的人去出力。”从她闪闪的双眼中，我看到了她对体育的热爱和执着。

轻风吹皱了泳池的水面。同龄的我被蕊思震撼了。不只是因为她的残而不废，更因为她自然散发出来的成熟沉稳，自信谦和，她对理想的坚持与努力。

我问她对北京残奥会有信心吗？她说：“有，你一定要先相信你自己。只有这样，别人才会相信你。”

加油吧！蕊思！我们等着你的凯旋！



# New Lifestyle Gym Werkz Out

BY DANIEL NG  
daniel.tribune@gmail.com

With the opening of a new gym on campus, students will now be able to enjoy and work out on an even wider variety of fitness machines than ever before.

The new gym, called Gym Werkz, is located on the second floor of Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) Staff Hub. It is above the previously established gyms on the ground floor and is meant to cater for lifestyle activities, whereas the older gyms were predominantly used by the various sports and fitness clubs for their training and fitness activities.

Mr Steve Chan, senior fitness manager and person-in-charge of Gym Werkz said, "Gym Werkz is more of a lifestyle gym than a performance centre, in order to cater to every student. Our gym is exclusively for NP students only. The staff is not allowed to use it because we do not want it to be overcrowded."

New users at the gym will have to attend an orientation programme, which Mr Chan describes as a "choke point" for potential users. He elaborated, "We have up to three orientation programmes daily, two in the afternoon and one at night. Only upon orientation are students allowed to use the gym. It's a sort of membership requirement, as the school spent quite a bit of money to set up Gym Werkz and we don't want irresponsible students damaging the equipment, whether on purpose or by accident."

With a building cost of around \$1 million, according to Mr Chan, it is easy to see why Gym Werkz is so cautious when it comes to accepting gym users.

Said Mr Chan, "The equipment we have here is very sophisticated and top-of-line, comparable to California Fitness, and very high standard-wise. We are also the first in Asia to use the Vivo System, which enables gym users to choose and customise their own training programmes, set obtainable targets, and track their own progress."

*We try to keep all our equipment user-friendly, so that our users don't feel intimidated.*

Mr Steve Chan  
Senior Fitness Manager /  
Person-in-charge of Gym Werkz

Gym Werkz also has four main zones in which students can choose to sweat it out, with each zone catering to the diverse needs and preferences of the users, ensuring that NP students will be spoilt for choice.

Users also need not, as the new gym is able to accommodate about a hundred participants at any one time, with more than 40 fitness machines available, far above the capacity of the old gyms.

An aerobics studio and a sound system which Gym Werkz has invested substantially in complete the makeup of what must surely be the envy of every other school gym.

Mr Chan said, "Each of the four zones have upholstery of a different colour to identify one series from another, and each



FOR HEALTH ENTHUSIASTS: The new "no-membership-required" gym has a range of more than 40 fitness machines. (Picture by Daniel Ng)

zone is catered especially to the needs and wants of our users."

"We try to keep all our equipment user-friendly, so that our users don't feel intimidated. Most of the equipment can also calibrate to your own range of motions, so that you can have your own personalised workout without having to suffer from risk of injuries or strains," he added.

Such professionalism has certainly won the gym many fans. According to Mr Chan, "the response has been overwhelming" since Gym Werkz first opened its doors in April this year. He said, "When we first started out, we had around 100 students a day, now we have an average of 300 users daily as more students get to know about us." Mr Chan also added that Gym Werkz is "eventually hoping to hit 10,000 visitors every month".

Eugene Tay, a second-year student from

the School of Business and Accountancy (BA), said, "The new gym definitely will appeal more to me not only because the fitness machines are of such a high quality, but also because there is a true sense of professionalism in the atmosphere and feel of the gym."

Teo Boon Hock, a first-year student from Electrical Engineering (EE), said, "The new gym really encourages me to go and try it out as it is so much more convenient compared to joining some other club outside."

With sports clubs already filling the gym almost every evening and non-sportsmen so full of enthusiasm about the new gym, it seems that Gym Werkz is already shaping up to be a resounding success.

Gym Werkz is open from 8 am to 9 pm on weekdays, and also on Saturdays from 9 am-1 pm. ■

## Let The Games Begin

BY JAIME LIM  
jaime.tribune@gmail.com

The elegant Lien Ying Chow Library is not just a place to catch up with your research. It is also a place for board game junkies too.

Located at the back of the second floor, the library's Board Games Zone adds a whole new element of fun to the library by allowing students to de-stress as they immerse themselves in the games.

"The idea was conceived in recognition of the growing community of young board gamers in Singapore, evident by the setting up of board game themed cafes like Settlers Cafe and The Mind Café," said Mrs Caroline Loh, Director of the library.

Besides that, Mrs Loh also explained the other benefits of playing these interesting board games.

"They stimulate the students' intellectual growth and sharpen their minds by expanding their creativity, and improving their problem-solving and decision-making skills. Not only that, playing games promote interaction like bargaining and opens up opportunities for social networking," Mrs Loh said.

Students would be glad to know that the area is enclosed so they need not speak in hushed tones. Another big draw is that food and drinks are allowed within the area.

They simply have to exchange their student cards to pick from a wide variety of about 60 games including popular ones like Cluedo, The Game of Life and Taboo. According to Mrs Loh, the area was set up at a cost of about \$10,000 while the games cost another \$2,700.

The Board Games Zone is manned by a group of 12 students as part of their job on campus. Besides keeping the place running, they also teach students how to play the games and even join in should there be a player lacking. The facility may also be used by lecturers for teaching purposes. According to student manager for the area, Lu Jia Yi, 19, a final year Facilities Management for Business (FMB) student, response has been very good, with the place packed during peak hours.

"In the near future, we intend to set up a Board Games Club, and hold talks and Board Games competitions on campus," Mrs Loh said. ■



SINGING WITH SOUL: This contestant's image and style, along with her voice, are both judging criteria at ARC. (Picture by Vanessa Ng)

## The Making Of A Star

BY VANESSA NG  
vanessa.tribune@gmail.com

Young Singaporeans who hanker after a chance at making and managing the stars of tomorrow made their mark at the first Artistes and Repertoire Challenge (ARC) grand finals.

Jointly organised by music learning centre Virtuoso Arts (VA) and local retail chain 77th Street, the competition held at Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) on April 1 is the first of its kind.

A hundred teams competed as artiste management teams, which tested their

behind-the-stage processes including image and styling as well as music production to market their talent(s).

Ms Amanda Lim, 77th Street's Marketing Executive, said, "It was being initiated because VA felt that there was a lack of Artistes and Repertoire (AR) teams in the industry, and they wanted to groom interested young talents into becoming good AR team members".

According to Mr Wu Jiaming, Principal of VA and one of the judges for the competition, the organisers chose to hold this competition for youths and give them the chance to hone their talents and skills.

Besides Mr Wu, the other judges were Ms Stella Thng, editor of Lime magazine and Ms Elim Chew, President of 77th Street.

Jonathan Lee, an NP third-year Mass Communication (MCM) student, who assumed the role of Marketing Manager in his team, Revolution, said, "We decided to participate in this competition as we were attracted to the opportunities it gave students like ourselves to feel and learn hands on from the pros in the industry."

The top prize was \$1,500 in cash and prizes and the opportunity to produce a commercial album by VA.

Muggamummies from Ang Mo Kio Secondary School (AMKSS) won in the category for secondary schools and Institutes for Technical Education (ITE) while Singapore Polytechnic's (SP) 6FM won in the category for tertiary institutions. Revolution was the first runner-up.

Both winning teams will be working together to compile an album featuring artistes from all eight finalists. ■



GAME ON!: School is now a place for work and play. (Picture by Jaime Lim)



# Triathletes To Close Varsity Gap

BY PAUL CHIA  
paul@trimedibuzz.com

**T**ri-Elite Club, the only triathlete team among the polytechnics, continues to show it is a force to be reckoned with when it held its own against more experienced teams from local universities at a recent biathlon.

The year-old club, which fielded 11 members, came in third at the National University of Singapore (NUS) biathlon during the Institute-Varsity-Polytechnic (IVP) competition on March 4 at East Coast Park.

Some 50 participants, from two universities and two polytechnics, had to swim a distance of 750 m before returning to shore for a 5 km run around the park.

According to former president and current team advisor, Keith Hsu, 24, a third-year Banking & Financial Services (BFS) student, Tri-Elite which was set up on 6 March 2006, had also "come in third [place] last year, beaten only by Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and NUS". Their success had propelled the team to work harder to close the gap against them this year.

While the team is nonetheless pleased with the result, Keith revealed that more will be done to help to bridge the gap in standards between Tri-Elite and their university counterparts for next year's competition.

And despite the tough competition posed by Temasek Polytechnic (TP) during this



PERSEVERING FOR GLORY: Members of Tri-Elite who participated successfully at the NUS biathlon 2007. (Picture by: Paul Chia)

year's NUS Biathlon, Keith said that for next year's event, "We're quite confident [about retaining the mantle of Top Polytechnic team]. Our objective now is to try and get ahead of the [two] universities."

However he admitted that the two universities are formidable foes for Tri-Elite, especially since they enjoy the "age advantage", referring to the fact that the male university students have undergone National Service (NS) and hence, are better conditioned physically.

Besides increasing the level of training

(the team currently trains three times a week), Tri-Elite will also look to strategise more and aim to "peak [physically] at certain competitions that we want to win".

The team is also coached by one of its success stories, Mr Lim Kok Chin, 24, a National Serviceman who is the only member of Tri-Elite to have successfully completed the gruelling Ironman Langkawi Triathlon in 2006.

The competition saw him compete against some of the world's fittest athletes over a 3.8 km swim, 180 km cycle and 42

*Our objective now is to try and get ahead of the [two] universities.*

Keith Hsu  
Former President /  
Current Team Advisor of Tri-Elite Club

km run.

Mr Frederick Francis, 46, a Maritime lecturer in Singapore Polytechnic (SP), who is currently training to compete at the upcoming Aviva Singapore Ironman Triathlon in Singapore on September 2, explained that the Ironman "is supposed to be the toughest [competition] in the world".

He added, "Competing at the event is also a testament of mental fortitude, especially during the running segment of the race when your body is drowning [in pain]."

Besides the competitions, Tri-Elite with its current strength of 25 members, including seven women, is on the lookout for new blood, especially good swimmers, to replace its outgoing members - two of which are from the IVP team. According to Keith this is "because swimming is much harder to teach than running".

If you would like to find out more about Tri-Elite, you can contact the team via email atcca\_trielite@np.edu.sg or call Keith at 98554559. ■

# Magnum Force Fires Blanks - Yet Again

BY ANTOINETTE PATTERSON  
antoINETTE@trimedibuzz.com

**M**agnum Force, Ngee Ann's long-running cheerleading champs failed to win any prize for the first time at the recent national cheerleading competition.

Instead, the winners of the Cheerobics 2007 National Cheerleading Competition, held on March 24, was the ACES team fielded by Nanyang Technological University (NTU), who won \$1,500 and snagged a trip to Tokyo to represent Singapore in the Cheerleading International Open 2007 from April 21 to 22.

Second place went to the KR Steppers of National University of Singapore (NUS), while Temasek Polytechnic's Blazers tied with Adastral from Innova Junior College (IJC) for third place.

It was a huge blow to Magnum, which had been regarded before the competition as the hot favourites to clinch the title that they had lost narrowly the previous year.

Magnum Force had, in previous years, been the five-time National Cheerobics Open Category Champions from 2001 to 2005 and finished a strong second last year. What fans find most shocking is that Magnum failed to clinch even a podium finish for the first time in its 18-year history.

Mr Lenny Foo Ceming, 26, the coach for Magnum Force and a Magnum Force alumni, however, remained optimistic. "I wouldn't use the word 'lost'. Everybody worked hard as a team because the stunts went up during practice. I think it was just lack of experience because it was only their

second time performing."

"Although we didn't get placed, the team is stronger than before," he added. "For me, my goal for the first-year students this year was to go out there, have fun and get more performing experiences".

Agreeing with him, one of Magnum's junior members, Chan Tze Jen, 18, a second-year Mechanical Engineering (ME) student is optimistic about the future and is determined to restore Magnum Force back to its former glory. "We will train harder and be more focused," he said.

Rasyide Abdul Rahim, 19, a third-year student from Film, Sound, Video (FSV) and one of the senior members of Magnum

*I feel we lost because from what I saw from other teams, they had safer stunts. Ours had a higher difficulty level, and as a result, we had more falls than the rest. I guess luck was just not with us.*

Rasyide Abdul Rahim  
Magnum Force Member



OPTIMISM IS KEY: Magnum Force remained optimistic throughout their performance, with smiles on their faces. (Picture by: Antoinette Patterson)

Force, attributed the team's recent lacklustre performance to complacency. He explained that the 2006 team was more playful compared to their predecessors, resulting in their second place finish.

This year's team, however, showed no signs of complacency.

They trained strenuously for four to five hours every night, for three months during the semester, and for 10 to 12 hours during the holidays to prepare for the competition. Certainly, the painful sting of losing their crown in 2006 would spur them on to do better this year.

"This year we also have more first-year

students so we have to be more serious," he added. He observed that though the freshmen were relatively inexperienced, they were not the reason the team lost this year.

"The first-year students are actually better; they are what we are not."

"They are more cohesive as a team, hardworking and will fight for their stunts and routines," he said.

He added, "I feel we lost because from what I saw from other teams, they had safer stunts. Ours had a higher difficulty level, and as a result, we had more falls than the rest. I guess luck was just not with us." ■





**DANCING WITH PASSION:** Despite their hectic schedule, Melvin and Sharon gave their best for all their performances.  
(Picture: Courtesy of Melvin Tan & Sharon Tan)

## A New Groove In NP

BY WINNIE LEONG  
winnie.tribune@gmail.com

Despite not winning the nationwide competition The Dance Floor, Ngee Ann Polytechnic DanceSport (NPDS) instructors Melvin Tan and Sharon Tan have inspired many freshmen to join the club.

Many freshmen want to join NPDS as a co-curricular activity (CCA) and tango, waltz and swing like the duo.

"We love teaching the students as they are fun and always determined to do well. The students have done a good job in promoting this sport and the management has given great support in bringing the club to higher levels. DanceSport is a big thing in NP now and it will continue to do well. We love it here!" said Sharon excitedly.

The pair participated on Channel 5's The Dance Floor to experience different genres of dance away from their speciality. More importantly, they wanted to create awareness of DanceSport in the local dance scene.

And judging by what their students said, it is clear that they worship them.

"They are dedicated and committed to teaching. They make time to teach us, regardless of whether we are talented or not," said Pamela Lee, 19, a Business Studies (BS) student and President of NPDS.

NPDS students had supported Melvin and Sharon right from the very beginning with some of them rushing back to

Singapore from a DanceSport competition in Kuala Lumpur to cheer them on at the Grand Finals.

Juggling work and rehearsals for the competition meant they had to train way past midnight every day.

The hectic schedule took a toll on Melvin and Sharon's health. "Sometimes due to fatigue, we are less alert and injuries occur," said Sharon, looking somewhat jaded.

Incidentally, they are neither married nor related to each other.

And as to whether they are still opening a dance studio (they had said earlier that if they were to win The Dance Floor, they would use the prize money to open a dance studio), both Melvin and Sharon answered immediately, without any hesitation, "Yes, definitely. It is only a matter of time."

However, their main agenda now is "to go back to our dancing and to bring NPDS to a higher level".

Reflecting on how they performed throughout the competition, Sharon said, "In all true honesty, we feel that we have done our best in our performances. We feel happy with our performance."

And after having the chance to assess all the other groups' performance following the Grand Finals of the Dance Floor competition, Melvin said, "Everybody in the Top Five deserved to win."

"Everybody is so strong and everybody did their best and I think that to be able to be part of The Dance Floor is a great achievement."

One of the leading universities in Australia, **James Cook University** offers a prestigious and enriching curriculum to its students worldwide. **JCU** was recently awarded a **5-star rating for the quality of Student's Education Experience** (Good Universities Guide 2006).

Immerse yourself in a vibrant and creative learning environment under the wing of our experienced lecturers at **JCU Singapore**. With its trimester academic year, you graduate ahead of others, fully equipped for an exciting career ahead.

Stimulate your mind with a professional education at **JCU Singapore** now.

### Undergraduate Programs

- Bachelor of Business (Management)\*
- Bachelor of Business (International Business)\*
- Bachelor of Business (International Tourism)\*
- Bachelor of Business (Marketing)\*
- Bachelor of Information Technology
- Bachelor of Psychology
- Bachelor of Tourism Management

\* Double majors option available for the Bachelor of Business Programs

Postgraduate programs also available in Business, Education, Guidance & Counselling, IT and Psychology

### Why JCU Singapore?

- 3 intakes a year for most degrees
- Option to study part of the degree in JCU Australia
- Degree awarded by Australian government-funded University
- Resident senior academic staff from Australia ensuring academic quality
- Study completed earlier than fellow students in Australian Campuses
- Polytechnic graduates are eligible to receive Advanced Standings towards their Bachelor Programs

## STUDY IN AN AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY IN SINGAPORE



**CaseTrust**  
Be Sure

For more information, please visit our website at [www.jcu.edu.sg](http://www.jcu.edu.sg) or email [enquiries@jcu.edu.sg](mailto:enquiries@jcu.edu.sg)



FOR LEARNING. FOR LIFE. FOR YOU.

**JCU Singapore** 2, Bukit Merah Central, #03-01 SPRING Singapore Building, Singapore 159835  
Tel: 6377 6833 Fax: 6272 5833 Hotline: 8222 6833