

SINGAPORE'S BIGGEST CAMPUS MAGAZINE

hype

MAGAZINE

April 1997 No. 4

The Paranormal

The truth behind the trend

Star Struck!

An exclusive interview with
Chew Chor Meng

POPULAR CULTURE

Finding Our Own Icons

HOT REVIEWS AND COOL PREVIEWS

Cheap & Trendy Eats, Savvy Shopping, Cool Sports

features

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Forget Hollywood!

Coca-Cola. Levi Strauss jeans. Comic books. The X-files. Try as you might to deny it, the signs are everywhere. From the clothes we wear to the food we eat, from the shows we watch to the music we listen, symbols of popular culture is all around us. **LENA & EVELYN** go in search of the elusive answer to why our pop icons are what they are.

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Invasion of E.T. Culture

People of the world beware! We may not be alone! Extraterrestrials might be watching us right now, waiting to abduct a few innocent souls to see how we survive with all that junk food. There may be life beyond Earth, but will we ever know? **JAIGANESH & SITI** get assimilated into the paranormal craze and separates some of the facts from the fiction and fantasy.

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Sports Encounters of the hype kind

Speed through some of the most heart-stopping, adrenaline-pumping activities to be found! **CLEMENT & SHARAN** take a dive through the sports scene and live to bring back news of the thrills of para-gliding, skiing and wakeboarding.

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Savvy Shopping

Being the kiasu Singaporeans we are, we're always on the lookout for new ways to stretch that dollar, regardless of whether we live to shop or shop to live. **KIM** moves away from the hustle and bustle of Orchard Road and uncovers some real value-for-money places.

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Cover background picture
courtesy of Entertainment Reality

he WARNED.

In this age of cyber-technology and virtual science, it's not enough to say that time flies anymore. More appropriately, time thunders forward at warp speed, heeding neither pleas nor wishes to slow down. With the advent of the borderless telecommunication world, it's easy to be overwhelmed by sheer sensory overload from the media. So many things are constantly vying for our undivided attention — bug-eyed Martians toting ray guns, Alanis Morissette wailing on the radio, and the wholesome McDonald's adverts playing in the background... and the list goes on.

The trick to avoid getting distracted by menial issues is to wind down a bit, and let the world whizz by. Just open your eyes and observe. That way, you can catch the really important happenings as they occur. The 20th anniversary of Star Wars, for example. *BigO* going online, or the Singapore Film Festival, as revealed by our regular feature on up-and-coming events.

Delve into our feature on strange new sports such as wakeboarding and touch the sky safely with para-wings, or even discover snow in tropical Batam. Such adrenaline-pumping activities might well be assimilated into our popular culture in time to come.

But what is popular culture? Academics all over have been perplexed by what characterises and forms this phenomena, which is so talked about and yet so undefined. Our main feature explores some of the manifestations of this "catch-phrase of the 90s", such as the rise of local music, *8 Days* magazine, Internet chatlines and TCS 8 drama serials.

The success of television dramas such as *The X-Files* and *Millennium* is one indicator of the pervasive influence of one part of American pop culture — a wave of interest in the unknown. Our feature on "Paranormal Activities" traces the unfolding of this trend in NP, revealing a loyal following of individuals and student groups such as *The Lone Gunmen* who are slowly gaining a higher profile.

We also profile an already well-known local pop icon, Chew Chor Meng, NP grad. Adored by many and watched by all, he has charmed audiences with his multiple screen personas. Few would expect the reserved character we find behind the smooth-talking *lobang*-seeking Ah Bee in *Don't Worry, Be Happy*.

And *lobangs* are what we unearthed in our feature on "Stretch Your Dollars". Scattered across the island are five Salvation Army Family Thrift Stores which offer dollar-stretching bargains ideal for students. This is the time to pull the plug on expensive shopping sprees. Chances are, you could discover cool finds. As the saying goes, "Seize the day". After all, an opportunity missed is an opportunity lost.

In retrospect, the past year spent working on HYPE has certainly zipped by in an almost surrealistic manner. As we, the editorial team, move on with life after graduation, fresh new talents will take over the magazine, changing and progressing as time rolls on inexorably.

 Pauline

Larry, Lisa & Pauline
EDITORS

Local Music Gets Substitute Exposure On-line

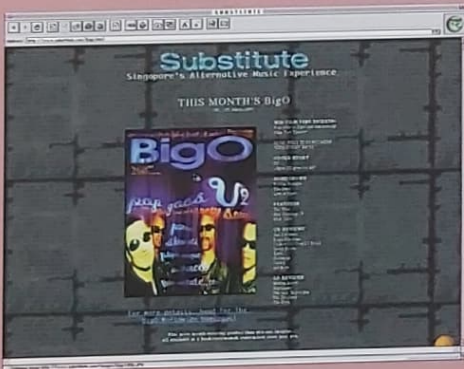
by PAULINE TEO

So you're familiar with local bands like Humpback Oak and the Padres, and you've heard a few of Art Fazil's songs on the radio. Even if you don't know too much about them or local music for that matter, you can now access on-line trivia and information about the local music scene at a cool new website, *Substitute*.

In a nutshell, *Substitute* is the official website of *BigO*, a local music magazine. It is also the first local Internet publication to offer web surfers the chance to listen to local music on-line, purchase local demo tapes and albums, and check out the latest news and reviews of local bands.

Officially launched in March 1997, *Substitute* was created by CaveTech Media in collaboration with *BigO*. CaveTech Media is a web publishing company formed by three final-year Mass Communication students at Ngee Ann Polytechnic — Kevin Lim, Gregory Tan and Lin Sihui.

The idea for *Substitute* was sparked



off when Kevin, who is also *Substitute's* publisher, produced a 23-minute documentary about the local music scene for his Advanced Television Production class last year. Initially codenamed "Operation: KAFKA", this idea metamorphosed into a digital music experience that is *Substitute* today.

Apart from the usual graphics-laden pages that most websites seem to employ, and the obligatory sections on the creators, *Substitute* has some happening sections *HYPE* suggests you shouldn't miss.

Hello, Do You Want to Talk?

At the section *Coffeeshop*, web surfers can chat real-time with other local music fans about the music scene, concerts, gigs, and the latest musical happenings.

Substitute uses a JAVA/CGI-based interactive chat board similar to Internet Relay Chat (IRC). Kevin says

their aim is to "provide a forum for people who share the same interests in local music."

Kevin and his partners are also looking into bringing local music celebrities onto *Coffeeshop* to chat with fans. Keep a lookout for this, for you might be lucky and get to 'talk' to Joe Ng (front-man of The Padres and star of *Mee Pok Man*) or your other faves on-line.

Freshness Guaranteed

Real Fresh! is where you can get an update on music events, juicy interviews with celebrities, music feature write-ups and music reviews. Occasionally, you might even get to hear soundbites of songs such as 'Summer', a track written and performed by Pauline Chong of Sideshow Judy. The demo tapes used are usually recorded by the bands themselves or recorded from live gigs.

"You can say that these songs featured on *Substitute* are almost exclusive to us until the bands release their demo album. In a way, we act as a showcase for the latest songs by any local bands," says Kevin. Most of the write-ups are provided by Daniel Sassoon from the band Livonia, Pauline Chong, and Xiao Jinhong who works for *BigO*. This gives *Real Fresh!* a unique tone, with stories and news coming from insiders on the music scene.

Bands Unlimited

Band Central offers an alphabetical band listing for you to choose and click to listen to a sampling of their demo tracks.

Virtually any band that's local with music of any genre, and that has produced their own music on demo tape or CD will be listed on *Band Central's* A to Z band listing. If you are an aspiring musician who might be interested in recording a demo tape, listen up! Send your tape to

Substitute and who knows, they might just feature you and your band. You can get more details from the website.

Substitute scores extra brownie points with their use of Macromedia's Hi-Quality Shockwave Streaming Audio technology, otherwise known as Shockwave. This is a technology that streams music as you download the soundbite onto your diskette. So you'll get to hear the song while you download. In addition, Shockwave allows for good quality sound without the typical crackle and hiss that plague other audio streaming techniques.

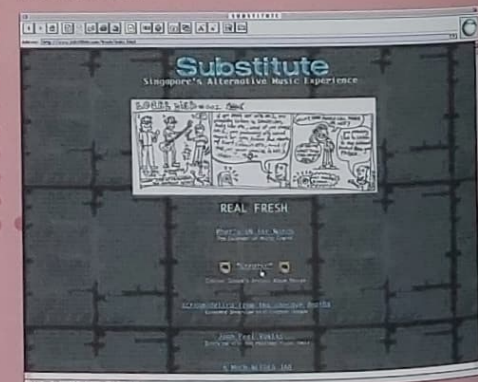
At *Band Central*, you can also subscribe to the 'Substitute Insider'. You'll be

one of the first to receive free monthly electronic newsletters on music news, gigs, demo releases and more. All you have to do is click on the icon and key in your name and e-mail address in the specified boxes.

Classified Information: For Your Eyes Only

Do you have lots of CDs to sell? How about books and magazines to exchange? Or are you searching for a soulmate to share your love for the Lilac Saints? Check out *Substitute's* *Un-Classified*, an Internet board for all you guys out there with stuff to sell, buy or trade, or people to find. This is a useful 'search engine' much like Straits Times' Classified Ads. So make use of it because it's free!

Substitute rides high on the list of web sites to browse through. After all, which other website lets you hear a CD before you buy (see the section, *Sub Gear*) or sells demo tapes and CDs at prices lower than retail stores?



The web address for *Substitute* is <http://www.substitute.com>. CaveTech Media is constantly looking for people who are interested in exercising their writing or designing muscles. If you are interested in contributing or you want more information, e-mail CaveTech Media at editor@substitute.com.

The Singapore International Film Festival celebrates its 10th birthday this year and along with it, the highest number of films ever showcased. This year's Film Festival runs from April 4-19 and 200 films will be screened, out of which 160 are features and 40 are short films. Of special mention is that half of the 160 feature films are made in Asia.

In conjunction with the Film Festival, Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) Film and Media Studies (FMS) Society will host an Asian Film Appreciation Workshop in LT 26. To be held from April 14-16, this three-day workshop will feature four prominent speakers from the film industry as well as some of the films screened at the Festival.

Two of the speakers, Nick Deocampo and Regiben Romana, are outstanding Filipino film-makers. The other two speakers are Tony Rayns, a film critic who writes for magazines such as "Sight and

Film Festival



Sound" and Kip Fulbeck, a professor of film at the University of California, Santa Barbara. They will provide analyses of the films screened and encourage open discussion from members of the floor.

Over at the Substation, *Moving Images*, a monthly event will be introduced to encourage interest and understanding amongst Singaporeans on film appreciation. This event features talks, forums or screenings with film-makers and industry professionals, critics and academics from Singapore and the region.

Among the activities at *Moving Images* will be a film workshop entitled *Classic Indonesian Masters* on April 12-13.

Tickets for the Asian Film Appreciation Workshop are priced at \$10 a day or \$25 for all three days. Further enquiries can be directed to the FMS Society at Blk 73, #73-03, Ngee Ann Polytechnic. For more information on *Moving Images*, call the Substation at 337 7800.

The Jedi Returns

by LARRY LOH

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A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, a movie was quietly launched in theatres around the world by a little-known film-maker. The movie was *Star Wars* and the film-maker's name, George Lucas. American popular culture, the entertainment industry and motion picture technology have never been the same. Movie-goers will soon be able to relive the magic of this epic saga of war in the stars as it returns to the big screen this year.

The *Star Wars Trilogy Special Edition*, consisting of the original film (which was previously named *Star Wars: A New Hope*) and its two sequels, *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*, will be relaunched nationwide in June. This version is the result of three years' labour by a team of film-makers and restorers, many of whom worked on the original films two decades ago.

The improvements are not merely cosmetic. They include painstakingly restored negatives, enhanced or new visual prints and a state-of-the-art, digitally-remastered THX soundtrack.

Star Wars 1 The Empire Strikes Back

The films also boast new footage created by Lucas' visual effects house, Industrial Light & Magic (ILM), which he established in 1975 to realise his then revolutionary special effects ideas for *Star Wars*. "A lot of work has gone into enhancing the entry into Mos Eisley," says Lucas. The spaceport city in the *Special Edition* now has several new creatures,



droids and people added to its streets. The scene of Skywalker's arrival has also been improved so that his landspeeder is clearly floating rather than gliding as it did originally.

The inspiration for releasing the *Star Wars Trilogy Special Edition* stemmed from the approaching anniversary of the original release on May 25, 1977. The idea was to screen all three films within a few weeks of each other (much like a drama series), to allow audiences to experience the epic story in its full glory. This will be followed by a

rio of new 'prequel' films which chronicle the rise of Anakin Skywalker (Luke's father) and his subsequent transformation into the evil Darth Vader.

For those of you who have never seen the awesome spectacle of a lightsaber duel up close, or heard the whine of a X-wing as it zips across the pitted surface of the Death Star, here's your chance to experience the phenomenon which spawned a whole series of books, sci-fi films, games and a world-wide following. When it hits the big screen, go with any disbelieving friends and prepare to be overwhelmed. As the immortalised saying goes, "May the Force be with you!"

The *Star Wars Trilogy Special Edition* is scheduled for a nationwide release at Golden Village cinemas in June this year. It was produced by Lucasfilm Ltd and distributed by 20th Century Fox. A word of advice: get your tickets early for the best seats.



Sports Encounters of the Hype Kind



Touch the skies... defy gravity with a fibreglass board, a little creativity and lots of courage.

Feel the rush of adrenaline pumping and experience heart-stomping action... Enter the arena of unique and thrill-seeking sports with wakeboarding, snowboarding and para-wing flying. What do these sports have to offer in their promise of thrills? Daredevils SHARANJIT KAUR and CLEMENT TAY raced around Singapore and Batam to find out.

Cruising through the waves ...

Wakeboarding is a sport which took America by storm four years ago and is rapidly catching on in Singapore. Packed with thrills, this adrenaline-pumping sport requires guts and creativity in executing stunts to truly enjoy the experience. Wakeboarding is actually an alternative form of water-skiing and is a hybrid between surfing and snowboarding. The main differences are that it is done behind a water-ski boat, and a wakeboard, although similar in shape to a surfboard, is only 70 centimetres in length (half the size of a surfboard).

The humble beginnings of the sport date back to the 80s when U.S. surfer Tony Finn sought an alternative to achieve the ultimate thrill. Much like water-skiing, he held on to a rope that was attached to a ski-boat. Instead of skis, he balanced on a surfboard and performed surf-style stunts on the wake or the waterline made up of small waves formed behind a water-ski boat. Thus, the "skurfer", a primitive version of the wakeboard, was born. Later on, as the sport grew, footstraps were attached to the boards to give riders support and control while they performed aerial tricks and somersaults. That marked the dawn of a new sporting experience ... wakeboarding.

Today, the sport has grown to new heights with wakeboards designed in the shape of a surfboard but with a "twin tail" (fins that stick up on both sides of the board) for more balance and control. Advanced wakeboarders can even perform gravity-defying feats and stunts such as the *Back Somersault*.

If you're interested in trying out the sport, it is always safer to have lessons first. *Cowabunga Ski Centre* at Kallang River is one place in Singapore where beginner's course of five 20-minute lessons costs \$110, including equipment. The course is held over three to four days, depending on your own schedule and stamina. It guarantees that if you don't pick up wakeboarding by the end of the course, lessons will be extended at no extra charge.

Cowabunga Ski Centre is managed by three-time Asian Water Ski champion Paul Fong and a team of champion water skiers and wakeboarders all serving as instructors at the centre. State-of-the-art ski equipment, including an extended pylon with a ramp raised to 10 feet and a 14-foot trampoline for stunts, are parts of the ski centre's main features.

Cowabunga Ski Centre's instructors check to ensure that all ropes and cords are secure to the boat before every use. Life jackets



Touchdown! As the saying goes, "any landing is a good landing", as a para-wing enthusiasts safely demonstrates.

are also compulsory. "There are no other boats around this private ski site so it is a safe place to learn," Paul says. "Anyone can enjoy wakeboarding, from as young as four to 80 years old."

Prices for professional wakeboards in Singapore range between \$700 and \$900. These can be bought at most water-skiing and sea-sports shops. With the increasing popularity of wakeboarding, other equipment such as specially-designed wakeboarding shoes are also available, although these are not required unless you plan to be a professional.

Now that you've encountered some exciting, radical fun in the sea and on the hot sand, how about cooling off with some snow?

Surf's Up! On Some Snow ...

The most extreme craze ever to hit the snowy slopes of Europe and America has now arrived on the sunny, tropical island of Batam!

You're probably wondering, "What? Snow? in Batam?" Make no mistake - this isn't the ice-shavings you get in *ice-kachang*. There is snow in Batam - in *Waterfront City* to be exact. With the construction of *Waterfront Indoor Snow Ski Centre*, customers are able to play with, ski and snowboard on man-made snow. The white powdery snow is made by specially imported snow guns from Britain. Kept at a constant temperature of minus five degrees Celsius since it opened in January 1997, more than 5000 people have visited the *Waterfront Indoor Ski Centre*. With its eight-metre wide and 30-metre long slope, it's a great starting place for folks who wish to learn the basics on how to snowboard or ski, but are unwilling to pay for costly overseas ski packages.

Before you go snowboarding though, you'll need the right equipment. The snowboard is much like a wakeboard in its dimensions but it's more flexible. Ski boots, jackets, ski pants and gloves come with the snowboarding lesson for \$12 per half hour.

Safety is the main concern for the ski centre's management and there are always safety marshalls to guide people out of a snowboarder's way. You can also rest assured that your snowboarding future is in

good hands because all the instructors are coached by world-class skiers.

Apart from snowboarding, you may want to try out skiing too. At present, more than 30 sets of skis are available for rent at the same rates as the snowboards. After two hours of ski lessons, the centre guarantees that you'll be able to ski. This means that if you're not skiing by the end of two hours, the extra lessons needed for you to ski are given at no extra charge.

After reading about wakeboarding at sea and snowboarding, check out this next thrill-seeker's delight that will have you believing you can fly ...

I Believe I Can Fly ...

You'd better believe it. Now you can fly and almost touch the sky because the *Batam Flying Club* in *Waterfront City* offers a whole new way of airborne recreation - para-wing flying.

The para-wing is a small aircraft made up of a lightweight aluminium airframe about the size of a Morris Mini, using a modified parachute that acts as wings to lift its passengers - you and its pilot - into the air. Powered by a large propeller, of about two metres in diameter, the appearance of the para-wing in flight is a rather comical yet graceful sight.

The para-wing has its origins in America, where it was developed by aviation enthusiasts primarily as a fun and safe way of flying without a flying licence.

Cruising at an altitude of about a 1000 feet, at a speed of 40 km/h, it's really a "nice and leisurely way to relax, fly and enjoy the sky" as para-wing pilot, Malcom Barker, puts it. The reassuring part of the para-wing experience is that safety isn't compromised. With more than 30 years of flying experience behind him, Malcom claims that the para-wing is one of the safest machines he has flown in,

with no mishaps to date.

For a fee of \$50, you can be strapped into one of these graceful flying machines and enjoy a 15-minute joyride. Anyone can take to the skies and the only requirement is your enthusiasm. So hold on tight to your cameras if you want snaps from a fantastic bird's eye view of Batam.

While you register in the office and select your flying helmet, the pilot is busy outside on the runway preparing the para-wing for flight. After inspecting the parachute and flight-control cables laid out neatly behind the airframe, the pilot then helps you buckle up in the back-seat, puts on your helmet and you're ready to take off.

The para-wing ride can be bumpy at times because of strong winds and turbulence. You'll also discover a practical purpose of the helmet. Its clear visor helps to keep out the dust and sand during take-off and landing. Not to mention the occasional high-flying bug during the flight.

So even if you're not a true blue thrill-seeker, by nature, we urge you to give these sporting activities a try. Before you know it, a doorway to a whole new world of adventure and excitement may just be opened to you.



Slip and slide down the finest, smoothest and the only snow slope in Batam

Mostra
Internacional d'Art
HOMENATGE
a JOAN MIRO
Granollers



Scattered

Stores which sell practically everything under the sun. Their motto "household items at affordable prices" hits the nail on the head. Each of the five stores is divided into five departments, namely jewellery and accessories, household items, books and toys, clothing and shoes, and electrical items. Even if you're only into designer gear, you'll find plenty at the thrift stores at prices that will blow your mind.

Entering the outlet located on Upper Bukit Timah Road, you'll find yourself at the jewellery and accessories section. Earrings of all shapes and sizes; bracelets of plastic, metal and wood; necklaces and beads cover the counter at rock-bottom prices.

You could create a new outfit without spending more than \$15 in the clothes and shoes department. Sleeveless shirts are selling for \$1, long-sleeved shirts for \$2, trousers for \$3, jackets for \$4, men's suits for \$10-\$15, ties for \$1, and shoes for \$3-\$6. Shopping at the Salvation Army really stretches your dollar.

The jackets are very appealing with brands

throughout
Singapore are five
Salvation Army
Family Thrift

thrills. "It's a different kind of shopping. It's exciting because you never know what to expect," said Peter Cheong, the deputy general manager in charge of all the Salvation Army outlets.

Each outlet has the same layout, but if you want Levi's jeans and polo shirts for \$10 each, the Changi branch is the one for you. Be adventurous. You might be surprised by what you find. One thing you won't be disappointed with is the price.

Gone are the days when it was enough to have a pager. Now there is a growing trend for handphones, but they are expensive. So if you are considering buying one, why not think about a second-hand one?

You can find popular second-hand models from Motorola, Nokia and Ericsson at ACE Communications, at Orchard Plaza. These status symbols are selling at very competitive prices. Motorola hand phones, models 8200, 7200, and 4300 are selling for just \$450; Nokia model 2100 for \$250, and Ericsson model GH337 for \$480. These second-hand phones are practical buys because you'd need close to \$1000 if you were to buy them brand new.

ACE Communications also sells phone

SHOPPERS' PARADISE

Forget about spending a small fortune every time you go shopping. Head on down to any of the five Salvation Army Family Thrift Stores or to ACE Communications for some of the best bargains in town. The variety of items available is unbelievable and the prices certainly won't burn a hole in your pocket! To give you a peek at what's in store for you, KIM FRANCIS tours the outlets and finds the best buys.

such as Chomel and Bianca selling for just \$4! Of course, not everything will be your cup of tea, but if you hunt deep enough, you'll surely find something you like. With new items coming in every day from donors, it's really worth a trip down to the stores.

One student was over the moon when she found you don't have to spend a lot of money to be trendy. "I really don't have the kind of money to buy expensive clothes, but here you can find some really hip items which are so cheap," said Juliette Wong, a Singapore Polytechnic student.

The books and toys section is where you should go if you're in need of extra study material, especially if you're into computers. The selection of software titles is endless. They cover almost everything from Lotus, Microsoft Word, WordPerfect to Harvard Graphics, and are available in the form of user's manuals, tutorials and handbooks selling for \$2 each. There are also six shelves dedicated to books on topics such as Economics, Business, Advertising and Accounting.

The Salvation Army offers an alternative form of shopping that is no-frills but full of

accessories at wholesale prices. An Ericsson portable hands-free phone set is selling for \$98 on the market, and ACE Communications sells it for \$75. So pop into the shop and see what's in store for you.

Where you can find them:

Salvation Army Family Thrift Stores

1. 500 Upper Bukit Timah Road
Tel: 765 5221
2. Blk 4 #01-2078
Changi Village
Tel: 545 5722
3. 34 Cuff Road (Little India)
Tel: 297 3313
4. 350 Pasir Panjang Road
Tel: 872 0361
5. Blk 133 #01-1530
Jalan Bukit Merah
Tel: 275 5877

ACE Communications is located at #05-22 and #01-23, Orchard Plaza.

initially known as one half of the local rap duo

Sheikh Haikel Construction Sight,

climbed to instant stardom when he and his partner won the finals in the first-ever Asia Bagus Championships in Japan. Currently glowing in the success of the movie, *Army Daze*, in which he played a fumbling recruit, the rapper cum actor gets friendly with

N. CHANDRAN.

“I did ballet you know...,” declares the 110 kg and 1.8m tall towering frame that is distinctly Sheikh Haikel. “I did tap, I did jazz and singing ... I managed to be an all-rounder, but in the end of it all, I ended up as a singer,” he continues of his days in National Service with the SAF Music and Drama Company.

Given time off during his National Service to act in the movie *Army Daze*, Haikel auditioned for the role of Deanna Yusoff-obsessed Johari on the request of Michael Chiang. He describes the difference between acting on stage and in the movie.

“In the play, we had a stage and one blank-faced audience. We were allowed to relax, say what we want and have fun on stage, but in the recording, we can’t ad lib. You have to follow the script unless the director says so. We had very limited space in the room when the camera was rolling, because we had to be conscious of where we stood so as not to block each other.”

The refreshingly frank 21-year-old reveals the main difficulty he had to face during the filming of the movie.

“I’m fat and there’s no doubt about it. And when you are fat, everything is a challenge. It was even a challenge to squat, let alone run through the jungle in a heavy uniform and keeping to tight and sometimes late-night schedules. It was hectic.”

Commenting on how similar he is to his screen counterpart, Johari, Haikel expresses a goal-oriented side that hides behind his wit during the interview.

“Apart from the fact that we both like to see people smile, Johari was a character of his own. He knew what he wanted but was not really sure how to get it. He goes with the flow but I sort of plan what I want to do. I sort of know where I want to go. And with a lot of hard work, I know I can get there.”

Although his role as Johari required him to shave his head bald, Haikel chose to be ‘hairless’ even before his enlistment into the army. He explains how he got to realise that bald is beautiful.

“I was tired of hair after some time ... I shaved bald and then got disowned by my parents (a giggle escapes from the bubbly figure). They thought it was an act of rebellion but it was nothing of the sort. I love my parents very much and I would do anything I’m told to do but when I want to do something on my part, I would do it too. But I’m lucky I look good bald (laughs).”

While displaying a sense of humour and a comical poise, Haikel expresses acute sensitivity to issues such as conformity and the need to develop an individual identity.

“We have no identity. You conform to a style but the influence that comes along is from somewhere else. If Armani is in, then no one will wear Versace. There should be no such thing as a particular way of dressing. What you wear is you. I guess it’s not what you put on, but how you put it on. We are afraid to try, but when we do, we are criticised.”

Haikel in a Hurry

I really admire ...
those who live their lives to the fullest.

I love going to ...
anywhere that plays hip-hop music.

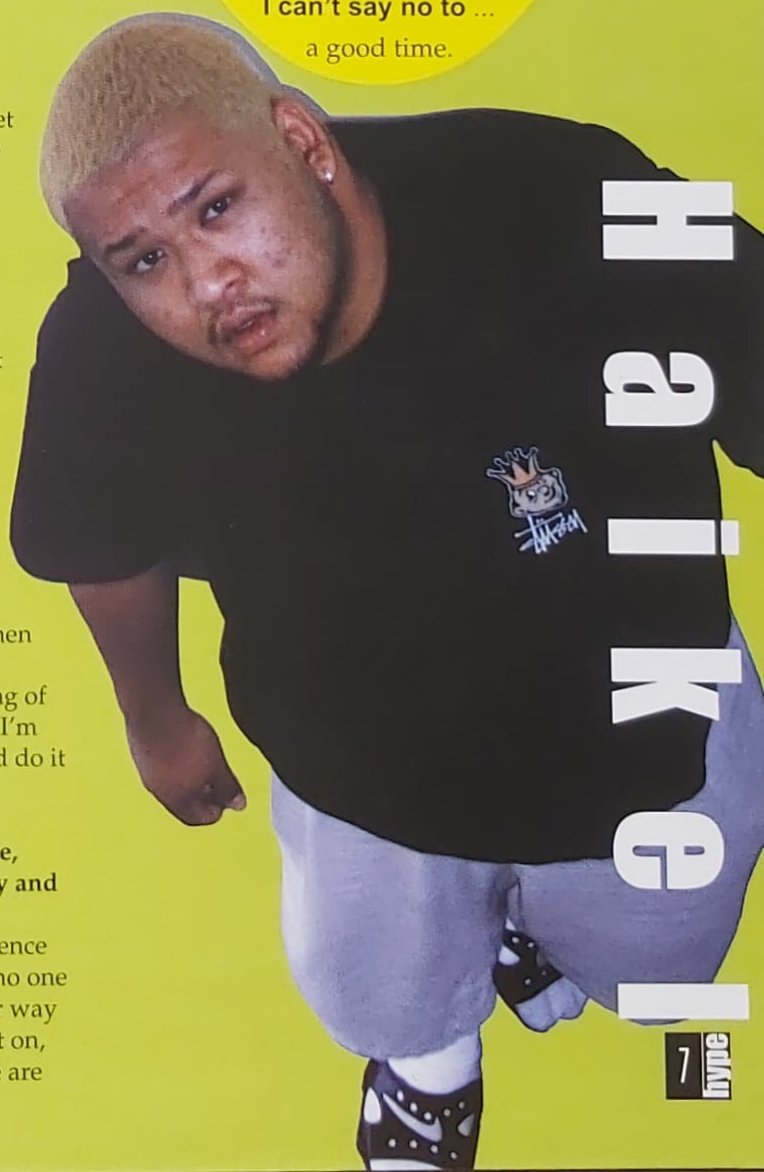
I never leave home without ...
my pager.

You’ll never see me in ...
tight jeans.

I really want to meet ...
OutKast (rap group).

I really wanna be ...
always myself.

I can’t say no to ...
a good time.



Sheikh Haikel

Invasion of E.T. culture

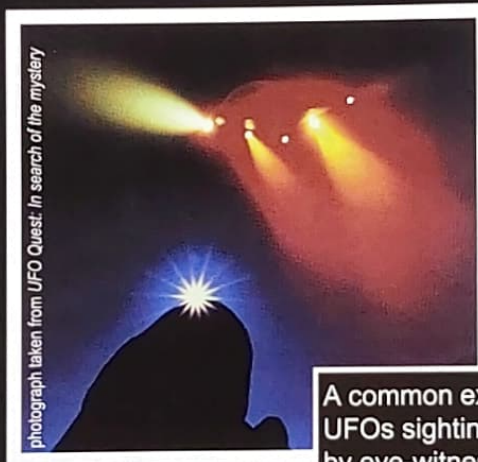
Interest in the paranormal is perennial - a constant flow of movies, magazines, articles and even clothing shows this to be the case. Yet we have still been unable to prove the existence of Extra-Terrestrials (E.T.). But as we continue to search for E.T. intelligence, our alien counterparts have already invaded our planet. M. JAIGANESH and SITI AZLINDA turn "paranormal researchers" to reveal the beginnings of the E.T. phenomena and its infiltration into our society.

A violent beam illuminates your dimly-lit room as your ears pick up some unfamiliar noises. You stare intently in the direction of your room door until your eyes begin to twitch in discomfort. Images of aliens, weird creatures and UFOs (Unidentified Flying Objects) begin to flash across your disturbed mind. Could it be? You wonder. Just then, the door swings open mysteriously. You awake in cold sweat to find yourself late for school.

A nasty dream like this may be the closest form of paranormal contact we may experience. However, it is intriguing to note that this has not deterred many of us from believing in paranormal phenomena. This is also in spite of the fact that research conducted on such paranormal sightings and encounters has failed to provide much, if any, concrete evidence.

These studies on extra-terrestrial contact have been carried out predominantly in the U.S. This can be attributed to the countless number of

reported E.T. encounters by Americans since the early 50s. Of these encounters, the most widely reported cases involved UFO sightings and alien abductions. Based on these occurrences, by a group of astronomers and paranormal researchers initiated the



A common example of UFOs sightings given by eye-witnesses.

Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence (S.E.T.I.) project in October 1992. Their goal? To detect the first signs of extra-terrestrial life before the year 2000.

A significant amount of effort has been devoted to shed more light on these encounters and sightings involving E.T. Despite the use of questionable resources, thousands of people still tune in to "infotainment" programmes such as *Sightings* to sate their curiosity. These shows convince the public of their authenticity through slick visuals and interviews. Their reports often arouse more curiosity instead of dispelling their darkest fears of the unknown.

Explaining The Unexplained

According to the Oxford Dictionary, paranormal activity simply refers to events that lie beyond the range of normal scientific explanations. E.T. contact refers to experiences with the third kind. It must also be noted that paranormal activities include mental telepathy, ghostly encounters and telekinesis (moving of objects through using one's mind). Hans J. Eysenck & Carl Sargent in their book, "Explaining the Unexplained" likened all these to puzzle pieces which have to be put together to make sense.

From The Skies to our Screens

E.T. encounters were widely reported in several U.S. dailies during the 1950s after the public recounted sightings of UFOs in their backyards.

In July, 1984, the headlines of an American daily read, "Scientists and computer hard at work to explain thousands of mysterious sightings from all corners of the world." This two-page article was based on our estimated 25 years of research conducted by a UFO researcher in North America, Dr. J. Allen Hynek.

Dr. Hynek managed to investigate more than 80,000 reports of unidentified objects sighted in 161 countries worldwide. In fact, Dr. Hynek was ordered by U.S. officials to fabricate cover-up stories to steer the public away from any UFO suspicions. This only reinforced the public's suspicions instead of assuring them that there was no possible danger. Unfortunately, before he could complete his

research, Dr. Hynek died in 1986. Since then several U.S.-based researchers have continued his work.

It was not surprising that Hollywood cashed in on the trend with its pioneer E.T. cult classic film in 1953 - *The Invasion of Aliens*. The release of such films in the 50s incidentally triggered off more UFO sightings, reports and alien abduction cases. The public's interest in such movies is reflected in box office takings, where movies such as *E.T.*, *Star Wars* and *Return of the Jedi* are still the highest grossing movies in the U.S. Recent blockbuster Hollywood movies such as *Independence Day* and *Mars Attack!* have shown that the interest in such movies has not died.

Brad and Sherry Steiger, in their book "*The Rainbow Conspiracy*", claimed that the masses were made to stop thinking about the threat of extra-terrestrial invaders through films. They believed that positive propagandizing was carried out through films such as *E.T.* where aliens were portrayed as cute and friendly. The Steigers stressed that such portrayals of alien life were instrumental in calming a frantic public already disturbed with reports of E.T. contacts in the past.

Since then, times have changed and so has the impact of paranormal movies. This unique genre of Hollywood movies, together with reports and research on E.T. contact has played an instrumental role in spreading a new brand of popular culture. Books, TV shows, Internet newsgroups and even a new line of E.T. fashion are examples of how this extraordinary form of culture has infiltrated lives and lifestyles.

We have been "attacked" too!

On the local scene, many teenagers have been led by paranormal-based television programmes such as the *X-files* and *Millennium* to form their own informal paranormal groups. Group

members are "recruited" based on their common interest in E.T. activities such as UFO sightings and alien abductions.

Eugene Hui, 19, a final-year Film and Media (FMS) student is a member of such a group. The 12-member group calls itself *The*

says Eugene

Groups such as *The Lone Gunmen* have raised several eyebrows as they are seen "as people wasting time on the idle talk." Joe attributes this general feeling to "the older folk" who do not believe in extra-terrestrial

contacts. He says, "I find it puzzling that these people are convinced that ghosts are real

and not aliens, especially when there is more

research and findings on the latter."

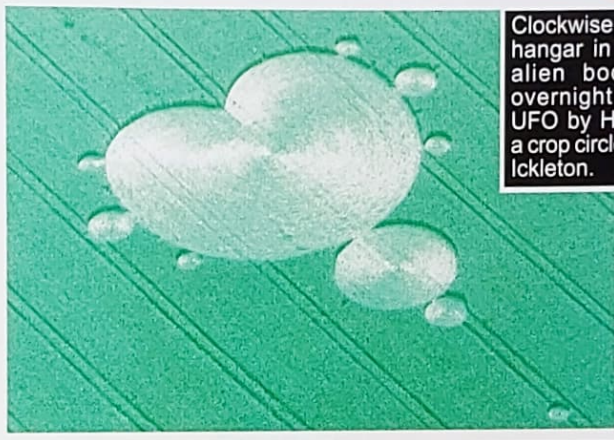
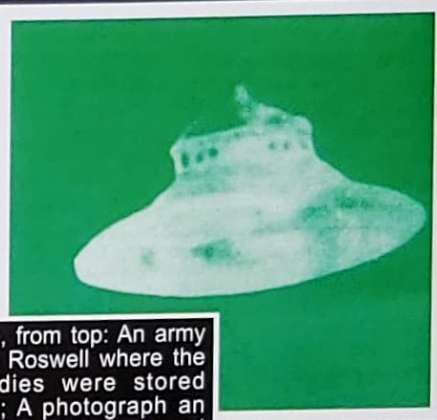
Sivakumar, 18, a first-year student from the Centre of Computer Studies (CCS) finds it, "a little hard to accept but if people can accept geomancy and astrology, then they should welcome UFO-logy".

Contrary to this comment, Karen Tan, 22, a final-year student from Business Studies (BS) department, stresses that these groups should channel their time to some form of study which is more down-to-earth.

Practical Views

The existence of E.T. may remain in our minds as a "fact or fiction" doubt for a long time. However, that does not seem to dampen the interest in paranormal activities. Reports on paranormal encounters have whetted the interest of teenagers such as Eugene and Joseph. On the other hand, many others who are not particularly interested in paranormal activities have also been influenced by their peers.

Our alien counterparts may not have set foot on earth but their presence is already being felt. Are these E.Ts. preparing us to contact with them by first creating this paranormal pop form of culture? Just imagine the situation where E.Ts. actually indicate their existence from some remote planet in outer space. What will we do next? Or rather what they will do to us?



Clockwise, from top: An army hangar in Roswell where the alien bodies were stored overnight; A photograph of a UFO by Howard Menger; and a crop circle in Mandelbrot, near Ickleton.

Lone Gunmen (after a group of characters from the *X-Files*). Eugene stresses that "as science fiction fanatics, we are generally interested in unusual happenings such as alien abductions. Programmes such as *X-files* and *Millennium* just stimulates us further with mysterious and captivating plots."

Another group member, Joseph Tong, 18, a first-year student from Electrical Engineering (EE), enjoys discussing the latest paranormal findings with his *Gunmen* as it "sheds more light on the very little we know about the universe". Joseph revealed that their main source of paranormal findings are books and articles by famous paranormal authors such as Charles Berlitz and the Steigers.

The Lone Gunmen also make it a point to "chat" via the Internet with people who share their common interest. "As there is hardly any paranormal action here, we have to fall back on our foreign counterparts for information. The Internet allows us to obtain detailed information on the latest E.T. encounters quickly,"

Wacky Hairdos

Inject some life into the same boring hair colour. With the Sweet Georgia Brown Colouring Comb, you can put fancy colours through your hair whenever you feel like.

Choose from a myriad of striking and eye-catching colours with wacky names ranging from *Green Witch Village* to *Yellow Brick Road*. You won't have to worry about damaging your hair because, according to the product label, it doesn't contain harsh chemicals.

Suitable for processed hair, the dye is temporary, less messy than D.I.Y. home-colouring kits and comes with easy-to-follow instructions. It colour-coats your hair like mousse and may easily be removed with just

Say You Love Her With Rice

If candy and flowers fail to get her attention, try surprising her with a rice pendant. This locket of love, originating from Australia, is actually a grain of rice engraved with a name or message placed in a glass capsule of oil.

Kept to a maximum of eight characters, the calligrapher will, with a special pen and ink, magnifying glass and very steady hands, engrave the name or message on the grain. The grain of rice will then be placed in a capsule filled with unique types of oil to preserve it.

While the engraving can be in English, Chinese, Japanese or simple coloured drawings like a heart or leaf, the

Tweety Turns Gold

Guys can't help but silently admire this little fellow while girls go 'goo goo' over him. Tweety, the yellow canary of Looney Tunes fame is back but this time round, just about everyone wants a piece of him in the form of gold jewellery.

Produced by The Singapore Mint, the expertly-crafted Tweety collection comes in designs of 22K and 24K gold. Each purchase comes along with a certificate of authenticity to assure customers that they're not getting an imitation.

Many die-hard followers of Tweety often purchase the entire range of jewellery, regarding them as collectibles.

The whole Looney Tunes collection

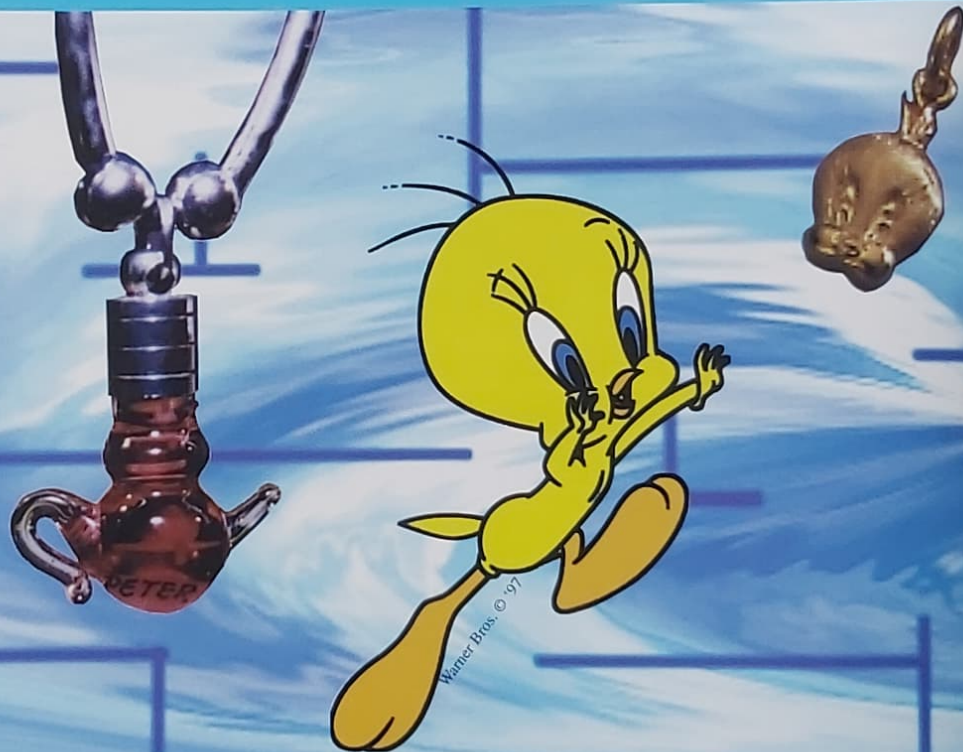


Photo courtesy of Singapore Mint

shampoo and water. Keeping the dye for future use is no problem either. Simply replace it in the plastic case provided.

Lasting for 10 and five highlights for shoulder-length and longer hair respectively, the Sweet Georgia Brown Colouring Comb is easier on your pockets! So before deciding on a funky hair make-over at the salon or just grabbing any D.I.Y. hair-dye satchets you can find, the colouring combs may be what you need.

The Sweet Georgia Brown Colouring Combs are priced at \$12 each. They are available at Nex-Is (Tangs Studio), 4th storey of Ngee Ann City. The store is open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily.

capsules come in shapes of dolphins, hearts or pyramids. You can even choose the colour of the oil which may be clear or tinted shades of magenta, peacock blue, rose red or apple green.

So express your feelings in a fashionable way with the rice pendant. Eye-catching and elegant, it can be shared between friends or given to that special someone.

The rice-pendant is available at Lee Theng's Sia's artist's booth at the entrance of Orchard Emerald, 218 Orchard Road on the first floor. The opening hours are from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. daily.

range from \$39 to \$665. The best-selling designs such as the Tweety and Bugs Bunny "head-pendants" costs around \$75 each. The accessories make good gifts for the young or young-at-heart. However, remember to keep your Tweety jewellery well hidden if you meet any Sylvester fanatics. You wouldn't want your little Tweety to be "bird-napped" by that "bad pudgy tat", right?

The Looney Tunes collection is available at all Only Gold outlets run by The Singapore Mint, and most leading goldsmiths. For more enquiries, call The Singapore Mint at 566 2626.

LOONEY TUNES, characters, names and all related indicia are trademark of Warner Bros. ©1997.

Toyz Story

If you enjoy a little violence or are just plain frustrated with your problem-ridden computer, Screen Toyz from Creative Insights is what you need. The interactive screen saver package consists of CD-ROM software and an external plastic device that plugs into your keyboard port to let you wreak havoc on-screen.

Take your pick from the three wacky toys available: *Latrina's Toilet*, *Tad's TNT plunger* and *Stitch's High Voltage Switch*. The accompanying device with each of the toys lets you activate your screen saver and take control over the actions of your cartoon.

The on-screen characters include the delightfully repulsive *Latrina*, who takes joy

"Beary" Small Teddy Kits

Have you always wanted to try your hand at making a teddy bear but never did so because you didn't want to splurge on the expensive kits? Well, here's a piece of good news. Wallet-friendly teddy bear-making kits are now available at Paw Marks.

These miniature teddies, which are only about 5.5 cm tall when completed, are not difficult to make. If you are an amateur at bear-making, the clear instructions provided in the packet will make your experience a less frustrating one. For added convenience, a needle and sufficient thread are included. Accessories such as buttons may also come with the kit, depending on

Bollywood Barbie

Here comes a Barbie of a different sort; a Barbie of vibrant culture and colour hailing from the East. With her comes Barbie's soul companion, Ken. Meet the Indian Barbie and Ken dolls.

Launched by Mattel in India, the Indian Barbie and Ken series have been quietly drawing attention to its showroom, Celebration of Arts, down at Little India Arcade. Influenced by Western fashion's discovery of Asian beauty, these ethnic dolls has been popularised among locals and even tourists.

The *Manipuri* Barbie doll is the star attraction clad in her brightly coloured traditional *lenga choli* (short blouse and long



Actual Size

in bathing in her toilet bowl and flushing all your work down the drain, and Tad, who derives pleasure in wiping out everything in his path with dynamite sticks and tunnel bombs.

Go ahead and unleash the monster in you as you blow your documents to bits, zap your e-mail away, or spring a bug attack on your spreadsheets. But a word of advice: keep those violent tendencies in the virtual world!

The *Screen Toyz* screen savers are priced at \$70.10 each. They are available at *The Best Connection*, #01-16, Plaza Singapura. The store is open daily from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

the design.

There are about 30 designs for you to choose from. You can also purchase your own fur and materials such as eyes from Paw Marks and make a new bear from the pattern.

So whoever said you have to burn a hole in your pocket to get a teddy bear kit? All you need is a little patience to make a designer teddy that can certainly hold its own against its bigger counterparts.

The miniature teddy bear kits are available at Paw Marks: *The Bear Place*, #02-25, Cannery Block, Clarke Quay. Opening hours are from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m., Tuesdays to Sundays.

skirt) outfit. Her glittering gold jewellery, brightly coloured bangles and intricately designed ethnic anklets makes her indeed the most popular and eye-catching of the range.

Not as movable as their familiar American counterparts, the Indian Barbie and Ken dolls serve more as collector items and decorative pieces priced at \$20 each, except the *Manipuri* Barbie which costs \$49. So if you're looking for something new to add your booming cool collection of collectibles, the Indian Barbie and Ken dolls should take the top spot.

The dolls are available at *Celebration of Arts* located at #01-72, Little India Arcade along Serangoon Road. Opening hours are from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

FORGET Hollywood

Local Drama Serials



Think popular culture and a host of western-influenced icons come to mind.

Coca-Cola, Levi's jeans and Nike Air trainers are among the many symbols of "hipness" and "coolness" that we have adopted from the western nations, in particular, America. But is the west our

only "true" source of popular culture symbols?

Do local pop icons exist?

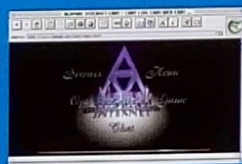
LENA LEE and **EVELYN TAN**

speak to Ngee Ann

Polytechnic students to find out more.



Local Music
(English)



Internet Chat Line



The New Paper



8 Days

Local

popular culture is an inferior "aping of the Hollywood aesthetic". This view is held by S.

M. Ong, a cyber-columnist of the monthly web magazine Asia Online. In this year's January edition, Ong interviewed Philip Cheah, editor of local rock magazine *BigO*, who had this to say. "We don't really like ourselves all that much ... We just consume mass Hollywood culture. We're not really sincere about who we are."

On

speaking to several Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students, it appears that this infatuation with all things Hollywood and

American is not true across the board. It may not be apparent, but these students have incorporated some locally born and bred elements into their lifestyles. They include *The New Paper*, *8 Days* magazine, local Chinese drama serials and local music in English. Another element, though not Singaporean in origin, has become localised through its widespread usage - chatting on the Internet. Here's an insight into what these pop icons are all about.



THE NEW PAPER

Think *The New Paper* (TNP) and a tabloid with bold, flashy headlines and sensational stories comes to mind. After all, it is not difficult to recall the Toh Chin Chye fiasco, or the Annabel Chong sex scandal, among other stories. Where Singapore is concerned, TNP has covered almost everything, ranging from the scandalous to the downright outrageous.

TNP's circulation has tripled from its first run nine years ago, to stand at 110,000 copies today. This rise in circulation can be largely attributed to the paper's focus on human interest stories. As P.N. Balji, editor of TNP, says, "We try to give a human face to as many stories as possible."

One of the common characteristics of TNP's cover stories is that they usually involve Singaporeans in unusual situations. Angeline Ng, a third-year Accountancy (ACC) student, finds that the incidents reported in TNP are "something that's least expected to be done by people like us". This may help to explain the paper's popularity among Singaporeans who are curious about what the others around them are up to.

Shahid Rowter, a third-year student from the Mechanical Engineering (ME) Department, feels that TNP draws readers by stoking their desire for sensational news. This, however, is not a big attraction for him. He reads TNP on a regular basis for its extensive sports coverage.

A daily reader of TNP is Lynica Loh, a third-year ACC student. In her opinion, TNP is "easier to read" and less time consuming than *The Straits Times*. However, she feels that some news reports are "too brief, and tend to focus on unimportant issues".

On the other hand, Balji says the paper's "simple, conversational and newsy" style of reporting has succeeded in attracting people who may have found *The Straits Times* a tad too difficult for them in terms of language and intellectual content, or those who were not reading newspapers in the first place.

So love it or hate it, there is no denying TNP's immense popularity. According to Tan Mook Lan, a shop assistant at NP's Shop 73, the outlet is supplied with 200 to 250 copies of TNP daily. All copies are usually sold out by the end of the day.

But there should be a limit to how far TNP is willing to go in maintaining its high circulation figures. Though Balji emphasised accuracy, this meticulousness did not extend to all of TNP's stories, as in the infamous case of mistaken identity involving former Deputy Prime Minister Toh Chin Chye.

However, in spite of TNP's slip-ups, readers still seem receptive toward what it has to offer. Mabel Mohan, a third-year ACC student, says she buys the paper almost every day because she can relate to its contents. For instance, the "Dear Aunt Aggie" column helps her in everyday life because of its local context. Thus, for all its shortcomings, TNP is above all a paper tailored to our local palates - a local pop icon.

INTERNET CHAT LINES

"The sight of blood quenches the thirst in my soul. Would you like to be my next victim?"

This is one of the many personas that Joice Toh, a third-year FMS student, assumes on an Internet chatline. Once there, she lets her imagination take control, switching with ease from being a psychotic killer to a complete nerd. Before you jump to any conclusions, rest assured that Joice is mentally sound. She's just one of the many NP students out for some fun in cyberspace.

The growth of the Internet in Singapore brought about a new pastime for local Net surfers - chatting on the Net. Currently, there are hundreds of electronic chat rooms available, some of which are just for specific groups of people. Even those who believe they are vampires will have no trouble finding a suitable chatline.

With this world wide interaction, it is no surprise that a local expression has found its way into international waters. The *Alamak Internet Chat* is a favourite with many NP students. Contrary to popular belief, *Alamak* is not based in Singapore, but rather, in Seattle, U.S.A.

The popularity of chatting on the Net can be attributed to the fact that it is an economical and simple method of getting to know more people from different cultures. Angeline Ng says that chatting on the Net allows us to "hear different views from all over the world ... it's an eye, or rather, ear opener".

Other students give another reason for the popularity of this activity - that of anonymity. For Syed Ismail, interacting on the Net gives him a "sense of security" as he can be himself without fear of being judged by others. He recalls spending up to eight hours a day chatting on *Alamak*.

While it may be true that chatting on the Net allows for mutual exchange of viewpoints and the opportunity to know more people, there are downsides to this activity too. Law Kok Hern, a third-year ME student, says he has stopped chatting on the Net as it is too time-consuming. In addition, Mabel Mohan claims that "those people who go on chatlines have no life at all", since there are many other ways in which they can pass the time.

NP students are certainly in tune with global change. But there are potential hazards to this "faceless interaction". A *Straits Times* report in February this year highlighted the dangers of using electronic chat rooms as meeting forums, as parties on the Net reveal very little of themselves to one another. In the article, Michael Plaut, a psychology professor, commented that while fruitful relationships can occur on the Net, there have been others that have "ended in rape and murder". So despite its current popularity, there's obviously room for caution in chatting on the Net, even as we watch to see if it will catch on as a "full-fledged" iconic activity in Singapore.



LOCAL MUSIC (ENGLISH)

Asian youths are marching to a new beat - the beat of "ethnic rock", or so claims the October '95 issue of *Asia Magazine*. "Ethnic rock", a mix of western-influenced sounds with Asian traditional instrumentation and contemporary local themes, has taken Malaysia, Thailand, Taiwan and the Philippines by storm. What is the impact of local music on Singaporean youths?

According to Sivodayan Pillai, a third-year CCS student, it is "undeniable that music is a part of our lives, and can be used to express not only feelings", but also to raise "political, emotional and racial issues". He observes that more local musicians are trying to move towards portraying honest messages and feelings.

"The local scene is on an upsurge right now, there's gigs to go to and new CDs to buy," says Gregory Tan, a third-year FMS student. Dean Ng, a second-year Electrical Engineering (EE) student, shares similar sentiments. He too is optimistic about the current local music scene, describing it as "up and coming".

In Sivodayan's opinion, the local music industry consists of "a lot of (local) wannabes trying to be as good as the bands in the American or British industry". However, he says that while a handful of musicians here are in a league of their own, they are not given enough recognition by the public. He cites X'Ho as an example, as he finds X'Ho's music "different and original".

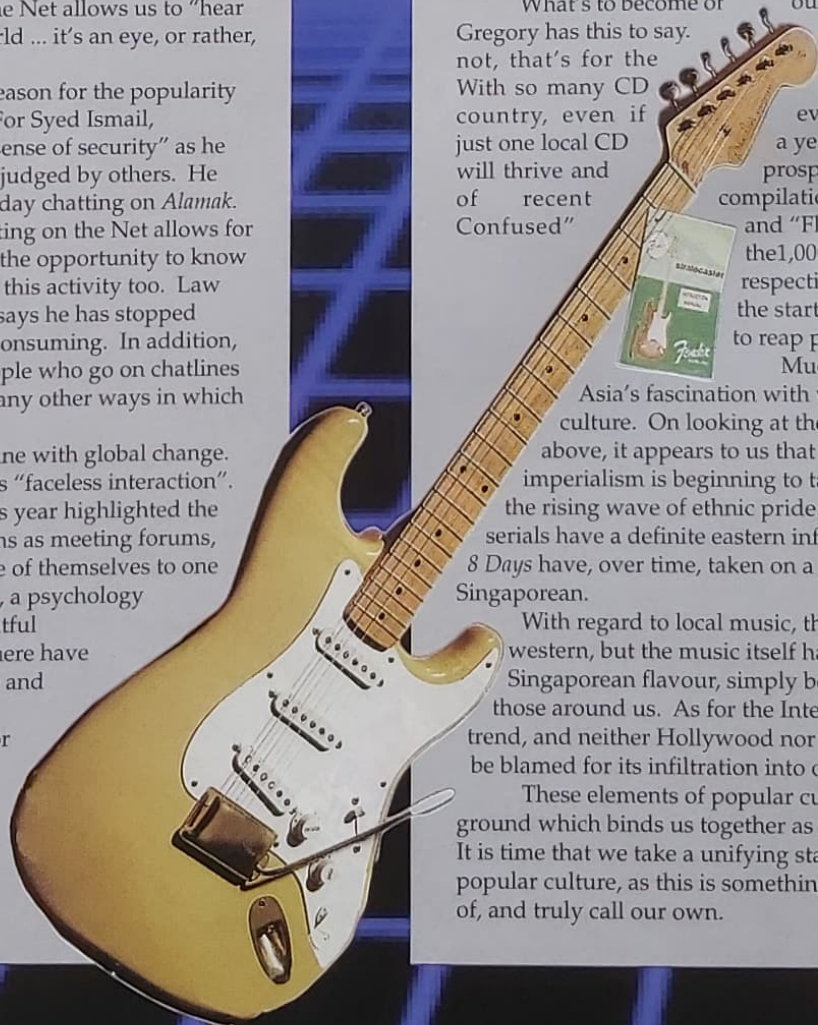
Gregory adds that a major concern surrounding local music is that many Singaporeans are still unreceptive towards it. He feels that the standards of recording and musicianship are now comparable to that of western bands, but sales of local albums are still "miserable". He says that local bands die off after several years because there is no motivation for them to keep making music.

What's to become of our local music scene? Gregory has this to say. "Whether it lasts or not, that's for the future to tell us. With so many CD players in the every household buys a year, I think the scene will thrive and prosper!" With sales figures of recent compilation albums "Dazed and Confused" and "Flush After Use" hitting the 1,000 and 1,500 mark respectively, this could signal the start of local music's ability to reap profits.

Much has been made of Asia's fascination with western popular culture. On looking at the icons identified above, it appears to us that western cultural imperialism is beginning to take a back seat against the rising wave of ethnic pride. Chinese local drama serials have a definite eastern influence, while *TNP* and *8 Days* have, over time, taken on a form that is distinctly Singaporean.

With regard to local music, the influences may be western, but the music itself has been infused with a Singaporean flavour, simply because it is written by those around us. As for the Internet, it is a global trend, and neither Hollywood nor western influence can be blamed for its infiltration into our homes.

These elements of popular culture serve as common ground which binds us together as young Singaporeans. It is time that we take a unifying stand in support of local popular culture, as this is something that we can be proud of, and truly call our own.



8 DAYS

You may remember the English Radio and Television Times, which came into existence in 1980. It was started to keep local audiences updated on programming and developments in the broadcast industry. However this magazine took a bow a decade later to make way for 8 Days, a vibrant and exciting magazine which soon became known as "Singapore's insider guide to television and entertainment".



for the latest Tinseltown and Caldecott stories, music and movie reviews, updates on the coolest eating places and the comprehensive guide to what's happening around town.

This full colour magazine, with an average weekly circulation of 73,000 copies, is a definite hit with many Singaporeans. "It's the best magazine in Singapore!" proclaims Zahid, a second-year student from the Film and Media Studies (FMS) Department. When he gets his weekly copy of 8 Days, he reads it from cover to cover. According to him, the magazine is a "ready and available source of information", especially on the entertainment industry. Agreeing with him are Mabel Mohan and Lynica Loh, who read 8 Days mainly for the movie reviews and celebrity news.

Yeo Hwee Ling, a third-year ACC student, buys 8 Days because it is affordable at just \$1.50 per copy. Another contributing factor to the popularity of 8 Days is that it provides synopses on Chinese drama serials. As Cecilia Ho, also a third-year ACC student says, it is "the only English entertainment magazine that provides this".

8 Days has garnered itself a faithful following through the years. Syed Ismail, a third-year ME student, describes the magazine as "addictive". With its fun and relaxed blend of news from the entertainment worlds of both the east and the west, the magazine may have just the right formula to cater to readers who want to have the best of both worlds.

According to Lawrence Lim, marketing services executive of 8 Days, the name of the magazine came about as it gives eight days of television listings, from Saturday to Saturday. But the magazine has certainly become more than just a listing of television programmes. It is after all the compact booklet

LOCAL DRAMA SERIALS

Some of us might consider ourselves part of the "MTV generation", but Koh Buck Song, a Straits Times journalist, feels otherwise. He refers to Singapore's youth as the "TCS (Television Corporation of Singapore) generation", brought up on what local television has to offer.

Over the years, Channel 8 has continued to dominate the local television scene, drawing over 1.5 million viewers daily. Synonymous with Channel 8 are local Chinese drama serials, which have come a long way since their early Singapore Broadcasting Corporation (SBC) days. What were once no-frills, low-budget productions are now slick packages of star-studded casts and exotic locations, à la "The Unbeatable" and "Golden Pillow".

These changes have not gone unnoticed by viewers. Michael Guok, a second-year student from the Centre for Computer Studies (CCS), laments that drama plots of today are too "involved with love, sex and violence". He misses serials of the past, which to him, were "more concerned with traditional values".

Liew Hwee Fong, a second-year ACC student, agrees that early serials were "more realistic". However, she thinks that current serials still attempt to portray the way of life here. She enjoys serials set in post-war Singapore, such as "Tofu Street", which give her an insight into how people lived in the past.

The plot intricacies of local serials have transcended language and cultural barriers to induce even non-Chinese viewers to tune in.

Seema Mathew, a second-year student from the Electronic and Computer Engineering (ECE) Department, recalls that she used to "rush back home every day and not go anywhere else", just so she could be in time to watch the serials. Others, such as Zahid, who speaks English and Malay, have managed to learn some basic Mandarin by following the serials' dialogue and English subtitles.

To Angela Tay, a third-year student from the Business Studies (BS) Department, drama serials are a good way to learn about local, as well as foreign cultures. She feels that local serials play a role in addressing youth-related issues such as teenage gangs and abortions, to better inform young people on what's happening in society. An example is "Tales of the City", a collection of stories inspired by real-life events which made news headlines.

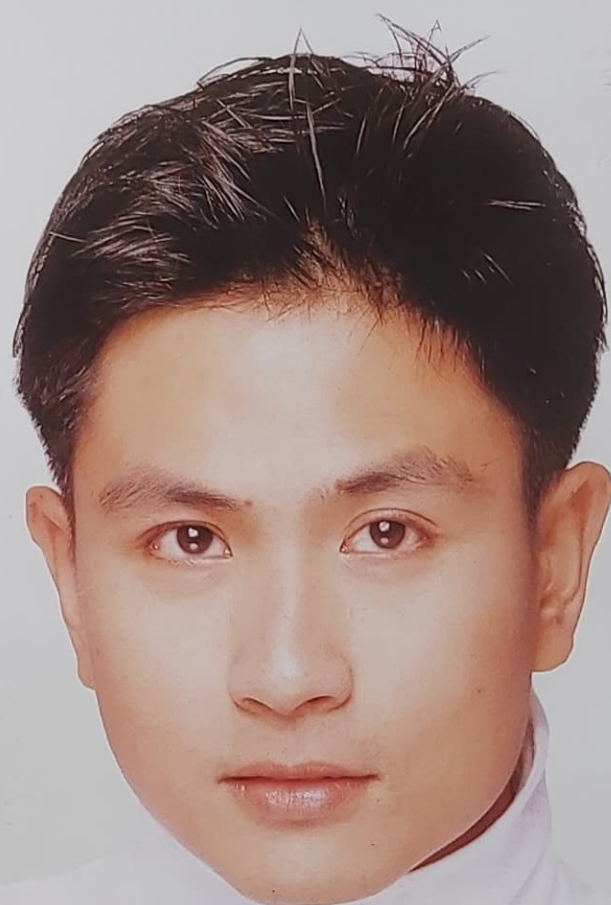
However, Angela points out that TCS may be compelled to go regional and produce serials to cater to foreign audiences' tastes, as "Singapore's market is very small". Hwee Fong comments that some local serials are beginning to resemble Hong Kong serials, especially in the gambling and action scenes.

Thus, there is a danger of TCS becoming over zealous in its quest to introduce more drama to its serials. These may then unwittingly translate into poor substitutes for less-than-ideal plots. As such, it is imperative that TCS, in the process of reaching out to a wider audience, bears in mind the needs of its audience at home.



Will the Real Chew Chor Meng Please Stand Up?

Photograph courtesy of TCS



You've seen him meting out j
lobangs as property agent Ah Be
a scholar in Witty Advisor. But wh
graduate steals some time from h
YIP SAU LENG, and sheds some li

Meng
his voice comes
animated despite some
crackling over the phoneline. Speaking
from his handphone during a break from
filming, TCS actor Chew Chor Meng sounds
more like a student in his teens than the 29-
year-old celebrity he is.

The Electronic and Computer
Engineering (ECE) graduate who received
his diploma in 1988, sounded a little
cautious initially. It was only after a brief
but friendly introduction that he started to
warm up, switching comfortably between
fluent Mandarin and English. Amidst
frequent disruptions from the television
crew, the interview takes off with the man of
many onscreen personas.

Those Were The Days — Poly Life

Hands up those of you who have to
fight the morning crowd on the bus and
traffic jams to get to class on time every
morning. It might comfort you to know that
Chor Meng experienced the same
frustration when he was a student.

The actor recalls, "Because I stay so
far away from NP, I had to get up very early
in the mornings to catch the bus, switch
buses and fight the crowd. I usually ended
up feeling very sleepy during the first few
lessons of the day."

Given his bubbly screen personality,
few know that boyish-looking Chor Meng
was actually a laid-back student who kept a
low profile in NP. He maintained a heavy
schedule that saw him juggling several part-
time jobs with his studies — any job "as
long as it paid."

Campus life was rather uneventful
for Chor Meng. "Life is peaceful then," he
recounts. "I didn't have a particular
hangout spot but if a canteen can be
counted, then it's Canteen Four. It's near
the Mechanical Engineering block and I
used to go there three, four times a week
for the chicken chop that cost \$2.70."

Although he did not participate in
any ECA while in school, his NP diploma
was the security blanket for Chor Meng to
fall back on should his dream of being an
actor turn out less than ideal. The street-
wise actor says he chose to study ECE out of
interest, but at the same time, he took into
consideration other factors such as market
demand and job security.

It is with this maturity that he
expressed a strong determination to succeed
in his studies back in NP. "It was my
ambition to do well for my exams even
though I didn't have a lot of time to study. I
wanted to get what I felt I deserved because
I toiled to support myself through school."

However, he was rather
disappointed with his mediocre results.
"Looking back, there were many other
students who were working and studying at
the same time but they managed to obtain
very good results. Yet, I couldn't and in a
way, I feel ashamed of myself," he
reminisces, his voice tinged with regret.

The Making of a Star

In Mandarin, Chew Chor Meng's
name means "famous" phonetically. It
seems that this Star Search 1990 winner had
his talent in acting honed from childhood.
Before joining Television Corporation of
Singapore (TCS) which was then known as
the Singapore Broadcasting Corporation
(SBC), Chor Meng was already an
experienced stage actor as a member of the
Chuen Lei Cultural Association.

His love for stage acting was
developed at an early age when his mother
took him to watch street operas. Thus, it
was interest and pragmatism that prompted
Chor Meng to enter Star Search. "Firstly, I
like to act. Secondly, the prizes were very
attractive." Speaking from experience, he
points out that, "Star Search is a very good
spring-board for those who want to break
into acting."

His acting career took off after he
became the first male winner of Star Search.
From his debut as a kind-hearted boy in the
sword-fighting serial *The Last Swordsman* to
his latest role as Lucky Boy in TCS' most
watched drama of 1996, *The Unbeatables II*,
Chor Meng has chalked up a notable
resume with more than 15 drama serials
and telemovies under his belt. And now,
having tackled acting, he is giving a shot at
singing in "Nan Yan Zhi Yin", a CD
compilation album featuring eight other
TCS male artistes.

"I've tried both acting and singing,
but I think I'm better at acting," Chor Meng
comments. "For singing, you express
yourself through your voice. For acting,
you express yourself through body
language and actions. Both are challenging
in their own ways, but I prefer acting."

In Real Life and Reel Life

One of NP's most watched graduates
to date, Chor Meng remains humble about
his success despite attaining fame and
popularity. "Am I successful? I don't think
so. I can't define my own success. I think it
should be left to the audience to decide
whether I'm successful or not."

His dimples and ever-ready smile
are a winning combination though they
may eventually stifle his growth as an actor.
Chor Meng realises that audiences tend to
pigeon-hole him as "crazy and childish"
and protests that he is Chew Chor Meng
and not the characters he plays. "Actually,
I'm mature! It's just that my boyish
appearance and the roles that I have taken
on have made people dubious of my
maturity," groans the actor.

"When you really get to know me,
you'll find that I'm not like that (talkative
and carefree) at all. One has to draw the
line between reel life and real life," he says.
"If you really know me, sometimes I might
not even speak more than 10 words a day
unless I'm acting or I have to be talkative
professionally."

In the fickle world of show business,
Chor Meng seems to have found the key to
surviving and succeeding in his reel as well
as real life. "I'm flexible. In terms of my
acting career, I have been given the chance
to play different roles and bring out
different emotions in my characters."

"I'm also flexible in terms of dealing
with people. By that, I mean that when I
come in contact with various situations or
problems, I have to adapt and make do," he
reveals.

Parting Shots

"My philosophy towards life is just
one word, 'smile' — which in Mandarin is
xiao kan ren jian (look upon the world with a
smile)," says Chor Meng.

"It's a very optimistic outlook on life
— we can't possibly be pessimistic because
life itself is sad," he continues, sounding
thoughtful and serious. "It is full of ironies
and paradoxes, but we still have to face it
with a smile."

With these parting words, Chew
Chor Meng is off again, back to the
Caldecott world of make-believe where the
television crew is waiting for him to slip
back into his screen personality.

Justice as Young Justice Bao, scrounging for
e in Don't Worry, Be Happy and wisecracking as
at is the real Chew Chor Meng like? The NP
is hectic schedule to talk to PAULINE TEO and
ht on himself in the process.

New releases, classic evergreens, compilation albums... HYPE brings you some choice albums worth a second look.

SIMPLY RED
"GREATEST HITS"

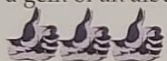
Simply Red Greatest Hits



A greatest hits collection seems to be *de rigueur* for any artiste who has achieved a considerable amount of commercial success. Simply Red is no exception. For lead singer Mick Hucknall, this compilation is a culmination of 10 years of hard work and five excellent albums.

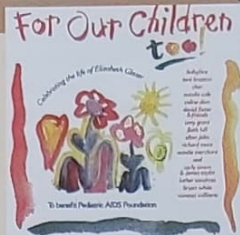
What makes this compilation so different is that it shows Hucknall's career progression from funk to soul to pop, and finally to hip-hop on the latest single, Angel, a collaboration with rap faves of the moment, The Fugees. You'll be won over by Hucknall's vocals which have mellowed through the years together with his change in musical direction.

Simply Red's songs are not just about love and the search for the perfect relationship. Hucknall writes with his heart about other relationships ("For Your Babies"), self-confidence ("Your Mirror"), as well as social issues ("Money's Too Tight To Mention"). These together with Hucknall's choice of cover songs ("If You Don't Know Me By Now") are what make "Greatest Hits" a gem of an album.



DJ LENA LEE

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"FOR OUR CHILDREN, TOO!"



With all the heightened controversy surrounding the issue of AIDS today, it's good to know international recording artistes are doing their bit for charity. *For Our Children, Too!* is a compilation of classic hits, nursery rhymes and lullabies dedicated to AIDS victims. Aimed at raising funds for the American Pediatric Foundation, this album presents the smooth renditions of songs sung by Babyface, Seal and other equally established international singers - but with a twist.

The songs on this album are sung in mixed styles of jazz, pop and soul. Listen up for a refreshing version of the classical Brahms's Lullaby crooned by Celine Dion. Coupled with relaxing instrumental backup, Celine sings freely, occasionally adding her own emotional improvisations. Bringing the album to an alluring end is David Foster's theme composition, "Love Lights the World" - a heart-felt rendition dedicated to giving hope to AIDS-afflicted children.

The general mood may not go down too well with non-sentimentalists. However, its saving grace derives from the fact that it's for a good cause. Strictly for the emotional.



DJ LISA TAN

RONALD CHENG
"DON'T LOVE ME"



The name Ronald Cheng may not be as much of a household name to fans of Chinese pop compared to Jacky Cheung and Andy Lau. However in this album, the man shows that he is certainly a force to be reckoned with.

With this album, Cheng has proven his talents as a *shi li pai ge shou* (singers with substance) especially in slow and mid-tempo songs. His prowess is especially apparent in the poignant "Don't Give Me A Heartache" and the title track, "Don't Love Me".

The album also contains two Cantonese tracks, "Moving Away" and "Joke". Despite the fact that Cheng is now based in Taiwan and speaks Mandarin as well as the Taiwanese do, it is in his native tongue, Cantonese, that his emotive voice truly shines through.

Some may fault Cheng for not taking bolder steps towards experimenting with different music genres, but nevertheless, "Don't Love Me" is an excellent album worth listening to over and over again.



DJ LENA LEE

"It is easy to go down into Hell: night and day, the gates of dark death stand wide: but to climb back again, to retrace one's steps to the upper air - there's the rub, the task."

— Virgil, *The Aeneid*

Taken from the pages of *Diablo's* game manual, this bit of Roman literature sets the perfect atmosphere for Blizzard Entertainment's latest offering to the gaming universe. It also aptly sums up what the game is about: fighting through the layers of the Burning Hells, defeating Diablo (hence the name of the game), the demonic Lord of Terror, and surviving to tell the tale.

Dark, brooding and filled with enough arcane magic and rituals to satisfy the most demanding computer gamers, *Diablo* is a RPG (role-playing game) that's likely to set new standards for future games of this genre. Essentially, it combines the simplicity of a 'kill 'em all' action-packed dungeon and the addictive plot of an adventure game with the exploratory involvement of a classic RPG format. The game is played via a third-person perspective, similar to *Origin's* *Crusader: No Remorse* and *Crusader: No Regret*.

Designed exclusively for the Windows 95 platform, *Diablo* boasts a 'randomizer' feature which ensures that each time the game is played, the dungeon is different. Talk about replay value! One

can literally play the game again and again, and each time, there will be different monsters to battle, new items to discover and fresh quests to fulfil. The character interface is also simple and slick, giving you information on your character's vital statistics at a mouse-click.

Diablo is even better in multi-player mode, and was in fact designed with Blizzard's online gaming server *Battle.net* in mind. This server provides an arena for anyone to chat, challenge each other, and initiate multi-player games over the Internet, free! All that is needed is an open Internet connection and a copy of the game, of course.



DJ LARRY LON

But be warned: there are 'player-killers' running around loose who take the greatest pleasure in slaying others for their gold and items, so watch your virtual back!

Visually, the game is a masterpiece of programming, with more than 200,000 frames of animation for the 200-odd monsters and nasty creatures scattered throughout the dungeon levels, all clamouring for your blood. The 3D-rendered SVGA graphics make the sinister, cheerless dungeon atmosphere almost palpable. The walls also become translucent when your character approaches so that you don't miss hidden treasures or monstrosities.

One common complaint though, from reviewers and *Battle.net* gamers alike, is that the emphasis on point-and-click "user-friendliness" is almost overwhelming. Another lament is that when the monsters attack in force (and they often do), the cursor-oriented approach is insufficient and ineffective in dealing with the chaotic scenario.

A Pentium processor (recommended minimum speed is 90 Mhz) with at least 16MB of RAM and a quad-speed CD-ROM drive is needed to get the most out of the game, otherwise expect some slow-downs in animation and CD-access delays.

Diablo and the *Battle.net* server were created by Blizzard Entertainment. *Diablo* was officially released nationwide on January 7 and is distributed by Berkeley Multimedia. It retails for \$56.90 and is available at most PC gaming shops and major bookstore chains.

Movies have become pervasive icons of popular culture since 1895. This is especially so for Hollywood and its glittering world of movies and stars. However in recent years, movies made outside Tinseltown have also emerged to give the world a slice of other diverse cultures. Here is a palate of foreign movies available at NP's Library Media Centre that will whet your appetite for more.

RUAN LINGYU



Ruan Lingyu, one of China's most famous actresses during the silent movie era, is the main character in this movie which chronicles her rise to stardom and her doomed love affair. Ruan Lingyu became a movie legend as well as a tragic heroine after committing suicide at 25.

Maggie Cheung's heartfelt performance as Ruan Lingyu won her a Golden Horse Award for Best Actress in 1991 in this true story. This movie also won the Silver Bear Award at the 1992 Berlin Film Festival.

Viewers might be unaccustomed to the director's unconventional style of combining both film and documentary footage, which occasionally breaks the continuity of the entire movie. Mainly reserved for fans of Ruan Lingyu!

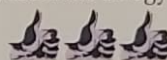


THREE COLOURS: BLUE, WHITE, RED

The three films in this well-crafted trilogy are interpretations of the French Revolutionary ideals symbolised by the three colours of France's flag.

In Blue, a woman struggles to overcome the grief and pain of losing her composer husband and only child in a car crash. White is a black comedy about a man who exacts revenge on his ex-wife, with unpredictable and disastrous results. In Red, a woman befriends a lonely retired judge who eavesdrops on other people's lives through their phone conversations.

Each movie builds upon the previous one, with Red reaching a climax where the characters from all three movies meet a common destiny. To find out what destiny fate has bestowed on them, catch the trilogy.



WINGS OF DESIRE



This surreal tale tells of angels and mortals whose lives intertwine in Berlin after the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Damien, an angel falls in love with a lonely female trapeze artist and eventually renounces his immortality to be with her.

This film speaks of liberation and the promise of freedom brought on by the fall of the Berlin wall. This is symbolised by the transformation of Damien from an angel into a human in this movie.

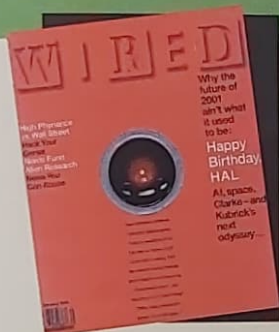
Some viewers may find this movie too abstract for their liking. Nonetheless, this movie showcases breathtaking scenes shot in both black and white, and colour. This movie deserves a watch.



by YIP SAU LENG

We go in search of other hip and savvy magazines for the young and trendy youths of today...

WIRED MAGAZINE



This is a high-tech monthly containing features on the computer revolution. A few pages are dedicated to a forum where you learn about advances in technology with an emphasis on computers. Modern technology is praised or criticized and this magazine comes along with a weird, scientific touch.

The feature articles have intriguing headlines, stretching your imagination to the limit. One such article is "Fantastic Voyage" which traces an angler's encounter with a spiritual fish, where the environment and artifact were contrasted with vivid absurdity.

This magazine is one of the more expensive ones costing \$12 and is available only from specific stores. One such place is the famous Holland Village magazine stall. *Wired* entertains but unless you're a computer nerd, you may not understand the complex technical terms used. Definitely a magazine for the computer generation!



LIME MAGAZINE

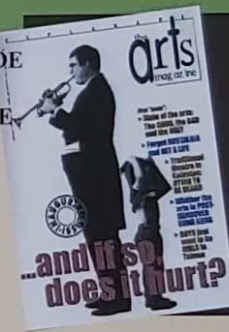


This is one of the latest monthly in town, but it's very much similar to *8 Days* save for the fact that it doesn't have a television guide. It is packed full of features and interviews with pop and movie stars, plus the latest fashion trends, juicy gossip, pin-ups and cover stories featuring someone from the brat pack or the lowdown on some established or up and coming bands.

Lime's regular features consist of letters from readers commenting how much they love the magazine, a page or two on a well-known local celebrity giving his/her life story, the latest gossip from Hollywood (which by the time we read it is already old news). Even the freebies and advertisements, as inviting as they might be, are replicas of those found in *8 Days*. However its advantage is both its price (\$2) and availability. It makes excellent reading material on the bus without taxing your brain in the slightest.



ESPLANADE THE ARTS MAGAZINE



The first and only monthly arts magazine in Singapore, *Esplanade* solely explores the arts scene. Its language, although flowery, is thought-provoking. Even if you're not an arts fanatic, you can still learn a few interesting points. It has in-depth stories with the theme of the arts within the local context. *Esplanade* reflects upon the role of the arts and its place in the face of chaos in the 20th century. There are also personal accounts such as articles on the political changes in Hong Kong before it reverts to China in July.

Like most magazines, *Esplanade* carries a forum page where you can share your most intimate obsessions, anecdotes, loves, hates and complaints. You are also given details of upcoming venues and dates for concerts, conferences, dances and competitions. If you're into the arts, this is the magazine for you. Costing \$4.90, *Esplanade* is available from most major bookstores. Indeed, this mag should please the arty-ones.



Hype's rating scale:

Don't waste your time (we wasted ours)

Thumb through, don't buy.

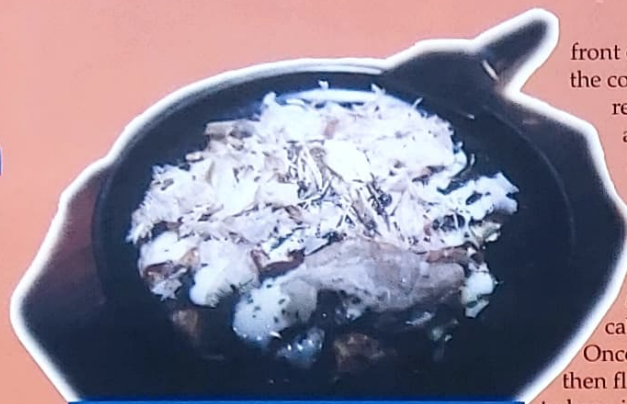
Both thumbs up - Cool!

Highly addictive - Proceed at your own risk!

by KIM FRANCIS

Erratum: In our previous issue, Ben E. King's name was incorrectly written as "B.B. King" in the video review for "Stand By Me."

Japanese Pizza. Anyone?



By CLEMENT TAY

There's more to Japanese food than just *sushi* and *tempura*, and it comes in the shape of an aromatic, perfectly grilled pancake. Called *okonomiyaki*, it's Japan's alternative to the Italian pizza and this traditional Osaka palate-pleaser can be found in Okonomiyaki House: Iroha 168

The rich aroma of *okonomiyakis* sizzling on the grill really whets your appetite. You can choose to dine right in

front of the grill counter or sit at the cooler tables outside the restaurant. Iroha 168's simple and cosy decor somehow reminds you of a typical Japanese eatery feature in *Japan Hour*.

Okonomiyakis are a mixture of ingredients such as thick batter, Japanese cabbage, and meat or seafood.

Once ready, the *okonomiyaki* is then flipped onto a small hot-plate to keep it warm. It is then sprinkled

with a special tangy sauce, Japanese mayonnaise and dried, brown slivers of fish called *bonito* flakes. Although it is about the size of a personal pan pizza, the ingredients make it a tantalising and surprisingly filling treat. The fun part of Iroha 168 is that you can attempt to make your own *okonomiyaki* at no extra charge.

The *okonomiyakis* come in various sizes and types. There's the "mini-*okonomiyakis*" (\$8-\$12) for smaller appetites, standard sized *okonomiyakis* (about six to seven inches in diameter), and "Osaka-Jyo"

(\$66.80), a family sized *okonomiyaki* serving up to four. For the more selective eaters or vegetarians, you can customize your *okonomiyaki* as well.

The chef recommends Iroha 168's most popular *okonomiyaki*, the *Iroha Deluxe* (\$16.80) containing beef, pork, cuttlefish, prawns and scallops. If you happen to like *yakisoba* (fried Japanese noodles), then Iroha 168's *Modern-Yaki* (\$19-\$22 depending on the portion) may just be for you. However, this clever concoction combining both *yakisoba* and *okonomiyaki*, is more oily than the *okonomiyakis*.

Okonomiyaki House Iroha 168 is at #B1-06/08, Orchard Hotel Shopping Arcade, 442 Orchard Road, Singapore 238879. Opening hours are daily from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Specialty for HYPE readers: Present your NP student card and receive a 20% discount when you spend \$15 and above in a single receipt. This offer is valid from May 1 to July 31, 1997 during weekdays only.

CHEAP

Subway - Build It Your Way

By EVELYN TAN

"Gosh, I'm so hungry I could eat a submarine." Not something you'll hear often, but this could come to change. Subway, ranked by Entrepreneur Magazine as the world's second largest fast-food chain, has arrived in Singapore.

"Submarines" or "subs" are large submarine-shaped sandwiches. The Subway concept was born in the summer of 1965, when a young man by the name of Fred DeLuca, together with a family friend, opened a sandwich shop in his home town of Bridgeport, Connecticut, in a bid to pay for his college tuition. Today, Fred is relishing his success, with more than 12,000 Subway outlets around the world.

Currently, there're two Subway food stands in

Singapore, at Orchard Hotel Shopping Arcade and Lau Pa Sat. But there are plans to open more Subway food stands and restaurants in Singapore soon.

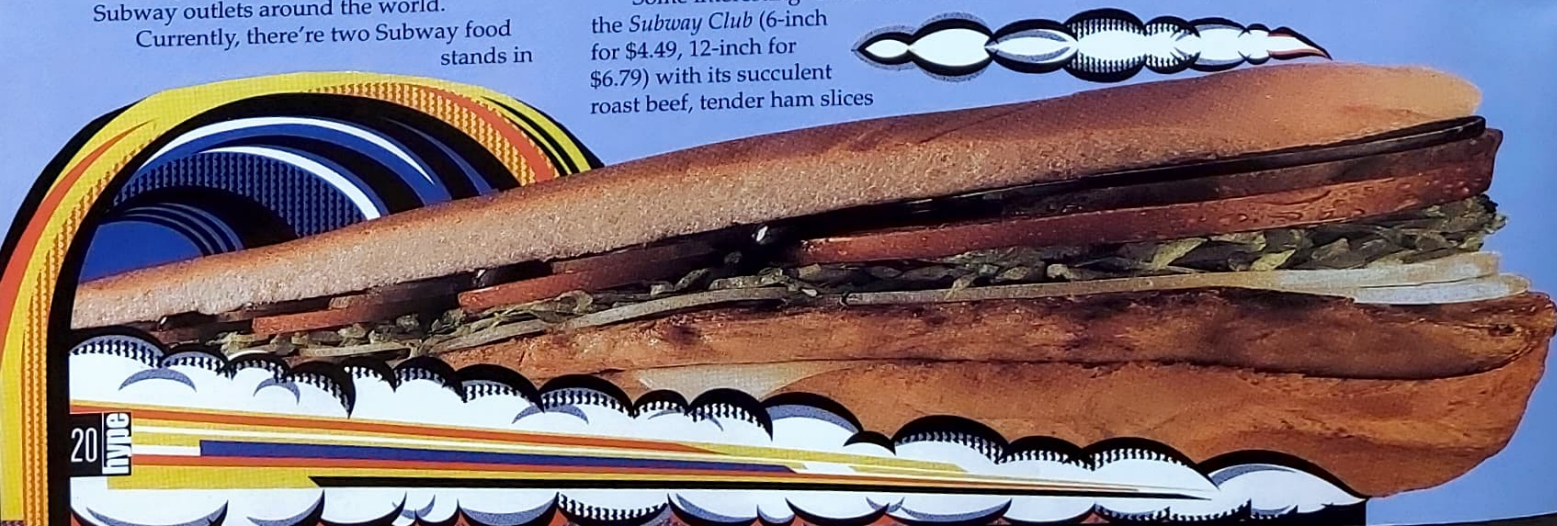
Once you get to a Subway stand, apart from choosing the size of your "sub" (6-inch for less than \$6, 12-inch for less than \$8), you have to make other major decisions. "Brown" wheat bread or "white" Italian bread? Some or all of the free toppings of cheese, tomatoes, peppers, pickles, onions and lettuce? You can also enlist the help of the counter staff, better known as Sandwich Artists, to create your very own "sub" just the way you like it.

Some interesting "subs" to savour are the *Subway Club* (6-inch for \$4.49, 12-inch for \$6.79) with its succulent roast beef, tender ham slices

and turkey meat; and the *Classic Italian B.M.T.*, which stands for "Bigger, Meatier and Tastier" (6-inch for \$4.09, 12-inch for \$6.59). The *B.M.T.* comes with ham, *genoa salami* (medium spiced sausage made from pork), bologna and pepperoni.

So the next time you're starving and strapped for cash, forget McDonald's and the like, and head down to Subway. It's one place where people still care about giving you exactly what you want.

The Subway sandwich stands are located at Orchard Hotel Shopping Arcade, #B1-13, and Lau Pa Sat, #68-70. The Orchard Hotel stand opens from 10 a.m. to 2 a.m. daily, while the Lau Pa Sat stand opens 24 hours daily.



McDosai, Takeaway Please!

The East meets West phenomenon has seen the opening of an unconventional Indian vegetarian restaurant - Komala's. Located in the midst of Serangoon Road, the restaurant has broken new ground by incorporating a fast-food theme to its once strictly traditional format.



As you enter Komala's, you can't help but notice the interior which is remarkably similar to popular fast-food restaurants such as McDonalds or Burger King. K.M. Sekar, the man behind Komala's success, explains that the restaurant serves as a "new and inexpensive place for Singaporeans and tourists who want unfamiliar food served in

a familiar way."

Komala's serves a wide variety of tasty North sets of 'combo' meals and served on disposable plates. There are no tongue-twisting Indian names to pronounce, as Sekar explains that "customers need not feel embarrassed of mispronouncing names. It is now a matter of combo A, B or C."

The *masala dosai* and *onion uttapam* are highly recommended for those looking for a light snack. The former is an enormous light crepe rolled around potato mixed with mustard seed. The *onion uttapam* is a savoury pancake livened with generous amounts of green chilli peppers that are surprisingly not hot. Diners preferring a heavy meal should opt for the South Indian rice meal which comes together with numerous side dishes that are sure to scintillate the taste-buds of every customer.

Authentic yogurt-based drinks such as *lassi* and *badham* are available at \$1.60 and \$1.80 respectively. These beverages are a must to complement your meal at Komala's. The restaurant, strategically located in the heart of Little India, is a popular tourist hangout. So don't be taken aback when you hear a tourist saying aloud, "McDosai, takeaway please!"

Komala's is at 3-9 Upper Dickson Road, off Serangoon Road, across the road from Zhujiao market. Their opening hours are from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily.

By M. JAIGANESH

20% discount at Okonomiyaki House Iroha

See Article on Pg 20 for details



Present this coupon

Get a Silver Chain

worth S\$22.90

for just \$8

With any purchase of the Warner Bros Series Silver Jewellery worth \$50 and above.

Offer valid till July 31, 1997

Coin City and Only Gold
Suntec City Mall
#01-086

Only original coupons are accepted



Tel : 223-8744

10% OFF Parawing Joy Flying

\$2 off Indoor Snow session at Ski Centre

Valid everyday until November 20, 1997

Not valid with other promotions or accompanied by local guide

Only original coupons are accepted

Spice It Up With Al Ameen

By N. CHANDRAN

Conspicuously located among a row of shop-lots along Cheong Chin Nam Road, opposite Beauty World Centre in Bukit Timah, is Al-Ameen Eating House. Bustling with life 'till the wee hours of the morning, this Thai-Muslim restaurant is popular among residents and patrons from as far away as Pasir Ris or Johor Bahru.

Brightly lit in the night, you can choose to sit outside and enjoy the cool night's breeze or feast in comfort of the clean and cosy semi-air-conditioned interior. Customers who are unfamiliar with Al-Ameen can refer to a montage of photographs mounted on the walls for their orders or from a simple menu.

Constantly luring new customers through its value-for-money dishes (standard prices of \$2 to \$3), Al-Ameen is a haven of tantalizing Thai-Muslim dishes prepared by chefs who have attended a six-month culinary course in Thailand.

Enjoy the likes of *Nasi Daging Merah* - rice served with sliced beef and an irresistible sauce mixed with the right amount of pepper and chilli leaving a Thai touch to it. For a more local taste, *Goreng Thai* (fried rice with oyster sauce, garnished with onion



and peas) is your ideal choice. The thick gravy in both dishes leave a savoury and spicy after-taste in your mouth.

Another popular choice is the seafood. It is both delicious and value for money with its generous portions. Choose from a variety of local fishes such as the sea bass and garoupa or even crab which can be cooked with a

gravy called *tigarasu* (a Malay word meaning three tastes) that blends all three tastes of sour, hot and sweetness. The seafood dishes come in small, medium and large sizes ranging from \$10 to \$18, depending on the type and weight of the seafood.

So if you're searching for a place that serves affordable and authentic meals with an exotic taste, come on down to Al-Ameen Eating House and enjoy a treat in Thai-Muslim flavour - the friendly Al-Ameen style!

Al-Ameen Eating House is at 4, Cheong Chin Nam Road (along Bukit Timah Road, opposite Beauty World Centre). Opening hours are from 11 a.m. to 3.30 a.m. daily.

Present this coupon or your NP student card

15% discount

BREEKS!
The American Restaurant + Cafe

#02-100C, Marina Square

Valid till July 31, 1997

Not valid on eve of public holidays, with other promotions or ONEBUCK coffee days.

Only original coupons are accepted

Good food and great ambience coupled with a sense of creativity is hard to find these days. However, look no further because that's exactly the hallmark of Breeks. Breeks dishes out a blend of wholesome pan-American food originating from four different regions of the United States.

Set against a funky backdrop of brown, red and deep green walls, Breeks' real specialty is its decor divided into three sections. There is the traditional American-style theme with stark brick walls and painted pictures for the more conservative. Then, there is the loud and

More To Breeks Than Meets The Eye

By SHARANJIT KAUR

provocative setting, where cheeky posters and signboards add a playful distraction to your meal. For the more contemporary who're into music and fashion, the back of the restaurant would be most appealing.

There are glossy fashion pin-ups and movie memorabilia from the familiar *Friends* posters to a portrait of Kramer from *Seinfeld*.

Just like its decor, Breeks' menu is colourful and adventurous in variety. The *Beer Battered Mushrooms* (white button mushrooms covered in American beer batter and deep fried with tartar sauce) is an excellent choice for an appetizer at \$5.50. Next on your list should be the mouthwatering *Cajun*

Blackened Fish, priced at \$12.90. Served with a tangy sauce made from herbs and spices, this dish might be a little too spicy for some taste buds. To complete your meal, try the *Barbecued Chicken and Cob* priced at \$12.90. This succulent-tasting chicken spread is charcoal-broiled with the truly traditional American barbecue recipes.

The prices for most main meals generally range from \$6 to \$18. The servings of the dishes are relatively large but for a smaller appetite, Breeks incorporates into its menu a 'Half Moon' special, a term coined for dishes where the portions are smaller just to accommodate one person.

A place for any time and occasion, Breeks promises to blend creativity into your meals. So the next time you crave some Yankee fare, feast your eyes and stomach on Breeks.

Breeks is at #02-100C, Marina Square. Opening hours are from 11.30 a.m. to 11 p.m., Mondays to Saturdays and from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Sundays. For reservations call 339 5545.



Photo courtesy of Breeks Cafe

Trendy Eats

Design-A-Pasta

By LENA LEE

Think pasta and the typical *spaghetti bolognese* and *fettuccine alfredo* spring to mind. However, it's a different scenario altogether at Sketches, the outlet where you create your own pasta dishes.

One of the best things about designing your own pasta at Sketches is that you can take your pick from a wide variety of pastas, sauces, garnishes and toppings from a convenient tick-off menu. Select a maximum of three types of pastas from a range which includes *penne*, *fusilli*, *ravioli* and *spaghetti*. The last is available in regular or wheat versions, while the *fusilli* comes plain or tomato-flavoured. Choose up to six garnishes - sausage, ham, fresh mushrooms, clams and even snow peas.

Your personal creation comes in two serving sizes. If you're feeling absolutely ravenous, then the 'Starving' portion (\$13.90) is the one for you.

Alternatively, order the 'Hungry' portion (\$9.90), a regular serving size similar to those found in other pasta restaurants.

While waiting for your food to arrive, soak in the warm, classy atmosphere of this spacious outlet. With its rich, yellow walls and wooden furniture complemented by soft lighting, Sketches is a great place to unwind and have a leisurely chat with a friend.

As for dessert, Sketches serves spaghetti ice-cream. This icy confection arrives looking like a plate of the popular pasta! The vanilla-flavoured 'spaghetti' is topped with chocolate flakes and a generous helping of raspberry or strawberry sauce providing a tangy touch to the otherwise ordinary ice-cream. Sketches also has a fine selection of wines in addition to the usual beverages. For a thirst-quenching

and calorie-free alternative, the lemon-flavoured iced water available at \$1 per bottle.

Sketches is a popular joint for people from all walks of life. So whether you're a student, a yuppie or a senior executive, you'll feel right at home at Sketches where you get a chance to design the pasta dish that's after your own heart.

Sketches is located at #01-85/86/97, Parco Bugis Junction, 200 Victoria Street. Opening hours are from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. and from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. (weekdays); and from 12 p.m. to 10 p.m. (weekends). For reservations, dial 339 8386.



Photo courtesy of Sketches

And The Memories Live On... • by Terry Johal

*Tears run down my face
for myself
no
but
for you*

*Alright you say you are
look inside
is it
true*

*Wear this
wear that
which is right
which is your shoe*

*Nobody's perfect
will you want
to be
someone new*

*What to say
what to do
What is my cue
What is your cue*

*One person
that is all I ask
for you to be
but who*

*You know what is false
yet
know not what
is true*

*There was a you
a me
but now
who's who.*

This poem was written by Mohd. Salai, station manager of Radio Heatwave, a few months before he died while on holiday in Bali, Indonesia. It is reflective of the way he lived his life, believing in living the moment lest it never returns. "He wished his dreams and learned to live them. He cherished life and taught me the same," says Donovan Chan, a close friend and final-year Film and Media Studies (FMS) student.

Always one to have big dreams, Salai was instrumental in making events such as Launchpad '96 and the Heatwave Gig such successes, even in the face of adversity. He was involved in every step of the preparation such as logistics, obtaining sponsorships, liaising with external organisations, obtaining permission for the use of venues and overseeing the smooth running of these big events which drew thousands and raised the profile of the campus radio station.

According to Tan Yean Loon, assistant promotions manager of Radio Heatwave, it was mainly through Salai's efforts that the campus station made its mark. "Salai got himself involved at all levels of organisation. He was a leader who led by example and not just assigning tasks to others, but by performing next to us," adds Yean Loon.

Salai had an optimistic and positive outlook. He believed that anything could be achieved if one tried hard enough. "Salai had a 'never-say-die' attitude. Even when I had reservations about taking on too much responsibilities for Heatwave, Salai was always the one motivating and making us believe in

completing the tasks against the odds," says Clement Tay, promotions manager of Radio Heatwave.

"I remember Salai always with a smile on his face. He was such a good student, perhaps not academically, but definitely as a person. Fellow students looked up to him as a mentor and big brother," says Ms Tonina Penney, a lecturer at FMS.

Indeed, the time Salai spent here may be short, but memories of him will last a long time.



Discovery Day

It was a day full of love dedications for lovers and hugs to friends. The Valentine's Day-cum-Friendship Day on January 31, 1997 at Canteen One of Ngee Ann Polytechnic was set in an atmosphere of carnival-like fun. Students across the campus gathered to make known their affection for someone special or strengthen friendship ties.

For the first time, students of the Business Studies (BS) department celebrated Valentine's Day-cum-Friendship Day as part of their academic project.

A dedication booth was one of the four stalls set up to receive messages ranging from the more modest "Happy Valentine's Day-cum-Friendship Day to all my friends" to the more aggressive "Call me as soon as you hear this dedication. I will be waiting." The celebration spirit was further enhanced by the playing of pop and sentimental hits and balloons selling for \$2 - \$7, depending on their shapes and sizes.

Corene Phang, a third-year Accountancy (ACC) student said, "I think an event such as this is great. I don't usually tell my friends that I appreciate them, so this is an opportunity for me to do so."

Judging by the amount of balloons seen around campus that day, Valentine's Day-cum-Friendship Day will become a permanent event on BS's calendar.

by Fionna Wee

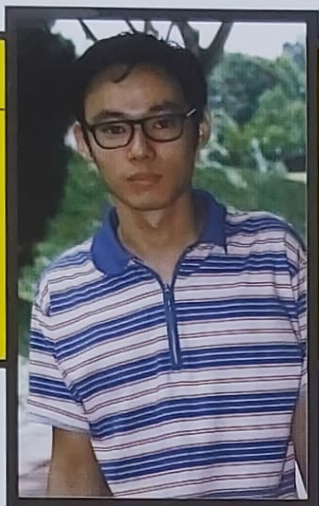
What to WEAR? What to WEAR?

One of the good things about studying at a polytechnic is that you no longer have to wear school uniforms. With the freedom to dress the way they want, Ngee Ann students strike a pose for N. CHANDRAN and PRAMELA THIAGASEN on campus as they tell us why they wear what they wear.

Studios

"I guess students have a good sense of dressing and personally, my style of dressing is pretty normal."

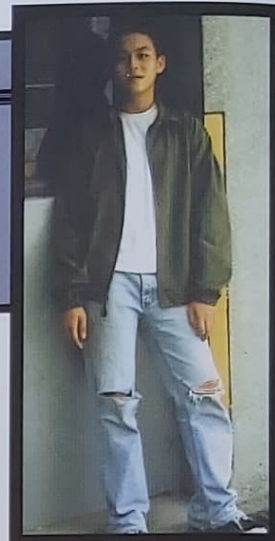
Eddy Tan, EE, Year 3



Rugged

"I guess you have to form a concept from what you listen to and believe in. Then you can dress according to that concept."

Lin Fangshi, BEM, Year 3



New Age

"I listen to trance music and I simply feel comfortable with the way I dress ... I like my style!"

Michelle Aw, ACC, Year 1



Flower Power

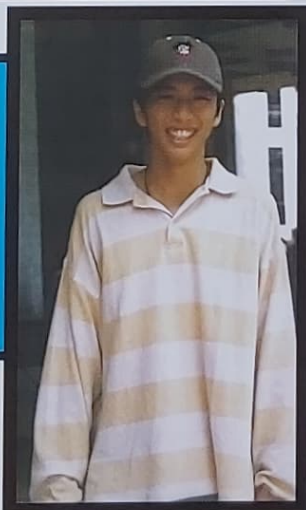
"Fashion is tedious, it's hard to keep up. I buy my clothes from *pasar malam* and mix and match ... like *rojak*."

Valerie Kang, BS, Year 3

Conformist

"I'm into the hip-hop style, I guess, and basically just *monkey see, monkey do*."

Esmond Tan, MTE, Year 3



Individualist

"I cross all boundaries when I dress ... just like what Nike says, *just do it!*"

Sharon Koh, BS, Year 2



Whimsical

"My dressing changes according to my moods."

Sue-Ann Lim, MCM, Year 1





"To me, popular culture or youth culture is a paradox. On one hand, it is fashion and trend chasing, it is the relentless and non-melodic music and the long queues into Zouk. On the other hand, popular culture is a new breed of youth, a band of people that are daring, bold, intelligent and very original. I think the youth are the most exciting group of people in Singapore today."


Tan Kheng Hua, Actress, TheatreWorks and TCS

"Basically, popular culture is a big bucks earner. Anything that has pop culture status, youth tend to follow or buy. In three words, pop culture is money, money, money!"

Darren Lim, Actor, Growing Up

"Popular culture among youth today is thinking they know too much, thus they insist on taking full control of their lives even before they are ready."

Audrey Chua, Finalist, Miss Singapore Universe



We wear the mask that grins and lies,
It hides our faces and shades our eyes.
This debt we pay to human guile,
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile.

- Paul Lawrence Dunbar