

hype

MAGAZINE

November 1997 No. 5

Night Visions



Spookiest Places
in Singapore

Inside:

Joe Ng & Steven Lim

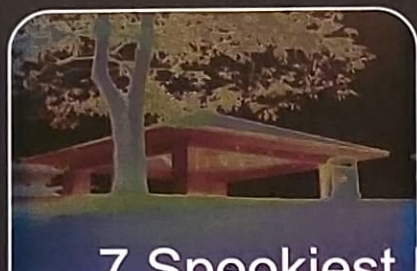
BARE Their Souls

Plus: Cool places to hang out way past midnight

WIN: Exclusive *Spawn* & *James Bond* premiums

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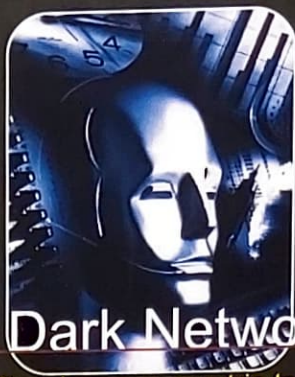
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hypertension



There

is no day without night.

A rather simple observation, but one that is often overlooked. Just as there is the mystical balance between yin and yang. The dark has always remained an integral part of our lives – a welcome escape from the glare and bustle of the day.

For centuries, man has been fascinated with the night – its undeniable menace, its stirring sensuality and its intense spiritualism. Though many have considered the dark to be the epitome of sin and all things unholy, others have learnt to embrace the night in all its splendour.

Forget the men that prowl the alleyways of Geylang in search of nocturnal erotica, or the cheesy infomercials that plague our TV sets at unearthly hours. The onset of the dark gives life to many phenomena.

Predators of the night – be it those of the supernatural kind or those that prey upon unsuspecting passengers with their murderous midnight surcharge – come out to play. One need not look far to find evidence of paranormal activity, for even in a sedate (and some say dreary) country like ours, spooks and other assorted terrors are rumoured to have set up shop in various locations. So much for quiet midnight strolls in the park.

Even in sleep, one is never free from the grip of the dark. Freudian theories aside, you will be surprised at the power and spine-chilling accuracy of your subconscious mind. While some have always interpreted dreams with a pinch of salt, others have found them to be a sign of things to come.

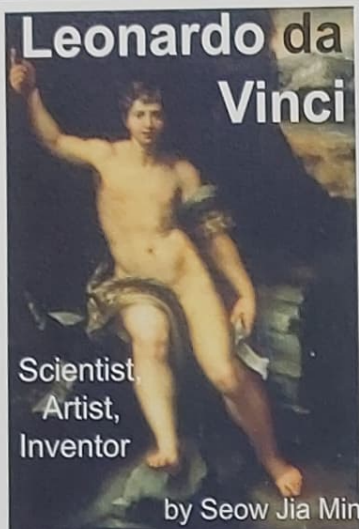
There's also no denying the inherent dangers of being part of the Internet community. Touted by users as "the singles club of the 90s," IRC channels and Internet chat-lines provide an alternate social reality for netsurfers. Just as nutcases exist in the physical world, twisted individuals stalk their victims with the help of a phone line and modem.

But hey, the night is not the exclusive domain of ghouls and psychopaths. Dreamy-eyed couples would be the first to espouse the virtues of a romantic moonlit evening, and there's nothing like hanging loose way past the witching hour at a fashionable club or 24-hour eatery with the company of friends.

In fact, the fun begins when the sun goes down, so whoever said the dark has to be all doom and gloom?

Phin
Shawn
Terry
editors

Terry, Shawn & Phin



On exhibition now at the Singapore Art Museum until 1 Feb 1998, **Leonardo da Vinci - Inventor, Artist, Scientist** features 277 exhibits. Definitely not to be missed, this exhibition includes over 30 original paintings attributed to Da Vinci, some 170 facsimiles of his scientific studies and models on Da Vinci's mechanical inventions. Multimedia kiosks and programmes are also available to give more information on Da Vinci's life

and the 15th century Renaissance.

This first-ever exhibition in Singapore was designed and produced by Professor Palazzi from the city of Malmo's Ministry of Culture and Professor Pedretti from the Armand Hammer Centre in Los Angeles. The latter is also acknowledged to be the foremost expert on Da Vinci. This exhibition comes directly from successful runs in Europe, and the US. Singapore is the first Asian stop before it proceeds on to Seoul.

While you're at the exhibition, look out for the rare drawing entitled **The Angel in the Flesh**, complete with Da Vinci's handwriting and two original sculptures attributed to him.

The first, a terracotta

bust of **Christ as a Young Man** shows both the saintliness and youthfulness of Jesus Christ while the second sculpture is a wax horse, a model based on Da Vinci's drawings.

Of course, no exhibition of Leonardo da Vinci's is complete without the famous **Mona Lisa**. Granted, the one at the Museum is not the original (the real one is in the Louvre in Paris), but the Gothenburg **Mona Lisa**, painted by an unknown 19th century German artist, is recognised as the most faithful reproduction among the hundreds of copies in existence.

So take some time off, visit the Singapore Art Museum today and discover the genius of Leonardo da Vinci for yourself.

Admission to the Singapore Art Museum is at \$8 for adults, \$4 for senior citizens and children under 16 years old. Group bookings for a minimum of 20 persons are available at \$5 a person. The museum is open from Tuesdays to Sundays from 9.00 am to 5.30 pm with extended hours on Wednesdays and Saturdays till 8 pm especially for this exhibition.

Half Lives

by Yap Meng Lee

TheatreWorks will be wrapping up its 1997 season with the world premiere of the play **Half Lives** - an emotional and provocative tale of family, home and love.

Written by local prize-winning playwright Chay Yew, **Half Lives** documents a family (comprising a Singaporean

mother, an Asian-American father and their son) and their pursuit of the American dream and a place called home. This refreshing theme comes as a timely reminder on the role of the family in this era where communication has broken down within families.

Although **Half Lives** is rated R(A) and viewers must be above 18 years old, there is nothing sexually explicit in this production,

which examines human and social issues through the medium of theatre.

Chay Yew's other plays - **As If He Hears**, **Porcelain**, **A Language Of Their Own** and **Red** - have been presented by theatre companies all over the world, which include the Royal Court Theatre (London), Tarragon Theatre (Toronto), Mark Tapper Forum (Los Angeles). His plays have even made an appearance at the New York

Shakespeare Festival and he has won several playwrighting awards to date.

Half Lives is Chay Yew's first play in Singapore since 1989 and will be directed by Lim Kay Siu (among other roles, the cook in television sitcom **Happy Belly**). Also making an appearance in the production is his wife Neo Swee Lim and his brother Lim Kay Tong.

Catch **Half Lives** at The Drama Centre from 3-14 December, 1997. Tickets priced at \$20, \$25 and \$30 are available at SISTIC from November 1997. Call SISTIC hot-line: 3485555 or contact TheatreWorks at 3386735 for priority bookings. There will be a 10% discount for UOB credit card users.

South Africa Comes to Town

by Janen Peris



Wetland - the most acclaimed piece of art by Dr Clancey, renowned author and painter.

Be prepared for a taste of South Africa when it comes to this side of the world in March. The Durban National Science Museum of South Africa will be hosting a special art exhibition on endangered species of birds right here in Singapore.

The art pieces are the work of celebrated author and painter, Dr Phillip Clancey. Internationally renowned for his paintings on endangered birds, he has produced a total of 400 paintings. One of the 25 paintings showcased is entitled **Wetland**, featuring saddle-billed storks, crowned cranes and Egyptian

geese.

This piece of art is the most acclaimed among all Dr Clancey's work. Done in a multitude of oil colours, it gives an almost life-like quality to the painting, something rarely achieved by other artists.

The exhibition is the first of its kind hailing from South Africa. The exhibition will be held at the National Museum for a month starting from March. Proceeds from the sale of tickets will fund the National Wildlife Foundation's efforts to save the endangered bird species in South Africa.

CD-Mania

Occupying a corner of StudentMart at Blk 04 opposite the library, is Disc-Z, a CD outlet fast gaining recognition and popularity with students for its friendly service and affordably-priced CDs.

A unique service which Disc-Z is currently offering allows members to put up their CDs for resale at a designated corner in the store. What's more, members set the selling price of their CDs and prices can be revised by the members anytime as long as Disc-Z is informed of the revision.

The membership fee of \$5 per student, members receive ten \$1 discount vouchers for CD purchases for the term of membership. On top of that, free posters will be given to members when they purchase a CD uring promotional periods (subject to availability and on a first-come-first-served basis).

For the months of June and December, members also enjoy a \$1 discount for every purchase without having to use the vouchers. Prices range from about \$17.90 for a best selling album to about \$22.90 for an imported CD. Although the collection of CDs is not extensive due to limited store space, customers can order titles that are not displayed. -- Dennis Yin

Students interested in becoming members can go down to the shop or contact Jay or Wong at Tel: 4677879. Disc-Z is located at StudentMart, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Blk 04, Library Concourse.

Double The Volume

Come early '98, Ngee Ann Polytechnic's Octagon will once again be bursting with energy streaming from electric guitars and hundreds of head-banging skulls. It will be a bumper crop this time round as two gigs have been lined up, the **Heatwave Gig** and the **Counter Culture II** gig.

Run entirely by final-year Mass Communications students, the campus radio station, Radio Heatwave is renowned (or notorious, depending on how you look at it) for organising the most talked about on-campus gig in Singapore - the **Heatwave Gig**. Continuing this yearly tradition, the fifth Mass Communication student, Radio Idran H. Junadi, a 20-year-old 3rd year formula of an "excellent student, Radio Heatwave will stick to the same magic of 1200 people this time round.

Local bands like **ITNOS**, **Graycode** and **Oname** are slated to play. Expect to be swept along by a heady mixture of metal, hardcore, punk and indie music faced with generous amounts of rock and alternative.


If the sell-out response to the previous four gigs are anything to go by, Heatwave gigs are definitely worth experiencing. After all, close to one thousand screaming teens could not have been wrong four times over.

Shortly after that adrenaline rush brought on by **Heatwave Gig**, steel yourself for an unbelievable fusion of local flavour, talented artists, and mind-blowing music. **Counter Culture II** is set to rock the house down once again, come March '98.

A collaborative effort between SpringRoll Record Company and Radio Heatwave, the Octagon as well, **Counter Culture II** will be the second time Ngee Ann Polytechnic plays host to one of the biggest local gigs ever held in Singapore.

Last year's show filled the Octagon with the youth and vigour of hundreds of patrons who were there to experience the atmosphere, music, and good vibes of the incredible line-up of local artists that graced the last gig, you wouldn't want to miss a chance to relive the excitement. And if you have never been to one, its time to stop denying yourself.

More details on the exact dates of both **Heatwave Gig** and **Counter Culture II** will be made available by early '98. So watch for it. -- Alvin Chan



Seow Jia Min explores
the macabre side of the
cyber-universe.

the dark network

One cold and wintry October morning, Sharon Lopatka, a lonely and overweight housewife, boarded a train from her home in Baltimore to a rural part of North Carolina. There she met Robert Glass, a quiet, introverted 45-year-old man who came from a respectable family. They drove 12 hours to the ramshackle, broken down trailer he called home and there, over a period of three days, acted out all the sexual fantasies they had shared over the Internet.

The blurring of fantasy and reality became all too real and three days later, Sharon Lopatka's asphyxiated corpse was found buried in Robert Glass's backyard. Evidence points out that Lopatka's death was not a murder. She had told her husband that she was going to visit friends in Georgia, but police found a letter she had left behind, "If my body is never retrieved, don't worry. Know that I am at peace." A message posted on August 22 in a chat room dealing with necrophilia was traced to Lopatka's terminal, "I have kind of a fascination with torturing to death." She also wrote, "I want to surrender completely. I want to die." All this time, she had been openly looking to be killed.

Lopatka met Glass through the Internet. Known to the cyber-world only as 'Nancy' and 'Slowhand' respectively, they communicated via e-mail over a period of six weeks. Their messages to each other, frighteningly violent and lurid, described what Glass would do to Lopatka. This culminated in their meeting and Lopatka being strangled to death by a rope while trying to experience an orgasm on the brink of death.

Although this is the first death directly related to the Internet, this case raises an alarming concern: the blurring of the thin line between fantasy and reality. Sex chat-lines facilitate that blurring process, offering virtual "rooms" for total strangers to meet, delving into fantasies they would never dare act out in their normal lives.

"I feel ecstatic. I am not supposed to feel like this, you are taking my heart. I kiss you tenderly." A relatively tame example of the language used in sex chat lines. Comments can range from the very romantic to the downright explicit like the exchange between Lopatka and Glass.

What is frightening about this, is that sometimes, the blurring between reality and fantasy becomes too fine to distinguish. You can cast your personality aside and become a totally different person.

'Analyzer', a regular at a popular sex chat-line has this to say about it, "Some are not just here for cybersex. Some are here for some good sexual conversation and horizon-expanding ideas." He goes there to chat with other like-minded users every other day. To him, it is harmless and although he admits that fantasies are acted out in such chats, he doesn't see any danger of

it being carried into reality. "It's just a fantasy, and many people are afraid to try it out in real life," he explains.

'Analyzer' and his friends may see it that way but there are others who don't know they have crossed that thin line. What's frightening about this, is that sometimes, the blurring between reality and fantasy becomes too fine to distinguish. You can cast your personality aside and become a totally different person. The temptation is there since the Internet gives one the anonymity to be anything or anyone you want to be. American psychologists have a name for this: the Mardi Gras phenomenon. This applies to users who feel they are wearing a mask and can act anonymously.

Professor Hisashi Muroi, a Yokohama National University associate professor of information science, says in an article that this phenomenon can be attributed to the lack of body language.

"The heart is free to express itself. Since you cannot see your partner, you can expose yourself boldly. The part of yourself that is normally kept unconscious is released."

It seems that the Internet is a very dangerous place. Consider the case of Oliver Jovanovic. Known in cyberspace as Oliver Gray, he seemed the perfect gentleman. Indeed, the 30-year-old Columbia University student was about to get his PhD in microbiology. The son of a professional chess coach and a violinist, he grew up in a family steeped in culture. In cyberspace, he seemed to be every woman's perfect dream. He embellished his appearance a little here and there, making himself taller, sometimes even gay, the ultimate non-threatening male. But throughout, he was charming, suave, and always gentle to unsuspecting girls.

But this perfect gentleman has been charged with 11 counts of sodomy, sexual assault and kidnapping. The charges stem from a 20-year-old philosophy student he first met on the Internet, and then in real life in November. He tied her up, blindfolded and

stripped her in his apartment, subjecting her to a 20-hour long ordeal of assault and sexual abuse. She was allowed to go home after that. Traumatized, she kept quiet for two weeks. When she finally spoke up, twelve women came forward and also admitted to having 'dallied' with Jovanovic. They had apparently e-mailed and flirted with him until the talk changed from charming to violent and sado-masochistic.

It is cases like these that make one worry about the safety of playing on the Internet. Dr

Brian Ho, Teaching Fellow and Senior Registrar at the Department of Psychological Medicine at the National University Hospital, thinks that the Internet is not as dangerous as it seems.

He says it is just a new tool, a product of the twentieth century that is interactive and cheap. "I think it's as dangerous as anything else in this world. Crossing a street can be dangerous, taking a holiday can also be dangerous," he says with a smile. He thinks that cases like Lopatka are "isolated". He says, "The Net attracts people who are eccentric, very different and some of them may have the capacity to be involved in a situation like that."

No one can deny that the lure of the Internet is strong. Increasingly, more people are finding true love on the Internet, especially for those who are shy. Dr Ho says, "You find that the Net is very attractive to people who are very shy because you do not use words, you can type, it's much more gentle."

The cases of Jovanovic and Lopatka happened in the US. So far, this hasn't happened in Singapore. So is there any danger of that happening here? Vijay Nair, a 20-year-old currently serving his NS, uses the Internet regularly, does not see a repeat of those cases happening here.

"Not in a conservative Asian society such as our own, even if it does, it would be on a minute scale," he said.

But Dr Ho raises an interesting point. He says, "Sometimes, if the society is conservative, people do repress a lot of things they would like to talk about, it's an avenue, an escape."

Dr Ho does not totally discount the possibility. "The possibility will always be there. I think there are no absolutes," he says.

Part of the lure of the Internet is probably the Mardi Gras phenomenon. 'Robhard', a third year Accountancy student, admits to having a personality change the moment he enters a chat line. Claiming to be shy, introverted and a very low-key person in nature, he describes himself as "super-mad" when he goes into cyberspace. He can't think of a reason for his behavior changes. He says, "It

comes naturally, it's a part of me in a cyber-world."

"Sometimes, if the society is conservative, people do repress a lot of things they would like to talk about, it's an avenue, an escape."

- Dr. Brian Ho

Dr. Ho says that it is not just the shy pe

ople who change on the Internet. He explains, "There are probably people who just want to have a good time, to have a good laugh, they can be ordinary people like you and I."

He thinks "there are two types of people who Net." The first type belongs to those who "invent a personality which is not true." He says, "It seems to me that people who do such a thing have no intention of ever meeting up people who invent very fantastic personalities would probably not scan their photograph to you. If you have no interest in meeting up, why not invent something fantastic and even say sexually suggestive things on the Net?"

However, the second set are those who are genuine about meeting new friends. He says, "[They] will usually be a little more honest about their abilities or their looks because if you invent something which is not really true, like if you say you look like Elizabeth Hurley when you don't, then I think it's quite embarrassing."

There is really no way to tell whether someone is telling the truth on the Net 'Robhard' says, "It is hard to see if people are genuine on the Net. You'd have to meet up to see, but meeting up is scary". He is now quite apprehensive about meetings after a bad experience. Apparently, people started spreading rumours about him after such a meeting. Dr Ho says, "You have to learn to pick out the truth. I suppose like anything else, you have to be prudent and exercise your judgement."

So don't go suspecting every person on the Net of being a psycho. Although chilly cases like Lopatka and Jovanovic can happen, they are rare. Just remember that there are plenty of nice, normal people around who are interested in finding new friends and new experiences.

getting personal

Joe Ng

- the enigmatic frontman of top local band **Padres** and probably the most well-known "mee pok seller" in Singapore. So who is the real Joe Ng behind all the media hype and glitz? **Shamala Rajendran** has a casual chit-chat with local music's most wanted man.

"This is totally weird," Joe remarks, as we walk into Majestic Theatre. There were just the two of us, plus his band members who were already in the theatre, getting ready for their opening gig for the premiere of the movie, **Scream**.

I look up at Joe, more familiarly known as the **Mee Pok Man**, and the singer of the local band Padres. I agree with him. It's like playing to an audience who's more interested in just watching the movie.

Dressed in a black shirt, stone-washed black jeans and a pair of black shades propped on his head, Joe admits sheepishly to being a lazy dresser.

"I'm really not much into fashion and the latest trends. My girlfriend knows that all too well. Actually, I have quite a bad sense of dressing, that's why I wear black...

the easiest to wear and wash." And foolish me thought it was an image thing, with all rock band members wearing black.

As we walk towards the food centre nearby, he talks about his band. Formed in 1991, the Padres was Joe's vehicle to musical success.

Ordinary

Joe
"All the members have an understanding with me. In that sense, I am able to maintain a very creative unit with all their influences coming in to shape the music. If everything goes well, our next album will be coming out in December this year."

"I remember my father telling me that I could do anything I want - a road-sweeper, even a garbage-collector. But he told me I should never become a singer."

Born into a traditional Chinese family, Joe Ng is the second of three children. He did his O's at Gan Eng Seng Secondary and his A level's at Bartley Pre-U. But, he wasn't much into studying.

"I remember my father telling me that I could do anything I want - a road-sweeper, even a garbage-collector.



But he told me I should never become a singer. Those were the days when singers were thought to be low-down, with all the night lounges and barmaids." He laughs as he adds: "Look at me now. I'm a full-fledged singer, and there's no turning back."

Joe bought his first Casio electronic keyboard when he was in primary school, and played around with it together with another buddy. He tried plugging in cables differently, trying to get all sorts of weird and obscure sounds.

All his early experimentation with music taught him "how to stretch my imagination." Coming from a not so well-to-do family, Joe had to keep his expenditure down to a minimum.

"You don't really have to use the most expensive equipment or instruments. Just make do with something small, and you'd be amazed with how much you

can produce. You have got to always improvise and maximise with whatever you have. Teaches you discipline." As he pauses for a moment to take a sip from his drink, he adds with a gleam in his eyes, "The best thing about it, is just to let your creativity and imagination flow."

And flow it did.

"I was working with **BigO** magazine when I met Eric Khoo.

We were writing for the magazine and we sort of just clicked as friends."

With their shared ideas as well as a mutual passion for drinking, both became buddies in no time. It was then that Eric wanted Joe to act in **Mee Pok Man**.

"Acting was very different from singing. I don't really know why though, but I can remember the lyrics of a song better than I can remember the script. We had to do several takes, and I'll admit, most of them were my fault!"

After his acting stint, Joe got into full gear writing and producing music. He was with **BigO** magazine from 1990 to 1993. From 1993 to 1996, Joe switched over to Rock Records, where he was working in the marketing and promotions department. He grimaces when he explains the monotony of a nine to five job. Having just quit his job last year, he is now a freelancer, as it gives him "more time and space to do what I really want." At present, he has two deals with Rock Records: one of which is the recording of albums by the Padres, and the other write songs for the record company.

Joe Ng is passionate about music and words, as well as the way people write and express them.

"It's actually more than a feel. You can't really describe it. When you're listening to a piece of music or reading, you feel something. But sometimes, it's a totally different thing. Something inside of you wakes up, and you feel a rush; your hair stands up and you know that THAT's it," he says in one breath.

Maybe studying Literature and History in school did have an impact on him after all. Listening to Joe quote from Shakespeare and Woodsworth, whatever misconceptions I had of rock singers are totally dispelled. It was a great treat to see

"You have got to always improvise and maximise with whatever you have. Teaches you discipline."

the versatility of actions and words in Joe.

Believe it or not, cooking is one of Joe's passions. "Yes you heard me right the first time," he laughs as I look disbelievingly at him. Ever since his mum died early this year, Joe has been cooking for his sister and himself. And yes, experimentation is the word here again, as all the food he cooks is by trial and error.

"At present, I would rate my cooking as five out of ten or six out of ten." Pretty modest I must say. "Oh, no! Seriously, I'm not that good. I have an uncle who's a great cook. The day I reach his standard, then I know I'm there," Joe proclaimed. Before exchanging cooking recipes with him, I want to know what he thinks of himself.

"I'm a Virgo," he claims. "No kidding," I say. "I'm a Virgo too." We both look at each other, all excited and exclaim together, "Perfectionist!" Laughing with me he explains, "During my first few gigs, I used to get real paranoid when I see someone not clapping or enjoying himself. I would wonder, 'He doesn't like my face?' or 'Is there something wrong with my singing today?' My band guys would tell me to relax and take things lightly. It's very tiring to be a perfectionist all the time and after a while I've learnt to let loose and enjoy." This reporter could probably learn a thing or two from him.

(Picture courtesy of Joe Ng)

Day 1: Farrer Park Stadium

The first place that came to mind was Farrer Park Stadium as I'd heard quite a number of stories about the place. After talking to some people, all I got was a history lesson (it used to be Singapore's first racing ground) that reminded me of my only 'A' grade for the "O" levels!

Things changed when I met Mdm. Teh, a 46-year-old housewife who does qi-gong with her "kakis" there every morning. On one occasion, they discovered a man hanging in the spectators' gallery - DEAD! "We thought it was strange that he hadn't moved at all," said Mdm. Teh. "How can anyone be in that upright position for so long?" Some of the men decided to check it out, and that's when they had the shock of their lives.

And guess what I heard next? Another man had also hung himself here before! "He was actually hanging by that tree over there," she said, pointing to a pong pong tree just beside the gallery. She later advised me not to look up at that tree if I ever walked past the place. "You'll never know what you'll see," Mdm. Teh cautioned.

I'll never know what I'll see? I don't even want to see anything! Home was the only thing on my mind.



Day 2: Fort Canning Park

A good day's rest, and I'm back on the 'hunt'. I found myself at Fort Canning Park, a well-known lovers' haunt. A friend once told me that it's especially scary in the old Christian cemetery dating back to 1822.

The first thing that drew my attention was the gothic gateways to the cemetery. The place was poorly lit, and the decaying tombstones had inscriptions that read like Sanskrit. It was just like a scene taken out of my favourite movie - Count Dracula.

According to history books, Iskander Shah, one of the last kings of ancient Singapore (Temasek) is also rumoured to be buried on Fort Canning Hill. So I was standing on sacred ground...

On another side of the hill were some World War II underground bunkers. From that strategic point, the entire area was dead quiet. Images of skeletal hands reaching out of the ground to grab my legs started to form in my mind. I had to get out of there.



Imagine this tragic scene: You have a week off school, and you have absolutely no cash to squander. Surely there must be something to do besides the usual bumming around. "Try something different," my friends would say. I decided to do some exploring. Why not? Lisa Ang seems to have a lot of fun doing it on Hey! Singapore

Day 3: Marina South Park

This is a choice spot for 'buayas' who want to bring their dates somewhere nice and quiet. It took me quite a while to walk all the way from Marina South MRT station.

The focal point of the park is a pavilion on the top of a small mound. Surrounded by menacing giant trees, I could understand the seclusion of the place. Besides, who knows what might be lurking in the bushes nearby?

It could be just another umbrella-toting "peeping-tom" getting a kick out of watching couples engaging in some hanky-panky. Or it could be something else - creatures of the night who are also drawn to the desolation of the park.

I ran into two writers from VJ Times (a publisher that supports local writers), Ms Theni and Mr. Pathmanabhan, both 19, who were there to seek inspiration for their upcoming horror stories. "The park never fails to raise my goose-pimples whenever I'm here. It's the kind of place that you would feel scared in even though you may be with a group of friends," said Ms. Theni. "Just the right atmosphere for us to come up with horror story ideas," added Mr. Pathmanabhan.



every week. So with seven days to spare,

I set off to spend my nights at seven choice locations of supernatural activity in Singapore.

Day 6: Little Guilin

I decided to make a 'journey to the west' to a park in Bukit Gombak. Formerly a quarry back in 1964, its scenic beauty reminds me of my experience in Ubin.

But behind this innocent appearance lies a dark past. Mr Tan Leng Quan, 55, a former quarry worker in Hokkien, "We used explosives to blow the rock that it can be transported away. Once, when it exploded, a piece of rock flew off and hit the leg of our canteen worker, killing her permanently. Another piece hit a worker, killing him." According to Mr Tan, such accidents occur. On that tragic day, they were just plain accidents.

As I looked out at the view, the granite hillside glowed off a soft, ghostly glow. There was an eerie silence that I could hear my heart pounding madly. I was suddenly, I just wanted to be as far away as possible.

Day 3: Tanah Merah Beach

Following up on the 'war trail' from last night, I went to Tanah Merah Beach, which is situated along Changi Coast Road. It's quite a walk from the main road, and the place is not as brightly lit compared to its more 'glam' cousin - Changi Beach.

Both beaches however, have something in common. They were massacre sites during the Japanese Occupation period of *Sook Ching* (Purge by Purification), where men identified as local patriots were brought en-masse to these places to be bayoneted and shot.

History books also note that 242 victims were taken from Jalan Besar to Tanah Merah Beach, and truck-loads of other victims from Bukit Timah and Stevens Road were taken to Changi Beach. All to be executed in cold blood.

Today, the exact spot of the massacre at Tanah Merah Beach has been reclaimed to form a runway of Changi Airport, but the vastness and desolation of the place still seem to carry the echoes of these screaming voices whenever a plane takes off.



Day 4: Pulau Ubin



With almost half my week now gone, I decided to visit the 'uncharted' land of Pulau Ubin. Off to Changi Jetty...

Upon reaching the island, I was already seasick from the rocky boat ride. But I just had to see the abandoned granite quarries before nightfall. For 140 years, ceaseless mining had dug deep into the ground, and rainwater accumulated over the years had created an artificial reservoir of Kodak-moment proportions.

I sprinted up a small slope overlooking the reservoir, but nearly received the dubious distinction of becoming the first Singaporean to bungee jump, minus the cord over the cliffs. Not knowing what lay ahead, just one more step and I would have plunged into the deep unknown of the water below.

There were warning signs all over the place, but reckless adventure seekers like me have ignored these signs, often to our own peril. After this experience, I decided to calm myself over a bottle of beer at the much talked-about seafood restaurant near the jetty. On reaching the restaurant, there was a huge debate among the diners on a particular 'sighting' that morning. According to Mr Gerald Lee, 55, many residents

over the years have seen an old fisherman at the jetty during the wee hours of morning. But whenever someone made an approach, he would just disappear into thin air!

Mr Lee himself used to be a sceptic until his own experience. "I did not believe in such matters because of my religion, but after only two weeks on the island, I saw it myself too," he related.

Day 8: Back to School

Hey! Not bad for a one week break. But who can guess that it would be so hard to get back to routine after spending a whole week as a nocturnal animal. So what shall I do with my bagful of experiences? Maybe I'll come up with a book titled 'The Seven Spookiest Places in Singapore', it's bound to be an instant classic.

In fact, I'll publish the book under the assumed names of **Yap Meng Lee** and **Daniel Seet**. That way, no one will ever know my 'spooky' identity.

Spookiest Places in Singapore

Day 7: East Coast Park Tower



The last day of my adventure, and I decided to go roller-blading at East Coast Park. One incident came to my mind as I sped past a watch tower: A couple had climbed up one of them for a quiet moment one night. Then a robbery took place, and a fight ensued, followed by a fatal stabbing, and a cruel rape...

Blading along the pathway and past the bird sanctuary, I came to this very tower. About three storeys high, it's especially scary at night. Said Ms Serene Ang, 19, an NUS undergraduate, "It's so dark up there, who dares to go up? Maybe, I would if all my friends at the barbecue came along. But if alone, NEVER!"

Indeed, at night, the structure seemed strangely black. I felt a sense of foreboding around the tower. It was all so quiet, save for the lapping of the waves across the beach. Like a hypnotic tune being played, it lures people into a false sense of peace, much like that fateful evening. As I climbed up, the timber creaked as if in protest. Or is it a cry, telling visitors to beware for you are not alone! There was definitely something strange in the air. I turned and left hastily..

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Nails for Males

Alvin Chan

Guys may very soon start worrying about chipped nails too, as Hard Candy, the American label known for its bright and unconventional nail varnish hues, has created a range of nail colour specially for guys.

Launched early June this year, Candy Man nail colour comes in seven hip and futuristic shades, with names chosen to evoke a sense of individuality, attitude, or just plain "kookiness". Check out these names: Superfly (blue), Libido (turquoise), Cowboy (gold), Gigolo (silvery-black), Dog (purple), Oedipus (green) and Testosterone (silver).

According to counter staff at Takashimaya Shopping Centre, the initial response has been "moderately good". If this catches on, can you just imagine the slew of nail polish-inspired pick-up lines? Here's one: "Hey baby, check me out, I've got my Libido on just for you." Or how about the following conversation? He: "Hey, do me baby." She: "No, you do me first." He: "No you do me first...." They are talking, of course, about colouring each other's nails. What were you thinking about?

Candy Man by Hard Candy is selling at \$22 per 13.3ml bottle.

It is available at all Hard Candy booths at Seiyu, Takashimaya S.C. and Plaza By The Park.

Let's play word association, shall we? Wigs. What flashed across your mind? Balding and totally 'uncool' middle-aged men with comb-overs that resemble spiders stretching over an egg? Think again. If you've ever wanted that oh-so-famous Jennifer Aniston shag or Milla Jovovich's carrot orange hair in *The Fifth Element*, then wigs are the answer.

At Face Affair, a shop with a section devoted to such wigs, there is a myriad of styles. Choose from the flower-power hippie look to the sedate and safe China-doll bob. They even have the HDB 'tai-tai'-permed-hair-look, if you really want to try it.

Also available are really wild colours like bright yellow, ice-blue and flaming orange for the more daring and Zouk-wannabes. Designs change every month or so to keep styles fresh and exciting. The wigs are pretty expensive, and given our student budget, it may be a better idea to rent them for more variety. You are allowed to rent the wigs for no longer than a week. So go ahead, surprise everyone. Change your look as often as you want, without suffering the trauma of chopping off your tresses.

Face Affair is at Holland Road Shopping Centre, Level 2. Prices of the wigs range from \$100 to \$200 while rentals start from \$50.

Shag-a-delic!

Seow Jia Min



Ancient Cure for the Modern World

Shamala Rajendran

"Turquoise animal fetish, corn to nourish the spirit." Do kinky images come to mind? Or are you thinking of a decadent voodoo ritual, with lots of gyrating naked bodies, dancing around a blazing fire and screaming hypnotic incantations?

If you are, slap yourself. As much as you would like your imagination to work overtime, we're not talking mumbo-jumbo. The words on the Native American "Medicine Bag" are the very essence of ancient spiritual healing, to help humans throughout their lives.

Native Americans believe that all things have a spirit or life-force, and that all these are interconnected. Every animal, stone and place has a unique spirit which influences life around it. To assemble a "Medicine Bag" means that the individual wishes to assert control over his or her life and to choose a certain path.

Crafted in the USA, the Medicine Bag is made of either deer skin or suede. The small pouch contains seven charms; each of them selected carefully for protection and more importantly, to act as a guide along your life path. You may also choose to add other items which have special meaning to you.

The Medicine Bag comes in nine distinct pouches, ranging from Love, Power, Journey, Balance to Success, Vision, Luck, Protection and Creativity. Now wait a second here. Yes, we all know how insulting the Tamagotch was to our intelligence. But before you start feeling that tinge of cynicism, ask yourself, how bad can things get when you're carrying *The ancient cure for the*



The "Medicine Bag" pouches and charms are available at Asylum, Far East Plaza, #03-100.

Each mystical Medicine Bags costs \$22.

Looney "Head Tunes"

Janen Peris

Looks like Toon Town mania has literally gone to our heads this time. No longer confined to mugs and T-shirts, the latest creative spin-off from the wonderful world of Looney Tunes is now in Singapore. Fun-loving teenyboppers and the young at heart have been seen sporting the infamous Bugs Bunny, where else, but on their ears.

Launched recently in Singapore by Warner Bros., the headphones have the famous rabbit on its side complete with long ears and teeth, the insignia of the carrot-munching character. It may look a bit zany and a tad looney (pun intended) to conformists who prefer staid black headphones, but it sure is attention grabbing. Made of light-weight plastic, the headphones are comfortable to wear and easy to plug in.

For those who aren't exactly crazy about Bugs Bunny, never fear, there's always Tasmania! The devil with the famous fangs and unintelligible muttering packs quite an impact when used to adorn one's ears!

With such wacky paraphernalia around, one can't help but fall in love with these toons. Priced at a reasonable \$15.90, it's also wallet-friendly, making it possible for crazed fans to own one (if not two!) of their favourite Looney Tunes headphones.



The Looney Tunes headphones are available at Advance Gravis, located at #05-19, Funan Center. The store is open from 10 am to 9pm daily.

Detoxified beer, anyone?

Dennis Yin



Kudos to the makers of this 'healthy' beverage! Finally somebody's got the spunk to come out with a chemically altered product (quite literally) to ridicule all you beer guzzling and potential wayward souls out there.

But seriously, what were the people at Beck's' thinking about when they came up with this idea of non-alcoholic beer? I came up with 3 logical and well-meaning reasons:

It allows non-drinkers to savour the taste of beer without comprising their alcohol abstinence principle. (WARNING: it actually has 0.3 % alcohol content in it. So don't be fooled.)

During drinking sessions, when your lobster-red intoxicated friend makes a fool of himself by demanding more beer, you could offer him Beck's' non-alcoholic beer. (Unfortunately, it's not served in pubs ... and your friend's a LOSER.)

It's cheap; you can drink all you want and still be able to drive.

Nonetheless, for those who have a taste for the new, or would like to collect the can/bottle as an added item amongst their proud collection of non-alcoholic bottles (does the word COKE ring a bell?), the product is available at leading supermarkets. Price: \$1.80.

Drink as you go

Heng Chin Chuan

The sun is scorching and your throat is screaming for water. You can 1) pay \$1.50 for a Coke at McDonald's, 2) dig through your haversack for that puny little mineral water bottle or 3) simply latch onto the mouthpiece of your Camelbak for a cool sip of water.

For those who chose number three, you definitely make the right choice. A shoulder mounted water carrier, Camelbak allows you to carry two litres of clear drinking water effortlessly. Camelbak also features a "look-Ma-no-hands!" mouthpiece that delivers water to your parched throat with just a bite on the one-way valve.

Besides storing water, Camelbak lets you stuff your walkman, pager, pencil-case and all your "barang-barang" in its storage pouch. And don't worry,

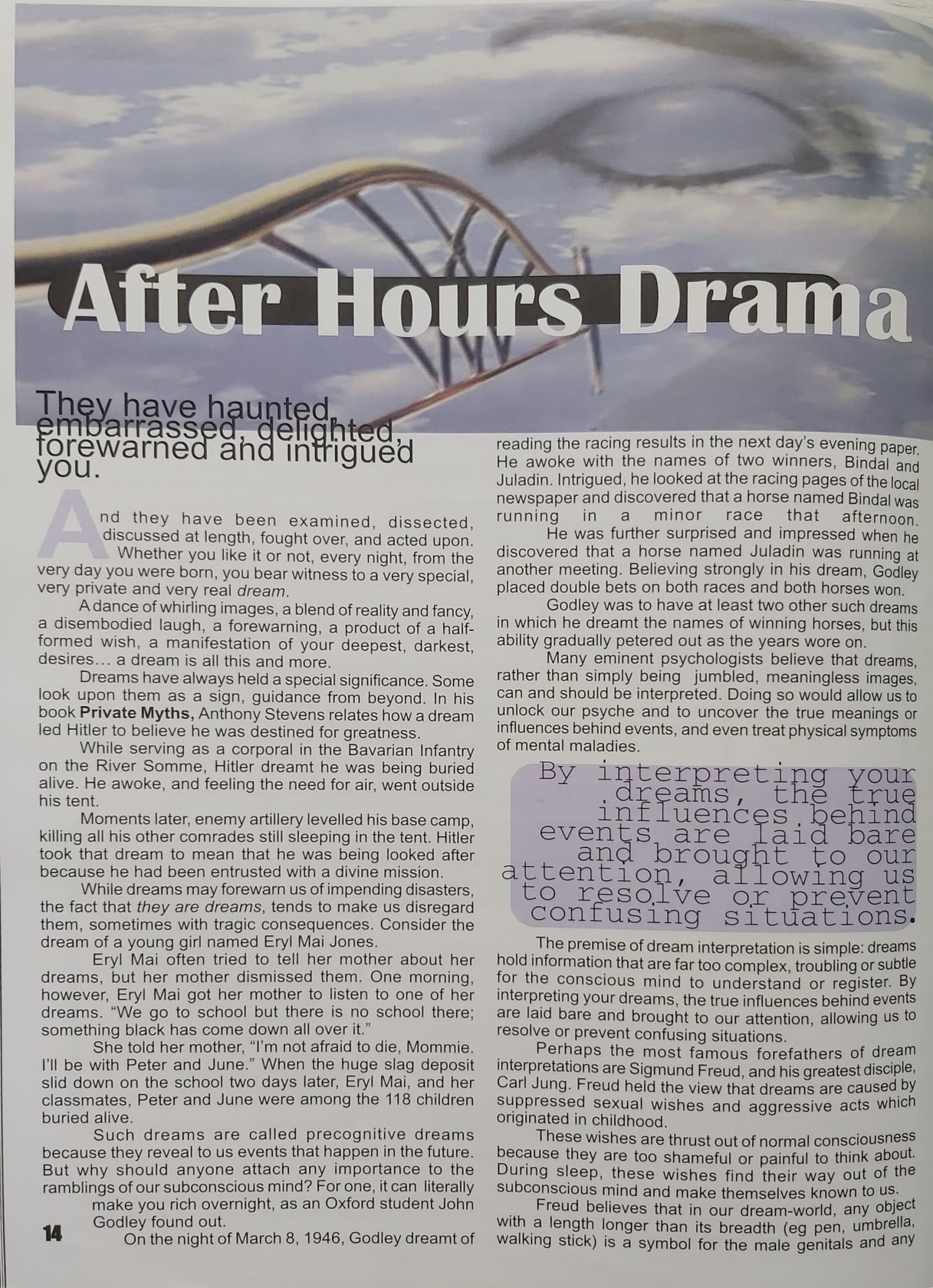
Camelbak will not make you look as if you are carrying a tortoise shell on your back because it's compact and yet tastefully designed.

Camelbak comes in two models, Rouge and Mule. Rouge cost \$75 and Mule goes for \$95. The only difference is that Mule has a larger storage pouch. Camelbak is fully guaranteed for manufacturer defects and all its parts (such as the bladder for storing water, mouthpiece, etc) can be replaced.

Camelbak is available from BikeAlley Trading at 43, Holland Drive #01-63.

For more information, contact Camelbak's distributor, Two Wheel Action Pte Ltd at 463 2143.





After Hours Drama

They have haunted, embarrassed, delighted, forewarned and intrigued you.

And they have been examined, dissected, discussed at length, fought over, and acted upon. Whether you like it or not, every night, from the very day you were born, you bear witness to a very special, very private and very real *dream*.

A dance of whirling images, a blend of reality and fancy, a disembodied laugh, a forewarning, a product of a half-formed wish, a manifestation of your deepest, darkest, desires... a dream is all this and more.

Dreams have always held a special significance. Some look upon them as a sign, guidance from beyond. In his book **Private Myths**, Anthony Stevens relates how a dream led Hitler to believe he was destined for greatness.

While serving as a corporal in the Bavarian Infantry on the River Somme, Hitler dreamt he was being buried alive. He awoke, and feeling the need for air, went outside his tent.

Moments later, enemy artillery levelled his base camp, killing all his other comrades still sleeping in the tent. Hitler took that dream to mean that he was being looked after because he had been entrusted with a divine mission.

While dreams may forewarn us of impending disasters, the fact that *they are dreams*, tends to make us disregard them, sometimes with tragic consequences. Consider the dream of a young girl named Eryl Mai Jones.

Eryl Mai often tried to tell her mother about her dreams, but her mother dismissed them. One morning, however, Eryl Mai got her mother to listen to one of her dreams. "We go to school but there is no school there; something black has come down all over it."

She told her mother, "I'm not afraid to die, Mommie. I'll be with Peter and June." When the huge slag deposit slid down on the school two days later, Eryl Mai, and her classmates, Peter and June were among the 118 children buried alive.

Such dreams are called precognitive dreams because they reveal to us events that happen in the future. But why should anyone attach any importance to the ramblings of our subconscious mind? For one, it can literally make you rich overnight, as an Oxford student John Godley found out.

On the night of March 8, 1946, Godley dreamt of

reading the racing results in the next day's evening paper. He awoke with the names of two winners, Bindal and Juladin. Intrigued, he looked at the racing pages of the local newspaper and discovered that a horse named Bindal was running in a minor race that afternoon.

He was further surprised and impressed when he discovered that a horse named Juladin was running at another meeting. Believing strongly in his dream, Godley placed double bets on both races and both horses won.

Godley was to have at least two other such dreams in which he dreamt the names of winning horses, but this ability gradually petered out as the years wore on.

Many eminent psychologists believe that dreams, rather than simply being jumbled, meaningless images, can and should be interpreted. Doing so would allow us to unlock our psyche and to uncover the true meanings or influences behind events, and even treat physical symptoms of mental maladies.

By interpreting your dreams, the true influences behind events are laid bare and brought to our attention, allowing us to resolve or prevent confusing situations.

The premise of dream interpretation is simple: dreams hold information that are far too complex, troubling or subtle for the conscious mind to understand or register. By interpreting your dreams, the true influences behind events are laid bare and brought to our attention, allowing us to resolve or prevent confusing situations.

Perhaps the most famous forefathers of dream interpretations are Sigmund Freud, and his greatest disciple, Carl Jung. Freud held the view that dreams are caused by suppressed sexual wishes and aggressive acts which originated in childhood.

These wishes are thrust out of normal consciousness because they are too shameful or painful to think about. During sleep, these wishes find their way out of the subconscious mind and make themselves known to us.

Freud believes that in our dream-world, any object with a length longer than its breadth (eg pen, umbrella, walking stick) is a symbol for the male genitals and any



by Alvin Chan & Shamala Rajendran

receptacle or object that allows passing through, or suggests containment or receptivity (eg doorways, furnaces, sword sheaths) is a symbol for the female genitals.

He even goes further to state that any pleasurable movement such as flying, floating or rocking to and fro (as on a rocking horse) represents physical sexual pleasure.

Therefore, dreams actually act as some kind of a safety valve, providing an avenue for our repressed and ignored instincts to relieve themselves.

His theory has been challenged by many because of the decidedly narrow view that dreams are driven purely by our basest desires.

"It's a very selective part of your memory that comes out (of your dreams), and you've got to be careful with what you do with it."

Dr Gerrian Wuts, MEH

One obvious argument has been raised: if we as humans dream only because we constantly censor and repress our instincts, then why do animals, who do not have the means nor need to repress their instincts, dream as well?

Carl Jung was Freud's most devoted disciple, and constantly suppressed his own doubts and questions for fear of displeasing his mentor. However, he later challenged and rejected Freud's theory and developed his own theory that came to be as popular, if not more, than Freud's.

Jung contends that the symbolic character of dreams is simply the natural picture-language of the mind when it expresses itself outside the limit of rational thought. His approach to dream interpretation is to take the dream at its face value, so to speak, and for the dreamer to interpret it in a way most useful to him.

Jung believed that people of the same race or species share the same subconscious mind, a mental remnant of some ancient instinct. He termed this "sharing" of instincts with our ancestors the *Collective Unconscious*. Dream symbols can therefore serve to carry messages from the instinctive to the rational parts of the mind.

This is why people with similar cultural or racial backgrounds tend to attach the same meanings to the symbols represented in a dream.

Many interesting and exciting discoveries have been made in the field of oneirology (the study of dreams), thanks in

part to Freud, Jung, and their peers. In fact, oneirology is now a recognised branch of psychological study in most parts of the world, including Singapore. A sleep clinic has even been set up at the National University of Singapore.

However Dr Gerrian Wuts, a clinical psychologist with Consulting Psychologists and Associates at Mount Elizabeth Hospital, cautions against taking our dreams too seriously. "I think that dreams are there to help us review and process information. But I also think that they are also linked to things that can be relevant or irrelevant. So, if people had a very stressful and taxing day, some get more vivid dreams than the ones they usually have."

"But it could also connect with something else that may not be linked. Sometimes I think we make major leaps by thinking about our dreams, but other than that I think they are confusing us also. It doesn't mean that if you dream of someone dying, something bad is going to happen to that person. There are different ways of interpreting your dreams, and you should feel free about discussing them." She adds, "It's a very selective part of your memory that comes out, and you've got to be very careful with what you do with it."

Gaining access to your dreams is effortless, and requires no special talent nor equipment. All you have to do is to lie in bed and sleep, and you can wear whatever you like while you're at it - your nightie, pyjamas, or your birthday suit.

The only mental energy required is that of paying attention to the dreams that are given to you repeatedly every night, and being willing to consider the possible messages that they might convey.

In return, you could gain invaluable insight into the real influences behind a situation. Take steps towards positive change and the end results could be extremely useful. Sure, you could be shocked, embarrassed, confused, delighted, spooked, even disgusted by your dream, but hey it's only a dream, and most of them are run only once.

So lie back, close your eyes and enjoy the show. The directors, producers and stage crew in your head have been hard at work the whole day preparing an exclusive performance for your eyes only, tonight.

Sweet dreams.

A to Z Interpretation of Dreams

(all these interpretations should be taken with a pinch of salt, then again, maybe two...)

A - Actor and Actresses

Your present state will be one of unbroken pleasure and favour.

B - Belly

A swollen belly indicates desperate sickness. To see a healthy belly, means insane desires.

C - Cats

Means ill luck, some false friend is using all the words and work to do you harm.

D - Dogs

Foretells news of a depressing nature.

E - Eating

Signifies loss and melancholy spirits.

F - Fat

You are about to make a fortunate change in your life.

G - Ghosts

You are in danger of some friend's malice.

H - Hugging

You will be disappointed in love affairs and in business.

I - Itch

You will be harshly used, and will defend yourself by incriminating others.

J - Jealousy

You will find that you are more impressed with the charms of some other person than your sweetheart.

K - Kiss

To kiss in the dark, denotes dangers and immoral engagements. To kiss in the light, signifies honourable intentions.

L - Laughing

Success in your undertakings, and bright companions socially.

M - Money

Small worries, but much happiness.

N - Nightmare

Dispute and failure in business.

O - Odour

It is a sign of beautiful people ministering to your daily life.

P - Pimple

Means worry over trifling matters.

Q - Quarrel

Unhappiness, unsatisfactory business and disappointing trade.

R - Running

You will outstrip your friends in the race for wealth, and you will occupy a higher place in social life.

S - School

To dream of attending school, indicates distinction in literary work.

T - Teasing

You will be loved and sought after because of your cheerful and amiable manners.

U - Ugly

Difficulties with your sweetheart, and your prospects will assume a depressed shade.

V - Visions

You will be unfortunate in your dealings and sickness will unfit you for unpleasant duties.

W - Walking

Possessor of fortune and favour.

X - ??? (Obviously people haven't been dreaming enough X-stuff...)

Y - Yawning

If you yawn in your dreams, you will search in vain for health and contentment.

Z - Zoological Garden

To dream of visiting zoological gardens, denotes that you will have a varied fortune. You will also gain knowledge by travelling in foreign countries.

overhyped, underhyped

overhyped, underhyped



Overhyped!

Underhyped!

Tamagotchi
Watching *Hercules: the Legendary Journeys*
without fail every week

1

Pet iguanas

Internet, IRC and Cyberspace communication
technoloav

3

Talking

The marital blues of Demi Moore and
Bruce Willis

4

The marital bliss of Li Nanxing and
Yang Libing

Fancy gourmet coffee with ridiculous names
at ridiculous prices

5

Good ol' affordable kopi-O or teh-tarik at
the neighbourhood kopi-tiam

Partying your socks off at some trendy,
ultra-chic club - complete with ear-splitting
music and gallons of beer

6

Spending the night at home with a good
book, soft music and a low-fat yoghurt drink

AVIs, MPEGs, VCDs, LDs and DVDs

7

The evergreen VHS tape

Catching sneak previews of the latest
Hollywood blockbuster that everyone's
dvina to see

8

Watching *Gone with the Wind* for the first
time - 58 years after its release

Self-mutilation in the form of ear-rings,
nose-rinas. lip-rinas. belly-rinas. etc

9

The ancient art of Chinese acupuncture

Muscular hunks with overblown egos and
sickly-thin babes with overgrown implants

10

Normal people with too much cholesterol
and too little exercise - like the rest of us

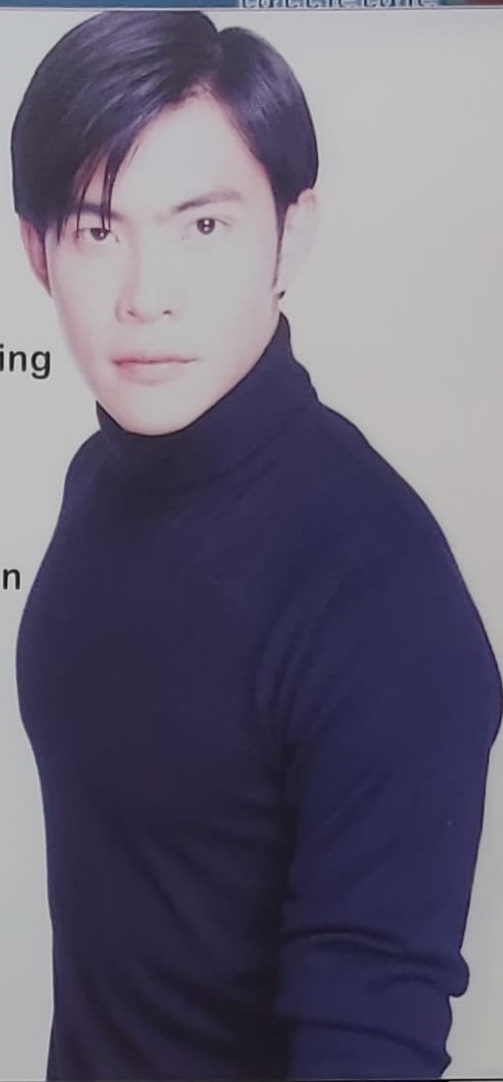
While an increasing number of
TCS 5 actors are crossing over
to the Chinese channel,

Steven Lim

who plays David in **Growing Up**,
has bucked the trend by appearing
in the musical **Hot Pants**.

Yap Meng Lee

talks to the NTU business
degree holder, who used to be an
Asean scholar from Kuala Lumpur,
on his interest in acting.



Many TCS 5 actors have crossed over to do Chinese dramas, why did you choose to do a stage musical instead?

Well, firstly, I'm not bilingual in Mandarin but in Malay, so it leaves that option pretty much closed. But stage productions are what I really enjoyed doing ever since I was still schooling. I remember taking part in drama festivals, school performances, and I was very active in acting towards the end of my studies in junior college.

Which do you prefer, TV or theatre productions?

It's pretty hard to compare the two, as each has its own rewards. Theatre has a different feel - it gives you a totally different adrenaline rush. There's the live audiences, and you're watching all the actions going around you on the stage. Movements, movements, movements.

Would you do an arts management course to add to your business degree?

Although I majored in business marketing, I'm not really sure I'd want to manage arts. Maybe in the distant future, but not at the present moment. Right now, acting is what I really want to do, I'll take acting any way I can get it. I just like acting a lot.

Have you put your business degree to any use?

I've always felt that a degree is not just a paper qualification, but the way you go about getting it, your campus life, they all become part of your learning experience. For example, what I learnt in business marketing is not just for application in business; it teaches you about life as well.

How did you juggle your studies and interest in acting?

It was quite scary as I started working with TCS before graduation from NTU. Once, I had to attend some filming during my final exams, so it was like paper in the morning, and filming in the afternoon. I wasn't too involved with external dramas during that time, more active in the hall events.

Was this how you got your role in *Growing Up*?

I was involved in some drama courses at TCS when they asked me to audition for the role, and I managed to get it. Well, I really like the acting in **Growing Up**, the whole cast got along very well. You should see us when we are filming the dinner scenes. We often got so hungry, that we would gang up and really eat the food, and the director would go: "Stop! Stop eating the props!"

How would you compare the role of David between the two seasons?

For the second season, there was more development on the character, and it's not as two dimensional as it was in the first season. It's really very hard to put a finger on it, but I'm only too glad to get out of the student role and put on the army uniforms. It's interesting as I'm not a local and did not go through National Service, so that helps as both David and me were doing it for the first time.

Now that you have had a reel experience of army life, would you want to do the real National Service?

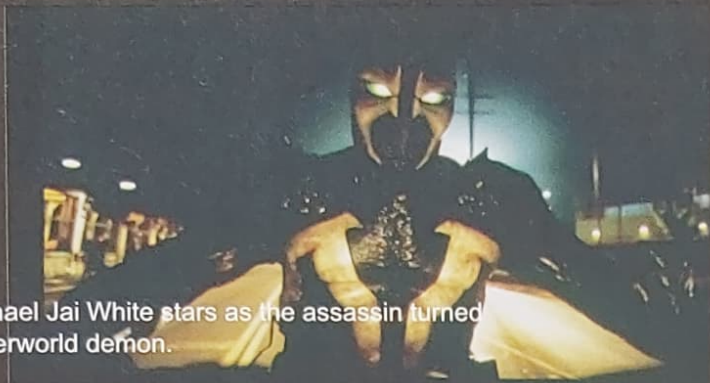
Definitely! From what I've been told to do during filming and the accounts that I've heard from my friends, I can easily imagine what local guys have to go through. National Service is just like a transition period for guys to grow up, making them prepared for adulthood.

What else have you gained from *'Growing Up'*?

It was a great learning experience to work with veteran actors like Lim Kay Tong, whom I really look up to as a fatherly figure. Arts practitioners like him, Lim Yu Beng and Tan Kheng Hua have been in theatres for so long, and have done a lot for the acting profession. I hope I can follow in their footsteps and make similar contributions.

A new Spawn-ing ground

Spawn, one of America's favourite comic book heroes, hits the big screen – with spectacular results. **Terrence Voon** previews the upcoming film, and delves into the saga of the demon with a heart.



Michael Jai White stars as the assassin turned underworld demon.

Move over, Batman.

There is a newer, darker and more twisted kid on the block – Spawn. Created by top comic book artist Todd McFarlane in 1992, Spawn is a scarred warrior as well as a fearless hero with the skills of an assassin. Made immortal through a pact with the devil, he possesses the weaponry of a demonic army and the supernatural ability to transform himself with an extraordinary arsenal of shapes and textures.

No fancy rubber suits and awkward sidekicks for this hero. Just state-of-the-art special effects and a tortured soul for company. In fact, **Spawn** the movie is closer to Tim Burton's original **Batman** film than the recent laughable screen incarnations of the Caped Crusader.

The plot of the movie closely resembles that of McFarlane's comic. It tells the tale of Al Simmons (played by Michael Jai White), a government assassin who is murdered by his superior. Five years later, he makes a Faustian pact with the devil so that he can be resurrected to see his beloved wife Wanda (Theresa Randle, who acted opposite Michael Jordan in **Space Jam**). In exchange for his return to Earth, Simmons agrees to lead Hell's Army to destroy mankind.

Cogliostro (Nicol Williamson) encourages Spawn to fight the devil and reign as a true champion for humankind, while Clown (John Leguizamo), a short, fat and ugly servant of the devil, prods Spawn to lead the Armageddon. The evergreen Martin Sheen plays Jason Wynn, a corrupt government agent bent on world domination who is manipulated by Clown to serve his own ends.

Spawn impresses immediately with its slick special effects wizardry from the Academy Award-winning team at George Lucas' Industrial Light And Magic (ILM), comprising director Mark Dippe, visual effects supervisor Steve "Spaz" Williams (who was responsible for the computer graphics used in *The Mask* and the *Star Wars* Trilogy Special Edition) as well as producer Clint Goldman.

"For less than half the budget of summer movies, we're making a first class motion picture with a better or equal quality of visual effects," says Goldman. "We know where the technological ceiling is, and we're pushing it just as far as it makes sense."

With 375 special effects shots and 21 companies working worldwide to complete digitally enhanced tasks for the film, **Spawn** promises to be a breathtaking visual treat for fans. Watch how Spawn's fluid costume moulds itself onto his body as well as how Clown morphs into the terrifying 13-foot Alien-like demon dubbed the Violator.

A digitally-enhanced Hell is another sight for movie-goers to behold. This apocalyptic vision of the underworld is complete with lava bursts, flying sparks, superheated clouds of bursting bubbles and even a lake of fire.

Fans can also look forward to an unusual soundtrack that

showcases an intriguing fusion of heavy metal and modern dance. The collaborations featured include Marilyn Manson & Sneaker Pimps, Orbital & Metallica as well as Prodigy & Rage Against The Machine.

In addition, kudos must be given to the filmmakers for resisting the temptation to cast Danny DeVito as the squat, overweight Clown. Leguizamo (last seen as Tybalt in **Baz Luhrmann's Romeo and Juliet**) delivers a hilarious show-stealing performance as the devil's henchman – no mean feat considering the fact that he had to endure wearing a 20-pound fat suit for hours on end.

Spawn has certainly come a long way since McFarlane received offers to bring his creation to the big screen as early as 1993. While working on a project at ILM, he ran the into Dippe, Goldman and Williams and even gave the trio a cameo appearance on the 14th issue of his comic book. They took the pitch for the movie over to New Line Cinema, whose president happened to be an avid comic book fan. The rest, as they say, is history.

McFarlane recalls, "It wasn't just about making a movie – it was about making the right movie. I felt if I went with a big studio, big directors and big actors, I was going to get lost in the shuffle. I needed people whom I could trust with my ideas, and I felt like I could trust these guys." Indeed, thanks to McFarlane's commitment, the screen version of **Spawn** is almost completely faithful to its comic book counterpart.

The comic book series, now into its sixth year, has enjoyed phenomenal sales since its debut. The first issue of **Spawn**, which launched one of the first African-American comic book heroes, sold an unprecedented 1.7 million copies. Consistently outselling the likes of other heavyweights like **X-Men**, **Spiderman** and **Superman**, **Spawn** has sold more than 100 million books worldwide and been translated into 13 different languages.

The character even has its own immensely successful toy line, now well into its eighth series. Other spin-offs include trading cards, jewellery and a cable cartoon series that was considered too violent to show on prime time television.

Leguizamo sums up the reason behind the hero's popularity and international appeal: "Spawn goes for the jugular, goes for the kill – things that kids want. Amidst all that darkness he still retains character, humor and style."

A mindless digitally enhanced bloodbath or a thought-provoking morality play? Watch it and decide for yourself.

Win passes for two to watch Spawn, exclusive Spawn posters as well as ultra-cool Spawn tattoos!

Come to the Newsroom (at Ngee Ann Polytechnic Blk 56 #02-01) with your copy of L'Espresso and your Ngee Ann student card, on Saturday, November 22, between 11am - 2pm to collect your prizes.

Prizes will be given on a first-come-first-served basis: Passes for two to watch Spawn will be given to the first 25, while Spawn posters or tattoos will be given to the next 30. Prizes are limited to one per person. (Prizes are provided courtesy of Golden Village.)



BONDS AWAY

TOMORROW NEVER DIES

by Wong Phin Wei

He's back. He of immaculate tuxedos, debonair charm, and shaken, not stirred Martinis, jumps back to the cineplexes for the 18th time come Christmas '97. Expect **James Bond - Tomorrow Never Dies** to have the usual barrage of battling diabolical villains, saving the world from a tragic end and picking up a few girls here and there. Don't you just love it?

Ian Fleming's James Bond is almost certainly the most famous secret agent in the world, with the trademark introduction of "Bond, James Bond" recognised and imitated across the globe. It is estimated that almost half of the world's population has seen at least one Bond flick. That's not too bad for a character created by Fleming for a little novel, way back in 1950.

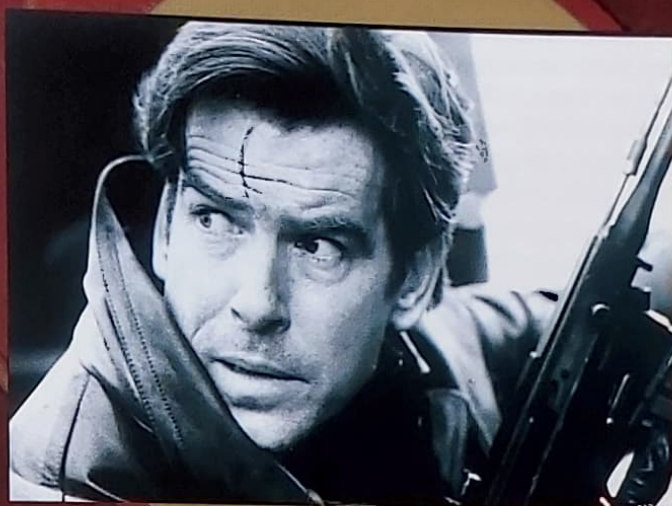
Fleming, an ex-Naval Intelligence Commander, crafted James Bond very much after himself. His love for smoking expensive cigarettes, his penchant for gambling, and his passion for beautiful women. According to Fleming, the spy's name was chosen for its simplicity. Ironical, huh? The very name now invokes images of a man known for his wit, charm, and exciting life of luxury and danger in the fast lane.

Not much is known about Bond's past. All we know from previous films is that he was born in Scotland in the 1930's, and was orphaned when his parents were killed in a mountain climbing accident. Of course that would now put him in his 60's. He's got good teeth for a man his age.

Bond made his movie debut with a suave Sean Connery on his Majesty's service in **Dr No**, way back in 1962. Since then, we've seen five Bonds, all adding a little something to the rather complex character. Connery, the original Bond, gave 007 his debonair charm. The second Bond George Lazenby, gave his arrogance. Roger Moore, a veteran of Bond films with seven movies under his designer tux, left his humour. Timothy

Dalton... ok, so he didn't leave anything behind. Thank God he took his stiff acting along with him.

What many don't know about the current Bond, Pierce Brosnan, is that he was offered the role before Dalton.



got to it. Unfortunately, his contract with his television series **Remington Steele** didn't allow him to do it. When the series came to an end due to plummeting ratings a short while after, it seemed like Brosnan simply wasn't destined to play 007. Of course when **Goldeneye** came out more than 10 years later, he showed the world what a truck-load of class and elegant composure can do. **Goldeneye** went on to become the highest grossing Bond film to date - US\$350 million.

Tomorrow Never Dies looks set to do the same. This time, with Brosnan still in the driver's seat, James Bond has swapped Russian baddies for a power-crazed media mogul played by Jonathan Pryce (**Evita**), who is all out to wage war in return for profits. Teri Hatcher (**Lois & Clark**) plays his wife, who also happens to have a secret past with Bond. Hey, at the rate this guy's going, he should have ex-girlfriends fishing through a little hole in the ice somewhere in the cor-

ners of Antarctica. This time round, Bond gets help from Michelle Yeoh (**Supercop**) who plays a Chinese agent helping 007 out. Hatcher also gets the honour of being the first pregnant Bond girl when she found out

dissappoint. Sheryl Crow looks set to have the distinction of singing that all-important theme song, putting her in the company of Duran Duran, Sheena Easton, and most recently Tina Turner. Anyway, with lavish sets, location filming in exotic countries, and cool toys only Batman could rival - the charming Bond has set the standard for the genre of secret agent movies. 35 years and 18 Bond movies later, no one has come close.

Tom Cruise tried with his **Mission Impossible** and ended up confusing everyone but his accountant. Val Kilmer tried with **The Saint** and ended up annoying more than just his co-stars. Even Jordan Chan and Aniki Jin who gave it a shot with the Hong Kong effort **Downtown Torpedoes** simply ended up looking like a clumsy cross between the two, without the cool soundtracks of course.

Roger Moore once said, "I think Bond movies are great - escapist entertainment, expensively made." Well-made works of fiction with the ability to capture the viewers' attention and hold them hostage in another world for two hours; perhaps that's the reason why audiences still embrace Bond flicks. Can you imagine a **Police Academy 18**?

she was pregnant after committing to the film.

With a strong cast, the same scriptwriter of the immensely popular **Goldeneye** (Bruce Feirstein), guaranteed action, drama, romance, and a whole new generation of Bond fans, it's highly unlikely that **Tomorrow Never Dies** will



Here's an example:

"JAMES BOND"

- Jade - Dome
- Bones - Bane
- Made - Same

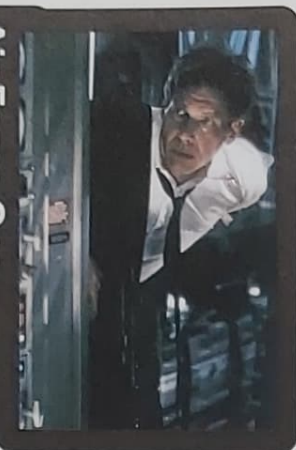
Freebies

We dare NP students to a diabolical game of anagrams. How many smaller words can you make from the words **"TOMORROW NEVER DIES"**?

The first 50 readers who sends us a list of more than 20 words (not less than 4 letters) will receive a limited edition **James Bond - Tomorrow Never Dies** interactive CD-ROM. Simply include your full name, telephone / pager number, department, and student number with your list, and drop it off at the Film and Media Studies office over at block 23. Prizes courtesy of United International Pictures.

Imagine this: Air Force One, the most secure aircraft around, is hijacked by a Russian terrorist group and only one man can save the day. Who better to do it than the President of the United States? This all American action flick tells of how the President plays hero and saves his family along with everyone else aboard his plane.

Air Force One



General Radek, a fascist tyrant who has been exploiting Russia, has finally been captured. His ardent supporters, led by the passionate and militant Korshunov, hijack Air Force One and demand the release of their leader. If not, they will kill everyone on the plane. The President finds himself placed in the dilemma of either saving his family or his country.

There are plenty of unintentional humorous moments in the movie. One scene features hostages escaping from Air Force One in parachutes. The images of them jumping off and floating breezily down is quite hilarious. Director Wolfgang Peterson, two time Oscar nominee for *In the Line of Fire* and *Outbreak*, is probably to blame for this. He tries to inject seriousness into the movie, but the film often ends up looking quite cheesy.

This movie features a number of well-known stars. The ever-reliable Harrison Ford takes the lead role, giving a fair performance as an action hero. Gary Oldman (*The Fifth Element*) gives a solid performance as the villain Korshunov. This movie also tries to be politically correct by having a female Vice-President, competently portrayed by Glenn Close (*Fatal Attraction*). Unfortunately, all the good acting wasn't enough to save the movie from looking ridiculous at times.

You'd probably enjoy this movie a lot more if you were an American since this self-indulgent movie works on the premise that the entire world revolves around the United States.



Rating: 2 peepholes

Seow Jia Min

"I'm not interested in being some poster girl for women's rights," says Lt. Jordan O'Neil, played by Demi Moore. Women's rights – that's the essence of the *G.I. Jane*. But don't expect high-heels, lipstick, and push-up bras. Try a whole lot of push-ups of a different kind and a stint in military hell instead.



G. I. Jane

The issue of sexual discrimination in the military is brought up by a brash and sharp Senator Lillian DeHaven (Anne Bancroft), who uses the hot issue as a political trump card. A deal is made: a woman will be allowed to train for the most honoured and demanding covert fighting force known – the Navy SEALs. If she succeeds, the military will allow equal opportunity for women. Lt. O'Neil is fiercely determined to succeed in a course where 60% of her male counterparts fail, while everyone else, including her sponsor, is counting on her to crumble.

Demi Moore finally emerges from the dumpster after her previous embarrassing films like *Striptease* and *The Scarlet Letter*. She shines in the role of Lt. O'Neil, as she goes through intense physical and emotional hell. While her celebrity status often overpowers her onscreen character, she finds a role strong enough to contain her in *G.I. Jane*.

The supporting cast doesn't disappoint either. Bancroft is perfect as the politically-oriented senator, and Viggo Mortensen brings depth and a sense of complexity to his role as Master Chief John Urgayle, Lt. O'Neil's immediate superior.

Ridley Scott's masterful direction keeps the film interesting and well-paced. He handles the military exercises with enough testosterone without getting overbearing as most military films do, and proves to have a real knack for doing movies with strong female characters (*Thelma & Louise* and *Alien*).

Finally, a military film that's not about Vietnam. Thank God they didn't let Oliver Stone anywhere near this movie.



Rating: 3 peepholes

Wong Phin Wei

Peep Quips

Mimic - 6 nov

Mira Sorvina stars as an entomologist who breeds huge man-eating mutant bugs to help kill little tiny virus-spreading bugs. Smart woman.

Kiss The Girls - 6 Nov

Morgan Freeman and Ashley Judd star in this thriller about a dangerous psychotic serial "collector" of beautiful girls. I guess a movie about a guy and his stamp collection wasn't exciting enough.

The Game - 6 Nov

A billionaire businessman (Michael Douglas) accepts an unusual birthday present from his brother (Sean Penn) - a deadly game. Doesn't anyone give book vouchers as gifts anymore?

The Peacemaker - 13 Nov

George Clooney and Nicole Kidman search for a stolen nuclear weapon in this action flick. Where's Batman when you need him?

She's So Lovely - 20 Nov

Robin Wright has to make a decision when her husband (Sean Penn) returns from prison only to find her married to John Travolta. Why bother? Haven't they seen *Golden Pillow*?

Seven Years In Tibet - 27 Nov

Brad Pitt sets off to scale to Himalayas, ends up in a British POW camp, meets the Dalai Lama, and spends seven years in Tibet. He should definitely dump his travel agent.

The Jackal - 4 Dec

A deadly assassin (Bruce Willis) is out hunting, and only an imprisoned IRA member (Richard Gere) can stop him. Tell me again why we have cops?

In Jan: The Rainmaker (Claire Danes, Matt Damon)
Red Corner (Richard Gere, Bai Ling)

In Feb: For Richer or Poorer (Tim Allen, Kirstie Alley)

In March: Amistad (Morgan Freeman, Matthew McConaughey)
The Boxer (Daniel Day-Lewis, Emily Watson)

In April: Man in the Iron Mask (Leonardo DiCaprio, Jeremy Irons)
The Truman Show (Jim Carrey, Ed Harris)



You may remember Bela Lugosi as motion picture's most popular vampire with his 1931 classic portrayal of Bram Stoker's **Count Dracula**. Less well known, however, are Lugosi's other works that have also made it into the horror film hall of fame.

Among them is **White Zombie** which features him at his ghoulish best as Murder Legendre - a voodoo practitioner in Haiti who enslaves his dead enemies as "walking corpses", to use them as plantation workers at night.

What made the film most memorable was Lugosi's facial expressions which instilled a strong sense of fear and dark sensuality. Despite being limited by black and white film, director Victor Halperin, was also able to create an atmosphere, that effectively produced a "horror package" complete with the clever use of eerie cemetery and castle sets.

The present generation of horror movies now contain themes that are not only far-fetched and unrealistic, but also bombard viewers with a non-stop spectacle of visual effects that leaves one more dazed than horrified.

Whatever happened to good old story-telling? Snarling monsters, gratuitous violence and lots of blood may spice up the screen and scare you for a moment, but good story-lines and sterling performances are the factors that leave lasting impressions.

White Zombie is available at Ngee Ann Polytechnic's Media Resource Centre.



Ratings: 3 peepholes

Yap Meng Lee

Garrett, an innocent man is tortured to make him surrender sensitive government footage that he is believed to possess, and locked up in a giant icebox. In this "refrigerator", Garrett encounters stresses that push him beyond his human limitations, and believes he has found God, Sleep and Love.

When the government finally realise their mistake and take him out of the "refrigerator" one week later, Garrett, bleeding from his ears and driven insane by now, claws his eyes out and chokes to death on his tongue, wanting to be put back into his "refrigerator heaven".

This and 21 other bizarre and chilling stories are what you'll find in **Dark Love: 22 all-original tales of lust and obsession**. Featuring contributions from the likes of Robert Weinberg (*A Local Magician*) and Ramsey Campbell (*Obsession, The Nameless*), plus a never before published short story by Stephen King.

None of the stories respect taboos or good taste, with subject matters ranging from sexual repression and liberation to pyromania. Yet they all have the common theme of obsession, which is ultimately inspired by love - plain old human love.

With twisted, disturbing and unflinchingly raw stories from award-winning authors, gratuitous sex, and humour of the blackest kind, don't expect a comfortable read of the bedtime variety. Indeed this book is not for everyone, but then again, neither is the night.



Ratings: 3 peepholes

Alvin Chan



When their baby is stillborn, U.S. Ambassador Richard Thorn (Gregory Peck) makes a decision that will change the course of his life as well as that of the world. He adopts an orphan secretly, hoping to save his wife from the grief of losing their child.

Gregory Peck and Lee Remick are the stars who play their parts with tremendous ease in this memorable thriller behind the pure

Directed by Richard Donner, **The Omen** is undoubtedly one of the most disturbing and scary movies of all time. With a script perfectly written to make you scream and jump when you least expect it, it'll never loosen its terrifying grip on your memory.

When all the many tragic, gory and coincidental events are woven together, Thorn realises that his mistake will take innocent lives, as well as his own.

Watch Thorn travel, as the tale unravels, to discover the mysteries and fate surrounding his young son, the anti-Christ. As the plot unfolds, the dark prophecy foretold by the ancient scribes comes true to seal the fate of mankind:

"When the Jews return to Zion, and a comet fills the sky, the holy Roman empire rises, and you and I must die. From the eternal sea, He rises, creating armies on either shore, turning man against his brother, till man exists no more."



Ratings: 4 peepholes

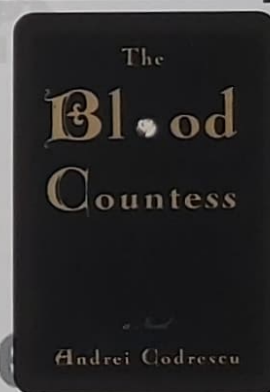
Lesley Chelvan

Murders, slayings and debauchery characterise this book about the intertwining lives of two people who lived four hundred years apart. Skillfully crafted to blend fiction and historic truth, Romanian writer Andrei Codrescu, spins a tale of the most dreadful murderess in recorded history and her descendent, Drake Bathory Kereshtur.

The novel spans the life of Countess Elizabeth Bathory during the Renaissance and the twentieth century court confession of Drake. The latter believes that his ancestress, who slayed 650 virgins for their blood, drove him to kill. His narrative is punctuated with scenes of sacrifice, torture and the making of the horrific and perverse monster within Elizabeth.

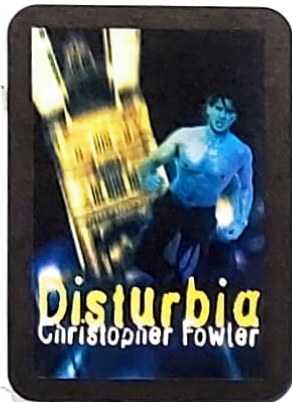
Well-worded to flesh out the full impact of Elizabeth's obsession, the book holds the reader captive in its unconventional and gruesome accounts of torture. It truly forces the reader to ponder if a beast indeed lies within each one of us.

However, the book's numerous abstracts of blood and gore make it teeter on the brink of being overbearing and nauseating. Definitely not a book for the faint-hearted, **The Blood Countess**, is unarguably the book for those fascinated with the dark and twisted.



Ratings: 3 peepholes

Clara Lee



What happens when you are only given 12 hours to live, and a whole set of unfathomable morbid challenges that you are to fulfil within that span of time? That is the question at the heart of this novel and it's another yarn of excellent fictionalised thriller.

Christopher Fowler cleverly interweaves England's history together with his unabashed sense of story telling, that captures the reader even at its prologue. His sixth novel as yet, **Disturbia** incorporates Fowler's style in his keen eye for the minute details of life in the big city in the nineties.

Disturbia essentially focuses on Vincent Reynolds, a young man who freelances for a book company. He has discovered a secret and wants to tell the world - if he can stay alive till dawn. His adversary - an English gentleman obsessed with puzzles, playing his deadliest game. Vincent's only hope is to discover the solutions to the ten lethal challenges that will lead him from dusk till day break, through the nightlife of a secret city hidden even to its inhabitants.

The spiral of obsession and manipulation is convincingly portrayed, as the book becomes a page-turner with Fowler's satirical dark humour. He finds pun with common everyday life and events, and the reader would find himself laughing at times, at how painfully accurate he could be.

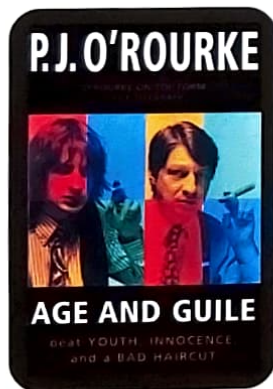
Although the interplay of characters are fleeting, Fowler has the ability to create a lasting impression on them, as the individual characters can very much relate to the reader's lifestyle.

A must read for the gore brigade, **Disturbia** is ideal for readers who go for novels with a descriptive play of words and characters. One of his best novels, **Disturbia** sharply illustrates the dilemma of what you would do if you were to choose the truth or your life.



Rating: 3 peepholes

Shamala Rajendran



All the ingredients of a sensational tabloid read are here in this no-holds-barred, provocative and sometimes unbelievably crude collection of readings published to celebrate P.J.O'Rourke's 25th year of writing.

In **Age & Guile**, America's premier humorist is unsparing in his parodies and satires as he pokes fun at everybody from juvenile delinquents and politicians to homosexuals and atheists. No one is spared.

From alcoholism, O'Rourke leapfrogs to communism - with a twist. In *The Boxer Shorts Rebellion*, he writes about sex behind the Bamboo Curtain. There is no clear distinction

between fact or fiction, and every detail seems so believable. If O'Rourke had not confessed that it was a fabrication, there is no way one could know the story was just pure fantasy.

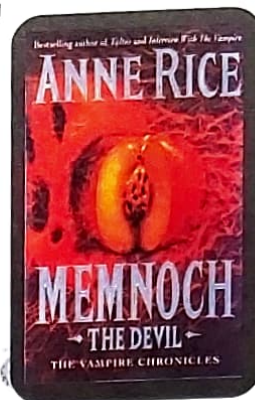
The anthology contains enough firecracker-wit to sustain the readers' interest, and O'Rourke is not afraid to offend or criticise. However, readers should not take the book too seriously. As O'Rourke says, the most important thing in life is to have a sense of humour. His ability to incorporate comic elements into serious subject matter, makes this a highly entertaining and readable book.

One of the readings, *So Drunk*, describes the misadventures of an alcoholic who goes on a unprecedented two week non-stop drinking binge. The reading is so politically incorrect that assuming that it is published in a magazine, the only people willing to advertise would be liquor companies.



Rating: 3 peepholes

Dennis Yin



Memnoch the Devil is the fifth and final book of **The Vampire Chronicles**, the wildly popular series detailing the exploits of Lestat and his fellow vampires. **Chronicles**, authored by gothic-horror writer Anne Rice, gained even greater fame and attained cult status following the release of the movie adaptation of

Interview With the Vampire, the first book of the series. **Memnoch** wraps up the series with the classy exit of Lestat, and shows us why Rice will be master of them all for many years to come.

Never has the vampire been so human. Rice departs from the popular idea that the vampire is an unthinking, evil creature whose only purpose in life (or death, as the case may be) is to go about sucking blood from humans. She paints her characters with rich detail, imbuing them with flaws, weaknesses and qualities that are identifiably human.

In **Memnoch**, Lestat is chosen to fulfil a divine purpose. The Devil himself personally comes for Lestat and brings him on a tour of Creation, right into the realms of heaven and hell to convince him to his cause.

In this story, Rice offers a radically different alternative to the timeless strife between God and the Devil. She skillfully reconciles two seemingly opposing ends of the spectrum by effortlessly weaving Lestat into the story as a witness, narrator, as well as the key player and "human" representative. Lestat is confronted by powers greater than his vampiric own; as such his "humanness" is made all the more apparent.

In wrapping up her best-selling series, Rice has created a journey into a fantastic world that is at once incredible and plausible. **Memnoch** slowly unfolds to ever-increasing heights of artful story-telling, leaving you deeply satiated, yet somehow thirsting for more.



Rating: 4 peepholes

Alvin Chan

Peepshow Rating System

1 peephole - Watching frozen meat defrost would be more exciting.

2 peepholes - Slightly more interesting than counting the hairs on your chest.

3 peepholes - More satisfaction than finding 10 cents some poor loser left behind in the coin phone.

4 peepholes - Even better than knowing the difference between "stationary" and "stationery" when all your friends don't.



Roomful of Blues

No hip-hop and trance. No ear-piercing, monotonous techno music. No ultra-cool "Zoukettes" with their outlandish clothes and smirks. Just plain, good ol' Blues with a whole variety of booze and great company.

Singapore's first Blues café, Roomful Of Blues is THE haven for all Blues lovers and musicians. The café,

off MacPherson Road, looks like any ordinary café with its cosy metallic tables, narrow high bar chairs against the walls, and framed pictures of legendary Blues artists. But step into the back area and instead of pool tables and dart boards, there are three sound-proof studios. These come complete with musical instruments and high-end jamming equipment, specially for professional and amateur musicians.

The concept behind Roomful Of Blues is to get people to have a drink or two, indulge in music-related tête-à-tête, and exercise their musical inclinations by engaging in spontaneous or rehearsed music-making in the jamming studios. For people who do not play any musical instruments, the café offers a whole range of CDs for their listening pleasure.

Three of the greatest Blues kings have their names on each of the studio doors. BB King, the biggest studio which comes complete with a couch and mini fridge, is rented out at \$22 an hour. Freddy King which is the next in size goes for \$20. Little Walter as the name suggests, is the smallest room. More suitable for smaller bands, this room is rented out at \$18. The best part about the jamming studios is the student's concession rate, where the studios go at a half-price of \$10 from 9am to 5pm every day.

To complete the experience, the café offers a menu of Blues-inspired dishes, with in-house specialities like Gill House Blues (fish and chips), Gatemouth Chips (french fries with cheese filling), Muddy Water (a mixture of coffee and Bailey's Irish Cream), and not forgetting their very own concoction, Cream Licks. Roomful Of Blues also sells some drinks at lower prices. For example, a jug of beer for only \$18, which is far cheaper than a night spot where you also have to pay cover and service charges. To bring home that all-Blues feeling, customers can buy a limited edition hand-drawn menus at only \$15.



Steven Low, the proud owner of Roomful of Blues says, "The concept of the café is Blues, but that doesn't mean that people with other musical preferences can't come in and enjoy themselves. I see this place as an alternative to the numerous pubs and clubs that Singapore has. Roomful Of Blues has a cool and easy atmosphere, and we want people to relax, have a couple of drinks and unwind after a hard day's of work."

Roomful Of Blues is at 443 MacPherson Road and they are open seven days a week from 9am - 12am. The jamming studios are open 24hrs, but bookings must be made at least one day in advance. For studio bookings call 289 6718.

Shamala Rajendran

Present your student card and this coupon for a

10% discount at

Roomful of Blues
Music Studios and Cafe

Terms and Conditions

1. There will be a 10% discount on all standard charges, regardless of the amount spent.
2. This 10% discount applies to both food and drinks from the menu.
3. However, this 10% discount does not apply with the student concession on the studio charges.
4. The 10% discount can only be used for studio charges, with bookings of two hours and above.

443 MacPherson Road Singapore 368154 Tel: (65) 289 6718 Fax: (65) 289 6717
an exclusive promotion brought to you by **hype & Roomful of Blues**



Swee Choon

An old ceiling fan turns lazily. At a corner of the room, an elderly man sips a cup of hot tea while lei

surely reading the evening paper. A well-dressed young man lumbers in to grab a snack, relaxing

after a hard day's work

Stepping into the restaurant is like entering a time machine and going back in time into the late 70's. With restaurants and food outlets all gearing for the 21st century with modern perfectionism, the quiet simplicity here is a welcome relief.

At 10 pm everyday, Swee Choon begins to prepare for a new "day" of selling *dim sum*. "Most *dim sum* shops close around the afternoon," said Mr Ping Yen Lee, 42, the owner. But Swee Choon specially caters to "midnight owls", and business is good.

Swee Choon means 'Good times in Spring', Mr Ping told me proudly. And the shop has a very long legacy, being established way back in 1962. But history isn't the only thing the shop is beaming about.

Talking about *dim sum* you'd normally find in coffee-shops, he said, "They're mass produced, and they use frozen pork." Swee Choon promises freshness right to the last bite. Their supplier deliver a batch of fresh ingredients every morning and its seasoned immediately for business at night.



"People usually come here for the *tua pao* and the *cha siew pao* because it's famous and delicious," boasted Mr Ping. Can't take his word? Then take mine. I tried their *tua pao*, and believe me, it's a real treat!

But perhaps the best endorsement Swee Choon ever got, was a visit from Martin Yan (**Wok with Yan**) himself. A thumbs-up from the master chef and the reigning king of TV cooking - what else do you need?

So for anybody sick of fast food and a fast-paced lifestyle, do visit Swee Choon. Relax while sipping a cup of piping hot tea and biting into a sweet and succulent *har gao*.... there's a prawn in every bite. Now isn't that heavenly?

Swee Choon opens at night from 10pm till 10am. It's located at No 191, Jalan Besar, just opposite New World Centre.

Daniel Seet



Club Samsara

Club Samsara is located at No. 9 Mohamed Sultan Road. Clubbing starts at 5pm and ends at 2am on weekdays and 3am on weekends.

Perfectly placed among several other pubs in the Mohamed Sultan Road area, is Club Samsara. It's a pub cum disco that's become popular because of its upbeat music and energetic crowd.

A rather obscure symbol greets you at the steps of this row of colonial shophouses that has since been turned into almost every party animal's favourite haunt.

The music is Club Samsara's best asset. With a different deejay each day of the week, there's always something for every gyrating individual. Trance, dance, alternative, house - this club has it all.

The club's dark and mysterious atmosphere is achieved with futuristic luminous lights creeping up in a few corners, giving the whole place a very comfortable feeling.

The concept of cover charge is non-existent, but drinks are at normal bar prices, so bring enough cash if you're going to dance the night away.

Lesley Chelvan

What do you do when the coffee works too well and you're wide awake at one in the morning after finishing a major assignment? The sound of your stomach growling starts grating on your ears and you can't sleep because you're riding on a caffeine high. Well, here's a solution to satisfy those hunger pangs in the wee hours of the morning.

As you walk through the gates to Gay World Food Centre you automatically know what it's famous for. The Teochew porridge. Everyone's ordering it, even with the wide variety of other food stalls which sell steamboat, barbequed seafood, Muslim Thai, and a whole array of duck dishes. Surprisingly, there's not a single customary chicken rice stall in sight.

If you venture to the back of the food centre which sells Muslim food, you'll find that Thai Muslim stalls are abundant and surprisingly so are the Malay working women of the night. The bright neon lights deceive patrons into thinking that the atmosphere is festive. In reality, the ambience is as good as the smell of stale beer wafting through the surroundings.



The food from Shun Li Rice, the teochew porridge stall arrives stewed duck with black sauce, stewed salted vegetables with garlic, salted egg, minced pork with black beans and sambal, steamed silat fish and steamed sotong.



Gay World Food Centre

The food is fresh and the sotong is surprisingly springy, an indication that it is steamed to just the right texture, a rarity at most Teochew porridge stalls. Special mention must also go to the minced pork with black beans and sambal because the minced pork is not fatty, something also very hard to find at other Teochew porridge stalls.

The dish is thankfully spicier than usual, giving it the "oomph" it deserves. When matched with the hot porridge, nothing describes it better than your satisfied stomach.

The barbequed sting ray from the bright yellow extension of Sawadee Thai food was a bit of a disappointment because the fish was a little mushy and a little stale. The food from the one and only steamboat stall looked so stale, my partner and I decided to give it a miss. Other than that, the only other interesting stall was the crispy "guitar" duck which was closed.

Eating at Gay World is a feast for the eyes and stomach because for about \$17 inclusive of drinks for two, you get to sample a wide array of dishes and drink in the atmosphere of Singapore's unofficial red light district.

Gay World Food Centre is located along Geylang Road (turn in from Guillemard Road). It's opening hours are from 5pm to 3am.

Jean Khong

Located at the rather desolate Planet Marina at Marina South is a pub brimming with upbeat optimism and appeal. Zoo, fast becoming a popular joint for party animals, boasts of tropical decor and attitude that is alluring to both pub crawlers and dance fanatics alike.

Entering this two-storey watering hole, one is greeted by fluorescent murals of wildlife ranging from gorilla portraits to a Tarzan look-a-like mingling with creatures of the wild. The ashed-coloured walls of the interior resembling rock structures, sums up the safari theme of this nightspot.

Zoo is divided into three areas. There is an alfresco wine bar at the concourse catering to those who have a taste for good wine and enjoy latin and samba music. A satisfactory taste of Spain's extract is affordably priced at \$45-\$60 a bottle, in comparison to other wine bars.

Another attraction is the games room on the second storey where patrons can pit their skills against each other on the pool table or the arcade-like operated dart board. However, the main selling point must be the disco which starts at 10.30pm. For those who like to groove to good music, the DJs on the dance floor spins a mix of reggae, '80s retro hits and world music. Techno and trance, on the other hand, are strict no-nos.

There is no cover charge for entry. However, on special theme nights like Hospitality Night, the entry charge is \$25.00 inclusive of two drinks. Normal housepours like beer and bourbon coke are priced at \$7.00++, while a jug costs \$15.00++ during Happy Hour and \$25.00++ after that.

Zoo attracts a mainly yuppie crowd made up of air stewards and stewardesses, executives and money brokers. So for those who want to have a good time, or are looking for an alternative to the overcrowded and overhyped Zouk, Zoo is just the right place to let your hair down.

Zoo is located at 31 Marina #01-06. Opening hours: 8pm to 3am daily. Happy Hours: 8pm to 9.30pm.



Zoo

Dennis Yin

Neo Pharaohs

"Feel it, Be it, Do it" - one rule at Neo Pharaohs which its regulars seldom break. This place is a true weekend haven to let off some steam, socialise, and soak in the good vibes of its irresistible party atmosphere.

This pub-cum-club, is nestled in a three-storey shophouse modelled after a Mediterranean 'fiesta' winebar. Once inside, you experience a visual transition into a place that makes you feel as if you were having a drink while on vacation in some exotic holiday getaway.

Each storey conveys its own ambience, mood, and style of music. The first level is the main bar with the standard high stools. Drink orders and conversation fill the room and the main traffic of people flow in and out. The patrons here appear more at home with the exotic World music, a mixture of salsa, Caribbean and South-American influenced music, unusual in the Singaporean context.

A walk up to the second level brings you to the lounge where patrons 'chill out' on plush sofas, enjoy their drinks, and groove to the music drifting in from above. The dim lighting and yards of richly-coloured velvet draped over the walls create an Arabian grotto atmosphere.

The top storey which can literally bring the house down, holds a dance floor, coupled with DJs playing mambo, house and garage tunes to those who want to boogie the night away. An antique-looking wooden staircase links these three distinctive levels, and rows of candles line the steps to guide you along.

The crowd is about half expat-half local, and tends to range between teenagers to the thirty-somethings. Less concerned with the latest trends, the regulars dress 'smart casual' without abusing the term.

With partying not confined to weekends alone, Wednesdays mark Neo Pharaohs' midweek event "Rubber". A cover charge of \$12, entitles you to a drink and allows you to be transported into this weekday fiesta complete with 'Feel-good-hands-in-the-air' house tunes oozing with soulful lyrics. Thursdays are dedicated to ladies with a complimentary first two drinks before midnight.

With no cover charge except on Wednesdays, Neo Pharaohs is definitely worth a visit. Neo Pharaohs is located at 56 Caimhill Road (next to Club Porsce) and is open from 5 pm to 3 am. (1 am on Sundays). Happy Hours: 5 pm. to 9 pm. Bar prices. Tel: 736-0818

Cheryl Ann Fox

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Cheryl Ann Fox

WHAT'S WITH?

What's with polytechnics constantly being put down when compared with JCs and Universities?

1

The comparison is not fair. We are all students and although the qualifications are not the same, they should treat us equally because we have the advantage of the 2 month working industrial attachment.

MTE

Lynn Wee, 17

3

Why are President's scholarships given only to top graduates from JCs? There are many polytechnic graduates who have shown their abilities in excelling in both studies and extra-curriculum activities, why are they left out?

FMS

Siti Norhana, 19

5

I guess it depends which side of the fence you're on. If you're in JC, you're bound to support your institution and say it is better than a poly. It's only natural.

EE

Eddie Tay, 19

7

Well, polytechnics are not a put-down in the sense that when people talk about going to JC, they talk about an easier way of entering the university, when they talk about the polytechnic, they think it's harder to enter the university, but it's not true. In fact, we're just as competitive as the university students.

ECE

Roy Chan Chin Yi, 19

9

I don't think poly students are being put down. People got different opinions and ambitions. I think those who still think poly education is inferior must have traditional thinking.

BS

Lin Yin Hsuan, 19

11

Perceptions are hard to change. Everyone is entitled to their opinions. I think what counts is your ability. I don't care what they think because I think action speaks louder than a piece of paper.

ME

Khayne Yin, 17

ACC

Poly is more of a thinking institution. What we study is more relevant to the outside world.

2

Steven Ng Kim Yeow, 19

CEE

It's a common thought ... most people think that JCs and Universities are better than polytechnics. I guess poly students need to prove themselves more capable in the working world to change this.

4

Lee Fook Man, 19

BFS

Definitely, people who are ignorant about the education system see us as the lower brother to the Universities and treat us as just above the ITEs. It's time someone corrects this misconception.

6

Phang Siek Ke, 19

EE

I think that personally, since I have had a taste of JC life, the poly is better. I agree whole heartedly that poly's are being compared with JCs and Universities, as people feel we are stupid if we are up in a poly. I think that's absurd.

8

Jeremy Oh, 19

BD

In our bus pass, both poly and Universities students have tertiary stamps. So what's the difference?

10

Phang Siek Ke, 19

SOE

That's a very unfair comment. I mean in the poly, we learn things that are more practical, things that we can put into good use when we graduate. But what can the JC students really put into use with that much theory?

12

Desmond Lee Hai Liang, 19

ohmygawd!

Wong Phin Wei &
Terrence Voon



Who needs a Prada bag when you can wear your noodles?



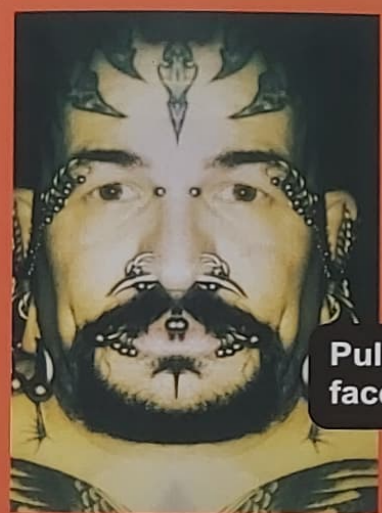
Don't worry, the octopus won't get far. I don't see an ALS coupon.



Under the influence of spice & we don't mean nutmeg and cinnamon.



You think they blink?



Pull the rings out and his face deflates.



Looks like we found Giorgio's long lost brother.

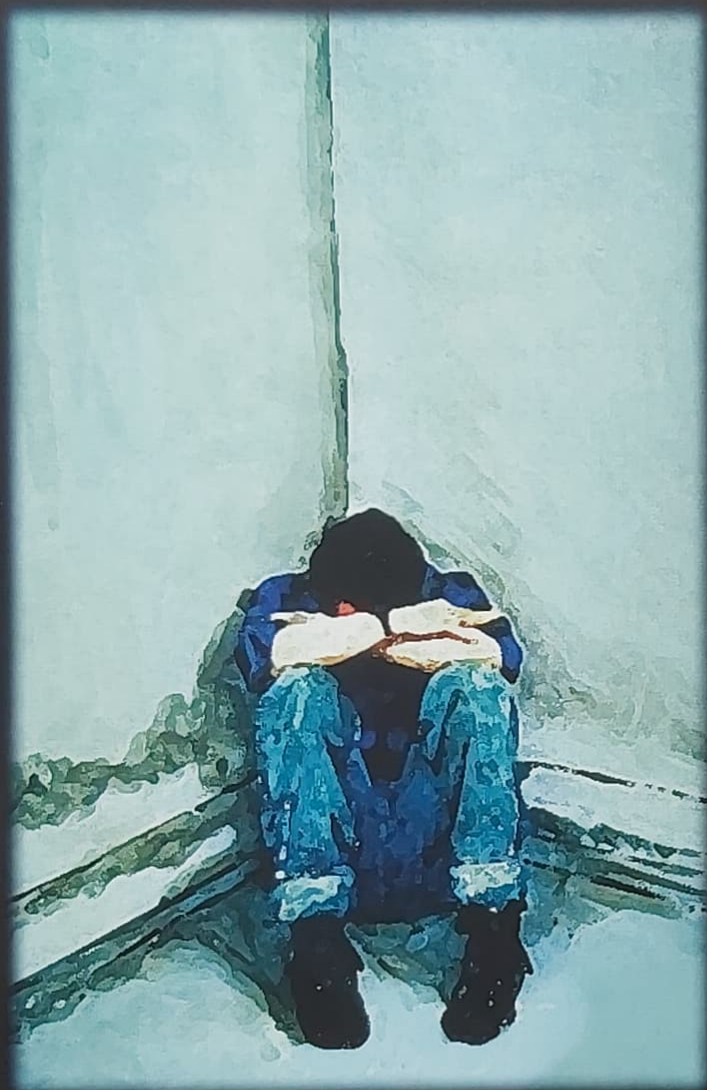


I'd love to see him in contacts.



5th Element without a budget.

wanna talk about it?



more satisfying than dialling a
1900 number, the **hype** mailbox is waiting
for your *feedback.*

tell us what you think about

issue 5 of **hype**

& we'll publish the best letters.

so as long as you didn't
use our precious magazine to wrap
fish

mail us
YOUR LETTERS
hype magazine

department of film & media studies
block 23, ngee ann polytechnic
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