



## Karen Mok Concert

Hong Kong singer  
wows NP audience  
Page 6



## Journey of the Heart

Young beneficiaries  
of Project Hope  
Pages 4 and 5



Campus Newspaper of Ngee Ann Polytechnic

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# March of Coins raises \$50,000

by Melissa Heng & D.W. Anuja

THE FIRST ever March of Coins held in Singapore, which involved students from both Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) and Singapore Polytechnic (SP) took place on 18 July and raised a total of \$50,000.

The March of Coins was a joint fund-raising project involving NP, SP and the National Youth Achievement Awards (NYAA) Council. It was adapted from the March of Dimes which originated in the United States of America, where people raised money by walking and laying coins long distances. This fund-raising project coincides with the launch of the NYAA Youth Development Trust Fund, which will be used for various youth development programs for Education.

The event saw each of the 1020 students placing seven strips of 280 twenty-cent coins along a route from SP to NP. A total of 250 000 coins was used, covering a distance of 5.6 km. Lecturers from NP also did their bit by placing the last strips of coins leading to the Octagon for the second part of the event - the Coin Building Competition. Eight teams from the two polytechnics tried to build the highest tower using twenty-cent coins.



NP Heads of Department (HOD) laying down strips of coins

Preparations started from the end of last year. The team had to work out the logistics, decide where to lay the coins and how to overcome obstacles such as roads and over-

head bridges. The project was co-ordinated by NP student volunteers who were praised for their spirit and commitment to the event.

"There was a sense of camaraderie. For example, when we contacted ECA groups like the Dragon Boat Club, Christian Fellowship and Indian Cultural Society only four days before the event, they could gather about 19 volunteers each to take part," said Mrs. Denise Michaels from the PE Department.

One of the coordinators, Hong Ruling, a final-year Biotechnology student said, "It was a rare chance to work on something like this. I learned a lot from this project; the planning, interacting with other students from SP and helping to organise the groups for this morning's event."

"We chose to do it because we wanted to do our little part to help NYAA and the community at large," added Caroline Chia, second-year Film and Media Studies student.

These three top fund-raisers will automatically be part of the Singapore-UK exchange programme and get a chance to travel to England.

Fund-raising started at the beginning of

this year with the distribution of donation cards to all NP departments. The top money earner was Felicia Kang, second-year Business Administration (BA) student from SP who raised a total of \$720. Two second-year NP students, Caroline Tan and Mohammad Abdullah from the Department of Film and Media Studies (FMS) in NP took joint second place raising \$670 each.

"We believe that the card (for fund-raising) should go to as many people as possible so we went to companies; we went to students, and asked them to donate," said Mohammad. Caroline and Mohammad heard about the event during their PE lesson and decided to give it a try.

Felicia found it quite easy to raise the money with help from the staff and lecturers at SP. However, being part of the main committee for the event was not an easy task. "It was very tiring and there's a lot to manage, and a lot of difficulties cropped up along the way."

The NYAA is a non-competitive award scheme that encourages young people from the ages of 14 to 25 to develop perseverance, self-reliance, and a sense of responsibility through community service, skills development, physical recreation and adventure programme. The aim of the NYAA is to "motivate young people to maximise their potentials to the fullest through the various projects that we organise," said Mr. James Soh, Executive Director, NYAA. ☐

## Youth in the New Millennium

by Delicia Tan

YOUTHS from 19 countries came together to discuss how they should face the many challenges and uncertainties of the new millennium.

Third-year Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students, Albert Lee Weng Yew, 19, from Electronic and Computer Engineering, and Delicia Tan, 19, from the Department of Film and Media Studies; joined 111 youths at the seven-day Asia-Pacific Youth Camp held during the last week of July.

The camp was jointly organised by the City Junior Chamber and the Orchid Jaycettes of Singapore, local branches of the non-profit Junior Chamber International movement, an organisation for helping youths develop their potential.

Supported by the National Youth Council, the camp provided a platform for character building through workshops, lectures and educational visits to help reinforce the leadership and entrepreneurship skills and a sense of social responsibility.

During their week-long stay at the National Community Leadership Institute, the youths shared opinions on topics such as gender roles, the economic crisis, culture and the role of the aged in society.

"They (the activities) were educational and taught us something new about leadership and thinking, and also encouraged us to think creatively. At the same time, it helped us become more aware of the world and how we as youth in the new millennium should face the challenges, such as the economic crisis happening now," said Albert.

The participants found out more about the Asia-Pacific region through first-hand accounts given by youths from participating nations. Albert also felt that the way the participants recounted the



Photo courtesy of Delicia Tan

Singapore delegates at the first Asia Pacific Youth Camp

happenings in their country, such as the Indonesian riots, was "more realistic than the news" and thus gave the participants an accurate picture of the situations in the region.

Despite the fact that the common language the participants used was English, Delicia and Albert still found difficulties in communicating with participants from Nepal, Japan and Korea.

"Their English was difficult to understand as they pronounced things in different ways and sometimes had very strong accents, so it was quite hard to understand them and vice-versa," explained Albert.

Differences in culture and behaviour, such as the Nepalese habit of shaking their heads in agreement, seemed strange initially. These differences were

also another obstacle the participants faced in their day-to-day conversations.

However, as young people from the same age group with similar goals, these obstacles diminished quickly, enabling the youths to enter into serious and fruitful discussions on topics such as the environment and unemployment, that will continue to be issues as we approach the year 2000.

National President of the Junior Chamber of Singapore, Junior Chamber International (JCI) Senator Michele-Pearl Fernando in her message, encouraged youths to share their opinions, "The participants of the Asia Pacific Youth Camp can contribute to the growing dynamism of the region through the exchange of ideas and thoughts." ☐

## insight

forefront

National Skills  
Competition  
Ngee Ann sweeps  
gold medals / Pg 2

focus

Hero for Today  
Founder of HI Club  
recognised / Pg 3

around campus

Power Station  
Pony-tailed duo  
Rocks Campus / Pg 7

sports

Magnum Force  
Muscles behind  
the Force / Pg 8



## Forefront

### 60 Seconds Eugene Tan

#### Brat Pack

TWO Scots went walking through the Scottish countryside. They saw poor soil and the rocky landscape. One turned to the other and asked, "What do we raise on land like this?"

"We raise men," the other replied.

Let's put it in the local context.

Two Singaporeans went walking down Orchard Road. They saw wealth and affluence thriving in this concrete jungle. One turned to the other and asked, "What do we raise on land like this?"

"We raise brats," the other replied.

We just celebrated the month of the Singapore Youth Festival but I believe Singaporean youth has a long way to go. Some may still be wondering which way to go. They need direction and more importantly, proper guidance.

However, many have chosen to fight the school system and have beckoned many others to join them in the cubicles of the toilets, where they plot how to dishearten the next enthusiastic lecturer, over a puff. Smoke if you must, but do it out of campus. They are your lungs, but be considerate to innocent visitors to the toilet.

Why should the cleaning ladies be at the mercy of selfish young people who have forgotten how to clean up after themselves each time they eat, drink or smoke?

Most pet dogs and cats are house-broken at a tender age. While we have always claimed to be far superior in our hygiene, the stench from our school toilets tells us otherwise. Intelligent youth, it seems, failed to fathom the use of the gadget beside the toilet bowl.

They claim rules and regulations dampen the human spirit. They want to be free souls and unshackle the chains that restrain unnecessary creative and inventive minds. Remember that if one has not learned to walk, an attempt to run might be a fatal mistake.

These mavericks are full of energy and always ready to go. Instead of charging at the slightest taunt, why not channel such zest and strength into something purposeful and useful?

Why look back three years down the road and regret opportunities lost? It's a new academic year and a new beginning. There are new challenges and chances for one to improve one's life. It's not uncool or unhip to be at a library or be seen performing community service. ☐



The Ngee Ann Tribune is a publication by final-year students of the Diploma in Mass Communication programme.

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The Tribune notice board is located at Blk 27. Do drop by for an update on the latest happenings in Ngee Ann. We welcome feedback and suggestions from our NP readers. You can contribute by writing to: **The Editors, Ngee Ann Tribune, Department of Film and Media Studies, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, 535 Clementi Road, Singapore 599489**, by visiting the newsroom at Blk 56, #02-01 or e-mailing us at [nptribune@hotmail.com](mailto:nptribune@hotmail.com). Letters should include your full name, contact number and department. The editorial team reserves the right to edit all letters where necessary.

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<http://www.np.edu.sg/~dept-fms/tribune/tribune.htm>

## Ngee Ann shines at NSC

**EE and CCS students bring home gold and silver medals for this year's NSC**

by Achaibar Gupta

THE THIRD National Skills Competition (NSC) produced gold and silver medallists from the Electrical Engineering (EE) and Centre for Computer Studies (CCS) Departments.

EE students Toh Teng Seng and Chan Wee Heng won gold and silver medals respectively in the trade area of Industrial Wiring while CCS students Wan Chih Hui and Martin Leo Chen Hong both won gold medals in the Information Technology (IT) category in the finals of the competition.

The NSC, held in early July, was organised by Institute of Technical Education (ITE) with the help of the four polytechnics, Nanyang, Ngee Ann, Singapore, Temasek and the Singapore Ho-

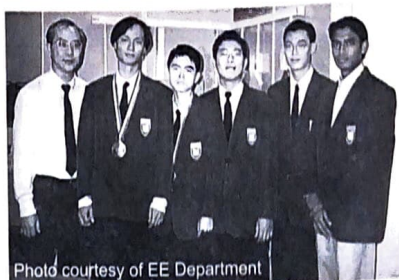


Photo courtesy of EE Department

**EE lecturer Leong Yat Meng together with the gold medallists and finalists**

tel & Tourism Education Centre, and Singapore Labour Foundation.

The competition attracted more than 700 participants from the different tertiary institutions. They competed in 10 trade areas in the Youth Category and five trade areas in the Open Category. The best 114 competi-

tors were selected to pit their skills against one another in the finals of the competition held at ITE Balestier.

"We are proud of their achievements and happy that they won against all odds. We gave our students prac-

tical training during the November/December holidays last year and a week of extensive training just before the finals," said Mr Leong Yat Meng, a lecturer from the EE Department.

The first prize of the competition was a gold medal and \$3,000 cash. The second prize was a silver medal and \$2,000 cash while the third was a bronze medal and \$1,000 cash.

This is the first time the EE Department has entered this competition and is proud of its achievements. As for CCS, they were unsuccessful in the second NSC in 1996, but clinched two gold medals this time.

"Toh Teng Seng and Chan Wee Heng are our best students. It all depends on the students themselves because no matter how much training we give them, they have to give their best shot during the competition. However, we will definitely train them to do well in Canada," said Mr Goh Eng Kee, Head of the EE Department.

All the three gold-medallists will represent Singapore in the International Youth Skills Olympics (IYSO) to be held in Montreal, Canada in 1999. ☐

## CCS strikes gold

by Jacinta Leow and Eugene Pang

FOR the first time, two Centre of Computer Studies (CCS) students won gold medals in the third National Skills Competition (NSC).

Martin Leo Chen Hong, 18 and fellow student Wan Chih Hui, 19, now third-year students were champions in the hotly contested Information Technology (IT) category.

The finals were held for various categories including Document Processing, Database Processing, Spreadsheet Processing, Graphic Processing and Presentation, Web Processing and Integration.

Mr. Lim Fang How, a CCS lecturer and the team's coach said, "The IT category was one of the most contested. It kicked off with about 30 participants from the five tertiary institutions and CCS had four finalists out of the 10 places for the finals.

The four finalists from Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) were Martin, Chih Hui, Augustine Ong Kuan Yong, 19 and Tan Su Pin, 19.

The team went through a weekly training programme that included reproducing graphics using the programme Corel Draw and creating spreadsheets for financial statistics using Microsoft Word Excel. These assignments were set by lecturers from CCS who acted as the team's coaches.

At any one time, each of them had about three different assignments to com-

plete. After this, the assignments were graded and the students' progress gauged by their performance.

Augustine elaborated further, "The training was definitely difficult because sometimes we couldn't produce what we were asked to. In addition, we were often expected to complete those assignments within a certain period of time."

Even though the training was difficult and Martin spent most of his time preparing for the NSC, he still managed to be the best student for his second year of study. He explained, "Although the training took up a lot of time, it actually pushed me to work harder and excel in my daily work too."

Despite the fact that that all four students were competing against one another, Augustine stressed their team spirit was strong. "We helped each other out a lot. Whenever one of us had problems with the assignments, we would come together to discuss the best and fastest way of solving the problem. In the competition, speed accounts for a lot." As a result of the co-operation, a strong bond was formed among the four.

The organisers of the NSC will decide if the two winners will represent Singapore in the International Youth Skill Olympics (IYSO) in Canada, Montreal. Similar to the

NSC, the IYSO might have more coverage on other software for participants to compete in. The names of the participants will be announced in September. ☐



Photo: Achaibar Gupta

**The jubilant CCS team with their mentors**

## The IYSO

THE IYSO is held every two years and youths from different countries compete in different categories. Singapore won gold and bronze medals for Industrial Electronics and Mechatronics categories respectively, when it competed for the first time in the 33rd IYSO in France, 1995.

Following that, Singapore clinched the gold medal in Mechatronics and a silver medal in Industrial Electronics in the 34th IYSO held in 1997 in Switzerland. This helped Singapore improve on its international standing moving from 16th to 13th position, ahead of the USA, Canada and the Netherlands.



## Focus

## Lending a listening ear

by Sarumathi

THE ASIA English edition of Reader's Digest has found a hero in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) student, Raymond Chong, 19. The third-year Civil and Environmental Engineering student, joined the ranks of eight other Singaporeans to be recognised as a "Hero For Today".

In the presence of NP officials, Reader's Digest representatives, his parents and well-wishers Raymond received his award as his work in helping hearing-impaired students was applauded by all.

Raymond has made a difference in others' lives by forming a club for



**Hero for the day- Raymond Chong receiving his award from Ms. Clara Lee, country manager for Reader's Digest**

hearing-impaired students and other students. The HI (Hearing-impaired) club merges the hearing world and the silent world to make a difference in the lives of 36 HI students. Raymond is not

HI but he wanted to help hearing-impaired students, so he learned sign language, then went out of his way to befriend deaf students.

In addition to talks and outings, the HI club also runs sign language classes that enable students to communicate with HI students. "I appreciate his (Raymond's) work. He did everything for the club. I would not have made so many able-bodied without this club," said Alan Wong, 18, a second-year Horticulture and Landscape Management student, speaking through sign language.

Besides being involved in the club, Raymond is also a volunteer at Singapore Association for the Deaf. "It's great and very encouraging that an ordinary student has come forward to do something for the deaf students. He need not have done it, what with the school load and everything but he did," said Mrs Jenny Ho, Executive Director, Singapore Association For

The Deaf

"I don't think I am a hero. I don't think that I have done anything really extraordinary. There is so much more that I can do and want to do for the deaf students. Nothing would have been possible without the team," Raymond said of his award. ☐

## Heroes for Today

READER'S Digest published the first "Heroes for Today" column in the US in 1982 and a year later decided to make it a regular monthly feature. Since May 1994, the column has been featured on a regular basis in the Asia English language edition. Three or four people are profiled in the English-language edition quarterly, highlighting acts of bravery, unusual kindness or personal commitment that has helped other people and their communities. Since launching the program, 13 heroes have been awarded. To date, there have been total of 17 Reader's Digest heroes (including latest hero Raymond Chong). Raymond Chong is the ninth Singaporean hero to be recognised.

"I don't think I am a hero. I don't think I have anything really extraordinary."  
-Raymond on his award

## Getting around NP is now a colourful affair

by Prem Anand

STUDENTS and visitors to NP will now find it easier to get around campus with the introduction of new multi-coloured directional signs.

The new signs, located along all the major traffic routes on campus, are a refreshing change as they give the campus a brighter and friendlier image. The new signs replace the old green signboards that most students and staff were used to seeing.

Mr. Yum Shoen Keng, Operations Manager of the Estates and Development Office, said, "Some of the old signs have been around for about 10 years and some are obsolete by now." He added that over the years, the polytechnic has done some major upgrading works, which include the construction of new buildings and facilities. Thus, it was important for

the signboards to be updated and relevant.

The new directional signs are colour-coded to represent the various departments and areas of the campus. Mr. Yum said that this was to enable visitors and student alike to get around with "minimum inconvenience". The buildings on campus have also been colour-coded and match the respective signboards.

"If a visitor is looking for Mass Communication, for example, he/she would just have to look out for the blocks which are coloured purple. It is important that we keep it as simple as possible," said Mr. Yum.

The new signs also have an added advantage because they can be lit up at night and this will help visitors locate their destinations more quickly.

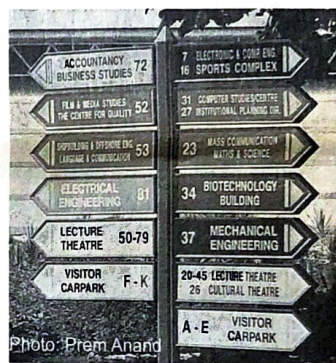
NP students have also given the thumbs up to the new directional signs. Law Soo Leng, 19, a final-year student at the Centre for Com-

puter Studies (CCS), said, "The new signs definitely look a whole lot better than the old ones. They give the campus some much needed colour and are also easier on the eye." Sing Hui, 17, a first-year student from Business Studies (BS) added that the new signs are very "colourful and informative".

Mr. Yum also confirmed that the Estates and Development Office will be undertaking several other upgrading projects in the coming months. These include the upgrading of Canteen Two at the Sports Complex, the staff restaurant and staff lounge.

"Canteen Two will be given a facelift and the new design and layout will give it a sportier image. We will also incorporate more woody-looking structures and fittings to give it a more rugged look," said Mr. Yum.

He added that there are also plans in the pipeline for major renovation works to be carried out at the Atrium. The upgrading works will be carried out in phases after all the plans are finalised. Students can look forward to hav-



Pointing you in the right direction

ing more activity areas and perhaps a cyber café. Mr Yum said that they are still studying ways to improve the Atrium.

By March 1999, students can also look forward to more covered walkways which will, for starters, link the bus stops outside NP to buildings nearest to the main entrances of the campus. ☐

## Crisis takes its toll on internship

by Poonam Rai

THE CURRENT economic crisis engulfing the South East Asia region is taking its toll on Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) Vacation Training placements.

The Vacation Training Programme (VTP) is set up for second-year students to give them a hands-on working experience in the industry. The school seeks out these placements for about 2000 second-year students each semester.

However, according to the Vacation Training Unit (VTU), there has been a significant decrease in opportunities for internship.

Mrs Choo Li-Eng, the officer-in-charge of the VTP, said, "In fact, this year several companies in the retail and

the manufacturing sectors have withdrawn their requests for interns."

To deal with the situation, the VTU has been writing to more companies to request placements for the students.

Students are thus encouraged to find their own placements as the VTU cannot guarantee a place to all the 2000 students. Lecturers can also assist the VTU by looking out for any available placements for the students, added Mrs Choo.

VTU hopes that the situation will improve by November so that they will be able to provide each student with a placement. The only advice the training unit can give students is to accept any vacation placement and get the best out of it. ☐



## Step to the Beat

by Bevis Yeo

STEPS' performance on 15 July started the new semester with a bang. The popular five-member British group drew a crowd at the Atrium. STEPS got the audience tapping their toes to some of their more popular hits, which included "5, 6, 7, 8" and "Last Thing On My Mind".

The event, hosted by Perfect 10 deejay Kate Reyes, was jointly organised by Perfect 10 and Ngee Ann Polytechnic's campus radio station, Radio Heatwave. ☐





Centrespread

# Journey

## Off the beaten path



New friends meet to share a tale or two

**Former Ngee Ann Tribune editor ventures into Inner Mongolia and discovers that behind the difficult living conditions lie the strength and beauty of the locals and their lives. Photos by Juliana Yeh.**

by Juliana Yeh

YOU first realise you've moved into Mongolian territory when an icy blast of wind blows in from the window of a chugging train. It's a 15-hour journey from Beijing and you've just had a restless four-hour sleep tossing about on a triple-deck bunk. From the narrow confines of your bed, you peer out from the window, only to gasp at the sight that greets you.

Hillocks of green overlap with each other, bringing life to the phrase—"rolling pastures". Changing shades and hues as the morning rays dawn albeit slowly upon them, there is an ethereal quality about the whole scene as shimmery waters of a lake reflect the landscape.

Unreal, you may think.

Welcome to Inner Mongolia. Perhaps it's the thrill of visiting what may seem as an exotic land—for the beauty of what I've just described is only surface deep. As one explores the land, the appeal of Inner Mongolia with its people, culture and sights, deepens.

I peer at my watch. The sunrise is over and I've only just begun to notice those who are around me and fast asleep. One can hardly blame them, for my watch reads 4am. In Inner Mongolia, the day starts early. Already we can see tiny figures of the local farming community going about their tasks, with the occasional grazing cattle dotting the outline of the hills.

It was with a certain amount of relief when we finally drew into the train station, located at the town of Tongliao. For the geographically uniformed, Inner Mongolia is an autonomous region under China. Tongliao is one of the more developed cities within, with an infrastructure reflecting of its comparative economic well-being and reminiscent of Singapore in the sixties. The taxi-fare within the confines of town was what we Singaporeans consider bus-fare. Five yuan (S\$1) can pay for a cab-ride for four and the remainder of our first day there was spent doing a mini-tour of the city in a cab.

Tourism, however, is not one of the city's strengths. Foreigners are obviously a rare sight in this area and the locals were clearly intrigued by our presence. More so because most of us share a similar skin colour and speak the same language,

albeit with a different accent. In a sense, the 90 Singaporeans who descended upon them were as much a thrill for them as it was for us. A local boy divulged his observation to me and had me slightly amused. "You look and speak almost in a similar manner, but the way you dress ..." he averred. According to him, we were out of place in our casual bemudas, jeans and sandals looking more like farm-lads as well as being slightly inappropriately geared for the cool weather of an average 20 degrees Celsius.

We arose bright and early the next morning for our task of renovating the primary school. Breakfast was an odd assortment of local dishes, glasses of warm milk, a variety of dumplings, porridge and plain buns, which were in fact Chinese-styled (rather than Mongolian, to our disappointment). We picked furtively at the dishes and found that they tasted fairly good.

The journey to the school took us about an hour. Disaster struck along the way as one of our buses broke down. Herded into another bus carrying Chinese university volunteers, we realised to our amusement that the blasting music played from the loudspeakers were in fact Sing Singapore songs.

Music however, took on another form when we arrived at the Zhongzhangutai Primary School, located in the Shebottu Village. Lined up in two long rows, dressed in their ever colourful band uniforms and local clothes were school children. Producing discordant music on little trumpets and yelling, "Huan ying, huan ying! Re lie huan ying!" ("Welcome, welcome! A very warm welcome!") while others waved little pom-poms, they were a sight to behold.

We soon got to work. Our task was to renovate the primary school basically tackling the manual jobs of brick-laying, roof-tiling, floor-tiling, clearing the refuse from the site, among a host of other tasks. The work was tiring, weighted by inexperience on our part, thanks to our comfortable Singaporean living.

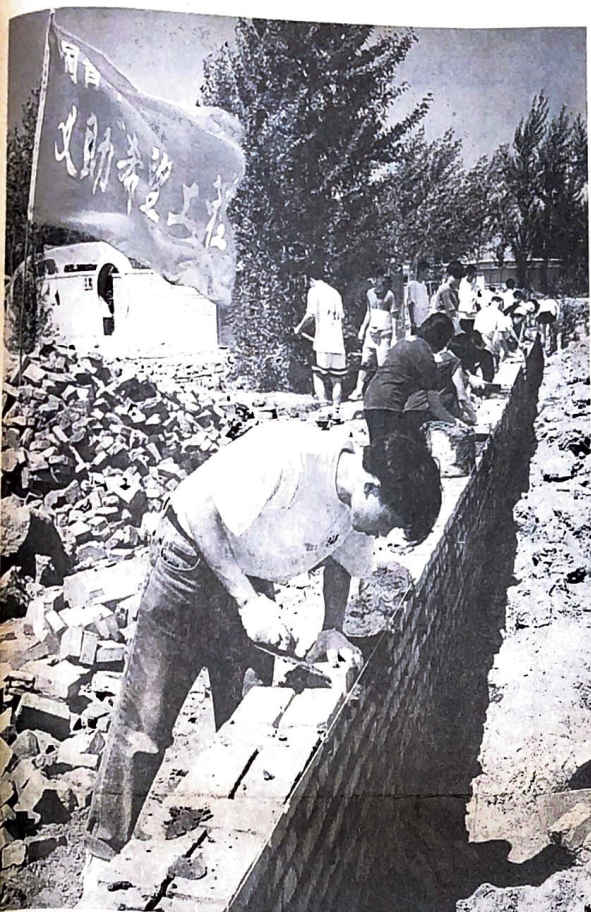
We were soon spurred on in unexpected ways by the children there. Life in a farming community is hard and the children well-accustomed to manual tasks. Little tikes of age ten were shovelling dirt



Members of the Ngee Ann Polytechnic delegation who assisted in Project Hope



# f the Heart



Laying the foundation for education

with heavy spades or lugging baskets full of refuse alongside their peers. During break-time, they made do with pebbles or pieces of broken glass as they played some game conceived in their imagination.

Lunchtime saw us exploring the neighbourhood, looking ridiculous as we shrieked at the sight of farm animals, snapped a dozen photographs with them and debated of whether to take up offers by kindly locals to ride on their donkeys. Simply by venturing out, you could enjoy an unobstructed view of spectacular blue skies.

We also discovered the wonders of local ice cream. Lollies, in their most basic form, were sold at 10 cents each (\$0.02). It gave us great pleasure to buy them in bagfuls of hundreds and distribute them to the kids. Getting them to accept it, to our surprise, was another task that required some cajoling. As much as they enjoyed ice-cream, the children there were very disciplined and would not accept our gifts until one of their peers did. Then, rather than a free-for-all, grab-what-you-can, they willingly shared the goodies with one another.

Over the days, we formed friendships with them, sealed with little tokens from the heart. A warm smile, an ice-cream treat which the child could probably ill afford, small fruits gathered from somewhere or teaching them the alphabet and having them sing in unison.

One of my most vivid memories was of a girl named Yulian. A shy twelve-year-old, she was not strikingly beautiful, but charming in her own way as she constantly tagged along behind us. Born in a

family of six, Yulian dropped out after a year of schooling. According to her, none of her siblings attended school as well, for her family could not afford it. Though readily accepted and perhaps a reality for many children there, such news to me was heart-wrenching and made me rethink a little my own perspectives on life. In that sense, the trip was an eye-opener for many of us.

At night, we roamed the streets. Street-life comprised a night market with make-shift stalls lining the roads. There, you can hear open-air karaoke singing or mingle with the crowds as they bargain for goods.

Tongliao is a curious mix of oxymorons. On one hand, I went on a desperate search for postcards to mail home, only to be told at the local post office that they were non-existent. On the other, Giordano is regarded as a branded label there, for their prices (tagged similarly to those sold in Singapore) made them luxury items for most people.

The ultimate disparity, of course, had to come from something we could all relate to. Six hours by plane from Singapore and another 15 hours via train, I saw a larger than life, oddly familiar illustration of Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet on the canvases of the local Tongliao cinema.

Now, I wonder how the theme song of "Titanic" sounds in Mandarin? ☐

## Building students lead the way for Project Hope

by D.W. Anuja

Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students, together with junior college students, completed a nine-day mission to renovate a primary school in Mongolia last June.

Called Project Hope, it was a volunteer programme organized by the National Youth Council (NYC) as part of the National Youth Achievement Awards (NYAA). The students involved in the Mongolia mission volunteer to work on such projects to meet the pre-requisites to win an award.

The Singapore team comprised five students from the Building Department, one from Film & Media Studies, 83 students from Anglo-Chinese Junior College, Raffles JC and Jurong JC, as well as students from universities in China.

The school, meant for 200 children, is located in Shebottu, about 15 hours train ride away from Beijing. Led by NP's Building students, the team had to lay roof tiles, set up boundary walls around the school and change the primitive flooring. They also painted the school walls.

In preparation for Project Hope, the BD students, one final-year and four second-year students, practised creating a shed for two weeks so as to equip them with the skills necessary to guide the rest of the student volunteers.

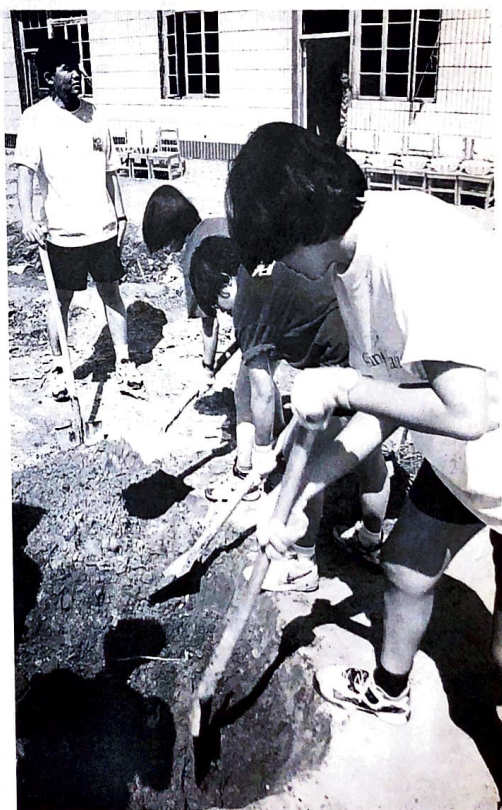
Mr. Jeffrey Yang, a lecturer in BD, who led the team, said, "The project was an opportunity to train the youngsters and let them experience a different way of life overseas. Seeing the people, who were poverty-stricken, and yet made do with what they had, made them more mature."

According to Juliana Yeh, an FMS graduate, who was one of the participants and in charge of video footage for the entire trip, also agreed that the experience gave her a new perspective on life. "Schooling is considered a privilege for the children, and they have to endure a horrible environment, like the toilets which are in bad shape."

For the Building students, it was an opportunity for them to do practical work, which extended beyond the classroom. Clarence Lim, a second-year Building and Services Engineering student, said, "It was a good experience for me as I did brick-laying, which was something new and exciting."

The Building students have indeed done NP proud. The Chinese officials and the Junior College teachers who went for the trip have praised their performance and leadership skills.

Drawing from the success of this trip, Mr. Yang said that there were plans for more programmes in the future; they have already scheduled a camping trip to Perth in November this year, as part of another NYAA project. ☐



Volunteers working hard to complete the renovation of the school



## Around Campus



NP Concert Band doing their bit for charity

Photo courtesy of NP Concert Band

### IN TUNE WITH CHARITY

## Music straight from the hearts

by Eric Tan

FOR the first time in recent years, the Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) Concert Band participated in a charity performance for the Community Chest of Singapore at the Victoria Concert Hall.

The event, "Music from the Hearts" held in June, was organized by student leaders from the Nanyang Technological University (NTU). The guest-of-honour was the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Community Development, Mr Chan Soo Sen. Almost 80 per cent of the tickets for the concert were sold and all the proceeds, an estimated \$6,500, went to the Community Chest of Singapore.

The President of the NP Concert Band, Oh Tze Yung, a third-year student from the Accountancy Department, was very pleased that the band had the chance to do their part for charity. Beaming, she said, "It was a good cause for charity, and I am proud that the band managed to put up a good

performance."

A total of three bands took part in the event, with NP concert band combining well with the NTU concert band and St. Patrick's band to dazzle the audience with their music.

The NP concert band played, "7 Nights of July" which is about a festival in Japan called Tanabata; "The Necromancer" and "Can't take My Eyes off You".

The band members had to include two additional rehearsals per week for almost a month to master these three pieces of music. This was quite a change from their usual two practices per week. Furthermore, the band also had to travel down to NTU for combined rehearsals with the other two participating bands.

However, Toh Hong Sim, a third-year NP band member from the Electronic and Computer Engineering Department, felt that the extra rehearsals were worth it. "I feel that the extra training was nothing compared to the

experience I gained from taking part in the concert."

Another NP band member who certainly did not mind the extra rehearsals was Nazri bin Jamil, a second-year Electrical Engineering (EE) student. He said, "Taking part in the concert gave me the chance to share musical tips with other band members from NTU and St. Patrick's. And I think I have learned a lot from them."

Tze Yung also shared the same sentiments. "Playing alongside NTU and St. Patrick's somehow motivated us to perform better, it made us want to excel and propel our band to its fullest potential," she said.

Besides gaining invaluable music exposure and knowledge, Tze Yung also picked up some organizational skills from taking part in the concert. "It was a big project for the NTU student leaders, the coordination being the most troublesome. However, I learnt a lot from the way they managed to organize the whole event smoothly." □

## Karen Mok thrills

Remember the Hongkong singer who posed nude for the front cover of her music album?

by Loy Hwei Shan

KAREN Mok lived up to her name as a daredevil as she treated NP students to an electrifying performance.

With an enthusiastic and spontaneous crowd of nearly 600 students, nothing could stop her from singing and dancing nimbly on the armrests of the seats of LT 26, not even her mini-skirt and three-inch high heels.

The audience danced and sang along with her.

The one-and-a-half hour long concert was jointly organized by the Poly Stage Production, a student society that deals with audio-visual presentations, Rock Records and YES 93.3.

To everyone's surprise, Karen made an unusual entrance from the back of the lecture theatre singing her latest hit, "I Say". This was followed by her soulful rendition of ballads, such as "Love" and "Let's Fall In Love" from her latest album, which were equally well-received by the audience.

Dressed in a pink checked blouse and grey

mini-skirt, with her brown, wavy locks tied up in two bunches, she delighted the audience with her schoolgirl-like garb and behaviour. She was prancing on stage, occasionally shaking hands and indulging in a little tete-a-tete with the members of the audience.

In anticipation of her concert, students with their complimentary free-seating tickets queued for the best seats as early as 2pm. Rachel Lim, a first-year Business Studies student, and one of the first few in line, gushed in Mandarin, "I want to see how pretty she is!"

The concert was described by some as an "all-time high" and the students could not get enough of Karen Mok. Shouts for an encore brought Karen back to wrap up the concert with "Love Yourself" a hit from her previous album, "To Be". □



Photo: Loy Hwei Shan

Darling of the crowd, Karen Mok

## NP going slow on fast food

by Prem Anand

WITH a good variety of eating places operating on campus, Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students have many options when it comes to choosing what they wish to eat but many are still asking for fast-food outlets to be set up on campus.

Currently, there are five canteens, a staff restaurant, a deli and a food kiosk already operating in NP. However, students cited convenience and a wider variety as the main reasons for wanting a fast-food outlet on campus.

Justin Tan, 21, a second-year student from the Department of Mechanical Engineering (ME) said, "After a while, the canteen food doesn't appeal any more.

Every day, they serve almost the same old things and I don't have time to go from one canteen to another."

Other polytechnics have at least one fast-food outlet operating on their campuses. Singapore Polytechnic (SP), for example, has four fast-food outlets operating on its campus, including McDonalds and a Delifrance outlet. Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP) also has a McDonalds outlet at its new campus in Yio Chu Kang.

A recent Straits Times report showed that business was brisk at these campus fast-food outlets. The report also said that prices charged at these outlets were relatively lower compared to the outlets located elsewhere because of the lower rents and other overheads.

A check with NP's Estates and Development Office revealed that McDonalds had indeed approached NP to set up an outlet on campus. However, this offer was declined. Mr Yum Shoen Keng, manager of operations, said the decision was based on health guidelines set out by the Ministry of Health. They felt that fast-food restaurants were not healthy food choices. He did not elaborate further when asked to comment on how healthy the food in our canteens is.

However, many NP students regularly patronise the McDonalds outlet at King Albert Park, which is a stone's throw away from campus. Some students were also seen at the Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet at Bukit Timah Shopping Cen-

tre.

Interviewed at McDonalds one lunchtime, Rory J. Slingo, 20, a final-year Electrical Engineering (EE) student said, "The fact that more fast food outlets are going halal would also give Muslim students more options to choose from. As far as the health issue goes, maybe the school authorities should check on the canteen food itself. At many of the stalls, you can just scoop up the oil and fill up another bowl."

Convenience was another reason cited by students. Some said the queues at the canteens were just too long at peak periods. Sing Hui, 17, a first-year Business Studies (BS) student said, "The queues in the canteens move so slowly and half our lunch time is spent queu-

ing up!"

Another BS student, Pauline Pek, 18, added that the walk to King Albert Park was tiring and "it would be so much more convenient if we didn't have to leave the campus just to have some fast food." She also felt that fast-food items such as burgers and fries were healthier than the western food served at almost every canteen. Interestingly, some of the most popular stalls at the canteens serve western food like steaks and fish and chips.

Will NP eventually introduce its very first fast-food outlet soon? According to Mr Yum, the school's position will be reviewed in the future, taking into account the needs of current food outlet operators on campus. □



## Around Campus

### Bites

#### PSF - From Dusk to Dawn

COME September, the Poly Stage PACTOR will perform outside campus for the very first time, as part of Singapore's first overnight theatre festival; Got to Go...Play Till Dawn.

PSF's original contribution, Goldfish, will attempt to reflect on the generation gap in a parent-child relationship with the interactive use of live stage action, television and video footage.

The festival, conceptualised and put together by TheatreWorks, is touted as "a veritable feast of new works by budding writers, actors, directors, dancers and musicians".

Got to Go...play till dawn, will feature at least 17 new pieces and will run for six weekends from 8pm to 7am, beginning 4 September.

For more information and ticketing details, contact Su-Lin at 338-4077 and if you're interested in helping out, call Traslin at the same number.

#### SOE wins Most Outstanding Society Award

THE ACADEMIC year 97/98 proved to be special one when the Shipbuilding and Offshore Engineering (SOE) Society was presented the Most Outstanding Society Award on 15 May.

Despite the fact that the SOE Society is one of the smallest in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP), they have organised events such as camping trips, mountain climbing, canoeing and dragon boat racing for their members. The Society also organised a three-day two-night Dinner and Dance on board the Star Aquarius cruise ship.

President of the SOE Society, Lew Kah Wai said that the Society succeeded because of the "good team work and commitment" of the committee members.

#### Road Safety for motorcyclists

IN CONJUNCTION with Road Safety Week, a road safety talk, demonstration and a skills-riding competition was held at the Octagon during the last week of July.

Organised jointly by Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP), the Traffic Police and the Singapore Safety Driving Centre (SSDC), the event started with a Harley Davidson Apparel fashion parade.

Student Affairs Officer Mr Vickneshwaran said, "Previously we used to have talks, but now we decided to hold this exhibition so that students can walk in to view and learn about the various motorcycles. We have always been keen on safe riding in Ngee Ann as we want students to ride safely and live longer."

#### Get tough with Aikido

THE FORMATION of the new Aikido Club in early June, "The Way of Harmony" has been introduced to Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students.

The art trains one to receive any attack and to respond accordingly. Grace and discipline are attributes that are fostered in the Aikido practitioner. In all the techniques, control is crucial. Grace and discipline are attributes that are also nurtured in the Aikido practitioner.

Held twice weekly at Tanglin Community Centre, training sessions will be shifted to Ngee Ann Polytechnic itself come August once the exercise mats are ready and a suitable training ground is set.

More information and details for signing up are stated on posters which have been put up around the campus, the club will also have another recruitment drive next semester.

## Power Station electrifies Ngee Ann

by Gracelyn Seah

POP DUO Power Station brought the house down with their electrifying performance in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) on 30 July.

Also known as "Dong Li Huo Che" in Mandarin, the duo from Taiwan, under the record label "What's Music", entertained the crowd with a mixture of soothing ballads as well as rock metal hits such as "Tomorrow's Tomorrow's Tomorrow" and "Love Song of the Li Mountains".

"We've prepared more ballads for the fans in Singapore because Singaporeans were known to be more 'reserved' and prefer slow numbers," said one of the band members, Yan Zhi Lin, in Mandarin.



Yan Zhi Ling and You Chiu Xing entertaining the crowd with their popular songs

## Forever Fever?

by Loy Hwei Shan

THIS YEAR, the Business Studies (BS) Department jumped on the retro bandwagon and organised a Hop Night with an 80's theme for its freshmen.

The Business Studies' Hop Night for first-year students was held on the last day of the three-day Freshman Orientation programme. Compared to the other orientation activities such as the Sports Day, the BS Convention and the Talent Quest, most freshmen turned up for the Hop Night.

According to Jerry Lim, a third-year BS student, from the organising committee of the Freshman Orientation, the Hop Night "was a time to relax and have fun" after the first two days of strenuous activities such as tugs-of-war, dance-and-song routines and cheerleading.

The BS Society never fails to organise the Hop Night annually because it allows interaction among students in a relaxed atmosphere. "Even the more reserved students will start opening up and soak in the atmosphere," said Elene Foo, a third-year BS student.

According to Tay Bee Peng, President of the BS Society, the Hop Night also enables the freshmen to get a taste of the "night life" favoured by most polytechnic students. She also added that it was 'good, clean fun' as compared to disco-hopping or pub-crawling.

"It was very spontaneous and I had lots of fun dancing the night away with friends I had made over the last two days," said Elizabeth Chong, a first-year BS student.

In addition, most freshmen are eager to give the Hop Night a try because the Hop Night is the closest they can get to entering discos at the age of 16. It is also the closest they can get to dabbling in some "night life" without alcohol and the cigarettes as both are not allowed on the campus at all times.

Some 500 tickets for the concert were snapped up in less than an hour, two days before the concert with fans queueing more than two hours for them.

The free-seating concert saw a long queue of fans waiting to enter Lecture Theatre 26 more than three hours before the start.

Chua Geok Tin, 19, from the Electrical Engineering (EE) Department, who was first at the queue for the concert tickets, said, "It's rare for a good pop group to come to NP to perform for free, so I see this as a must-catch. I'm not a fan of theirs but I think they have fantastic vocals and their songs are really great."

The duo, Yan Zhi Lin, 30, and You Qiu Xing, 29, from Taiwan has won numerous awards throughout the region, including a Billboard Award. Their first album was on the Top Ten charts in Singapore for four consecutive weeks. A tune from their first album, titled "Cruel Letters" even topped Taiwan's pop charts for six consecutive weeks.

Each sporting a long pony tail, the two dark-skinned singers are from an aboriginal Taiwan tribe, Pai Wan, which explains the slightly tribal touch to their music.

With their wacky sense of humour and excellent vocals, the crowd quickly 'powered' up as the duo mingled with the fans.

Several games were played during the concert, including one which made the fans guess and differentiate their voices. Prizes included autographed posters as well as limited edition cans of isotonic drinks from Taiwan, also called "Power Station".

"I thought that the concert was really fantastic but a bit too short, considering the amount of time we had to queue to get the tickets and into the lecture theatre," said Tan Sze Lee, 18, from the Accountancy Department.

The hour-long concert, hosted by YES 93.3 presenter, Chen Liyi, ended with the fans screaming "ENCORE!". When they ran out of time, band member, You Qiu Xing, said, "For all those who like our brand of music, we'll be performing an Asian Tour next year and don't worry, we won't forget to include Singapore too!"



## Sports

# Telematch for Freshies

by Achalbar Gupta

THE ELECTRICAL Engineering Department (EE) saw lots of student-staff interaction when it organised a telematch as part of its Freshmen Orientation Programme this year.

About 300 first-year students showed up despite the heavy early morning shower. "Our main objective of having this telematch was to create an opportunity for first-year students to interact with our staff and

senior students. It also allowed them to establish an identity and encourage them to take part in ECAs," said Mr Lee Thian Pau, a lecturer for the department and chairman of the organising committee.

The telematch kicked off with a speech and the release of balloons by Mr Goh Eng Kee, Head of the EE Department. Following that was an impressive dance demonstration by the "Magnum Force", which ignited an atmosphere of fun and enjoyment for the 600 students and staff.

A tug-of-war between students and staff of the department, saw the staff beating students 2-1 after three rounds.

"It doesn't matter losing to the students in the final round. I would say it is just in the spirit of fun and enjoyment," said Mr Lee.

The participants were divided into houses of white, orange, blue, yellow and red and competed in different games. In the "Chicken Feet & Duck Leg",



The enthusiastic EE Department at the telematch

participants formed partnerships, tied their right and left legs together, and raced against others to reach the finishing line.

Similarly, in the game of the "Last Emperor & Empress", participants were divided into five groups. There were four substations with two people at each station as carriers, who ferried the members of each group from one station to another. In this way, each member of the group felt like an emperor.

"It is fun and interesting. I am surprised that the EE department organises such activities," echoed Jacky Tan, 17, a first-year EE student who took part in the "Last Emperor & Empress".

"The freshies this year are very responsive and friendly. Although not all turned up due to the rain, those who did were excited and very interested in the games that awaited them. As for myself, I made more friends, gained leadership qualities and was able to interact with other staff," said Benjamin Tan, 20, a final-year student.

Mr David Lim, a lecturer of the EE department, found that the telematch had given lecturers a break from their work and a chance to mingle with other staff and students.

"We wanted all the students especially the first-years to take part in this telematch and enjoy themselves with their fellow peers and other staffs. The turnout this year is not bad," said Mr Goh.

The Blue house emerged as champions and won a trophy each.

"I feel great and have really enjoyed myself very much. I find it is not tiring in the end as the hard work has paid off," said Aidil Ali, 18, a first-year student a member of the Blue House.

"Although it is very tiring as an organiser, I feel rewarded at the end of the day to see both the students and staff have enjoyed themselves. We are making this an annual event," said Mr Lee. □

# The Men behind the Force

by Graeme Siow

WHEN the word cheerleading comes to mind, you immediately think of girls in short skirts waving pompoms. But a group of male students has defied that common perception.

Though small in number, the eight young men of Magnum Force, Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) cheer and dance team, are definitely not small in size. The reasonably well-built young men, are very much the opposite of the stereotypes of male cheerleaders.

"I guess they probably wear tights and have a little bit of a girlish nature in them. Strong? I very much doubt they are," said Nick Pililis, 19, a second-year Shipbuilding and Offshore Engineering student when asked to comment on male cheerleaders.

"A lot of people think that cheerleading is a girl's thing and have the wrong impression of us, but let me tell you it's tougher than what you think," said Johnathan Chan, 19, a second-year Quality Assurance Engineering (QAE) student and Vice-president of of Magnum Force. "Not many people have the strength, endurance or stamina to do what we do," he added.

The young men of Magnum Force perform dance routines that require complicated footwork, timing and precision. The strength to lift their female counterparts up in the air is also a prerequisite. Not an easy feat to accomplish. According to Johnathan, there have been one or two males who found the training too tough or tiring, and quit after the first few training sessions.

Johnathan adds, "Magnum Force is not a group of people who just cheer or wave pompoms, instead we style ourselves after the American style of cheerleading, which incorporates stunts and dance into their performances."

Magnum Force which has been around for more than ten years has always had young men in it. They have only recently become more prominent, with invitations to perform at events such as the recent MuscleNite VII, Freshmen Orientation Convention and the ECA fiesta.

President of Magnum Force and final-year Business Studies (BS) student, Diana Kao, 19, felt that the sudden surge of popularity can be due in part to changes in their cheerleading style. She said, "We have been working towards improving our dancing, and in recent years we have also added the stunts and modern dance routine to our usual performances."

Highlighting the importance of the males in this sudden rise in popularity is Fauziah Zainal, 17, a second-year BS student, "It is good to have them around, they're obviously stronger and you can do more stunts with them. You especially need them to form the base of most of our stunts."

"In the USA, guys are as big a part of the cheerleading teams as girls, they are readily accepted and definitely don't feel weird," said George Chai, 20, a final-year Mechanical Engineering student who joined on the basis of trying something new.

"I first saw Magnum Force perform during my Freshmen Orientation night a year ago and I really liked what I saw, that's why I joined with a classmate. It's a lot of fun and like most things in life, you won't know until you try," said Johnathan, whose most memorable stunt was being part of a human tower that went up as high as two-and-a-half story.

Magnum Force members train at least twice a week and more regularly before a competition or performance.

When asked what the girls in Magnum Force thought about their male counterparts, the girls all replied without hesitation, "They're fun, useful to have around and simply great." Demonstrating the fact that male cheerleaders are much valued here in NP.

-For those interested in joining Magnum Force, please contact Diana at 97606641 or visit the room at the Sports Complex, #03-19. □



The pillars of strength behind Magnum Force

# Ngee Ann Students Flex and Score

by Ng Hao Seng

WHEN MUSCLENITE VII was held on 16 July, there was actually much more to watch out for than just muscles.

More than 400 students and lecturers turned up at Lecture Theatre 26 for an evening of excitement and entertainment.

Four students took part in the lightweight category and five participated in the heavyweight category. The top three winners from each category competed for the overall Mr Ngee Ann accolade.

A powerful dance item by Magnum Force, followed by a Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) aerobics club performance were also planned to spice up the evening. However, the guest appearances of six-time Asian champion and four-time SEA Games gold medalist, Mr Ibrahim Sihad, former NP student and Man-hunt 1998 winner, Mr Francis Chua; proved to be the most well-received.

Commenting on the event, Mr Ibrahim said, "It was a very successful event that displayed many potential talents for the future of Singapore's bodybuilding. However, the contestants have to harbour



Winners Larry Zhao (left) and Alan Ang (right) flex to the max

a love for the sport and be willing to train even harder as it will get tougher. You must also get the right trainer to help you in your workout."

The lightweight category's gold medal went to Larry Zhao, a final-year student from Centre for Computer Studies. "I wasn't very keen in the competition at first but

joined after much persuasion from my friends and I am glad I won! Part of this prize belongs to my friends who have been helping me in my training all this while."

Despite grabbing top honours in the heavyweight category, Alan Ang, a third-year Mechanical Engineering student, was still his modest self. "It is a very

good feeling and all the hard work that I have been putting in really paid off."

The announcement of the individual category results, set the stage for the grand finale and Overall Champion. After a series of posing and flexing, Alan Ang was declared the overall winner and awarded the title of Mr Ngee Ann

1998. An elated Alan said, "I am very happy and this is really a bonus for me."

"The standard here is very high. The future of bodybuilding in Singapore is very promising," said one of the judges from the Singapore Bodybuilding Confederation. □