

NP's latest hangout

by Bharati Jagdish

In a bid to inject some zest into campus life, Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) has given the Atrium a dramatic face-lift.

The refurbished atrium not only serves as a conducive service-oriented environment for students, but exudes a funky atmosphere as well.

"I think it's a good idea to have a Coffee Club Xpress outlet here. Now, my friends and I can hang out on campus instead of going out after class. Food and drinks are also cheaper here," said Mohammed Effendy, 22, third-year Shipbuilding and Offshore Engineering (SOE) student.

Prices at the NP Coffee Club Xpress outlet are 30% lower than those at other outlets. Mr Koh Boon Sheng, a partner of the NP Coffee Club Xpress outlet, said, "The café scene is a lifestyle thing and young people go for this kind of thing. Affordability is important though, and we'll be coming up with value meals and other promotions to attract students."

According to Mr Julian Chong, manager of Coffee Club Xpress, its most popular drink, "Crunchy Freeze", is often sold out even without additional promotions.

Ms Lily Wong, Manager of NP Co-operative which manages the Campus Deli and the NP Coffee Club Xpress outlet, said, "In a sense, we are trying to contribute to community development.

We conducted a survey and realized that students like to frequent coffee places. By introducing a modern coffee-house on campus we want to make students feel that school is a "cool" place to hang out too. Staff members were also for the idea, as this gives them a place to relax as well."

a one-stop information centre where they can access information from the polytechnic administration, obtain course schedules, book sports facilities, make transactions and pay their tuition fees. The SSIC is open from 8.30 am to 4.30 pm on weekdays and from 8.30 am to 12 pm on Sat-

vide a conducive environment for students cramming for tests. "This is a very cosy environment and I enjoy studying here. The upgraded facilities seem very good, but we don't really know what specific services are offered here," said Joseph Yew, 26, third-year Electronics and Computer Engineering (ECE) student.

Mr Mui said posters outlining the services available will be put up around the Atrium in the next few weeks.

He also added that colour scheme was a main consideration to create a more "youthful look". The atrium now boasts a dramatic interplay of yellows, blues and other bright hues.

Foo Pei Ling, 19, second-year ECE student said, "The colours create a lighter atmosphere. My friends and I definitely enjoy hanging out here."

An open space for cultural performances and roadshows is also accessible to students. This space can be booked at the EDO prior to events.

With the opening of this new-look Atrium, students maintain that the canteens will still be a vital venue for meals.

"Although hanging-out here is

much better because of the atmosphere, we still go to canteens for our meals. We come here just to snack and chat," said R. Jayapalani, 18, second-year Mechanical Engineering student.

Coffee Club Xpress is open from 7.30am - 7.30pm on weekdays and 7.30am - 5pm on Saturdays. The Campus Deli is open from 8am - 7pm on weekdays, and 8am - 5pm on Saturdays.



With new amenities such as Coffee Club Xpress, the refurbished Atrium is worth the long wait.

The Campus Deli has also re-opened with a new look to blend in with the upmarket style of the new Atrium. To keep up with the competition, the Deli has introduced new food and beverage items to its menu. Students can now enjoy potato salads, tuna melts and other new items.

Besides these food outlets, a Students' Service and Information Centre (SSIC) offers students

urdays. SSIC kiosks, which provide similar services, are accessible 24 hours.

"Enhancements are necessary to cater to a maturing polytechnic. We wanted to create a functional environment where students can gather," said Mr Mui Cheng Hock from the Estates and Development Office (EDO).

A well-lit elevated study area also seems to pro-

NP scores at RoboCup '99

by Maimona Wahab

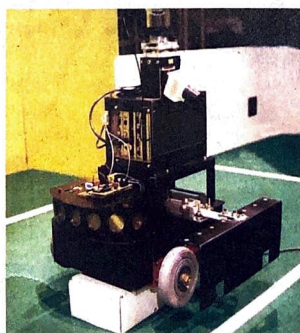
Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) robots emerged as one of the top teams during the 3rd Robot World Cup Soccer Games and Conferences (RoboCup '99), held from 27 July to 6 August in Stockholm, Sweden.

Eight graduates and three lecturers from the Electronic and Computer Engineering (ECE) department represented NP in the annual international championship. They were divided into two categories - the Real Robot Small League (F180) and the Real Robot Medium League (F2000), with five robots in each team.

NP's Small League team, Lucky Star, clinched the third position after defeating Korea University's robots in extra time. Alpha ++, NP's Medium League team, also made it to the quarter-finals.

Mr Yong Fook Seng, Head of the Alpha Centre (ECE), who accompanied the participants to Sweden, said that the NP squad was very proud with the achievement, considering that they were

pitching their skills against foreign undergraduates and post-graduates.



Here comes our very own robotic Maradona.

Alpha ++ and Lucky Star were the final-year projects of eight ECE graduates. It took them one year to perfect the robots. This is not the first time that the graduates have participated in competitions, they were also among the 12 who took part in the RoboCup '98 - First Pacific Rim Series, held

at the National University of Singapore. There, they emerged champions in both the small league category, and the middle league category.

Mr Yong said that RoboCup '99 had given the participants a lot of learning experience. "The competition has been a very good motivation for the students to work on robotic projects. These projects are very demanding and challenging. But they provide a very high learning value," he added.

Mr Yong also stated that although there were no monetary gains or other incentives for the participants, just the challenge and the desire to come up with a winning team was enough to fire up the participants.

The ECE department and the Alpha Centre are already preparing for the RoboCup 2000-First Pacific Rim Series at the end of this year, and the international RoboCup 2000.

RoboCup is an international move to foster intelligent robotics research by providing a standard problem where a variety of technologies can be applied.

insight

forefront

Facial Recognition System

NP tops NTU-Poly research prog / Pg 2

focus

R&D Internship

NP plays host to UK students / Pg 3

around campus

Student Union Elections

Did you know about it? / Pg 7

sports

NP's Sportswomen

A tribute to our female talents / Pg 8

Forefront

CCS's star student to shine for Singapore

by Ho Ling Nee

The top student in 1999 of the Centre for Computer Studies (CCS) is undergoing intense training not only on his computer skills but also attending psychological training, as he prepares himself for representing Singapore at the 35th biennial World Skills Competition in Montreal, Canada in November.

Martin Leo Chen Hong, 20, will take part in the Information Technology (IT) category at the international event. He won the gold medal at the Third National Skills Competition in 1998.

One of his projects, titled "DBsigner Base", won the first prize under the Engineering and Technology category of the Ngee Ann Innovation Competition 1999.

"He did a very good job...implementing more than a basic programme. He ensured that his software followed closely to the industry standard Windows Logo Specification," said Miss Chia Kim Hock, his CCS lecturer.

The three-day marathon at the 35th biennial World Skills Competition will test Martin's skills keenly. He will be expected

to complete several assignments during the three-day competition, to show his skills in using various softwares accurately and completing tasks as fast as he can. Examples of assignments would be to reproduce an existing magazine cover and to create a database for a company with the data provided.




Come November, Martin might just bag another medal from Montreal

"I am training day and night on my skills in the various IT applications. I am also attending psychological training fortnightly," said Martin. The psychological training, called the Peak Performance Training, is provided at the Sports Medicine and Fitness Division, Singapore Sports Council. His trainer, Mr Edgar Tham, was once the psychology trainer for sports personalities such as Fandi Ahmad and Joscelyn Yeo. "It is a real morale lifter," commented Martin, when asked on the advantage of the psychological training.

However, the Lee Kuan Yew Book Prize winner was still not so sure about winning the Skills Competition this November. "Unfortunately, Singapore do not have strong talents in the IT line. There is going to be a strong competition. Participants from Korea, Taiwan, America...I will get to see the best skills in the world," said Martin.

Described as a "bright student" by most of his lecturers, Martin's success did not come easy. "The load is really heavy. It is the will, the motivation, the

wanting to win, wanting to be the best," said Martin.

The outstanding student was justifiably optimistic about his future. "There are two alternatives. I will either get a scholarship to further my studies in computing or do something really different - joining the Christian Ministry." 

NP triumphs in NTU-Poly research programme



Facial recognition system - a revolutionary method of identifying students

by Jamie Teo

Ngee Ann Polytechnic emerged first in the NTU-Polytechnic Research Programme with its research and development project, Human Facial Recognition System. This identifies a person through the recognising his face.

The team of three third-year Electronics & Computer Engineering (ECE) students received the \$5000 award on 31 July at the presentation ceremony held at Singapore Polytechnic. Mr Peter Chen, Senior Minister of State for Education, was the guest-

of-honour.


The team which comprised Chua Min Yih, 19, Sean Ong, 20 and Ooi Kian Bin, 20, spent a year researching this project under the supervision of Dr Lim Boon Lum, senior ECE lecturer.

This NTU-Poly Research Programme aims to develop R&D (Research and Development) capability in the polytechnics by immersing engineering students in a scientific and engineering environment in NTU as well as promoting interaction with researches at the NTU through R&D projects.

The Human Facial Recognition System impressed the judges. The panel of researchers and engineers, assessed the system of classifying human facial features as impressive because it differentiated human facial characteristics after capturing the image of the person. In this way, the system could be applied in ATM cameras for more efficient user recognition as well as minimizing the time taken for criminal investigations.

"Once this system is fully developed, it may allow more efficient yet accurate results for security systems in future," observed Dr Lim.

One of the team members, Sean Ong was surprised yet happy that NP shone despite the fierce competition from the other three polytechnics.

In fact, out of the six projects entered for the Research Programme, two were from NP. The only other NP team also clinched the merit prize, with its project on Modified Topology used for 3-Phase Induction Motor Drive to improve the efficiency of electric vehicles in future. 

60 Seconds Michelle Lim

STUDENTS' Union elections. Campus relays. Are you aware of these campus-wide events, or should the more pressing question be, "Do you care?"


With the absence of a school uniform, can you think of anything which is so uniquely Ngee Ann, which you can proudly tell others, "This is us?" Do you feel motivated to be part of the polytechnic's life's blood, or do you see it merely as a place to get your diploma after three years of study?

I remember Students' Union Elections were such a big thing in my junior college. Everyone, even those who did not run for the elections, was so excited about who the nominees were, how they tried to campaign, which candidates were eventually elected and so on. At first I hardly knew anything about the Students' Union, but I was so intrigued by the involvement of my schoolmates, that I eventually got swept into the "college-wide election mania" too. Clichéd as this may sound, believe me, you really could feel the college spirit in the air.

Why is the situation so different here?

We need to look beyond ourselves, or even our respective departments, and start identifying with the Polytechnic as a whole. And this is also why you should be reading this newspaper. Yet you will be surprised...we have spoken to some final-year students who had never seen or heard of the Tribune. The knowledge that ten years ago NP had set up Singapore's first campus radio station, also meant nothing but a hollow association to those uninterested in listening to it.

Is our campus too large for all our students to get involved in something together? Is the population too big? I don't think these are good enough reasons to account for students' apathy in campus-wide events. The real answers probably lie within ourselves. An NP culture could be something as simple as hanging out in the newly-renovated Atrium with a Coffee Club Xpress drink, or something as massive as putting together a 2000-metre-long banner for National Day as a polytechnic. The latter did more than to gain publicity in the national media - it served a greater function of stringing together the hearts of many, many NP students, if not all. This is something I very much hope to see more of, in the near future.

Indeed, I hope for a day when everyone will truly be involved in a campus-wide tradition, as one. For example, not everyone can actually participate in a campus relay, but it is good enough if everyone at least feels excited about it. And I hope five years from now, it will not be the tremendous workload you will remember about NP - but this strong sense of belonging which would still make you proud to have been a part of Ngee Ann. 



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 Bk 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, Centre for Film and Media Studies, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, 535 Clementi Road, Singapore 599489**, by visiting the newsroom at Bk 56, #02-01 or e-mailing us at npr Tribune@hotmail.com. Letters should include your full name, contact number and department. The editorial team reserves the right to edit all letters where necessary.

Focus

Masters students from UK do R&D internship in NP

by B. Puvanes

For the first time, Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) played host to two Masters of Engineering from the United Kingdom (UK) who did an Research and Development (R&D) Internship programme here.

The Masters of Engineering programme students were in Singapore as part of an exchange programme co-sponsored by the British Council and NP.

Joanne Duncan, 21, and John Leslie, 23, were attached to the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department (ECE), during their six-month stay here from February to August. They worked on two separate R&D projects under the supervision of the staff in the department.

"The purpose of this programme was to get the Aberdeen students to come here and to expose them to a different culture and way of life," said Dr Lim Choo Min, the Head of the ECE department.

"Back in Scotland, we would have just been attached to an industry and not to a polytechnic. Our projects wouldn't have been so in



Joanne and John (from left) are the first two Masters students to have done their internship here. With them are final-year ECE students Toh Kheng Yong and Sin Hua Heng, who were sent to Aberdeen for their six-month attachment

depth as it is here," said Joanne.

John added that the normal duration of projects in the UK is only three months. But here it is twice that amount and it has enabled him to learn more than in the UK.

The students did not take long to adjust to the new surroundings and adapt to the working environment.

"It was difficult adjusting to the

heat for a while but as far as work was concerned, the supervisors have been very helpful," said John.

"In previous times in Aberdeen, I would have to study independently besides attending lectures. The six months that I had here to cooperate and exchange ideas with others, has been a precious experience," said Joanne.

With a strong Scottish accent, the students faced difficulties initially communicating with the people around them, especially with the canteen operators.

"I was trying to buy some lunch and when I asked the stallholder for it, she just opened her mouth wide and stared at me. That was when we first arrived. But they got used to it after a


while," recalled Joanne.

Besides having a taste of academic life, the students also had the opportunity to explore the local culture. They experienced Chinese New Year and tried using chopsticks. The sky-scrappers, commercial centres, multi-racial society and the efficient transport system gave them a very deep impression.

However, the students did not get the chance to visit the local industries during their stay in NP.

"We did initially plan a few visits, but due to the shortage of time we could not fulfill those plans. But we will try to implement such plans the next time in the other internships," said Dr Lim.

And with this first programme which turned out to be a success, the department has made plans for more internship programmes to bring foreign students into the poly.

"This programme is definitely a success. In fact, we already are working with other universities from Australia, France and Germany. Right now we are at the discussion stage with universities in Finland. We are also trying to get their students to come down," said Dr Lim. 

Helping S'pore celebrate

by Richmond Tan

For the second year running, a selected group of Film & Media Studies (FMS) students helped produce the video and multimedia portions of Singapore's 34th National Day Parade (NDP).

Comprising five Film, Sound & Video (FSV) Diploma students and six Mass Communication (MCM) students, they were chosen to work with Advanced Information Technology Application Centre (AITAC) as part of their eight-week Vacation Training Programme (VTP). Three additional volunteers were also chosen from FSV.

Although the students' involvement was to have ended with their

VTP in early July, they continued to spend time and effort on the project right up till 9 August.

The students worked under the supervision of Mr Christopher Ee, a lecturer from AITAC, who selected the participants based on their knowledge and attitude.

Involved for the first time, Dennis Yeo, 20, third-year MCM student, said, "Being involved in a project of such a grand distinction was truly an eye-opening experience for me. Not only did I learn much from my involvement, it also provided me with much fun and opportunities to make new friends."

Teo Hwee Boon, 20, third-year FSV student, felt that being in the project brought much knowledge and

enjoyment. "Seldom does one have such a gratifying time when working. One of the aspects of this VTP that I loved was being on the move most of the time doing outdoor shooting," she said.

The work scope of these students extended to filming the weekly NDP' 99 rehearsals, so that the organisers could review the performance of the participants and correct any mistakes.

Besides that, they also helped produced Video Compact Discs (VCD) for NDP' 99 participants. These commemorative VCDs served as a memento as well as a token of appreciation for all participants. The VCD captured the spirit of NDP' 99 with candid shots of participants going through their rehearsals.

In addition, the students manned the Matrix Board and the Video Wall on National Day itself.

The Matrix Board is the scoreboard used during soccer matches held at the National Stadium. On National Day itself, it was used to project the lyrics of various national songs as well as provide visual effects. For example, when a paratrooper set himself down on the stadium field, the Matrix Board showed "touchdown".


The Video Wall, on the other hand, showed Singaporeans from all walks of life during NDP' 99. These shots were then compiled into a montage.

The students actually went to different parts of Singapore to film foot-

age for the video montage. The Video Wall also showed the progress of the nation with a clip introducing Internet interfacing.

The students also produced the music video for Singaporean violinist, Miss Siow Lee Chin, who performed during NDP' 99.

Mr Christopher Ee, who volunteered for this project for a second time, spend much time and effort in co-ordinating the video production, and guiding the students each step of the way.

He said, "For me at the end of the day, when I get feedback from total strangers that the show is good. I know my contributions have been acknowledged and our goals as a team have been met." 

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Behind The

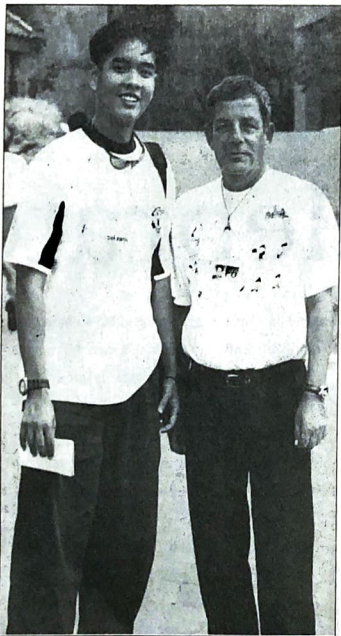
Time to bridge the gap with the world

The 20th South East Asia Games in Brunei was a mixture of accomplishments, disappointments as well as controversy. While some participating countries accumulated the medals, they were also criticised for the way they had won them. The fact that many of the medallists in the Games were foreign imports, was the focus of the controversy. One of Ngee Ann's Mass Communication (MCM) students, Nazri Hadi Saparin, was in Brunei to cover the SEA Games. He shares his opinion on the issue.

by Nazri Hadi Saparin

When the curtains fell on the biggest sporting extravaganza in South East Asia a month ago in Bandar Seri Begawan, the region's lack of talented athletes became more and more prominent.

When the SEA Games, then known as the South East Asia and Peninsular Games (SEAP), was first held in 1959, the idea was for it to serve as a springboard for producing world champions.



Cambodia's German coach, Joachim Fickert (left), taking time off his hectic schedule to have a date with Nazri.

Now, 40 years down the road, the quest for global supremacy for many Southeast Asian athletes remains elusive.

Except for the likes of Susi Susanti and Rashid Sidek in badminton, Tamarine Tanasugarn in Tennis, Sheik Alauddin in Silat and the Malaysian men's hockey team, South East Asian nations have not really been able to achieve what they set out to

do almost half a century ago.

In the recently concluded 20th SEA Games, the scenario could not be any gloomier.

Adding to that problem, few of the region's sports authorities seem to be interested in spreading their sporting prowess.

Only Malaysia has publicly asked for a radical SEA

games autopsy amid accusations that some countries are more worried about not winning medals at the Games - evident from the foreign talent recruitment policy of some nations - than the need to develop local talents.

Although 32 South East Asian records fell during the duration of the Games, these achievements failed to put a dent on any of the Asian marks, let alone a world record.

In swimming, the only two Asian Games record holders, Thai Ratapong Srisanont and Malaysia's Alex Lim failed to better their own records, despite being touted to have the potential to bridge the gap with world elites.

Perhaps the region can be proud of Singaporean swimmer, golden girl Joscelyn Yeo, who set six Games records, and so made the best personal progress.

Her consistency in the past five Games has been noted, and observers say that if any Southeast Asian athlete is to become a World Champion or at least come close, it will be Joscelyn.

The 20-year-old's effort of 1 min 0.44 sec in the 100-metre butterfly event made her the world's 16th best in the event.

"Joscelyn showed over the years and in Brunei that she has the potential to reach greater heights," said David Lim, head-coach of the Singapore swimming team to Brunei.

"The SEA Games is definitely not her limit. Her swimming is of Asian standard, and since she's young, who knows what she can still achieve," he added.

However the relatively poor showing of the participants was particularly apparent in athletics.

Nunung Jayadi of Indonesia set the SEA Games record in pole vault past the five metre-barrier with a 5.05 m effort. Compare this with the six-year-old Asian mark of 5.9 metre and Ukraine's Sergey Bubka's world record, which is 6.14 metres.

Sporting standards fall further when countries take the short cut to success by recruiting foreign talents in their bid for gold.

"But what is a SEA Games gold medal compared to grooming your own athlete and nurturing them into world champions," said Malaysian Chef-de-Mission to the Games, Mr. Sieh Kok Chi.

"I wouldn't want to comment on some countries policy of recruiting foreign talent but it defeats the purpose of the SEA Games being held in the first place."



Swimming was one of the few sports in which Singapore excelled.

"The birth of the Games was intended not just for winning medals but the bigger mission and objective was for the Games to be an avenue to groom and nurture the region's best to become world's best," he added.

And the country most guilty of taking a

light view of the foreign players policy seemed to be Singapore as almost all members of the table-tennis team were China-born players.

Over-reliance on such a move was obvious when Singapore's China-born Jing Junhong, the top South East Asian table tennis player, announced her retirement after just four years of contribution to her adopted country.


However, Honorary Secretary of the Singapore Table Tennis Association, Mr. Soon Min Sin, prefers to think of the policy from a positive point of view.

"If we really want to achieve glory, depending on our local talents alone is difficult. The foreign players are like expatriates. When they come in and play, they are able to raise the standard of our local players as well," he said.

The immediate aim, however, is obvious. Now that the last SEA Games of the millenium is concluded, Southeast Asian countries need to rethink their objectives and priorities regarding sports.

The various sports councils and associations need to rationalise whether it is more important to win medals at a regional meet, or qualifying for the finals and eventually winning a gold medal at the Olympics.

As one foreign observer was quoted as saying, "The countries seem to adopt the attitude of winning at all cost, whereas they should treat the Games as a springboard for bigger competitions like the World Meets and the Olympics".

South East Asia needs to catch up with the world and fast. The best way of doing that is to put aside the short-term gains for long-term ones. 

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Scenes

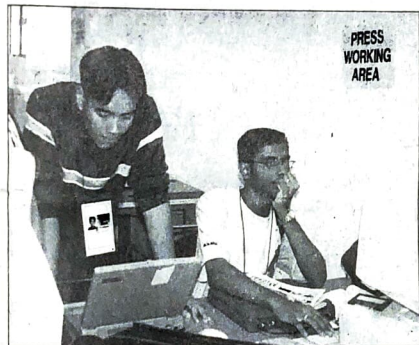
Sports journalism 'live' from Brunei

Besides Nazri, two other student reporters from Mass Communication were in Brunei to cover the SEA Games for Inter Press Service (IPS) and other sports magazines. Tribune talks to the two of them about how they felt as rookie reporters working alongside international journalists.

by Lavina Raghani & Michelle Lim

Fancy doing your job and watching your favourite sport at the same time? Well, this was exactly what Gary Lim and Mohamed Abdullah did while reporting on the SEA Games in Brunei.

Gary, 22, was assigned to cover swimming and soccer which are Singapore's favourite events, while Abdullah, 18, reported on squash and lawn bowl.



The student reporters often had to work overnight in order to get a story published in various newspapers.

Swimming was the event in which Singapore won the most number of gold medals. However, Gary who was too busy trying to get interviews with the swimmers, did not have the luxury to pause and enjoy our national anthem for all the seven times it was played.

"It was at the pool where I had a real taste of being a journalist. My fellow reporter and I were constantly trying to avoid the over-zealous security staff who were trying to do their job. As if getting hold of Joscelyn Yeo for an interview was not difficult enough!" he lamented.

That was only one of the challenges for Gary and Abdullah. Even getting to the various sports venues was not that easy as you would imagine.

"The shuttle service provided for the media seldom came on time. I had to try every way possible to get to a venue. On good days, I managed to hitch rides from fellow journalists. On bad days, I had to walk there, or simply wait for the shuttle service to arrive," said Gary.

His view was echoed by Abdullah, who did a fair bit of walking himself. "In some ways, we were athletes in our own right. We had stories to chase, interviews to conduct, and worst of all, the dreaded clock to beat."

Indeed, the pressure of meeting school assignment deadlines was nothing compared to the pressure they faced in Brunei. Two hours was all they had to send their stories back to Singapore to be published in our local newspapers the very next morning. At the same time, they could not afford to make a single error in their articles.


Besides having the opportunity to meet some of the region's finest athletes, Gary and Abdullah also managed to learn a thing



Despite being members of the press, Abdullah, Gary and Nazri had to queue up to take a photo with the SEA Games mascot.

or two from seasoned Singaporean journalists Santokh Singh and S. Gulam.

"I also met up with other journalists from abroad. Though we may not have completely understood each other's language, we still got along quite well. Such encounters truly marked the spirit of the Games, where all borders were crossed to forge new relations and to share the benefit of each other's experiences."

However, it was not all work and no play for the student reporters. After they finished their stories, Gary and Abdullah as well as Nazri would gather in front of the television with all the other journalists to support their respective countries. 

Taking classroom teaching into the 'real' world

Accompanying the student reporters was MCM lecturer, Mr Paul Ramani, who was both mentor and a friend to them. A former Straits Times journalist, he gave the students invaluable advice during their stint.

by Paul Ramani

The idea of the project in Brunei was to show students' the reality of what it is like to be a journalist in a major event such as the South-East Asia (SEA) Games. The theories that they learnt so well in their three years were severely tested in every aspect of the event. Basically, the boys were left on their own to cover certain sports that they were comfortable with. I acted as their "chief editor" as they reported to me whenever an event was completed.

The Games was well organised and this made it easier to cover. The boys were given access to the press centre to type their stories and together with their passes, movement was relatively easy. The only difficulties they faced were when they were trying to take photos as this required another accreditation. But, to their credit they learnt to improvise and make friends with other photographers so that they could obtain these valued shots. One example was when Gary Lim made friends with an AFP photographer and he gave Gary some



Their lecturer, Mr Paul Ramani (left), sharing a few helpful pointers with his students.

photos of the table-tennis matches.


The boys also attended press conferences and in one instance saw how crisis management worked. The roof tile at the main press centre had fallen and this caused an embarrassment to the organising committee. A press conference was held and the explanations followed. The boys had to move from one venue to

another and rush down together with hundreds of reporters to interview the winners and other sportspeople who made the news. They were constantly thinking of story ideas and this resulted in a couple of good "scoops".

One example was when Nazri while covering a squash match involving Singapore interviewed one of the players, Mohd Rizal, and quoted him as saying that he wanted to quit the sport because of the lack of support. He used this quote, "fleshed" up the story and eventually got it printed in the Malay daily, *Berita Harian*. This story was never carried by any of the local dailies including *The Straits Times*.

Two more stories which appeared in the wire service agency, Inter-Press Service (IPS) were also a collaboration between the three boys and I. The articles were about "Why the SEA Games has not produced much world champions particularly in Athletics" and "The rise of Indo-Chinese soccer...from warring nations to soccer nations..."

The boys set up the interviews with the various coaches, managers, etc., and saw for themselves the problems and the eventual satisfaction derived.

At the end of the day, they thoroughly enjoyed the experience and learnt that the job is satisfying but far from glamorous. 

Around Campus

Low turnout for Campus Relay

by Ridwan Abbas

Once again, the annual Campus Relay in NP passed without much pomp or publicity. However, amidst these circumstances lie a window of opportunity which many fail to see.

The Campus Relay has been a regular fixture on the Ngee Ann sports calendar. This year, the event took place on 18 August with a total of 15 teams participating.

However, through the years, the level of participation has not been encouraging. The Track and Field Club, which organises the event believes that most of the students are not keen to participate in the Campus Relay.

"I feel that some students would prefer to pay more attention to their academic curriculum rather than taking part in such events", said Yeoh Kok Yong, 19, chairman of the Track and Field club.

He further lamented, "It's not only the Campus Relay but also events such as the Inter-Department 4x100 metres relay do not



receive very good response.

"We have also tried to rope in the staff for such events but the results aren't any better."

This is why the staff relay had to be withdrawn from this year's event.

However, lack of publicity might also be a factor that contributed to the low level of participation.

"I've not heard of the Campus Relay...but I don't mind trying it out someday," said Syed Faizal, 18, second-year Mechanical Engineering (ME) student.

For participants, it was certainly a worthwhile experience. "I participated in the Campus Relay as I was invited by a friend to run on his team and I quite enjoyed it," said Ong Khang Hau, 18, second-year Electrical Engineering (EE) student.

Indeed, a lot could be gained from a high level of participation in such an event which has been exhibited by one other tertiary institution.

The "Poly 50" is held annually by the Singapore Polytechnic (SP). The event is a high profile one as it attracts a field of nearly 1000 participants from all the departments.

"I have participated in the "Poly 50" for the past two years and I feel obligated to help my department do well in this event," said Samad Zain, 19, final-year Multimedia and Software Engineering student.

The objective of the event is for the teams

to complete the specific distance on campus, and the field is made up of not only SP students, but also its staff and even participants from several secondary schools. This event is already very much a tradition in SP as highlighted by the positive gesture of its principal in running the first leg of the event.

"The Poly 50 attracts a lot of participation and the tradition dates back to the eighties," said Chan Ramli, 20, President of the SP Sports Club.

However, every cloud has its silver lining and the chairman of the Track and Field Club believes that the situation can be improved.

"In order to improve the level of participation, we would be looking to increase the manpower to help in organising future events."

- Yeoh Kok Yong

"In order to improve the level of participation, we would be looking to increase the manpower to help in organising future events," said Kok Yong.

A night of stars



by Richmond Tan

Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students were invited to view the conjunction of the nine planets and moon in the solar system for the first time in two thousand years on 18 August.

The event, called FULL Stop, an overnight affair, was organised by NP's Astronomy Club with the intention of allowing students to use the Astronomy Club's equipment to view the rare phenomenon. The event was held at NP's Sport's Complex to accommodate the nearly 100 students that turned up.

Banners, posters and a booth were employed by the committee of the Astronomy Club to attract more students for the viewing, as well as to inform them about the event.

"It's the first time we invited students from all over NP to come join the Astronomy Club in a viewing of this sort and we hope that there will more opportunities to allow a second time," said Shirley Sim, 19, a third-year Business Studies student and acting

chairman of the Astronomy Club.

Those who turned up that night managed to see the phenomenon throughout the night except for the planets Neptune, Pluto and Uranus.

All the spotlights at the school field at the Sport's Complex were off to allow a good view.

Alvin Tan, 20, a third-year Mechanical Engineering (ME) student who went for the event because astronomy has always intrigued him so he just had to go and check it out.

John Lim, 19, a second-year Electrical Engineering (EE) student who is also a fan of astronomy said that he wanted the chance to know more people who share the same interest as he does.

The students' enthusiasm was maintained throughout the night. Shirley Sim said, "The students were excited, even those who did not have indemnity forms to stay overnight. I personally feel sorry for them seeing their disappointment. I allowed them a gaze before they leave and upon seeing Saturn, they were reluctant to leave."

Nostradamus, a physician and prophet of the 16th century, actually predicted that this phenomenon would signal the end of the world. He reasoned that the phenomenon would affect the gravitational pull of the planets resulting in earth, which is positioned in the center of all the planets in the solar system, to be displaced from its axis.

First International Student's Section of Audio Engineering Society to be formed

by Bharati Jagdish

Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students will be the first in the region to form a Students' Section of the Audio Engineering Society (AES).

The Singapore Section of AES, affiliated to the AES in New York, was officially formed in December 1995. The society is committed to promoting education in audio technology in Singapore. Its membership comprises leading engineers, scientists and executives, educators and students.

"As members, students will get to pursue their interests ... and rub shoulders with professionals in the industry."

- Mr Rafael Oei

"As members, students will get to pursue their interests in all aspects of audio engineering and rub shoulders with professionals in the industry. Networking will open up avenues for them in terms of job opportunities and career advancement," said Mr Rafael Oei, lecturer from the Centre for Film and Media Studies (FMS).

His view was echoed by Jeffrey L. Omar, 24, third-year Mass Communications (MCM)

student. "I'm interested in going into audio journalism and this will give me the exposure," he said.

Kelvin Tjoa, 18, second-year Mechanical Engineering (ME) student, said that he is "definitely considering joining the society" because of all the "industrial opportunities" membership would offer.

Student members will also have access to a complete set of AES Journals, AES preprints, AES anthologies, current and back issues of major trade magazines, equipment manuals, and other reference materials

Mr Oei added that the formation of the NP Students' Section will definitely put the polytechnic on the world map. The International Section of the AES includes Adelaide, Brisbane, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea, Melbourne and the Philippines. Students' Sections of the AES in other parts of the world include Pennsylvania State University, University of Massachusetts-Lowell and Ohio University.

Mr Oei says he hopes to get the section up and running by the end of October.

Membership to the AES is open to all NP students. For inquiries/application forms please call Mr. Rafael Oei (FMS) at 460 8270.

Around Campus

Bites

A class of its own

WITH its entry into the Singapore Quality Class (SQC) on 21 July, Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) is now eligible for the Singapore Quality Award (SQA), Singapore's most prestigious business excellence award.

Winners of the award are seen as organisations of world-class business excellence, said Ms Lily Chang, Director of Corporate Communications PSB.

"Eligibility for SQC was based on criteria which ranged from customer focus, leadership and quality culture," she added.

NP is determined to attain the SQA "in 2 years time", said Mr Fong Ho Keng, Director of The Centre for Quality. He stressed the journey to the SQA is not a solo effort but one that requires the support from staff and students.

It will involve the implementation of "about 20" projects concurrently. In the pipeline, said Mr Fong, are student focus groups that will provide lecturers an insight into student issues and thus give the polytechnic more ideas to improve student welfare. **E**

Distance learning programme for ECE

The Electrical and Computer Engineering department (ECE) has introduced a distance learning programme for its students on Industrial Attachment.

Beginning from July, 23 ECE students were sent to various companies like Chartered Semi Conductor, Lucent Technologies and the Institute of Microelectronics to participate in the distance learning programme. Distance learning requires the students to work and learn at the same time.

"The students have to do distance learning because they are currently doing their industrial attachment and working full time in the industry. They are unable to attend everyday lectures and tutorials that other students do while in campus," said Mr Linus Low, a lecturer with ECE. **E**

Banner comes down

NGEE Ann Polytechnic's (NP) "Banner 2000: The Longest Birthday Banner for Singapore" was taken down after only a fortnight of display on campus. The banner was done in conjunction with Singapore's 34th National Day.

According to a statement from the Student Union, the banner, which was supposed to be on display for the entire month of August was taken down due to bad weather and rain.

Many NP students however, did not realise that the banner was taken down after only two weeks on display. "Is it? I didn't notice. Anyway, I feel that the banner is quite an eye-sore," said Lim Hwee Yee, 19, a third-year student from Business Studies.

Soh Hualie, 18, a second-year student from the Information Technology Department, offered a different view.

He said, "What a pity! I think the banner decorates our dull campus. Furthermore, the students must have spend a lot of time and effort in doing the banner." **E**

Student elections go unnoticed

by Cheryl Teo

During the recent Ngee Ann (NP) elections, only 65 students were involved as nominees and voters. Is it ignorance on the students' part or the lack of publicity to promote the elections?

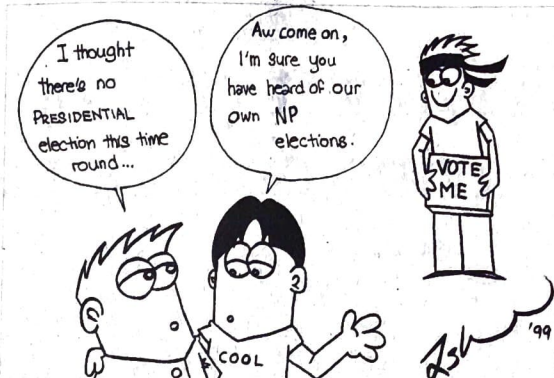
The NP election is an annual affair that selects student leaders for departmental societies and the Student Union.

Though the election is open to all students in NP, one must already be a member of a society and be actively involved in extra curriculum activities to get elected.

One of the nominees Lenus Chong Lee Lee, 18, a second-year Centre of Computer Studies (CCS) student who ran for a position in the CCS society, said, "The NP election has a relatively low profile, first-year students are especially unaware of it." She also said more publicity should be given to promote the election as well as the nominees taking part in the elections.

"The campaign is quite pathetic compared to the other polytechnics that organise voting campaigns where the nominees get students to vote for them through high publicity," she explained.

However, Mr Matthew Tan, Man-



ager of Student Affairs, told Tribune that notices had been put up at all departmental notice boards, and at several other prominent locations in campus as well.

"It is one's own responsibility to keep abreast of what's happening around us, and students should learn that while still in the polytechnic," he said.

Lam Sook Quin, 19, a third-year student from Accountancy agreed that the election was not of great interest to many students. She suggested, "Why not put up posters or imitate the American high school style of voting? Nominees should publicise themselves, persuade students to vote for them and

show them what it takes to be a nominee and the kind of enthusiasm it involves."

Tan Wee Kiong, former President of Students' Union also suggested, "During the first-year orientation, the various departments should let the new students know about such elections and encourage them to participate."

Lenus added that she was motivated to be one of the nominees after attending the leadership camp held by her department. "After learning the importance of teamwork, I believe I should apply what I have learnt by being one of the leaders for my department's society. I hope more students would involve themselves with the future elections." **E**

Care to grab a bite?

by B. Puvanes

With the opening of Megabites Café, Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) staff and students now have yet another alternative place to dine at.

The restaurant-cum-cyber café is located opposite Block 82 at the Singapore Institute of Management (SIM) building.

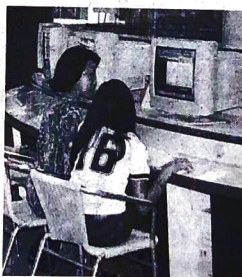
Megabites Café serves a variety of food at rather affordable prices. Its menu includes pasta, salads and varieties of desserts such as cheese-cakes and mud-pies.

The air-conditioned restaurant has allocated a small Cyber Café section for avid Internet surfers, who can surf the net for the first hour- free of charge.

"We want to set up a concept like Holland Village where vibrant, young people normally hang out for coffee. Also, we want the students to have a sense of belonging at Megabites," said Mr Paul Gomes, 33, the operations

manager of Megabites Café.

In spite of the lack of publicity, patronage to the café has been generated by word of mouth.



Students can surf the Internet while having coffee at Megabites

"I heard about this place from friends. And for me, I will be happy if I can get a place that is air-conditioned," said Michelle Low, 17, a first-year student of Logistics Engineering Management.

The café, targeted at young people, may come up with incentives for students.

"We are having weekly promotions currently. But at the same time, we are working on incentives that we could give students. There are no discounts at the moment because the current prices are competitive already," said Mr Gomes.

Megabites Café follows the concept of Marche Movenpick's multi-dining card system. Customers get their card stamped at the section where they buy their food from and pay for all items chosen at the cashier before leaving. If the card gets lost, guests would have to pay a fine of \$50 or fulfill two days of heavy-duty washing. Mr Gomes said that the penalty is a serious one. And there are some who think the penalty is justified.

"There is a price for everything. I think it's quite a reasonable penalty," said Emily Ong, 18, a first-year Logistics Engineering Management student.

Megabites is owned by Kriston Food and Beverage Private Limited, a professional caterer at CHUMES. **E**

Sports

Sports has lately been in the thick of news. Following the conclusion of the 20th South East Asia Games in Brunei came the National Day Rally with the Prime Minister's special mention to the

upgrading of sports.

In our support for sports in Ngee Ann, TRIBUNE looks at our female sporting talents. This issue showcases the champion, the challenger, and the

underdog. Whatever their reasons to participate, there is no doubt that each of them continues the spirit of the sport through their own merits. To them, we say thank you.

Playing it cool but leaving out the passion

by Shane Ng

Keeping one's cool before and during a competition is easier said than done for most. But for Serene Lee, 18, second-year Business Studies (BS) student, keeping her feathers unruffled under the heat of competition comes naturally to her.

"You must learn to cope with it," says Serene plainly.

Fresh from representing Singapore in the South East Asia Games in Brunei where she won a silver and a bronze medal, Serene has had a lot of time to learn exactly that.

Joining the national squash team

at the tender age of 13, she has played in numerous matches both locally and internationally, including two appearances each in the SEA Games and Asian Squash Tournament.

Ironically, having played competitive squash for so long seems to be not only a boon but also a bane to Serene.


"I often get very tired of playing and there is no competition left for me in Singapore because I'm already right up there (at the top)," she lamented.

When asked about what she is doing to remedy her weariness, she said that she continues to play because she has already done so for so many years.

She actually said that she did not have a passion for the sport but only started playing it both socially and professionally solely because of her father's influence.

Serene explained that when she was 10 or 11, her father, an avid amateur squash player, regularly brought her to the squash courts to pick up the sport.

When asked how long she would go on playing competitively, she shrugged and said she was uncertain.

It seems that Serene already knows enough about having a cool head when competing, but may need some "fiery" passion in the sport instead. 

NP's very own Joscelin

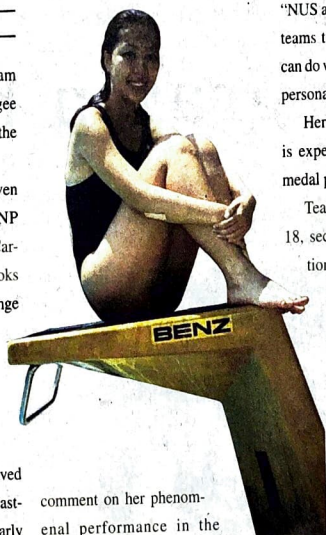
by Ion Danker

Just as Serene may be a champion in the squash arena, Ngee Ann has its own queen in the pool.

Having won an impressive seven gold medals and broken two NP records at the recent Swimming Carnival, 19-year-old Adelene Mak looks set to spearhead Ngee Ann's challenge in the on-going Inter-Varsity Polytechnic (IVP) swimming competition.

The affable final-year Accountancy (ACC) student, who once trained with Joscelin Yeo, shaved off eight seconds in the 200m breaststroke event. What was particularly encouraging about her performance was when she demolished the 200m freestyle record by a staggering 24 seconds even though she had not been training intensively for the freestyle event.

"I was very surprised with the freestyle timing as my training was more on the breaststroke events," came Adelene's reply when asked to



comment on her phenomenal performance in the freestyle event.

When probed further on how she rates her overall performance she said, "I am very happy to win seven out of the eight events. Since this will be my last carnival in NP before I graduate, I wanted to do my best."

Tribune also asked her how the Ngee Ann swimming team would fare in the IVP competition. She said,


"NUS and NTU will definitely be the teams to look out for and I hope we can do well and aim to improve on our personal best timings."

Her cautious reply comes as she is expected to be the only realistic medal prospect for the competition.

Team manager Michelle Seetoh, 18, second-year Mass Communication student, said, "As the swimming team is undergoing a rebuilding process of getting new swimmers and training them, Adelene would therefore be our brightest hope."

And having won two bronzes last year, Adelene looks ahead now of improving the colour of her medal.

"I learnt a lot from last year's participation and one way of showing I have improved is by winning a medal that is either silver or gold," came her determined reply.

Having been slated for five individual and two relay events, she looks to be our best bet to improve last year's medal tally. 

Triumphing against the odds

by Maimona Wahab

It was a field day for the women from Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) touch rugby team as they topped the table at the qualifying rounds of the Regional Schools' Under-20's - Western Region Tournament on 21 August.

The team had defeated the highly fancied team from Jurong Junior College 3-0. NP also defeated Singapore

back. "NP's touch rugby team has the potential to go far if only we have a proper coach. We now train under a part-time coach, who is also an NP student. Most of the time, we train by ourselves. A lot of people are very surprised when they find out that we have no proper training. They cannot believe we can do so well in competitions despite of that," lamented Trina Tham, 18, a second-year student from Mechatronics Engineering.



With or without a coach, a likely victory is on the cards for the rugby team

Polytechnic's team in the second round 2-1 to finish top in the qualifying league. This puts them through to the final league of the Regional Schools' Under-20's tournament in December, an event which is jointly organised by the Lion Red Rugby Club and Wanderers Rugby Club.

As this will be their first time taking part in the regional event, the team is very excited. They have begun intensive training and are determined to do well. "We've been training quite regularly and besides, there's a lot of chemistry in our current team. As long as we continue to train hard and improve as a team, we can definitely go very far," said team captain Carol Lim, 19, second-year Electrical Engineering student.

Amidst the gung-ho spirit of the female team, they face one major set-

A check with the Student Development Office revealed that the team would only be assigned a coach if they are participating in major tournaments such as the Inter-Varsity Polytechnic (IVP) Competition.

Nevertheless, the lack of proper coaching has not dampened their spirits. In fact, the team members are more than eager to show that they can succeed independently. By participating in tournaments such as the Regional Schools' Under-20's, they hope to gain more exposure and experience.

They now face the more established teams from Nanyang Polytechnic and Temasek Polytechnic, which both employ full-time coaches.

Nevertheless, you can be sure they will not go down without a fight; for that is only way they know how to play the sport and represent NP. 