



CAMPUS

Students experience life in Singapore's only kampung

Page 7

CHANGING EDUCATION

A roundup of changes in Ngee Ann and what students think

Centrespread

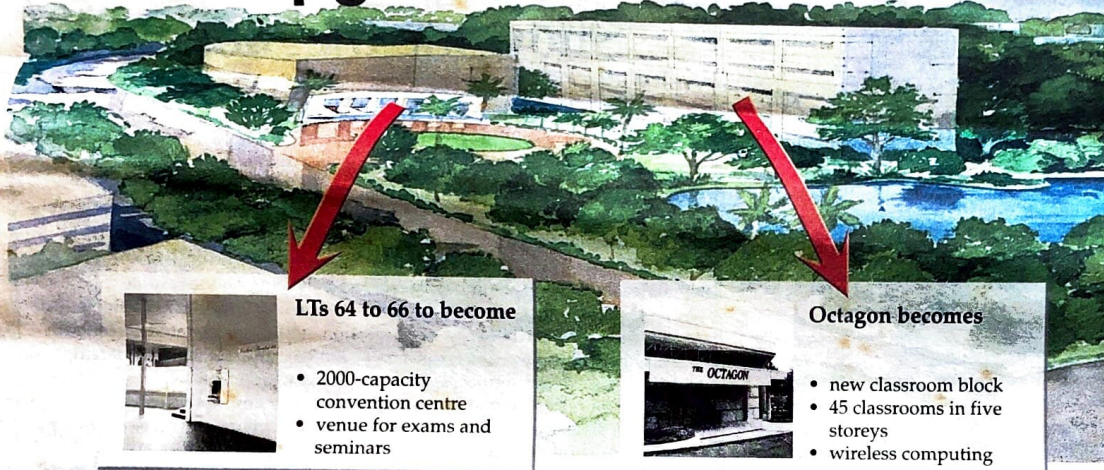
SPORTS

Fostering teamwork at BD's kayaking trip

Page 8



NP to upgrade facilities

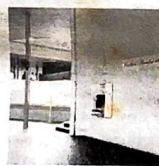


The \$40 million project

In two and a half years, NP will get a new 2000-seater convention centre and a five-storey, 45-classroom block with four LTs.

The redevelopment plans are

- Dec 00 Three temporary LTs at Block 51 ready. LTs 64 to 66 and Octagon concourse demolished.
- Mar 02 Convention centre at old LT 64 ready. Octagon gets demolished.
- Jan 03 New classrooms built at Octagon site. Block 56 gets demolished.



LTs 64 to 66 to become

- 2000-capacity convention centre
- venue for exams and seminars



Octagon becomes

- new classroom block
- 45 classrooms in five storeys
- wireless computing

By NIRA GURUNG

AN estimated \$40 million will be spent on Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) Phase 5 development project which will start in September and end in 2003.

This three-year project includes the demolition of the Octagon, Lecture Theatres (LTs) 64, 65, 66 and classroom Block 56.

To be done in stages, the redevelopment will start this month with the construction of three temporary LTs at the ground level of Block 51. By December, these replacements for LTs 64 to 66 will be ready.

A convention centre will then be built in February 2001 in the space where LTs 64 to 66 and the Octagon concourse are now.

By March 2002, the 2000-seater that can be used for seminars and examinations will be ready, said Mr Mui Cheng Hock, Deputy Head of Estates and Development (ED).

This will replace the Octagon, which can accommodate only 1200 people. The Octagon, an NP landmark, will go down only after the convention centre is ready.

A new five-storey classroom block with four LTs will be built in May 2002 in the former Octagon site.

The new classroom block will have 45 IT-ready classrooms equipped for wireless computing. They will also house the latest audio-visual equipment for teaching purposes.

Mrs Mary Chan-Sii, a lecturer from the Centre for Mathematics, Science and Computing, welcomes the upgrading because the present classrooms are "a bit rundown".

Upon completion of the new classrooms in January 2003, the existing classrooms at Block 56, and the temporary LTs

at Block 51 will be demolished.

Some of the present classrooms in Block 56 are actually of different sizes because they were converted from staff offices, said Mr Mui.

Trina Liu, 18, a second-year Accountancy student, said, "It's for the better. Sooner or later you've got to upgrade. We got to catch up with other polys like Temasek Poly."

Before the new classroom block goes up, classes will continue at Block 56. The ED will try to minimise noise pollution, and build hoarding and temporary walkways.

Mr Mui said, "Noisy work will be done after teaching hours." Although "there will definitely be some inconveniences, the big picture is [we're getting] much bigger facilities," he said.



Top post gets new man

NP's new principal on his hopes, expectations and private life

Page 3

ME most improved students get awards

By JERRY LING

TEN Mechanical Engineering (ME) students were recognised for their hard work when they received their Student Improvement Awards on 28 July.

Introduced in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) in July 1997, the awards are given to first-year students who have improved in their studies over the previous semester.

Students have to improve by a minimum overall score of 10 points to be recognised for the awards. That is, an average score of 40 points would have to be improved to 50 in the next semester.

Mr Tan Ah Sway, 56, Head of ME, said that there were remedial classes and tutor schemes for these weaker students.

"Normally, we can identify those students that need help [from] their tests. We realised that these students need additional help to go through the course; to cope with the course ... we just try our best to provide them with whatever they need," he said.

Mr Phua Lai Pueh, 47, Deputy Head of ME, added that lecturers "find ways [to] motivate and help these weaker students".

To do that, the Peer Tutor Scheme was introduced. First-year students who were weak in their studies were assigned to third-year student volunteers for one-on-one consultations.

Paul Wu, 18, a second-year student, said the Peer Tutor Scheme was "very good". Though the consultations lasted

only an hour twice a week, he felt that he had benefited.

"It's better that a fellow student teaches us than a lecturer because our education level will be somewhere closer," said Paul.

Another student who benefited was Muhammad Saimi, 20, who felt that mathematics was "very difficult". With the help of peer tutors and the lecturers, Muhammad Saimi finally passed the subject and volunteered to be a peer tutor himself.

The awards ceremony also produced a surprise winner - a former ME student who had transferred to the Early Childhood Education course.

Chen Yingqi, 19, had not expected to win the award because she was no longer an ME student. Nonetheless, she was "very happy" to win the award and paid tribute to her former lecturers, whom she said were "very willing to help".

"They ask you which areas you are weak in and, [though] they know it's tough, they still encourage you to go on," Yingqi said.

More joy was to follow for ME when two recent graduates received the first prize for their final-year project in the Design Excellence Award category. Mak Yew Foong, 21, and Ang Chee Keng, 25, designed retractable hands-free kits for mobile phones and hoped that their products would be made marketable.

FOCUS

NVC first charity to be adopted by NP

By SERENE LIM

Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) has adopted the National Volunteer Centre (NVC) as its charity, making this the first time the polytechnic is adopting a non-profit organisation.

Although NP has been working with charities for many years, this formal adoption marks the polytechnic's desire to become more involved in the Singapore 21 (S21) focus on active citizenship.

NP will take on projects or help charities referred by the NVC, which acts as an intermediary for charity organisations and matches them with compatible volunteers. They are put together based on their interests and expertise.

Ms Maureen Goh, manager for manpower planning and appointments at NP, said the polytechnic wants to move away from the traditional kind of fund-raising and into helping charities through community work.

"We have a lot of talent in NP in both the staff and students. We've got rich resources here that we can use to reach out to the community and help those who are less fortunate," she said.

Ms Goh added that NP hopes to "promote active citizenship and family bonding by getting more staff and their families involved in volunteer or community work".

Staff may also be given "time off" to do community service. This means that NP staff can do volunteer work during office hours, if it does not interfere with their work.

NP and the NVC are also customising public education programmes to educate and encourage NP students to sign up for future activities.

Mrs Tan Chee Koon, 50, executive director of the NVC, said she was very happy with NP's collaboration with the NVC.

"What the students need is just a lighting rod to draw them out. We believe that many of them have the zeal and energy, we just need to hold out some challenges to them," said Mrs Tan. These "challenges" might come in the form of a road show in September, where students will be urged to participate in its activities.

The NVC has also designed its website and outreach programmes to attract young adults and students in polytechnics and institutes of technical education.

Though their Memorandum of Understanding on corporate volunteerism has yet to be signed, NP is already immersing itself in the charity events recommended by the NVC.

NP's first project was the "Children's

Voice Golf and Dinner Charity" on 24 August, held in aid of the Children's Cancer Foundation. Staff and students assisted with the logistics of the event - packing goodie bags for the golf tournament and acting as ushers during the dinner at the Westin Stamford.

Those who wish to find out more about the NVC and its services can log on to <http://www.nvc.org.sg>, or call 1800 325 0965.

ECE Freshies Nite dampened by no show

By JERRY LING

LOW student turnout marred the Department of Electronic and Computer Engineering's (ECE) first-ever Freshies Nite on 8 July.

Freshies Nite was organised to end the department's Freshmen Orientation Programme (FOP) on a high. However, the event, scheduled to start at 6 pm, was delayed by 40 minutes as lecturers waited for students to arrive. In the end, the lack of participants resulted in the event ending at 8.30 pm - 30 minutes earlier than scheduled.

About 350 first-year ECE students signed up for the event but only 150 turned up. A post-FOP survey conducted the following week showed that 76 percent of the students who attended did not enjoy the event. Absentees surveyed ticked options saying they were "busy", had other appointments, or thought the Freshies Nite would be boring.

Mdm Tan Peck Ha, 41, an ECE lecturer and organising committee member, explained that it had been set up only in mid-May, "when most of the staff were away or on holidays".

Unlike previous years' half-day programmes, this year's FOP stretched over two-and-a-half days. Through the FOP, Mdm Tan wanted students "to get to know their mentors". She also revealed that the lack of resources and space resulted in lectures and tutorials being cancelled across all levels.

She added, "I wanted them to encour-

age one another to turn up."

Although 70 percent of Mdm Tan's students turned up, the same could not

be said of other lecturers' classes. About 55 percent of those surveyed said that Freshies Nite did not help to build team spirit among classmates, even though 46 percent agreed or strongly agreed that "the FOP helps me to know my classmates, the department and the lecturers better".

As a result of the low turnout, most of the games were affected, especially the Best Couple Competition.

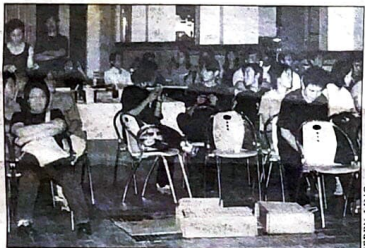
Seven 'couples' were slated to take part, but only two pairs turned up. The 'couples' had drawn marked slips in an earlier draw.

"I wanted them to dress up in a fun way and make it a laugh," said Mdm Tan, who was "disappointed" at the no-show of the other participants.

First-year students Andy Ng, 21, and Annie Angkasuwan, 19, amused the audience with their cross-dressing and eventually won the competition.

Presents originally meant for performers of magic tricks, sketches and participants of the Best Couple Competition, were undistributed and slated for use in the ECE Games.

The need to pay for Freshies Nite also turned off some students. Almost half of those surveyed felt that the \$4 fee was too expensive. They wanted the event to be "free" or cost "less than \$2.50".



These early birds had to wait 40 minutes before ECE's Freshies night started

Show me the money

KELVIN NG

IT seemed a logical solution. Teachers were leaving the profession in droves. Politicians were being wooed by big-name corporations. The solution: throw more money in.

I recently met my secondary school English teacher by chance. She was no longer teaching. "You just missed a fat pay rise," I jested.

She did not quit because of the wages although they were by no means miserly. Rather, it was the obsession of a ranking-crazy, let's-count-the-number-of-distinctions principal that caused this fifteen-year veteran to bail out.

Forget about creativity and drop the nurturing-our-young rhetoric, she said a little too harshly. Grades count, and a teacher is only worth her weight in the number of distinctions she produces.

Never mind that she did not actually produce them; her students did. As she said, there are still exams to take.

To be fair to the education system, she quit not only because of that "tyrant" (the most remotely sensational epithet she could muster); her two children demanded more attention.

Not a fan of bawling tyrants in diapers, I wondered aloud how she could have given up a career for one tyrant only to end up with two at home.

Money was definitely not the reason. And she would not leave her children now, pay rise or not.

A clichéd truism comes to mind: money isn't everything.

Dangle the carrot too much and

what you get is only as good as the donkey that comes after it. The recent talked-to-death issue of bond-breaking is evidence enough.

While there have been scholars who make good their promises, there are others for whom a scholarship is merely icing on the resumé cake.

Three to four years of free education, and an accelerated career path - you'd be an ass if you are not tempted.

But whither passion, you ask.

So you end up in a stuffy CBD office with cubicle partitions that are just a few inches higher than your peers'. A little while later, the move to a bigger cubicle comes.

Granted that there are few who will only take a scholarship for a vocation that interests them, there are more who will do anything for the biggest and brightest carrot.

An editor of a local daily recounted recently that most scholarship interviewees claimed that writing was their passion.

But more than a handful had also submitted applications for scholarships that were miles away from journalism. Unless, of course, you consider pen-pushing in an oil company the epitome of writing.

The question will come full circle when we graduate.

Altruists and ascetics aside, most of us will want a job that at least pays the bills.

But beyond merely selling a third of your day, you might want to get a job where work isn't really work.

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

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Tribune

Campus Newspaper of Ngee Ann Polytechnic

We welcome feedback and suggestions from our readers. Contribute by writing to: The Editors, Ngee Ann Tribune, Centre for Film & Media Studies, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, 535 Clementi Road, Singapore 599489 or email us at 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.

The new man and his vision

Mr Chia Mia Chiang, 47, former head of the Strategic Planning and Research department at the Ministry of Environment (ENV), assumed the post of principal of Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) on 1 April. Four months into his term of office, the man talks about himself and his mission at Ngee Ann Polytechnic.

By ERROL GEORGE

NOT many people know that our new principal, Mr Chia Mia Chiang has had a 12-year association with the polytechnic that began in the late 1980s.

Prior to assuming his post as principal, Mr Chia was an external examiner with the Building Department for several years and was appointed a member of the department's advisory committee. He is thus very familiar with the polytechnic system.

"Coming to Ngee Ann [as principal] was a welcomed move, in the sense that I'm coming into an organisation where I think people have a strong sense of commitment to what they are doing," he said.

On His Role

Mr Chia sees himself as a "facilitator" of ideas or proposals coming from his staff. He said he would evaluate the feasibility of their proposals and if the proposal were implemented, facilitate it through finance and resource allocation.

On Students

Mr Chia believes that students play a powerful role as the polytechnic's ambassadors to the public.

He hopes that "every student who graduates would be a confident individual - someone who is able to go out into the workforce and face up to challenges". He also hopes that each NP graduate will be skilled, knowledgeable and possess the right work attitude.

On ECA

The Principal sees extra-curricular activities (ECA) as playing an important role in a student's education.

"I don't think I can recall very much about what happened in the classroom, lecture theatres or tutorials. But it is all those moments on the football field, my

cross country runs, my canoeing, my sailing that leave behind the most lasting impression," the former school runner said.

Describing his belief in ECA as both enriching and important in moulding an individual's character, Mr Chia hopes to raise the current participation rate in ECA.

Lecturers should encourage students to consider taking some form of ECA, he said. He recognises that students are individuals and make personal decisions about ECA. But lecturers and the polytechnic can "soft-sell" the benefits of ECA participation.

His Vision for NP

Apart from encouraging participation in ECA and providing a conducive physical environment that promotes a vibrant campus, Mr Chia hopes that Ngee Ann will be known as the "polytechnic that delivers a broadbased, ability-driven education for its students".

The underlying questions in Mr Chia's vision for NP are how best to prepare the students so they can thrive in the new economy, and how best to cater to the different needs of students.

NP has started reviewing the academic system and structure to determine how best to deliver an education that is both ability-driven and offers "flexibility so that each student can mix and match his modules to suit his own ability".

If a student aspires to enter a degree programme, he should then be free to choose the modules that best prepare him for such a course.

The review is expected to be completed within the next three to four months. If all goes according to plan, some of the concepts and enhancements can be implemented within the next academic year. One recent change is the abo-

lition of supplementary examinations.

On Supplementary Exams

He feels that in the old system of main exams followed by supplementary exams for those who fail the main exam, there was greater exam tension that might have adversely affected a student's performance.

He said the time between the main exam and the supplementary exam was inadequate for a student to fully prepare himself for the paper, and thus his chances of passing the module were low.

"The desired outcome is that the students capitalise on this [new] system - to try to achieve sufficient core competency, get enough marks to go into the final exam."

"When you go into the final, you should have many marks out of the 70. And then the final determines whether you get the A, B, or C," he said.

Mr Chia hopes the new system will discourage students from cramming for final exams and then passing or failing a module on that one result.

Students should be able to perform well in their continual assessment so that they already have a good 70 percent of their overall assessment before going into the final exams for the remaining 30, he said.

He also encourages students who have doubts about this move to talk to their respective lecturers. Mr Chia said the issue would be of great concern to the polytechnic if many students do not perform well in the 70 percent continual assessments.

His Private Life

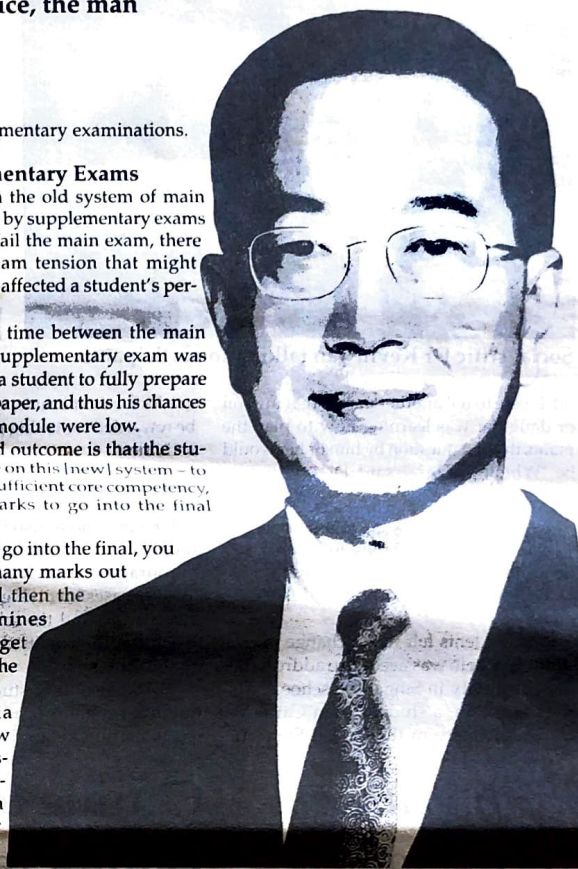
"The moment the weekend arrives, I know that it is time for my family. I know that between 3 pm on Saturday and 10 pm on Sunday, is time for my family. I don't compromise on that - full attention, full dedication to my kids. This time with my family is precious," he said.

Mr Chia is married with two daughters, aged seven and nine. His wife is a Deputy Director with the Auditor-General's Office.

Away from work, the avid nature lover enjoys spending time outdoors with them at places such as the zoo, the Jurong Bird Park or Pulau Ubin.

Mr Chia also enjoys reading, jogging and walking to keep fit. He makes a conscious decision not to watch too much television apart from the news and the occasional documentary. He does not want to get into the "habit of being glued to the TV set for too many hours".

Time management is an important aspect of Mr Chia's mission at NP as he believes that from time to time the polytechnic has to "take stock and reinvent ourselves to keep up with the times".



COURTESY OF MR CHIA MIA CHIANG

Top ECA performers get awards

By SERENE LIM

NGEE Ann Polytechnic (NP) is seeing a growth in extra-curricular activities (ECA) participation, with the last academic year having the largest number of student participants in the past four years.

ECA participation stands at 57 percent, up 15 percent from the previous year.

The rise may be due to the increase in clubs and societies, which increased from 60 clubs four years ago to the current 80.

The rise in participation could also have been a result of the ECA points scheme, that awards students points according to how much they contribute to their ECA.

Mr David Lui, 52, Head of Student Affairs, said ECA points are given only to those who "organise competitions, take on leadership roles, or promote the sport".

"If we look at the overall [student] population in Ngee Ann, as many as 70 to 80 percent of them are members," said Mr Lui, "But I would say right now we have about 60 percent which are active members."

Mr Lui added that accumulated ECA points might help students in their application for local universities.

Students who score the most ECA points list are also considered for the "Outstanding ECA Awards".

Short-listed applicants are interviewed by a panel chaired by the Principal, who evaluates students' presentation on the work they did in their ECA groups. This year saw a record 14 graduates, including six females receiving the award.

This is a further sign that the depth of participation has also risen as only four students achieved the merit award at the first ceremony in 1996.

Biography

Year	Achievements
1977	Bachelor of Engineering (Civil) (Honours), University of Singapore
1982	Post-Graduate Diploma in Sanitary Engineering (Distinction) (Masters Equivalent) International Institute for Hydraulics & Environmental Engineering, the Netherlands
1985	Diploma in Air Pollution Monitoring and Control, International Centre for Advanced Technical & Vocational Training, Italy
1991	Master of Business Administration, National University of Singapore

Road To Ngee Ann Polytechnic

Jun 77	Engineer (Planning & Design) Senior Engineer (Construction)
Feb 87	Deputy Commissioner of Public Health
Jan 91	Head, Environmental Health Department
Nov 92	Head, Strategic Planning & Research Department
Apr 00	Principal, Ngee Ann Polytechnic

Rethink education, students say

By SIMARNIRVAIR SINGH



Social critic Dr Kevin Tan talking to participants.

"If I were to tell another parent that my son or daughter was learning how to play the piano, the first question by him or her would be 'Which grade?'" said Dr Kevin Tan, former Associate Professor of Law at the National University of Singapore (NUS).

This paper chase, lack of creativity in schools and schools rankings dominated the second day of discussion at the ninth Singapore Students' Symposium held from 19 to 20 July.

Many students felt that a change in the education system was needed to address the lack of creativity in Singapore schools. Ms Chong Hui Min, a student from Carnegie Mellon University in the United States of

America, said students in Singapore are not prepared for life as what they learn comes largely from books.

She added, "I have seen students go abroad and just live day in and day out from their books and they act as if there is nothing else to live for."

Some students suggested that the process of marking in schools should be changed. Instead of only receiving

grades for their exams, students should also be rewarded for taking part in co-curricular activities.

The schools ranking system also came under fire for ranking schools by academic results alone.

Dr Tan, who is also the president of the Round Table, a think tank, said the system discourages creativity in school. "I have heard of cases involving principals who increase or expand the school syllabus so as to achieve the results that will push them up the rankings."

"Because of this, students are forced to put in extra hours of work at home and in receiving tuition, leaving no time for their

hobbies," he said.

Mohamed Amrin Amin, a law student from the National University of Singapore, called such principals 'myopic' but said that not all principals were like that. He suggested refining the system as he feels that the present ranking system focuses on academic excellence instead of encouraging creativity.

Issues discussed during the two-day symposium included opportunities in the local economy and the changing aspirations of Singaporeans.

Themed "Looking Ahead: New Millennium, New Challenges", the symposium organised by the Singapore International Foundation (SIF) drew a record 350 students from local and foreign tertiary institutions, including 14 students from Ngee Ann Polytechnic.

Dr Tan Chi Chiu, Executive Director of the SIF, said in his speech, "The future of Singapore is not guaranteed. The success of Singapore over the past 35 years can only be sustained if the next generation of young Singaporeans embrace the challenges ahead to make ... Singapore an attractive and gracious home."

Eric Seah, 19, a third-year student from the Department of Electronic and Computer Engineering, said that attending the symposium was worthwhile. "The discussions have helped me realise what my priorities are as a Singaporean and I've also recognised the kind of society that I want Singapore to be," he said.

BS students get REAL work

By SHARON LEE

CLASS will no longer be the same for third-year Business Studies (BS) students taking their specialisation in Marketing.

The BS department launched the Realistic Experimental Applied Learning (REAL) programme in a revamp of the course structure. It is the first department among the four polytechnics to implement such a programme.

Business units will replace traditional tutorial groups for students, and lecturers will be known as business advisors. Students apply and integrate what they have learnt from 11 modules by developing and selling existing products or services for selected companies.

The eight business units are made up of some 18 students each. Each group is assigned a client and a business advisor. Goh Siew Yee, 19, a third-year BS student, working with Kriston Food & Beverage, said the programme allows for a more interesting learning experience as it is reality-based and not theory-based.

BS Course Manager and lecturer, Mr Adrian Chan, 35, said future graduates had a range of careers to pursue. These include "marketing communications, advertising, retailing, administration ... [to] executive positions," he said.

Under the REAL programme, the participating companies provide a budget towards the development of their products.

Operational and promotional costs will be deducted from revenue made and profits will be returned to each company.

Excess funds generated from each business unit will be returned to the REAL programme and given out to students through scholarships, bursaries and allowances, said lecturer Ms Tan Lai Wan.

Online teaching good, but cannot replace "human" touch

By TEO KIAN NGUAN

MODERN technology has created new opportunities for teaching and extended education from the classroom to cyberspace.

Under NP's Mobile Computing Initiative, students can now attend tutorials online, download lecture notes, and hold discussions in a virtual classroom.

Mobile computing uses wireless technology, such as notebook computers to carry out tasks previously done on the personal computer.

The new scheme lets students use their notebooks wherever they are on campus, allowing for greater convenience.

The Department of Accountancy (ACC) piloted the mobile computing scheme last year.

This semester, the Departments of Business Studies (BS), Mechanical Engineering (ME) and the Centre for Computer Studies (CCS), introduced mobile computing to all their first-year courses and selected second-year courses.

Mr T Elangovan, 49, Section Head, Infocomm and E-Commerce of BS said, "The whole idea of mobile computing is exploiting technology and making use of learning space. It is not just giving them a computer, but it actually re-models our teaching process. They can learn a lot just by handling the computer."

In the virtual classrooms - one aspect of online learning - tutorials are more interactive because lecturers can provide immediate feedback as students do their assignments.

Online notices provide updates of quiz

schedule changes and online forums encourage students to post questions or discuss tutorial subjects.

Adeline Lee, 17, a second-year BS student said, "Online learning provides us with not only interaction with our friends and lecturers, but it also allows us to make full use of our computer notebooks."

However online learning has its disadvantages.

Students from BS, ACC and ME said classes have been interrupted for several hours whenever the server broke down.

Students might be tempted to surf the Internet or play games on their notebooks. "Whenever they did that, lecturers would usually ask students to close their notebooks when lessons were conducted," said Ms Angeline Sin, an ACC lecturer.

Online lessons also lack the human touch and are unable to provide students with the concern and understanding a lecturer can give.

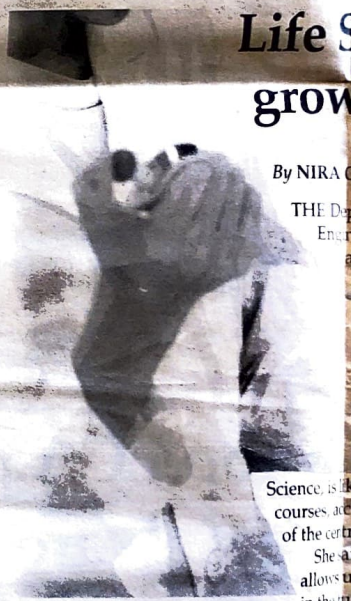
"I think online education is insincere and cold because the computer is not a human being and it is unable to understand my needs. It doesn't care whether I understand a particular question or not and it can do nothing to help me," said Yap Xinyi, 17, a second-year BS student.

ACC, BS and CCS lecturers interviewed all said online learning, while beneficial, can never replace classroom teaching.

"It would be a very simplistic view if someone says traditional teaching can be replaced," said Mr Elangovan.

"It would be a very simplistic view if someone says traditional teaching can be replaced."

Mr T Elangovan



By NIRA C

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Science is
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The centre's previous name was not rep
Chang said, "By having that name, we at
Management and Biomedical Science talks
agriculture and Landscape Management, and
appropriate under the title 'life sciences'."

The Chemical Engineering part of the
chemical industry. Dr Chang said that Chem
going into areas such as industrial chemist
Having restructured the curricula of the
ment and Chemical Engineering courses, th
turing the Biotechnology and Biomedical S
expanding the aquatic science and technol
ceutical option to the centre's courses.

LSCT is also looking into a new mode
subject in isolation, we are trying to link up
This means that students may need to take

The centre, which is currently research
player in the huge and fast-growing field of
Times article, the government has set asid
search.

The centre will also facilitate the govern
manpower ... when the government brings
power," said Dr Chang.

No more supplementary exams

NP students will only get one try at their finals, but exam weightage goes down as continual assessment increases in importance.

By DORINA LOH

NGEE Ann Polytechnic (NP) students who fail their end-of-semester examinations will no longer sit for supplementary papers.

Being the first polytechnic in Singapore to scrap supplementary papers, NP has also changed its assessment system.

Mr Lee Tuck Seng, Deputy Principal (Academic), explained, "The emphasis now is on learning, rather than just studying for exams."

Mr Lee said students should now be encouraged to learn throughout the semester through projects, assignments and tests.

Under the new assessment system, students can expect a heavier weightage for their projects and class assignments.

This is expected to give students more motivation to do well in their coursework, and discourage them from depending on the final examinations to excel.

Mr Lee said that although final examinations are important for testing students on analytical skills, projects encourage creativity and hands-on learning.

However, some students are concerned about the removal of the supplementary paper safety net.

This was when those who failed a final examination but scored at least 35 percent could have another chance by taking the supplementary paper.

Leow Yihao, 19, a third-year student from the Department of Electronic and Computer Engineering, said, "If students are

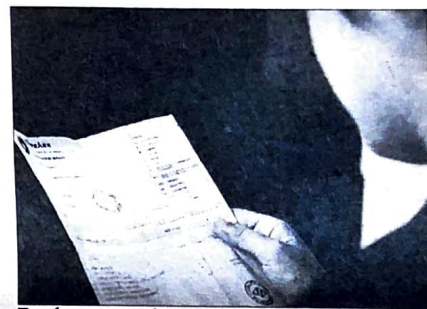
very bad at studying for exams, they will be more likely to lose out to those who score in exams and they will not be given a second chance if they fail."

Mr Lee explained, "Because of this mechanism which allows students to learn along the way, when the time comes for exams, students would already have the basic knowledge to attain a passing mark. Because the student has the basic knowledge, when the student comes for the exam, the pass rate [for the exams] will be high. So there's no need for supplementary paper."

Supplementary papers are usually more difficult. According to the Academic and Public Affairs (APA) office, 12 percent of NP students took the supplementary papers last semester, and only 60 percent of this number passed.

Mrs Anna Chew, Exams Manager at APA, said there is no uniform weightage for examinations. Departments may fix the overall weightage for coursework depending on the needs of the module.

At the Centre for Life Sciences and Chemical Engineering (LSCT), examinations usually take up about 60 percent of a student's overall grade. However, with the change in assessment system and the removal of supplementary papers, final examinations will now take up about 30 per-



Performance in a subject is now greatly affected by coursework.

cent of the overall grade.

Dr Hedy Goh, an LSCT lecturer said, "I think the students appreciate it [reduction in weightage of exams]. It just doesn't make sense to squeeze a semester's work into a three-hour paper."

She also said that more marks should be awarded for the time and effort students put into their projects.

Although the removal of supplementary papers may seem like bad news to some students, there are others who see its benefits and welcome the change.

Lee Soo Hui, 17, a second-year Business Studies student, said, "There's pressure for us to do well in exams. But it's better now; the exams will have less percentage."

ging education

knowledge-based, thinking schools. of the new world or students already over- with work? Tribune the changing face of n in this issue.

sciences to tap ing industry

URUNG

Department of Biotechnology and Chemical Engineering is now the Centre for Life Sciences and Chemical Technology (LSCT). This more accurately reflects the various courses conducted by the centre.

The centre, which offers diplomas in Biotechnology, Chemical Engineering, Horticulture and Landscape Management and Biomedical Science, aims to introduce more diploma courses. Dr Sushila Chang, 44, director of the centre, said, "By having the name 'life sciences', it gives the opportunity to go into other areas of science."

representative of the diplomas offered. Dr Chang said that Horticulture and Landscape Management is currently looking into restructuring its curricula. The centre will also be adding a pharmacy course and may be adding a pharmaceutical course.

of assessment. "Instead of just doing a few subjects within that level," said Dr Chang, "we will have only one paper for several subjects."

ing in related fields, hopes to be a key player in life sciences. According to a recent Straits Times article, a \$1 billion grant for life sciences research has been announced by the government's push for life sciences. "We train students in companies, we will be providing man-

Creative thinking: how to walk the talk?

By ADALINE LAU

"CREATIVE thinking? You are asking the wrong course," said Colin Lai, 23, a second-year student from the Department of Mechanical Engineering (ME).

Lee Wai Sun, 18, another second-year ME student agreed. She stressed that in her course, "memory is very important." One does not need to understand anything, as long as one remembers everything, she added.

"You do not need creativity ... one person do, everyone copy," their classmate, Huang Decai, 20, chimed in.

Ironically, this group of students just completed the Creativity and Innovation module in their first-year curriculum.

Creativity and Innovation Module in the Department of Mechanical Engineering

The Creativity and Innovation module, initially known as Creative Design was introduced in 1993 to the Department of Mechanical Engineering (ME).

Electrical Engineering (EE) students started the module last year. The programme emphasises the importance of creative thinking in work, study and daily life.

Mr Tan Ah Kat, 42, a senior lecturer from ME, defined creative thinking as, "the ability to generate many, many new ideas". This is taken in the context of engineering students who deal with design and solving technical problems.

When the module first started, "some [students] were lost" because of the lack of standard answers, said Mr Tan, who is also the manager of Special Projects and Product Development at the Technopreneurship and Design Centre.

In recent years, however, Mr Tan noticed

that students generated more ideas in their final-year projects and they were also more responsive in class.

Applied Thinking Skills in the Department of Business Studies

In July 1999, the Business Studies department (BS) introduced Applied Thinking Skills as an introductory module for first-year students in the department.

Mr Henry Tio, a senior BS lecturer explained that creative thinking is only a part of many other thinking skills.

Learning how to think creatively will help students in other areas such as analytical and critical thinking, he said.

The activities that have been introduced in the module include poster and board game design competitions.

Mr Tio said, "Initially, students may not think it [Applied Thinking Skills module] is important or relevant."

However, he noted students soon saw the module's applicability to their studies and working life and understood the relevance of the subject.

Mr Tio also added that the thinking process mattered to lecturers. "Lecturers or tutors do appreciate and encourage students to think for themselves and come up with new ideas," he stated, debunking the student notion that all lecturers wanted to see were correct answers.

Mr Tio and his committee won the Dr Hiew Siew Nam Distinguished Academic Award 1999/2000 for introducing the Applied Thinking Skills module to the Business Department.

Student and staff opinions

"Our course is about memorising and practising ... outputting the same stuff."

Toh Miao Yi, 19, a second-year student from the Centre for Quality.

"It depends a lot on the course one studies."

Ali Akbar, 19, a second-year student from the Department of Accountancy when asked how creative thinking plays a part in his course.

"Lecturers can still make the content creative and present the content in a very creative manner."

Mrs Yap Swi Neo, 54, principal lecturer of Language and Communications Skills who feels that creative thinking is not limited to certain departments.

CAMPUS

The road to recovery

By LEE XIUHUI

FIRST-YEAR Accountancy (ACC) student Dawn Chen Qingrui, 18, was involved in an accident last September that has left her unable to continue her studies at Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP).

While trying to cross Holland Road, her pocket got caught on the wing mirror of a passing car and she was dragged for some distance before she was flung to the ground.

She was admitted to Singapore General Hospital's (SGH) intensive care unit for two weeks and then transferred to Ang Mo Kio Community Hospital. However, she had to be readmitted to SGH for an operation earlier this year.

Almost a year later, she is still unable to swallow food or walk. She also has difficulty recognising faces, but close friend and coursemate Ong Kai Ling, 19, says that Dawn may recognise those close to her – like her immediate family. She says that Dawn may show her emotions. "Like when she's happy, she might have some expression."

Kai Ling, now a second-year ACC student, and Dawn's other friends, all miss Dawn very much. As for their hopes to see Dawn back in NP, Kai Ling said, "Of course! Everybody wishes that she can [make it back], but I doubt that she can." Even if Dawn were to return, it would be after her friends have graduated. "It's actually a miracle that she's alive," Kai Ling conceded.

Kai Ling and her friends often visited Dawn in hospital during the recent vacation. Kai Ling recalled an incident that delighted and surprised everyone, "She 'ate' ice-cream, but she can't swallow. So it just drips out her mouth." This is an improvement in her condition as she can open and close her mouth, though she is unable to swallow.

Dawn's improvement may be slow, but she is making progress. "Every time she's getting slightly better, but slow," Dawn's aunt, Mdm Susan Tay said.

Despite being hearing-impaired, Dawn was a cheerful and hardworking student and an active member of NP's LEO Club. "She joined LEO Club herself – she came to the clubhouse herself. It wasn't like part of any ECA recruitment or anything," Yeo Yifan, 19, then LEO Club President recalled.

In the spirit of Dawn's charitable and loving nature, the LEO Club and ACC Department raised more than \$10,000 in April to help Dawn's family with its medical bills.

Mrs Sylvia Lim, Student Development Manager for ACC, explained why the department pitched in, "We teach our students social and community values. What better way to demonstrate the application than by helping a fellow student." She added that staff and students of the ACC department also visited Dawn in hospital. "It's not just a matter of giving money," Mrs Lim said.

Dawn has since been discharged and her mother works at home to look after her. According to Mdm Tay, doctors and therapists cannot predict when or how much Dawn will recover from this accident. "It's a long process," she said.

A journey through time

By SIMARNIRVAIR SINGH



Visiting Pulau Ubin on a Saturday, CCS students see the old world charm of the island.

INSTEAD of surfing the internet or visiting the cinema, 27 students from the Centre for Computer Studies (CCS) and the Electronic and Computer Engineering (ECE) department visited Pulau Ubin on 22 July.

They spent three hours on the island known as Singapore's only remaining kampung (Malay for village). This was part of the Kampung Days Tour organised by the National Heritage Board to teach Singaporeans about kampung life in the past.

Before the tour, students were given a talk and shown a slide presentation tracing the development of housing in Sin-

gapore, which forms the main settlement on the island. They visited a number of sites in the kampung such as the Singapore Pulau Ubin Mutual Benefit Association, an old wayang stage and a Buddhist "Tua Peh Kong" shrine near the jetty, where new settlers to the village would pay homage and ask for protection in times of need.

The students were also treated to some cool, fresh coconut juice at a provision shop. The shop owner, Mr Chew Teck Seng, opened some fresh coconuts for them. "It is nice to know that young people today are still interested about the life-style of the past," he said.

gapore by an officer from the Singapore History Consultants.

On arrival at the island, the students were surprised by the simple life-style of the villagers, a contrast to the hustle and bustle on mainland Singapore.

The group first visited the Chinese kam-

At the Chinese kampung, the students also visited the house of Pulau Ubin's headman. Mr Lim Chye Joo, 95, was delighted to see the students and was very open and friendly towards them. On the way to the Malay kampung, the students passed a typical rural landscape, with vegetable and poultry farms, prawn and fish farms and small rubber plantations.

Through this trip, the students appreciated a value of all kampungs in the past as well as the one on Pulau Ubin. This unique value was the spirit of cooperation between the different races, known as 'bergotong-royong'. For example, if there was a marriage on the island, all the men, regardless of race, would build the wedding tent while the women cook.

Yusry Harfuddin, 19, a final-year student from CCS, said, "This trip has reinforced the aspect that the spirit of 'bergotong-royong' is very important for Singapore's survival."

Ryan Boo, 17, a second-year student from CCS and first-time visitor to Pulau Ubin, said, "I learnt a lot about the different styles of housing in the past and it helped me understand how the different ethnic groups lived together in the past."

The students left Pulau Ubin believing that the island should be kept and maintained as it is. "This is the last village in Singapore and I think it should be preserved for future generations to experience this way of life," said Ryan.

Environmental rangers reap harvest in recycling drive

By DORINA LOH

MORE than 1600 kg of recyclable paper was collected over four weeks in the Environmental Rangers Society's (ERS) Recycling Drive.

Held every Friday, from 14 July, the recycling drive aims to raise funds for 55 organisations supported by the Community Chest.

"We find that this programme is cause-worthy, and it's for a good purpose. So we help to collect every Friday," said Mr Alfred Tan, advisor for ERS.

A collection point was set up at Canteen 1 in July for staff and students to drop off newspapers, magazines, brochures and telephone directories.

The collection point is relocated every month until the end of the Recycling Drive in October.

Mr Tan, a lecturer at the Department of Building, said all materials were sent to NCSS, which sold them to the appointed waste disposal company. All proceeds will go to the Community Chest.

ERS, whose last recycling effort was in March this year in aid of SPCA, hopes to collect 10,000 kg worth of recyclable paper by the end of the recycling drive. To reach the target, Mr Tan said that ERS is now aggressively persuading various clubs and societies on campus to support the programme.

Most of the current contributors were staff from various departments.

Ms Kok Lai Foong, 35, an administrative staff from the Department of Electronic and Computer Engineering, gath-

ered a trolley full of materials from the office and sent them to the collection point twice.

"So far what we've given is already quite a lot. There's not much left to donate," Ms Kok said.

Lenny Ong, 24, project coordinator for the recycling drive said students found it troublesome to bring the papers to school.

The second-year Civil and Engineering student said, "They say it's too heavy and inconvenient to bring, especially when they take buses to school."

Although no transportation was provided to collect the papers from students' homes, Mr Tan said that special arrange-

ments could be made if required.

Students or staff who wish to donate any material of more than 100 kg can make arrangements with ERS to have the materials collected from the contributors' department.

In addition to raising funds for the needy, the programme also aims to create an environmentally friendly society and interest students in current affairs.

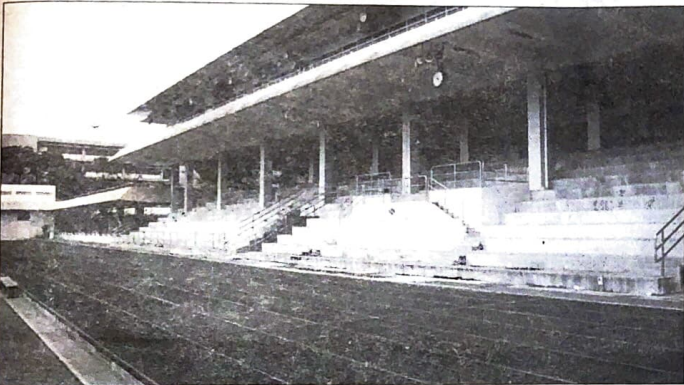
Collection points will be set up at Canteen 2 on 1 and 15 September, and at the Atrium on 29 September. For more information contact ERS advisor Mr Alfred Tan at 460 8084 or tch6@np.edu.sg



In just three days, the Environmental Rangers collected 1363kg of recyclable paper, all thanks to supportive NP staff.

Facelift for Sports Track & Field

By NIRA GURUNG



KEVIN NG

After a three-month upgrading, the sports complex will have its running track replaced and its field levelled.

COME December, you can expect a brand new look for the sports complex after its upgrading.

The red running track will be replaced with a blue one and the field, together with the two "semi-Ds" will be raised to the same level as the track.

According to Mr Siow Chow Sid, manager of the Student Development Centre (SDC), although they are based on an old design, the present track and field still meet technical specifications but the field is a step lower than the track. The difference in level causes an awkward step down to the field. "Some people might trip and fall," said Mr Siow. How-

ever, no complaint has been lodged about people tripping over.

These uneven levels also cause problems to the drainage system.

Azmi Mohamed Masuni, 22, a third-year Shipbuilding and Offshore Engineering student and member of the Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) Football Club lamented that the drainage system in the field was dangerous for players. "We have very poor drainage system. When it rains, the field will be full of water. On a rainy day, it's dangerous when someone tackles an opponent because the opponent can hit the face against the edge of the raised track," he said.

Azmi added, "There is a lack of space. Some people need a lot of space to run to take a corner kick. With the drain next to you, you only have very little space." Mr Siow agreed that it was difficult to take corner kicks in the field.

He also said that upgrading the field and track simultaneously should save time and cost.

Mr Thomas Tan, a Student Development Officer welcomed the SDC's move. "It's a change for the better. Hopefully, it'll attract more people to come down."

Shanmugam s/o Balasubramaniam, 22, a second-year Mechanical Engineering student and captain of the NP Track and Field team was jubilant at the thought of getting a new track. "This is a very good idea. I think Ngee Ann is the first one to own the blue-coloured track. Anyway, our track is also getting worn and torn out," he said.

Mr Gopinathan Retnam, another Student Development Officer said, "Should the project go on, then we're going to be the first stadium in the whole of Singapore to have a blue-coloured track. I wouldn't be surprised if just that little bit of colour in the surrounding motivates a person. It can happen."

The upgrading will start in early October and may end by late December. During this period, the polytechnic will arrange for alternative venues at other polytechnics for students requiring the use of the track and field.

Ngee Ann dot Com

THE Language and Communication Skills Centre (LCS) has implemented an online registration system for its enhancement programmes.

This new system started in July comes with the increasing number of students for the Centre's courses in General English Training, "O" Level English, Foreign Languages, Marketing for Non-Marketing People, and Sales for Engineers.

The system facilitates registration as well as reflects the student's enhancement programme time slot in his original timetable.

This makes LCS the first department to put its course registrations online, making it a benchmark for other departments.

NGEE Ann Polytechnic (NP) and River Valley High School (RV) have created a website, which allows students to observe biology experiments from their homes via the internet.

The Biology Internet Laboratory is the first of its kind in Singapore.

A joint effort between the biology teachers at RV and the IT experts at NP's Advanced Information Technology Application Centre (AITAC), the Biology Internet Laboratory debunks the misconception that biology can only be learnt through traditional experiments.

The Biology Internet Laboratory does not replace actual practical sessions, but complements classroom lessons because students can submit experimental data via the virtual laboratory in real time.

Those who are interested in finding out more about the Biology Internet Laboratory can log on to <http://aitacweb.np.edu.sg/vlab/rv/biology> and sign on by typing "guest" in both the ID and password fields.

Mission with an edge

By SHARON LEE

LOCAL band, Forerunner, charmed a 200-strong audience with a mixture of rock and pop at Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) on 3 August.

Held at LT 26, the hour-long performance got off on the wrong foot when it started 45 minutes late at 6.15 pm.

However, the band made up for the late start with their good rapport with the audience. Interspersed with short skits and giveaways, the 10-song performance was warmly received by the students.

Organised by Ngee Ann Campus Crusade for Christ (NPCCC), the skits illustrated moral dilemmas that teenagers often face. In the first skit, the band demonstrated the pains of growing up when one of the characters discovered his friend had made use of him.

Explained Ms Jacqueline Tay, 26, the lead singer and guitarist, "The skits brings out what we have to convey more engagingly as it is more visual ... we want to nurture and help students reject peer pressure and lead them to place their security in the right place."

"people ... 51 years old were touched by our message so I think it's even more relevant to polytechnic students"

Jacqueline Tay

Speaking mainly of teenage angst and a search for a self-identity, lyrics of each song were flashed on the canvas backdrop.



SHARON LEE

Forerunner hopes to help teens in their search for identity.

An example from "Even Song", "Magic is in the makeup, can you tell I'm faking it, but I want to be myself."

Ms Tay felt that the search for self-identity was a universal one. She recalled an incident where the band played, "We played in a church once and people as old as 51 years old were touched by our message so I think it's even more relevant to polytechnic students," she said.

Forerunner was formed in 1992. Its lineup depends on the availability of its part-time band members. The present lineup of lead vocalist and guitarist, Jacqueline Tay, 26, Sara Indot, 31, keyboardist and back-up singer and brothers Roger Chan, 23, bassist and David Chan, 25, drummer, has played 16 gigs since February.

Emmeline Yeo, 19, a graduate from the Business Studies (BS) department now waiting for admission into a foreign university returned to NP just to catch the performance.

She said, "It was excellent and the songs were meaningful. I would come back if I had the chance."

Roundup

ARTS Festival 2000, organised by the Students' Union was a two-week long thumbprint event and a three-day arts bazaar.

Four booths were set up at the Octagon, Atrium, Canteen 2 and Block 51 for the thumbprint art event. Some 130 student volunteers manned the booths. Apart from using gold and silver markers, students signed their National Day wishes with their thumbprints on pieces of mahjong paper.

The decorated papers were then combined to form a card that contained the Arts Festival 2000 logo.

THE Ngee Ann (NP) staff apartments have seen yet another daring burglary, most recently in the June holidays.

At 6.30 am, a man entered the apartment of Susan (not her real name), 24, a lecturer from the Centre for Computer Studies (CCS) while she and her roommate were asleep. He rifled through Susan's belongings and casually walked out of the apartment. He made off with \$400.

International Fellows staying at the staff apartment said the units on the higher floors of the apartments in Block 90 were broken into.

Mr U. Krishnan, 43, a security guard at the staff apartments, said it was difficult to keep track of the people entering the staff apartment compounds.

The Estates and Development office could not be reached for comment.

FIRST-YEAR Electronic and Computer Engineering (ECE) students thought they had gone back for remedial classes when they took part in the ECE Games on 5 August.

Open to first-year students, this year's event saw students pitting their wits against one another in "education games". The event, or Staff-Student (SS) Games was held at the Octagon.

Lecturer, Mr Low Hong Kai, 44, chairman of the SS games committee, said, "(Previous years') games used to be physical [but] this time we are concentrating on playing games which are related to the studies."

One such example was 'The Great Connection', where students had to strip wires and connect them together to light up bulbs. Another game that tested students' knowledge was the "3-Pin Plug Race", where students had to assemble a plug in the shortest time possible.

55 Building Department (BD) students attended a five-day Outward Bound camp at the Outward Bound Singapore (OBS) campsite on Pulau Ubin.

Held from 17 to 21 July, the mobile camp organised by OBS helps build students' self-confidence by challenging them physically.

All 55 places were snapped up in two days.

For those who attended, it was a memorable week. Patrick Woon, 19, said, "You appreciate the simple things in life after going through the camp. Like sitting down on a chair. In the camp, we had to sit down on the hard ground."

Simon Lim, 19, said the camp "helped build up my self-confidence. It also taught me to save the environment as well as working as a team and trusting your team-mates."

SPORTS

NP's Olympic-styled games draw 700

Initially bothered by a "disappointing" turnout, organisers from the Students' Union held out. About 150 students turned up for each street event. Organisers say experience gained will help plan better Omega 2001.

By BASRIL NIZAM

OMEGA 2000, a first attempt by the Students' Union (SU) to get people involved in sports, attracted more than 700 students.

Dubbed Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) answer to the Olympics, Omega 2000 highlighted street soccer, street basketball, badminton, netball, swimming, and track events over nearly three weeks.

The various sports however, received different responses. The bulk of the attendance went to street soccer and street basketball. About 150 students signed up for each street event.

Responses for badminton and swimming were lower, with about 20 people signing up. But this fulfilled the attendance expectation.

SU project chairman Wilson Ang, 19, a third-year Centre for Life Sciences and Chemical Technology (LSCT) student had to encourage his sub-committee when the initial turnout was disappointing.

"On the first day, because it was raining, no one turned up for the track and field event, so my sub-committee were sitting there like idiots, but I actually went down there and encouraged them, trying to push them [to carry on] as we already put so much effort into it," said Wilson.

He said that the lack of proper post-

ing of the event schedules around campus and the lack of initiative by participants in checking the schedules contributed to the number of no-shows.

There were however, surprises that encouraged the organisers during the run of events.

"Netball was outstanding because ... only two teams registered but on the day itself six teams appeared," said Wilson.

"Most of them [participants] are quite cooperative in this and anyway it is good to promote a healthy lifestyle and friendship at the same time."

Jason Lim

Although one-third of those who signed up for the street events did not turn up for their event, Wilson was happy with the response.

"I still consider it [Omega 2000] a success. As long as people are participating and are enjoying themselves, it is successful enough," he said.

Jason Lim Weiming, 24, a third-year

Electrical Engineering student whose team won the street basketball final agreed with Wilson.

"Most of them [participants] are quite cooperative in this and anyway it is good to promote a healthy lifestyle and friendship at the same time. I had fun here," said Jason.

His teammate, Tan Boon Han, 18, a second-year LSCT student said, "We all, basketball lovers can get along and play basketball together."

Jason pointed out that some events were not well-organised because the organisers split them up over too many days.

He hoped future events would be reduced to two days or less, to avoid clashing with students' project work.

Wilson hoped that the experience from this year's Omega will help his committee to organise a much better Omega next year.

"Maybe next year it'll still be on the same scale but hopefully we can have additional games. Instead of just physical games maybe chess? Mental games. Brains and brawn all into one. We shouldn't neglect people with brains, so intellectual games-wise, it is quite appropriate," he said.

Sportsmanship displayed at Badminton Open

By BASRIL NIZAM

NGEE Ann Polytechnic's Badminton Open men's final on 25 July between two Chuan Longs was filled with exciting game play and sportsmanship.

Yeo Chuan Long, 20, a first-year Mechanical Engineering (ME) student and Chye Chuan Long, 21, a third-year Electronic and Computer Engineering student, first met in a badminton competition last year but never competed against each other.

When they finally did, Yeo, who trains with the national team, could not rise to the crowd's expectations because of a prior ankle injury.

He lost to Chye, 13-15, 15-11 and 10-15.

In the first set the injured Yeo took advantage of Chye's complacency, pulling back from being down 2-6 to holding a 7-6 lead. But as soon as Yeo hit the seventh point, Chye headed straight for the set. Yeo tried to bring the game to deuce at 13-14 but to no avail, as Chye gave a spectacular smash, ending the first set 13-15.

It was a feat nonetheless for the injured Yeo to make it all the way to the final. An hour before the match, Yeo and Chye were seen chatting like old friends.

"I expected to lose but I played my own game never trying to injure his leg," Chye said.

The whole match was filled with rallies and deadly smashes. The crowd cheered and applauded both players with each successive point and intelligent net play.

One of the event's organisers, Soo He Fong, 20, a third-year ME student, and an inter-varsity player, was hopeful that Yeo would make it to the NP team after recovering from surgery in August for his ankle injury.

Highlights

MECHANICAL Engineering (ME) department and the Electronic and Computer Engineering (ECE) department, last year's inter-department soccer competition finalists, are all but out of this year's competition.

ME lost its first game against Electrical Engineering (EE) in a 3-4 penalty shoot-out. ECE fell 1-2 to the Centre for Computer Studies (CCS). With teams needing two wins to top their respective groups, the future looks bleak for the two favourites.

Your support may just be the push your team needs.

Remaining Fixtures:

- 29 Aug
EE vs Life Sciences & Chemical Technology
- 31 Aug
CCS vs Accountancy
- 5 Sept
Building vs Shipbuilding & Offshore Engineering
- 7 Sept
Film & Media Studies vs Centre for Quality

Building bonds that never break

By BASRIL NIZAM

IN an effort to foster teamwork and build bonds between students in the different courses in the Building Department (BD), 92 students went on a kayaking expedition to Seletar Island.

"We have different courses, Building Services Engineering (BSE), Building and Real Estate Management (BEM) and Civil and Environmental Engineering (CE). So it's good to have all the different courses mix in this kind of social event," said Mr Wee Keng Loon, 39, a BD lecturer.

Students across all levels spent the morning learning basic kayaking skills at Sembawang Sea Sports Club (SSSC) be-

fore taking a 45-minute kayaking trip to Seletar Island off the coast of Sembawang.

"I think it is very creative to organise this event. Good to gather all the people from the department to have fun together and learn some kayaking skills," said Ding Kian Seng, 17, a first-year BEM student.

"Overall they [the students] are quite cooperative. Physical wise, I think they are great. They had fun while observing our safety instructions barring the one capsized we had, which is not a bad thing," said expedition leader, Lee Chee Kung, 22, a volunteer instructor with SSSC.



Displaying trust and teamwork in a human pyramid.

Blessed with cloudy conditions and calm seas, kayaking from SSSC to Seletar Island was an enjoyable affair. Guided by instructors from SSSC, the participants sheared through the waves in two-person kayaks trying to outmanoeuvre one another while taking every opportunity to soak their lecturers as well.

"The objectives of the trip were to actually let the students enjoy poly life, apart from just studying. Apart from that, to let them build bonds with each other so that coming to polytechnic will be more exciting," said Mr Jeffrey Yang, 47, a lecturer who did not mind getting soaked. He observed that before the students started, they were "sitting in their own little pockets with small little groups, and now, they are all very united."



BD students making final preparations before leaving for Seletar Island.