

# Tribune

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campus newspaper of ngee ann polytechnic

sept 2001

3,277,500 Pieces of A4 paper  
or  
270 trees  
33,139 Litres of oil  
497,658 Litres of water  
6,484,752 Kilowatt-hours of  
energy

Every 3 months, that\* is how much goes  
into Ngee Ann's paper use alone  
Turn to the centrespread and see for  
yourself.

## NATIONAL DAY AWARDS

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Five people linked to NP  
are honoured with National  
Day Awards for  
outstanding contributions.

## 58-YEAR-OLD GRAD

3

The oldest grad this  
year - who holds three  
diplomas - speaks to  
Tribune.

## MAKANSUTRA

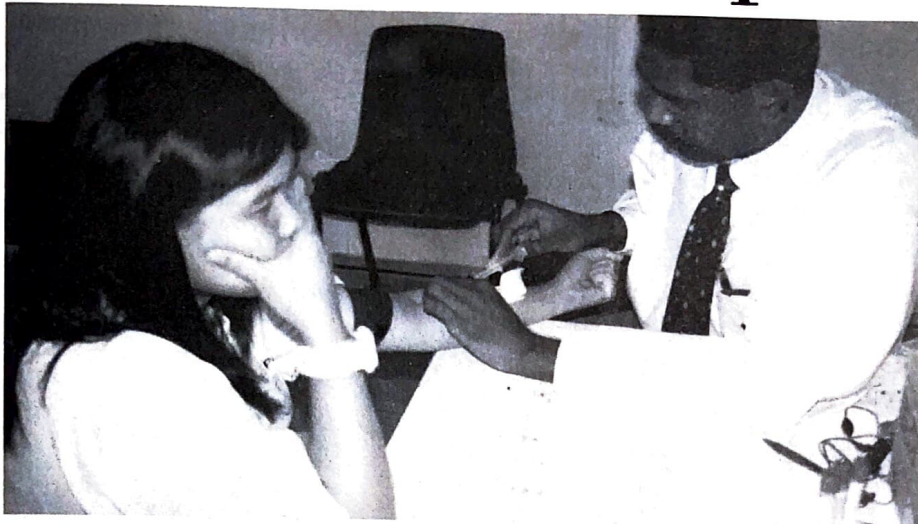
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Fast food on campus?  
More Halal stalls?  
Tribune speaks to  
students.

\* Conversion rates from: <http://www.envirosysteminc.com>  
Paper purchase figures from Finance Office.



# Jabbing out Hep B



Ouch: The Hepatitis B immunisation drive is brought home to NP students. (clockwise from left) Mr Mohd Ali takes a blood sample from a student

BY AMELIA RHEA TANG

**C**lose to 7,200 Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students received free screenings for Hepatitis B when the Health Promotion Board visited NP from 13 to 17 August.

Thirteen doctors came to NP.

Students found to lack immunity can choose to come back for three Hepatitis B injections.

The exercise was done through the Medical Healthway Group, the vendor appointed by the government to carry out the programme.

According to Mr Mohd Ali, 38, operations manager from Medical Healthway Group, the objective of the screening exercise is to "get every Singaporean to be screened against Hepatitis B".

Four percent of Singapore's general population are Hepatitis B carriers. Chronic carriers often appear to feel

well, not knowing that they are infected, according to the Ministry of Health (MOH).

Hepatitis B can lead to liver cancer and liver failure.

Responding to reports that the antibody shots can lead to serious side effects such as chronic fatigue syndrome, which can lead to death, Mr Mohd said the likelihood of side effects is minimal.

"For most of them, they'll not have any side effects at all," said Mr Mohd. "And it is not commonly reported in Singapore. A case like that will be one in 10,000."

What is most common is pain around the punctured area and a mild fever that can be treated with an analgesic or painkiller such as Panadol. Such side effects should subside after a few weeks. If anyone experiences more serious side effects, they should see the doctor, he advised.

The screening was held at Blocks 73 and 18 and LT 26. According to Mr Mohd, normally 70 percent of those screened will require immunisation.



Students queuing up for their free blood screening at Block 73; Collected blood samples waiting to be processed.

For some students, drawing 6ml of precious blood was no big deal. Phua Mei Fen, 18, first-year Accountancy student, said with a smile when asked how she felt, "Practically nothing."

The Medical Healthway team was back on campus from 10 to 14 September for the first round of Hepatitis B immunisation shots.

The second and third shots will be administered later in October and in March next year.

Students will receive the results of the screening via post. Those who require immunisation will receive reminders via e-mail and Short Messaging System. They are required to bring their screening card, result slip and any medical records.

All three shots for the Hepatitis B immunisation package cost \$25 - with subsidy from the MOH - instead of the usual \$40 per shot. Payment for the immunisation shots can be made through cash card, Nets, Medisave or parents' Medisave accounts.

## Unearthing my roots



LIM WEILIN

I vividly remember my first day of school at Ngee Ann. Apprehension and excitement in equal measures. And I was so curious to see what this huge and glorious campus had to

offer me.

Yet, after class, I went home and called up my secondary school friends. Whimpering almost pathetically, all I could say was "I miss our secondary school days. Ngee Ann is so huge and impersonal. I don't belong here." My friends shushed and comforted me but even for the next two years, I drifted around campus like the walking dead.

I still felt like I did not belong to this vast school with an amazingly rich history.

Roots are something very much treasured in Asian culture. The minute National Day approaches, we find a myriad of newspaper articles asking questions like "What makes Singapore home for you?" During festivals like Chinese New Year and Hari Raya, there's no shortage of articles showing the camaraderie and bonding.

We need to find our roots because they represent who we are and what we mean in this world. Which is probably why so many of my friends who are leaving for overseas studies do so with the same tinge of excitement and fear I felt when I first came into NP.

Being uprooted from my secondary school environment and entering a totally new system was scary. Simply because it meant that all the personas I had gathered

in secondary school, as a prefect, monitress and friend, would have to be re-established.

For my first two years of polytechnic life, I grasped at straws, hoping to carve out an identity for myself but I found it so terribly hard. Maybe it had something to do with the more electrifying personalities within the same course. Maybe it had something to do with sheer numbers: hundreds in the department alone, 14,000 students in the entire polytechnic.

But now, I believe I have found an identity. Slowly but surely, I have emerged to find my passions and convictions. A large part of this momentous discovery can be credited to the work I do with Tribune.

Through the work that I do, from brainstorming for ideas to subbing and sleepless nights in the newsroom working on the layout, I finally feel that I am contributing to this place which has given me an immeasurable amount of knowledge. I finally feel that I am part of this school. In short, I have found my roots.

Have you found yours? I ask because I have been seeking and I have found and I want to share with you how much your perception of school life will change once you do. You look at the school with different eyes. Instead of just an academic institution, it becomes a second home, a place where you share laughter and tears.

There are so many ways you could find those roots. From joining a CCA to simply taking the time to evaluate what this school means to you and what you mean to it.

The choice is yours. You could leave NP, as lost and rootless as when you first came in. Or you could leave knowing that you made a difference. What will it be?

The Ngee Ann Tribune  
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## Tribune

Campus Newspaper of Ngee Ann Polytechnic

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Letters should include your full name, contact number and school. The editorial team reserves the right to edit all letters where necessary.



# NP Staff receive ND Awards

BY S. NIRMALA

**F**ive people linked to Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) were presented with National Day 2001 Awards for their contribution to the country.

Mr Tan Hang Cheong, 47, deputy principal (Academic Planning) of NP received a Silver Public Administration Medal.

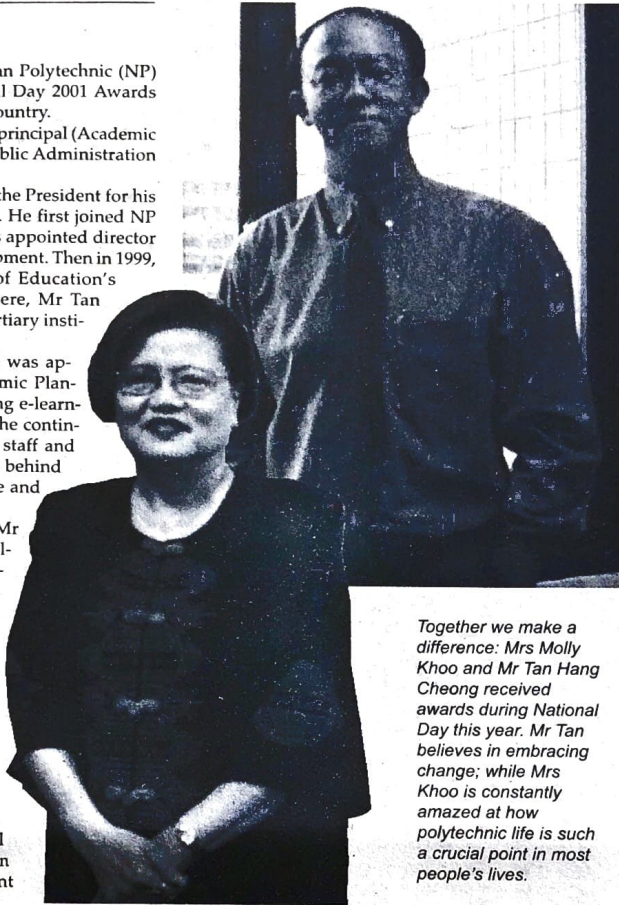
Mr Tan received the award from the President for his service in the Ministry of Education. He first joined NP as a lecturer in 1991. By 1997, he was appointed director of Institutional Planning and Development. Then in 1999, he was seconded to the Ministry of Education's Higher Education Department. There, Mr Tan joined a team of policy makers for tertiary institutions.

In April, he returned to NP and was appointed Deputy Principal of Academic Planning, where he focuses on forwarding e-learning and the wireless initiative, and the continued education and training of both staff and students. Mr Tan is also the person behind both the mobile computing initiative and the Teaching and Learning Centre.

A common thread links all that Mr Tan does - an emphasis on staying relevant in a fast moving world. He believes in the motto, "Embrace change" which he advocates to both staff and students.

Mrs Molly Khoo Poh Lan, manager of the Student Development and Alumni Office was awarded a Commendation Medal.

Mrs Khoo received the award for her work in NP. Her association with NP goes back to when the then school clinic was established in 1982. From there, Mrs Khoo moved to Student Affairs where she remained till the campus-wide structural reorganisation earlier this year resulted in her current appointment.



*Together we make a difference: Mrs Molly Khoo and Mr Tan Hang Cheong received awards during National Day this year. Mr Tan believes in embracing change; while Mrs Khoo is constantly amazed at how polytechnic life is such a crucial point in most people's lives.*

Her job involves everything from meeting overseas exchange students to organising community service projects such as last year's "Rendezvous with the Elderly" and this year's "Community Service Awareness Week".

On all these varied projects, one thing does not change - that from the first moment of fund-raising down to the last detail of reserving seats for the elderly at Sentosa's musical fountain - Mrs Khoo is at the forefront of things, organising and interacting with student helpers.

Honoured with an award she never expected, she said the true fulfilment comes from the students she "gets to meet and work with. To work side by side with them and to see them grow in such a vital time of their lives".

Mrs Khoo professes a never ceasing amazement at how polytechnic life is such a crucial point in most people's lives. From being "a teenager when they first come in, to make-up and suits when they come back to visit", Mrs Khoo said that knowing that she helped in this process is fulfilling.

Her advice to students - "Slog and slave over your school work, but never forget to be involved with community work, as it is the most fulfilling."

More than 700 people from various walks of life, ranging from grassroots leaders to teachers, were honoured this year.

## The other recipients are:

### Ms Chang Hwee Nee

Ngee Ann Council Member  
-- Public Administration Medal (Silver)

### Prof Leo Tan Wee Hin

Chairman Ngee Ann Biotechnology  
-- Public Service Medal

### Mr Ling Ten Ing

Principal Lecturer/BA  
-- Public Service Star

# A "battery" that never dies

BY S. NIRMALA

**T**his year's oldest student at 58, Mr Sam Goh Boon Leong, graduated with an Advanced Diploma in Safety, Health and Environment Management (ADSHM) on 21 August.

Graduating as a student in his 50s gave Mr Goh a sense of personal satisfaction from fulfilling his motto: "Education never ends, from the cradle to the grave".

However, this personal satisfaction came at a cost. He faced a constant two-year struggle to maintain a balance between work, family and school. When asked how he juggled work and school, he replied, "Time management is the only answer."

While the average age of his classmates was 30, Mr Goh did not feel discouraged. He said his younger peers motivated him to work better and he in turn demonstrated that "if an 'old recharged battery' like me can do it, they should be able to do just as well".

However, Mr Goh also felt that his work experience gained from over 25 years in the work force stood him in good stead when working on projects. In his words, "knowledge can be acquired, but experience cannot be learnt".

This is something he feels that the older

generation should take heart from in this time of economic uncertainty.

"Academic papers show that you have the theoretical knowledge of the field, but whether a person will be able to apply this knowledge into practice is a different story," he said.

He encourages the older generation, with experience but without academic qualifications, to take the initiative to "upgrade themselves to keep abreast with the time".

Mr Goh, who wanted to upgrade himself and learn about the new developments in the field of safety, health and environmental management, enrolled at NP as he found the curriculum relevant to his field of study, and felt that it would provide a support to his work experience.

The ADSHEM diploma is Mr Goh's third. He received his first diploma in 1987 in Training and Organisational Development from the National Productivity Board, now the Singapore Productivity and Standards Board and his second diploma in Personnel Management in 1990 from the Singapore Institute of Personnel Management, now the Singapore Human Resources Institute.

Currently unemployed, Mr Goh's future plans are still uncertain but he is contemplating pursuing a degree in safety, health and environmental management.

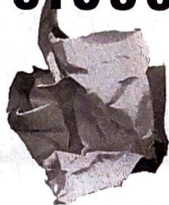


At home: Mr Goh and his wife looking at pictures of themselves and their 30-year-old daughter.



# Blues over green bins

Recycling must come full circle. This not only involves putting used papers in recycling bins, but also using recycled paper to close the circle.



## 7 ways to make a difference

BY LIM WEILIN

Besides making use of the recycling bins the school has provided, you can also play a part in reducing the amount of waste paper generated by following the paper saving tips below:

- Use both sides of a sheet of paper.
- Use the electronic media as often as possible. For example, communicate through e-mail rather than memos and send electronic cards rather than paper cards.
- Always re-use, regardless of what kind of paper you use.
- Try not to use cover sheets unless absolutely necessary.
- Try and use lightweight paper when printing for general purposes.
- Make sure you preview all documents before printing so you do not waste paper printing inaccurate copies.
- Try and buy products made from recycled paper.

Bins for can recycling

-- Canteen 1 - 5

Bins for paper recycling

-- The Atrium



# The dollars and sense of paper recycling

BY WAYNE CHAN

Currently, waste paper around Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) is sold to a paper disposal company every month, according to Ms Diana Tai, 28, the Finance Office's assistant purchasing officer.

But there is more to the disposal of paper in NP. "We send out e-mails to all the secretaries of the different departments three weeks before the collection date," said Ms Tai. "They will place the paper at the proper collection points."

Waste paper in NP is divided into two categories: confidential and non-confidential.

"Confidential paper refers to documents like examination papers, staff payrolls or human resource records," explained Ms Tai.

She also said that confidential paper is collected bi-annually, whereas non-confidential paper is collected monthly.

Ms Tai and the appointed paper disposal company, Tay Paper Resources in Jurong, will agree upon a collection date.

According to Ms Tai, the 2070kg of non-confidential paper collected in August earned the school \$331.20.

The last collection of confidential paper weighing 5220kg brought in \$835.20.

"For the confidential paper, one of our staff actually has to go down to make sure that the paper is shredded," said Ms Tai.

According to Tay Paper Resources operations manager, Mr Raymond Tay Thiam Huat, 43, the shredded paper is shipped to Southeast Asian countries like the Philippines and Indonesia to be recycled, because there are no paper mills in Singapore.

## Ngee Ann's latest eco-friendly attempt

BY WAYNE CHAN

Despite the Estates and Development Office's (ED) efforts to promote environmental conservation by introducing recycling bins on campus, most students are still unaware of their existence.

"Recycling bins? Nope, have never heard of them before. They actually exist in Ngee Ann?" said Chia Kang Yang, 19, a third-year InfoComm Technology student when asked about the recycling bins.

The six recycling bins were placed around campus on 14 August. Each of the five canteens on campus has a 240-litre bin to collect used cans. The sixth bin, which collects waste paper, is located next to Splash! at the Atrium.

Most students Tribune spoke to had no idea where the recycling bins were placed.

"Recycling bins? I have never seen them. Where are they?" said Agnes Tan Siew Lin, 19, a third-year Business Studies student.

However, the recycling bin system is still on trial and according to ED Deputy Director, Mr Mui Cheng Hock, how successful the bins are depends on whether "there is no other food or organic waste disposed of at these bins".

Although there are no bins assigned to other recyclable materials, Mr Mui said that ED might consider introducing bins for glass and plastic recyclable items if the need arises.

According to Mr Mui, circulars have also been sent out to students to advise them on proper usage of the bins.

A first-year Electrical Engineering student, Noor Aishah, 18, said that she would like to see the bins at the various departmental buildings in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP).

Other environmental friendly programmes that are already running in NP include the canteen tray return system and the motion detector systems installed for toilet lights.

It appears that while NP is trying to do its bit for the environment, the recycling bin system will only really take off with sufficient publicity.

SEMAG, Singapore's largest waste management company, is providing these six polyethylene wheel bins free as part of the company's community service.

They will collect the recyclable waste twice weekly by truck and process the waste at its recycling plant.

## Will you use it?

We ask students if they will use the recycling bins on campus.

"No, I won't use them because they will most likely be dirty with other rubbish that don't belong there."

**Angelina Fu, 19, third-year ACC student**

"Yes, if it is on my way."

**Goh Bee Kim, 22, third-year ECE student**

"Maybe not. The idea is to make it convenient though so if it's nearby [I will use it]."

**Nor Sabrina Mohd Salleh, 20, third-year ECH student**

"Yes, why not? But for paper [bins], you have to walk quite a distance from the classrooms."

**Zhang Liling, 18, second-year BioTech student**

"I have seen it but I didn't use it because number one, no one else seems to be using it and I'm not sure what to and what not to put into it."

**Kanahl Kaven, 19, second-year BioTech student**

"I will use it if I get a chance to."

**Tan Teck Loon, 19, third-year ECE student**



# Pictures that speak

BY S. NIRMALA

The unprecedented 120 entries for the Travel Photography Contest 2001 left the organisers overwhelmed, and showcased how well travelled our students and staff are.

The idea for a travel photography competition developed from the good showing at a travel photography seminar held in May this year by the Ngee Ann Polytechnic Consumer Co-operative Society Ltd (NP Co-op) according to senior executive of marketing and promotions, Ms Diana Ong.

The overwhelming response to the competition surprised the organisers as the last time such an event was held six years ago, the response had been poor. Ms Ong credited the success of this year's competition to three things - "good publicity, good prizes, and the fact that more people are travelling nowadays".

In fact, good prizes did seem to be a vital pull factor. The prizes ranged from a \$500 cash voucher for the top entry to \$300 for the second place winner and \$100 for the third. All winners were also awarded trophies. Participant Malcolm Ngai Chung, a first-year Electronic and Computer Engineering student agreed that the attractive prizes were an added incentive to participation.

However, the biggest pull factor, according to Malcolm was the opportunity to display his photographs. This opinion was reinforced by first place prize winner, Alex Nyew Won Leong, 23, a second-year Building and Environment student. He said he definitely "did not enter to win, just for the experience".

In fact, Alex said that when he looked at the number and quality of the other entries, he thought he had no chance of winning. Ms Ong agreed that the standard of entries was "really quite amazing".



Bridging a thousand miles: "Children of Cambodia" won first prize as it showed both the people of the country and the environment and culture according to the judge.

Mr Lim Seng Tiong, who conducted the travel seminar in May, and was one of the judges of the competition, spoke highly of the winning entry. He described it as "highly touching" with a complete visual story of three small children and the circumstances of their lives. "When you go to a country, you want to see more than just one aspect [of the country] such as scenery, it's a whole atmosphere, which a photograph has to portray."

Mr Lim as well as, Mr Pablo Tan Siang Po, a lecturer with the School of Film and Media Studies, and Mr Ooi Yan Tin, ex-director of NP Co-op, judged the entries more on this depth of character than on level of technical expertise.

The future of all the entries is yet to be determined. Suggestions so far have included an online repository, e-greeting cards and even a calendar. They can currently be viewed on the library's website.

# Braving it till the end



In happier days: Kok Hon (extreme right) with his family in a 1999 picture.

BY NAJIB AHMAD

His only wish was to complete his diploma in Building and Real Estate Management, according to his close friend.

Tan Kok Hon was 18 when he died on 21 July, after a year of suffering from brain cancer. He left behind his parents and two elder sisters.

Kok Hon had earlier been granted deferment from his second year of studies at Ngee Ann Polytechnic.

Tribune spoke with one of Kok Hon's sisters, Kelly Tan Kia Yee, 19, a second-year Business Studies student, who said that her brother had a rare tumour measuring three centimetres on the right side of his brain.

According to her, Kok Hon collapsed on the night of 1 May last year and her family brought him to a hospital. He was diagnosed with brain cancer.

She said that Kok Hon often lapsed into fits, which caused him to salivate and lose his memory for a few minutes each time. "After he has fits, he cannot recognise people but he can recognise me. He can still call my name."

Mr Jeffrey Yang, who was Kok Hon's lecturer

and mentor, told Tribune, "There were days that he feels really nauseous... in class, sometimes he goes into epileptic fits and all."

He added that the first time it occurred, his classmates got really frightened. But they soon got used to it and even helped to clean him up after every incident.

Kelly explained that an operation to remove the tumour was a success and her brother underwent radiotherapy.

However, the treatment did not produce hoped for results, so Kok Hon switched to chemotherapy in January this year.

This caused him to lose a massive 15 kg within a few months. The 1.78 m tall teenager whittled down to 35 kg just before he died.

Before his health caved in, he was an energetic teenager who loved the outdoors. "He was really active... he got a lot of awards in secondary school. He was an NCC master sergeant," said Kelly.

According to Kelly, for someone with a terminal illness, her brother was not afraid and remained optimistic throughout the year-long ordeal.

"He just told us, 'I'm not scared, why are you all scared?'"

As for Mr Yang, Kok Hon's death came as expected. "If you've come across some of these cancer patients, sometimes you feel a bit relieved for them that the pain and suffering has all ended," he said.

Kelly was at his bedside when Kok Hon died, but she did not have a chance to exchange any last words with him.

"He was in a coma... his hand was still hot but his breathing just got slower and slower. I just hope that he really has peace in heaven."

# Are NS CCA points fair?

BY CLARICE SEAH NILI

Mixed reaction greets National University of Singapore's (NUS) and Nanyang Technological University's (NTU) decision to recognise co-curricular activities (CCA) points from National Service (NS) as a factor for entry come 2003.

Full-time NS men can now earn points, similar to those earned from co-curricular activities in junior college, centralised institutes or polytechnics. These CCA points can help one in entering NUS and NTU.

However, not all NS men will be eligible for the CCA points. A full-time NS man with "unsatisfactory" performance cannot get any points. Rank also plays a part as one must be at least a sergeant or have "outstanding performance" during his service.

Ms Tracy Won, a media relations officer from the Ministry of Defence, defined "outstanding performance" to be exceptional behaviour "in leadership and teamwork, which is like in school CCAs". Evaluation is determined by the commanding officer of each NS man as "the commanding officer is closer to them and knows them better".

Kenneth Lim Han Kiat, 22, a first-year Mass Communication student, who has undergone NS, said he feels the scheme is "unfair" because women are "not conscripted to serve national service and therefore lack the

opportunity to earn these bonus points". He also said that "if the points are going to be awarded to those who perform well in NS, the people who get these marks would more likely be a better bootlicker than an infantry platoon commander".

Lee Kang Seng, 20, a third-year Electronic and Computer Engineering student feels the scheme is beneficial. "I think this is a very good idea, as it will definitely help more male students to get into the university... not many students would join clubs or societies during their poly life. Even if they join, they may not have enough CCA points to help them to get into a university."

However, a female student felt otherwise. Tan Yue Xuan, 19, second-year Accountancy student said, "Serving NS is the guys' responsibility and duty." It "doesn't mean that they should get privileges for entering university through using CCA points by serving NS".

Female students can earn the maximum CCA points through their participation in their respective CCAs in school.

Ong Wee Biao, 18, a second-year Information Technology student didn't see the scheme as a necessary advantage. "This policy might be unfair towards female students... but on the other hand, look at it from another angle and it seems to be like another burden for male students because their chances will now be affected by their performance in NS, which, in my opinion, isn't really logical."



# Food for thought

BY NAJIB AHMAD

In a straw poll of 33 NP students, three-quarters said they are content with campus food. But those who are not would like more variety.

Also, all but two surveyed were in favour of having a fast food chain on campus. When asked to select their preferred two fast food chains, 58 percent of the students selected Burger King as one of their choices, while McDonald's came in a close second with 45 percent of the votes.

The Estates and Development Office (ED) is in charge of Canteens One to Four, while the NP Consumer Co-operative Society (NP Co-op) is in charge of Canteen Five at Block 83 and all the independent stores on campus, including Splash! and Campus Deli at the Atrium.

In a written reply to Tribune, Mr Ng Say Kiat, director of ED explained the business consideration of having a fast food chain on campus. "If we allow fast food chain to come in, it will not be an open tender but a waiver of competition." According to him, a single operator handles each of the canteens under ED's directive, with a different head operator for each canteen.

He added, "Fast food is not good for health and there is a McDonald's outlet at King Albert Park; we are not keen to bring them in."

But Mr Ng is not ruling out the possibility of inviting fast food chains to operate on campus in future. "We may consider the option later when we can find a suitable location to accommodate them."

NP Co-op manager Ms Lily Wong said, "We have invited Delifrance to come in but they declined because campus business is very different. McDonald's also didn't want to open an outlet here because they have one nearby at King Albert Park."

Ms Wong added that most of the food operators approached were concerned about poor business during the holidays.

While Singapore and Nanyang Polytechnics have

McDonald's and Pizza Hut outlets, NP's students' best alternative is the Campus Deli, which sells an assortment of sandwiches and pastries.

But because Campus Deli does not serve Halal food, the dietary restrictions of NP's Muslim population limit their patronage.

Currently, there are 1,211 Muslim students in NP, which constitute about 8.5 percent of the total student population, according to statistics provided by the Academic and Public Affairs Office.



*Deli-cious but students want a fast food outlet to give more variety.*

In a separate straw poll of 22 Muslim students regarding Halal food on campus, 17 expressed their dissatisfaction, citing that there are too few Halal food stalls. Given up to three choices on the types of Halal food they would like to have on campus, a majority of 86 percent opted for Western fare, while slightly under half surveyed wanted a Halal deli to satisfy their taste buds.

"We need more Muslim food stalls. We have only two good Malay (Muslim) stalls at Canteen One and Three," said Mohammed Hafiz Bin Sifon, 16, a first-year Electrical Engineering student.

When asked if NP could have more Halal stalls, Mr Ng said, "Currently, there are already Halal food outlets at every canteen. Some canteens have more than one stall."

Ms Wong added, "The Campus Deli is owned by Four Leaves and if they cannot cater Halal food, there's nothing we can do."

# We are the Champions

BY LIN WENJIAN

Team Singapore watch out!

A Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) soccer team - albeit one made up of robots - clinched the championship title in the Robot World Cup, or Robocup Tournament, for the first time.

The Robocup Tournament was held from 2 to 10 August at the Washington State Convention and Trade Centre, Seattle, USA.

The team, made up of two staff supervisors from the Alpha Centre and four students who recently graduated with diplomas in Electronic and Computer Engineering, took part in the Small League Tournament.

All 21 participating teams, from 12 countries, namely Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Iran, Japan, New Zealand, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, Taiwan and United States, were required to field a team of five robots on a carpeted wooden field, the size of a ping-pong table.

Said Mr Hui Tin Fat, one of the supervisors, "Our strategy, going to the tournament, is to get the students to pit their robots against a staff team."

In this way, "they will know the problems that they are going to face in the tournament and can therefore refine their robots".

Mr Hui and his staff left the design and conceptualisation of the robots entirely to the students, intervening only when the team needed advice.

In fact, the team had to spend six months studying and understanding the fundamentals of robots before they started working on their match-playing strategies.



*NP beats 20 international teams to win the Robot Soccer World Cup.*

One of the team members, Low Wai Yee, 21, said, "This project requires a firm knowledge of mathematics and we also had to do a lot of self study and research to win."

Their efforts paid off when Lucky Star II, the name of their team, beat Singapore Polytechnic's Field Rangers 3-0 in the final.

When asked what the win meant for NP, Mr Hui said, "Ngee Ann has always been actively involved in the areas of robotics, so this win means that NP has reached a certain level of international standard."

Given their good showing, NP will be competing again in next year's tournament, to be held in Tokyo, Japan, along with the 2002 FIFA World Cup Finals from 19-25 June.

# Japanese students visit

A GROUP of 25 Japanese students and four lecturers stopped by Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) on 25 August during a cultural homestay programme.

The visitors from Takada High School in Miye, Japan were in Singapore for five days. The half-day visit in NP was organised by NP's Japanese Tsubasa Club.

The Japanese students gave a brief presentation on their school, visited the Lifestyle Library, sports hall, swimming complex and other facilities.

Said Kou Kawano, 17, a Grade 11 - equivalent to year one junior college - Takada student, "Ngee Ann is much larger than our school and the facilities are modern and much better."

Hemma Roger Que, 19, vice-president of the Japanese Tsubasa Club, felt that the visit benefited both parties. "Because of the interaction, we understand their culture and differences. They also learnt about Ngee Ann... the conditions, architecture, dress code and so on," she said. Takada students are required to wear uniforms.

- Najib Ahmad

# Unclogging the field

SPORTS enthusiasts can look forward to a better quality pitch at the Admin field when work underway to improve the field is completed by mid-September.

The Admin field, usually used for rugby and soccer practices, is being redeveloped to fix the uneven playing surface and poor drainage system.

Mr Ng Say Kiat, director of Estates and Development Office, said that they will lay sub-soil drainage to prevent water stagnation.

Mohamed Ridhwan, 19, third-year Mechatronics Engineering (MTE) student and IVP rugby player said, "One of my friends sprained his ankle at the old ground once and everyone got scratched by the rough surface before."

The redeveloped pitch will still be used for sporting activities.

- Lin Wenjian

# Ceiling board mishap

TWO ceiling boards collapsed onto a lecturer's workstation in the Film and Media Studies office at Block 23 on 27 July.

The incident - which did not cause any casualties - was due to a defective hanging wire, exposed by repair works to replace two fan coil units that caused water to leak. The incident happened while the repairmen were working.

Mr Desmond Kon, the lecturer affected, claimed \$2,800 in damages for three of his rare figurines. "These are collectibles that cannot be replaced... my custom-made doll broke into four pieces and the tail of my T-rex came off," he explained.

Mr Kon said the total estimated value of the damaged items was far more than what he asked for, but he was nevertheless pleased with how quickly the Estates and Development Office resolved the matter with the contractor.

"Estates was really efficient about it... in three days, I received the cheque... and the contractor was very apologetic and wanted to meet in person to hand me the cheque," said Mr Kon.

- Najib Ahmad



# Conquering new lands

BY MUNIRAH MOHAMED

**N**gee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students came in seventh out of 27 teams in a 36 hours non-stop Adventure Quest which saw them canoeing through rainstorms, trekking through jungles and abseiling six storeys.

Matthew Lee Fu Guang, 19, Danny Tan Chee Sian, 23, and Daniel Yap Kuang Yung, 22, second-year Mass Communication students and William Leow Lai Chuan, 23, second-year Bachelor of Science in Management student from Singapore Institute of Management (SIM) moved all over Singapore - Kallang, Sembawang, Changi, Pasir Ris, Pulau Ubin, Pulau Tekong and Seletar Island.

These four young men spent about \$1,200 on entry fees, food and gear, to race in the 'Are You Insane? Division' against teams from the Singapore Armed Forces, Civil Defence, Nanyang Technological University, National Institute of Education and Singapore Polytechnic.

Each team carried a handphone with an auto-roaming service in the case of emergency where external assistance would be needed.

Other items that were essential to their survival throughout their race were power bars, power gels, Gatorade and water. The team consumed this sustenance every two hours.

Danny, captain of the four-man team said, "We don't stop to eat. We basically eat on the go."

"I lost five kg between the start and the end," continued Daniel.

Keeping awake and moving along was not exactly easy either, William agreed, but stressed that team spirit kept him going.

"At Pulau Ubin when we were navigating, I was very tired and I wanted to rest but the other three team mates kept me on. They continued walking and encouraged me and we managed to beat the cut-off timing."

"We had trouble keeping our eyes open during the night where the weather was really cold and our fingers are all cramping up," said Danny.



Life-changing quest: (from left) William Leow, Daniel Chan, Danny Tan and Matthew Lee endured 36 hours of physical challenge to come in seventh out of 27 teams.

"It was tough having people overtake us. Nobody likes to be overtaken, so we were a bit [upset]. But eventually a lot of them dropped out and we caught up," continued Danny.

"We have already spent so much and we have given everything, sacrifice so much of our time, we just wanted to finish it," Matthew explained.

Each team received goodie bags containing boxes of cereals, cartons of milk, bottles of water, Milo, Energizer

batteries, and some vouchers from sponsors.

"Personally I felt it was worth every ounce of sweat and money because it really makes you grow as a person. No matter how tough the times are, you just have to keep going," said Danny.

The Adventure Quest was organised by the Marine Parade Community Development Council, People's Association Adventure Pursuits Section and the Singapore Sports Council.

## Magnum Force goes Pengarang Cruising to SEA Games

BY THERESA WU

**N**gee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) Magnum Force makes up more than half of Team Singapore's first cheerleader ambassadors at the SEA Games held in Kuala Lumpur this month.

The team of ambassadors consists of 15 Magnum Force members and 11 other cheerleaders from Nanyang Polytechnic and Temasek Polytechnic.

The Singapore Sports Council (SSC) decided to have an ambassador team to complement the concept of Team Singapore - "Singaporeans striving together for Sporting Excellence". The ambassadors will be leading supporters to cheer for the Singaporean athletes at the SEA Games.

The cheerleaders had to go through an audition held by the SSC. According to Ms Jamie Low, executive officer for Team Singapore, the judges were looking out for enthusiasm, crowd appeal and cheerleading experience.

Magnum Force members started training for the audition in mid-June, practising four days a week.

The routines may look simple, but the co-ordination of movements and voices "need[ed] a lot of patience" to master, according to one of the choreographers for the team, Nur Janna bte Mohd Said, 20, a third-year Electrical and Computer Engineering student.

The team also came up with several breath-taking stunts that require balance, skill and courage. One example is standing in mid-air with just one leg balanced on the hands of four people.

The cheerleaders warmed up with a segment in the roving National Day Parade preview on 26 August.

BY LIN WENJIAN

**U**ndeterred by the common tests, 29 Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students spent three days of their one-week break cycling to Pengarang, Malaysia.

The trip, organised by the Adventure Seekers Club, also saw four NP students from China participating.

The number of these foreign participants was originally six, but according to the event's overall organiser, Erina Xie, 19, a third-year Mass Communication student, two had to drop out due to last minute school commitments.

Speaking in Mandarin, Li Wen, 18, first-year Marine Offshore Technology student said, "This is my first trip to Pengarang but the food and products there are really similar to those in China."

The similarity though, ended there.

Said Li, "It is really hot here compared to China and after we got home, my skin was all peeling off because of the burn."

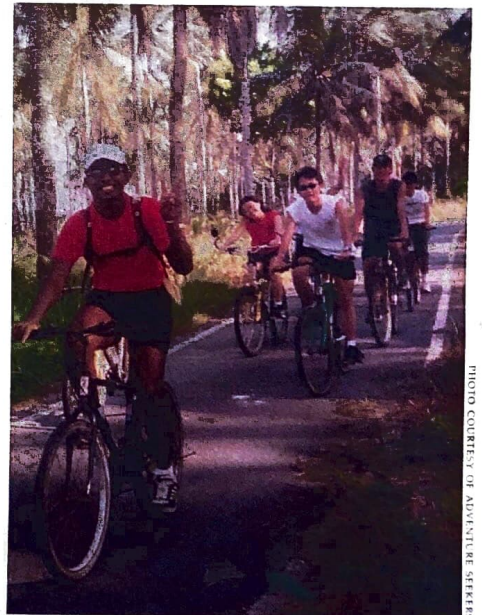
Besides cycling, participants took part in nightly campfire sessions, designed to build team spirit. The beauty of Pengarang was also not lost on the students.

"Pengarang is very beautiful. The beach and water is all sand, very beautiful, very different from my homeland," said Li.

Said Erina, "There was also an award ceremony where we got together and gave out trophies made by one of the organisers to some of the participants."

These bonding sessions definitely helped the four foreign students understand their Singaporean counterparts better.

"The culture among Singaporeans is very different, so the trip actually enabled us to interact with them," said Liu Hui, 18, a first-year Civil and Environmental Engi-



The road less travelled: Adventure Seekers journey to and back from Pengarang in leisurely fashion.

neering student.

In fact, she enjoyed the experience so much that she is looking forward to participating in future trips.

She said, "Going on such trips train me both physically and mentally so I definitely hope to go again."