

# TRIBUNE

Ngee Ann Polytechnic's campus newspaper

Volume 26 • Issue 2 • September 2002

## NEWater is n

**Latest national pride NEWater made a quiet debut on campus during Graduation 2002.**

**SAMANTHA CHAN and MATTHEW LEE report on staff and students' reactions to NP's newcomer.**

**N**gee Ann Polytechnic (NP) graduates and staff had the opportunity to try NEWater during two of this year's graduation receptions.

According to Mr Henry Tan, Planning Unit Manager in the Deputy Principal/Academic Planning's Office, NP brought in 1,000 bottles of chilled NEWater to support the national effort to make NEWater more popular among Singaporeans.

Most graduates and staff did not hesitate to take their first sips. "NEWater tastes just like fresh water," said Ang Chee Yong, 23, a Mechanical Engineering graduate.

Another Electronic & Computing Engineering graduate, Zhang Qinqin, 24, said that NEWater tasted slightly sweeter than tap water.

On the other hand, there were others who were apprehensive. "It is not so healthy," said Ong Tung Siong, 22, Electronic & Telecommunication Engineering graduate. "I don't want to try it."

Among the first to try NEWater on campus was the Principal, Mr Chia Mia Chiang. No stranger to NEWater, Mr Chia was involved in tracking the technology and costs of producing NEWater as head of the Strategic Planning and Research Department at the Environment Ministry before his appointment in NP.

"I have total confidence in the production of NEWater and how safe it is to drink," he said. He assures students that the treatment process is "fool-proof" and nothing other than water molecules can pass through the reverse osmosis membrane used in producing NEWater.

He added that NEWater played a part in bilateral agreements with Singapore and Malaysia. "NEWater makes a more relaxed negotiation with Malaysia," he said. "Now that we are more self-reliant, it means that when we discuss with the Malaysians on the water supply quantities and price, we are in a somewhat better position."

Some agreed that NEWater contributed to Singapore's self-reliance.

Daryl Seah Boon Leng, 20, this year's IDA Gold Medal graduate winner in Information Technology (Computer Studies), said, "Singapore is more sufficient now and we don't have to rely so much on Malaysia."

Observing the graduates' reactions to NEWater, Mrs Pee-Koh See Hua, Director of the School of Interdisciplinary Studies, was pleased that most graduates were eager to try NEWater. It showed that they were "daring" and possessed a sense of "curiosity", she said.

"Bringing NEWater to NP has a symbolic significance," said Mr Henry Tan. "Like how graduates are going to meet new challenges when they leave NP, NEWater resonates a national challenge."


Other NP students got their chance to try the new drink during the National Day Parade when bottles of NEWater were distributed. Daphne Tan Lay Peng, 22, a second-year Business Studies student, was unaware of the NEWater hype until she had finished her bottle. "There are so many types of mineral water. I just didn't notice. I was thirsty so I drank it," she said.

Like many NP students who have yet to try NEWater, Toh Kin Keong, 19, first-year Electrical Engineering student, looks forward to doing so.

"Everybody is drinking it," he said. "NEWater has been filtrated. I'm sure the government would not do anything to harm its citizens."

For NP students who are still hesitant about drinking NEWater, Mr Chia encourages them to learn more about NEWater and its treatment processes.

Explaining that the Public Utilities Board (PUB) has done extensive testing of NEWater, he said, "They do not take chances. I suspect it is the cleanest water in the world."

NEWater is treated waste water, further purified in three stages: micro-filtration, Reverse Osmosis and disinfection with ultraviolet light. After filtering the water and removing harmful viruses, bacteria and other contaminants, the water collected after the treatment is even cleaner than regular water from PUB. 

**PROVING HIS POINT:**  
Principal Mr Chia Mia Chiang spoke glowingly of the NEWater he was drinking. "The water is ultra pure," he said. "It is absolutely suitable for human consumption."  
[Picture: Matthew Lee]



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:  
**hype**  
PULL OUT



**3**  
Once upon a time: Read me a story for President's Challenge



**4**  
Fun in NP: Scavenger Hunt, Pool Party and SNAP 2



**8**  
Put your best foot forward in this martial art



# Survey: 88% students satisfied

BY GEETHA VISWAMBARAN  
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**A**n estimated 88 percent of Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students who participated in the new Campus-Wide Student Satisfaction Survey (CWSSS), are happy with NP's learning facilities and support services.

The survey findings revealed that NP's Guidance & Support had the highest satisfaction rate of 92 percent. Student Services had the lowest rate of 65 percent.

For CWSSS, Guidance & Support covers performance improvement programmes and NP's mentor system, while Student Services include sport facilities, canteens, common areas and the Student Service & Information Centre.

NP's Organisational Excellence (OE) Office that implements and organises various continuous improvement policies and programmes, carried out the survey between 1 and 15 April. Its aim was to allow students to identify four areas of improvement in NP: Learning Resources, Total Development of Students, Guidance & Support and Student Services.

670 students were chosen based on random sampling of each School or Division's first to third-year students. The survey was conducted online within ten minutes during lab lessons when students had immediate access to computers and a network. For students who had no lab lessons, hard copy questionnaires were used.

OE said that the results will serve as an initial benchmark for future annual surveys to diagnose problem areas and identify ways to add further value to students' study experience in NP.

Respondents showed overwhelming satisfaction with the remedial classes and with the assistance offered by mentors on financial matters and tertiary education.

Ng Tze Siong, 23, second-year Building & Real Estate Management (BEM) student, said that the peer tutoring system has helped him to revise his work while coaching his classmates. He and his friends have benefitted from the system and improved their work.

Xie Shumao, 19, second-year Chemical Engineering student, said, "My lecturers are friendly and approachable and [I] am able to consult them when I have problems."

Speaking on NP's learning resources, Benjamin Tan, 19, second-year BEM student, is relieved with the addition of socket systems on the fourth level of the library. He said, "I can now plug in my laptop and conveniently do my work. There is also more privacy as each table has a glass panel attached to it."

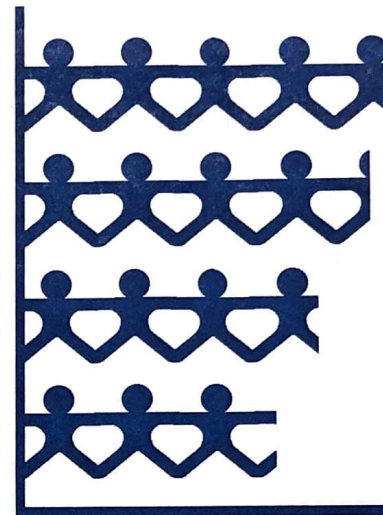
While feedback used to be gathered verbally from students, OE now encourages valuable ideas for improvement through Customer Feedback Forms, IDEAS and the new CWSSS, said Mrs Lynn Foo Fong Lin, Manager of OE's Customer Satisfaction Unit. IDEAS is an online student suggestion system created by OE.

The Student Development & Alumni Relations (SDAR) committee is currently analysing the concerns noted by the student respondents. Problems encountered include outdated and limited gym equipment, insufficient and not well-maintained sports facilities, and poor ventilation, said SDAR.

SDAR intends to set up a five-year plan to enhance the sports facilities. Requests have been made to renovate the tennis courts, build street soccer courts and replace pool deck tiles.

"Nothing has been confirmed yet, but we are trying our best to put up relevant proposals for developmental funding to nurture an enriching learning environment for students here," said Mr Siow Chow Sid, Manager of the Student Development Section in SDAR.

## Student satisfaction level by category



**WE'RE ALMOST THERE:** The four aspects surveyed: Guidance & Support, such as the mentor system and performance improvement programmes; Total Development of Students, which includes community and environmental projects and Co-Curricular Activities (CCAs); Learning Resources, which include lecture theatres, workshops, laboratories, classrooms and the library; and Student Services, which include sports facilities, the canteens and the common areas.

Source: NP Organisational Excellence Office

# Students respond well to Level Two IS modules

BY BELINDA CHNG  
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**M**ore than half of Ngee Ann Polytechnic's second-year students got their preferred Level Two Interdisciplinary Studies (IS) modules.

Out of 4,378 second-year students, 84.5 percent got at least one of their three top ranked choices with 57.4 percent getting their first choice, according to figures from IS.

Foreign language modules were the most popular of the 44 Level Two IS modules offered in the new academic year. Japanese and French were especially popular in both the April pre-ranking exercise and the actual web enrolment exercise in June.

Hairul Nizan bin Haron, 18, a second-year Accountancy student who got his top choice French, said, "It has been an eye-opener, learning something I've never done before."

However, not all the students who opted for the popular modules got their choice.

IS could only provide places for a fixed number of students due to a manpower constraint, said Mrs Pauline Liang, Deputy Director of IS.

Asked if IS would increase the intake for popular modules next semester, Mrs Liang said, "We might look into making adjustments, but these will be based on many factors such as

module evaluation by students and not just the popularity."

Since lessons started in July, students have responded positively, said Mr Henry Tio, an IS Senior Lecturer who teaches the Level Two module "Psychology of Creativity". His students had said that they were learning something useful and gaining new insight and information.

With a wide range of modules that cater to students of different interests, some students have had a tough time making their choices.

Muhammad Khaiwi bin Ahmad, 18, second-year Electronic & Computer Engineering student, had difficulty choosing, but eventually applied and got his top choices of German and "Starting a Business".

"It is very difficult to choose because all are interesting modules," he said. "Classes have been fun and we have benefited a lot from it."

As students were allocated different time slots for web enrolment, Muhammad Hafaz bin Zulkifli, 18, a second-year Accountancy student who did not get any of his six choices, voiced his concern that students with later slots could not apply for the popular modules, as the places available would have been snapped up.

However, Mrs Liang said students need not be unduly worried about the fairness of the web enrolment process. Since IS allocates for each time slot a fixed number of places for each module, she explained that all students will have

a fair chance at applying for their desired modules, regardless of their time slots.

As students were only told that they were "randomly assigned appointments" to enrol online, they might have been unaware that applying at a later time slot will not affect their chances, she explained.

Students had to be allocated different time slots as "not all of them can log in at the same time as it will slow down the processing time", she added.

On offering first-year students elective IS modules instead of the present 10 compulsory modules, Mrs Liang said, "There are no immediate plans as we feel the Level One modules are basic skills in communication that every student can benefit from." Level One

modules include "Oral Communication", "Understanding Writing for Academic Application", "Life Management Skills" and "Individual and the Community".

For the second web enrolment exercise slated in December for second-year students, no changes will be made to the current curriculum as IS will "review feedback from the teaching team, module evaluators and students over at least two semesters before making major changes", said Mrs Liang. Students will be briefed in late September or early October by the module developers.

Although IS has not planned the Level Three curriculum for July 2003, Mrs Liang said that some Level Two modules may be offered at an advanced level for third-year students.

## So, how do I sign up online?

1. Each student is given a two-hour time slot on a specified date to log into the IS system for real-time web enrolment. They will be notified immediately of their application results.
2. First log-in: Students rank and apply for six modules and are allowed to make changes within the two hours allocated.
3. Second log-in: On the night of a student's specified enrolment date, from 10 pm to 6 am, he/she is allowed to either make changes to the original choices or view the available modules.
4. Final log-in: One week after the enrolment date, students can log in to view the available modules and make final changes to their choices.

Source: NP's School of Interdisciplinary Studies



# Taking up the President's Challenge

THE PRESIDENT'S Challenge is an annual week-long event of community-based activities. Prior to the year 2000, there were several charity events carrying the President's name held at different times of the year.

President S.R. Nathan decided it would be better to consolidate all such events under a single platform for the social services sector to rally the public to help those in need.

President's Challenge aims to increase awareness about how the community can help the less fortunate. This year's President's Challenge was combined with Public Service in Action for the Community, another

community service initiative, to raise funds for more than 30 beneficiaries this year.

Mr Lai Tar Meng, 35, one of Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) Human Resource Officer, said, "In order to gather staff participation, it's better to combine both [events] into one... where everyone can participate."

"The problem of having two big events too close to each another is that the novelty will be lost on people."

NP's week-long response to both events consisted of a charity bazaar in the Atrium with a song dedication booth run by Radio Heatwave, a reading-for-children session at

Yishun Students Care Centre, a 10-kilometre walkathon at MacRitchie Reservoir, as well as a month-long clothes donation drive.


The vendors at the charity bazaar had a choice of giving up 10 to 15 percent of their profits to President's Charity 2002 or a combined total of \$3,000. Mr Lai dismissed worries that vendors might mark up prices as a consequence, though he admitted there was no way to check on this.

"Students nowadays do more shopping, so they know market prices better. There's no reason for [the vendors] to up the price... students won't buy from them if prices are too

expensive."

The projected collection of \$2,500 from the charity bazaar was eventually surpassed and a total of \$3,000 was collected.

Radio Heatwave's song dedication booth also garnered donations over three days from students who paid for song dedications.

According to Radio Heatwave's Promotions and Publicity Manager, Shirlynn Oh, 19, a third-year Mass Communication student, 18 people signed up for the song dedication donations. 

- DANNY TAN

## \$6,510 raised through charity walkathon

BY ANDY SOH  
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**T**he President's Challenge walkathon at MacRitchie Reservoir Park on 27 July saw about five times as many participants as last year and raised \$6,510 for the less fortunate and social service sectors.

An event for this year's President's Challenge and Public Service in Action for the Community (PSAC), each participant donated a minimum of \$10 to join the 10 km walk.

The organiser, Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) Human Resource (HR) Office, said that the event saw 647 NP staff, their families and students signing up, with about 350 people joining the actual event. The \$6,510 raised exceeded the target of \$5,000.

Mr Lai Tar Meng, 35, HR Officer for Community Relations, said that last year's event for the President's Challenge, the Tunnel Walk, was open to staff and families, and attracted about 70 people from NP. He added that the Tunnel Walk at the incomplete Changi Airport MRT station site was not organised by NP and was open to all members of the public.

Explaining why last year's event was not open to NP students, he said, "There were easily 20,000 to 30,000 people over there, so it creates a problem if we opened it up to students."

NP Principal Mr Chia Mia Chiang flagged off the walkathon at MacRitchie Reservoir's Carpark B at 8 am. When asked about how he

viewed NP's role in the President's Challenge, Mr Chia recalled a conversation with President S.R. Nathan earlier this year.


"President S.R. Nathan encouraged us to play a big role in the President's Challenge and I fully agreed with him," Mr Chia said. "The polytechnic has a lot of resources and there is a lot we can do."

Mr Chia also said that he appreciated the 318 students' participation in the event. Most of the students were present as part of the required community service hours that they must fulfil to pass their Social and Community Values module.

Nur Irwati bte Abdul Aziz, 20, third-year Electronic & Computer Engineering student, said of the community service, "It's not exactly compulsory, but since my whole class is going, let's do it one for all, all for one."

Mr Yam Weng Wah, 49, Director of the Teaching & Learning Centre, felt that the walkathon reminded him to "show concern and be conscious about the less fortunate".

Fund-raising aside, the walkathon, which covered mostly dirt tracks within MacRitchie Reservoir Park, also meant a morning of fun and relaxation. Some participants appeared to enjoy looking at the reservoir park's wildlife, and chatted among themselves as they walked.

Mr Ho Seng Yong, 50, Deputy Director of the Mathematics, Science & Computer Division, said, "It's very good... we can contribute as well as have some fun." 

## Staff and students motivate children to read



"READ ME": NP works with other volunteers to reach out to young children. (Picture: National Council of Social Service)

BY DANNY TAN  
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**S**ix Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) staff and students were exposed to a novel way of community service when they read to children from the Yishun Students Care Centre.

Mr Lai Tar Meng, one of NP's Human Resource Officers, said, "Community service has many factors. You can do community service for people in need, the environment, and even sports. Whenever we talk about community service, the first thing that comes to mind is to feed old folks and help them move about... so in order to bypass this kind of thinking, we organised this reading programme where you read to kids."

Mr Chan Kwan Yew, 48, Deputy Director of the Mechanical Engineering division, chose to participate. "We are usually so involved in our own things and since there was a call for volunteers, I thought it'll be a good idea to see what I could do," he said.

Shameer Bismilla, 30, a third-year Early Childhood Education student, volunteered his services because he took a course in story telling organised by the National Library Board and is

a story teller to school children in his neighbourhood.

"It could be a challenge because I've never done volunteer work before, but I'm more than happy to try my hand... to help the children," he said.

The NP staff and students helped the regular volunteers from Anderson Junior College read to the children, who ranged from primary one to four.

Ms Geraldine Low, 30, Educational Psychologist at the centre, explained the rationale of the reading programme.

"These are families who may not be financially well-off, and some of them may not have a conducive reading environment. So we are just helping to instil interest and motivation in


the children [in reading] and hopefully they can carry it with them," she said.

Volunteers had to adapt to unfamiliar environments, a learning experience for all.

"You have to be patient, because the children come from different backgrounds and have different needs, so we have to be slower and more sensitive to their needs," said Mr Chan.

Mr Ho Khwai Weng, 44, Technical Support Officer in the Mechanical Engineering Division, added, "The most challenging point is to get the child comfortable with me, to gain their confidence and raise their comfort level. I was able to get the first boy, a four-year-old, to smile on three or four occasions, because he is very shy."

The reading-for-children session may or may not continue next year because it depends on the need of the Students Centre as well as the recommendation of the National Council of Social Service (NCSS).

Mr Lai said, "The thing about the reading programme is that they also like people to come down regularly to volunteer. When you come down regularly, you get to know the children and you get to know how to handle them." 



WELL DESERVED REST: Most of the early finishers simply sat on the kerb, munching on fruits that the HR staff had prepared, as they waited for their friends to complete the walkathon. (Picture: Andy Soh)





BY ANDY SOH  
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# Pool Partying

**T**he first-ever MediaCorp Pool Mega-Match at the Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) swimming pool on 2 August attracted about 200 students who were eager to catch their favourite deejays and artistes in action.

The telematch featured seven teams of five members led by MediaCorp artistes, such as Vincent Ng and Jeff Wang. The event was organised by MediaCorp radio station Y.E.S. 93.3FM and Radio Heatwave's Mandarin Division, Yi Wei Dian Tai. Y.E.S. 93.3FM deejays Dasmond Koh and Lin Lingzhi were the emcees.

Shavone Yeo, 19, Yi Wei Dian Tai's Assistant Music Director and third-year Mass Communication student, said that response to the event was "very good" with nearly as many backup teams as participants.

Mr Koh, 29, better known as Xu Zhen Rong to radio listeners, explained his station's new promoting approach, "I think this is the first telematch thing we're coming [into schools]. It is also our positioning for our radio station itself, to be a young and vibrant radio station."

He also said that Y.E.S. 93.3FM chose NP as its first campus for the telematch because Y.E.S. 93.3FM and Yi Wei Dian Tai shared "quite a close link".

Ng Shirong, 18, a first-year Electrical &

Computer Engineering student who was a spectator, said that he learnt about the event through Y.E.S. 93.3FM's radio announcements and found the games "quite interesting".

The unusual games were a hit among students who cheered and laughed with each item. The games required the teams to search for numbered ping-pong balls in the pool or fill up bottles attached to the contestants by splashing water on them.

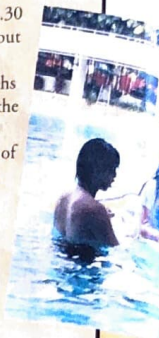
The telematch gave students a chance to see a different side of the participating MediaCorp artistes as they tackled the games wholeheartedly in beachwear or swimming attire.

The muscular martial arts-trained Vincent Ng, in particular, drew loud cheers from the crowd when he took off his shirt.

Although the crowd at the pool gallery got smaller after 5.30 pm, some fans stayed throughout the event, waiting to take the MediaCorp artistes' photographs and get their autographs after the prize-giving ceremony.

Group B, made up mostly of members from the NP Dragon Boat Club, won the telematch and received gift hampers sponsored by Y.E.S. 93.3FM.

Mr Koh felt that the event was a "great success".

"Everybody enjoyed themselves. That's the most important," he said. 

# 'Snapped' on campus

BY TESHWINDAR KAUR  
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**A** third-year Marine & Offshore Technology student won by a landslide the most attractive polytechnic student title in Channel U's talent-scouting show "SNAP 2".

The only Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) representative, Angelynn Yang, 20, defeated five male and female contestants from Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP) and Temasek Polytechnic (TP) at the final audience voting at Tampines Mall on 16 August.

She won \$1,600 worth of vouchers from convenience store chain 7-Eleven and Japanese skin care brand FANCL.

"I'm very surprised that I won," she said in Mandarin. "I felt that everyone was better."

"SNAP 2" host Mr Bryan Wong, however, was not surprised. "I knew she had a high chance of winning because of her innocence. It shines through," he said.

Mr Wong had stopped by NP in search of "pure, untouched and unsophisticated" students, he said.

In "SNAP 2", the hosts Mr Wong and Miss Kym Ng scout at pre-determined locations for people who fit each episode's theme. Due to

time constraints, Miss Ng went to NYP while Mr Wong came to NP. They met later at TP before hosting the finals at Tampines.

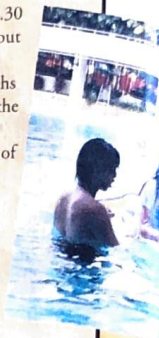
Angelynn was spotted in NP's Canteen One by Mr Wong. "No one has said that I'm cute and innocent before, so I'm very flattered," said the Chinese national.

Candidates ranged from the shy to the confident. Most were spotted by Mr Wong, his producers and crew, while some were recommended by friends and a few volunteered themselves.

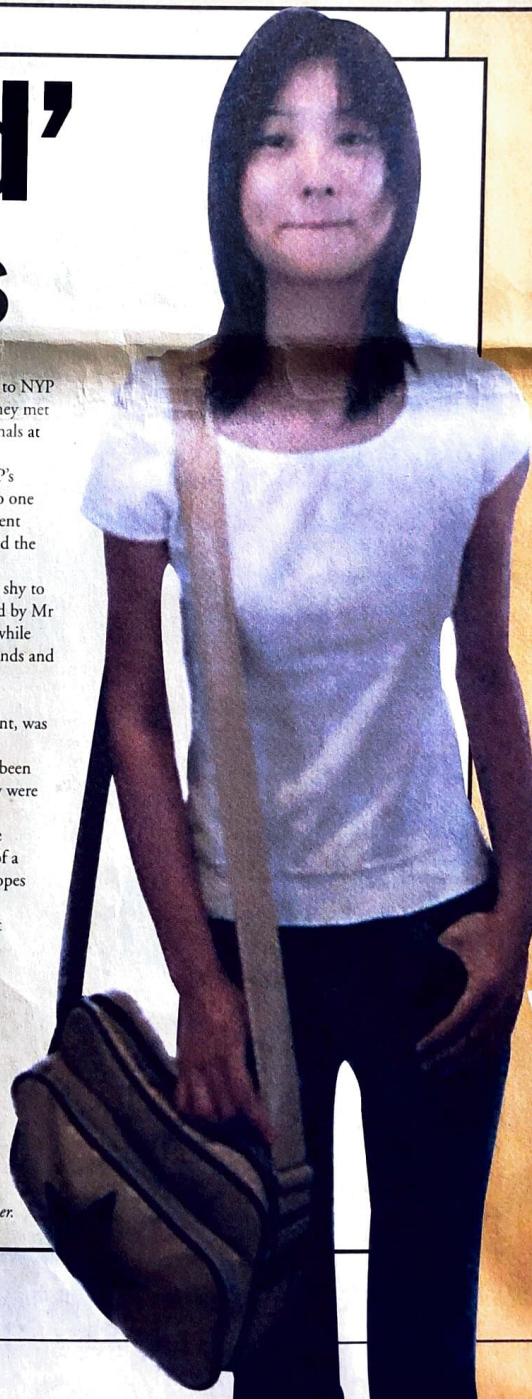
Gordon Tu, 18, first-year Mechatronics Engineering student, was picked out in Canteen One.

"I'm very surprised that I've been chosen," he said. "I thought they were looking for teachers actually." Describing himself as average, he rated himself a "55 percent out of a 100" when told of Mr Wong's hopes of him going into the finals.

Other students, such as Janet Ng, 22, third-year Accountancy student, and Gary Ang, 17, first-year Biotechnology student, declined to join the contest as they felt they would not win. "I don't feel I'm good enough," said Gary.

"A lot of people don't want to go down to Tampines Mall," added Mr Wong. 

The "SNAP 2" polytechnic student search was televised on 15 September.



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**hype**  
on campus

Issue 1 . Sept . 2002

# Looking Good

How Far Would You Go?

Also

Positively Suede

Campus Entertainment:  
On Air and On Line





# behind the desk



I have no idea what to say. I wanted this editorial to be flippant and whimsical, but nothing even vaguely humorous is springing to mind. It's usually so natural – I latch on to a topic and the creativity just kicks in. This time, I feel like the one being kicked.

## DISCOVERING ANEW

I've looked at all the past commentaries I've written, and I've scoured the web for some sort of inspiration or the other. I've even read all of Dave Barry's latest columns, but nothing's flowing. Where has the laughter gone?

Not too long ago, I remember lamenting that I'd started to worry about losing the ability to write creatively – that my single-minded focus on the comparatively regimented style of journalistic writing and more journalistic writing was beginning to have an effect on my other writing styles – a harsh reminder that trite clichés like

"use it or lose it" really do have some sense in them after all. To a certain extent, it almost feels as though I've lost a part of myself – a part I thought I had and knew, but which I, in fact, have to discover anew.

In a way, this is also the story about these precious sheets of newsprint that now occupy your hands. *hype* has been around for six years, and it's been a good run – our predecessors have set high standards for us to surpass, but we wanted to do something more. We wanted to rediscover *hype* and see if we could find an answer to the question – how can we give it greater voice?

As our inaugural attempt at providing a campus-oriented publication with a softer edge, *hype on campus* is part of that answer, and part of the process. Above all, it's been that – a learning process on rediscovery.

Perhaps, it is a journey that we can take together.

Aaron Lye Student Editor

I'm a frustration to the marketing departments of consumer goods manufacturers – be it food, drinks or electronics. I believe in the tried and tested, especially when it comes to ingesting unusual food items, some of which I refer to as "funny stuff", only because I don't know the proper names. Of course. And thus, I'm part of the agonising market segment that digs in its heels and refuses to try anything new. No matter how beneficial or cheap.

## CONSUMERS & COCONUTS

Recently when out shopping for groceries with a couple of friends, I espied my friend buying a particularly "suspicious" green package filled with white cubes floating in clear syrup. "Yummy

coconut fibre," he said, or is purported to have said. All I heard was, well, "funny stuff!"

Much persuasion and hours later, I gingerly lowered a fork into that green pack and slowly drew out a glistening white cube. After giving it a few warning glances, last it try something funny in my stomach, I (eyes screwed up, willing my mouth to open) popped the cube in my mouth and munched. And munched.

Within seconds I commandeered the erstwhile "insipidous" package and proceeded to chomp my way through to what I now know is Nata De Coco. A delightfully addictive dessert, which incidentally also goes a long way in warding off the sugar-guilt due to its healthy fibrous nature.

There's a lesson in there somewhere.

Syeda Sana Rahman Student Editor

One early morning, I find myself taking a tour of my housing estate. I am in a taxi, silently willing the taxi driver to speed me home.

## OF TAXI DRIVERS, RUBBER SHOES and CEMETERIES

He turns around and with impossible amounts of energy and enthusiasm at such un-earthly hour, suddenly says, "I need to

stay there you know!" What?

"Your flat! I used to stay around that area!" Right.

In the subsequent twenty-minutes, I learn that opposite my block of flats used to stand a row of shop houses that sold latex, which was then converted into a saw mill, which was also replaced by flattened factories. Now, the land has been cleared once

again for very high-rise, HDB flats. The main road from which I grab buses used to be a huge river that transported goods. The cluster of car parks used to be a kampong that housed hundreds of families.

I listen. Then he tells me that the plot of land where my flat stands used to be a cemetery. Comforting.

The tour ended too soon. I was curious. We seem to always be in a state of construction. Pulling down buildings, paving new roads, repairing damaged goods, all in search of something perfect. Or at least, to make a difference.

The start of a new hope. A hope that will take us through to build better things. And with each new beginning, we remember our past, our history, our heritage.

Sue-Ann Woo Student Editor

## at a glance

### Matters Of Esteem P. 4-5

Christine Yee and Muhd Hafiz Nordin look at issues of the self and the lengths to which some will go

### Making The Band P. 8

Join Sue-Ann Woo as she takes a peek at student bands on-campus

### Suede-d Over

Amanda Koh meets up with British rock band Suede and finds out why they continue to rock 10 years on

### Rewiring Ahead

P. 3 Daniel Yap goes behind the scenes at UrbanWire.com, NP's very own online entertainment publication

### Animated Reality

Masturah Salim crosses dimensions in search of the future of 2D and 3D animation

P. 7

Also:

Events in and around campus in September and October

P. 3

P. 6

Radio Heatwave Highlights Campus CTV Highlights

#### **hype on campus**

is a bi-annual publication by final year Print Journalism students in the Mass Communication diploma programme.

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## J.C. Sum the Pocket Illusionist

Fancy yourself as a pocket-illusionist? Or need a quick two-hour break from reality? Then, this "magic" show is highly recommended. J.C. Sum, the performer of *Intimate Illusions*, is one of Asia's finest illusionists. J.C. Sum presents his "magic" up front and in the surroundings of his audience. The show starts with small-scale tricks with a touch of comedy, followed by out-of-this-world illusions performed no more than two metres away from the audience. Before the show, examine some of the actual props that are used, and everyone has a hands-on experience with performing illusions. All part of the package that comes with the ticket price.  
22 September. 7.30pm. Alliance Francaise AGF Theatre. \$48 from Ticketcharge

## Aaraathanaa Arts Competition

The grand final of the *Aaraathanaa Arts Competition*, organised by NP's Indian Cultural Society, will feature qualifying participants from its August semi-finals vying for top honours in a song and dance segment and a theme costume segment, meant to showcase their Indian Heritage. A display of talents from various Indian cultural clubs in Singapore, this competition boasts participants from secondary schools, junior colleges and tertiary institutions.  
21 September. 2pm. LT 26, Ngee Ann. \$8 from the Indian Cultural Society, Blk 73, #02-05.

## NTU Career Fair 2002

Graduating students wanting to launch their careers might find the *NTU Career Fair 2002* a good avenue to search for jobs. Employers like Keppel Insurance, the Land Transport Authority, SPH AsiaOne and Maersk Singapore Ltd are looking for people in disciplines ranging from accountancy to mechanical engineering to communication studies.  
25 & 26 September. 10A, Nanyang Auditorium, NTU. Free. Call 6790 5034 for more details.

## Japanese Festival

The students from Sakuri Commercial Senior High School are back at NP after two years for a one-day cultural exchange visit. Get the low-down on everything Japanese - its music, fashion and even the lifestyle. As part of this visit, they'll bring along traditional toys like the *Daruma*, a round wooden doll that has a face like a cat and writings on its body, *Menko*, a game involving throwing circular or rectangular playing cards on the ground as well as spinning tops and kites. Not only do you get to learn something new, you also get to make a host of new friends.  
26 September. 10am. LT 26, Ngee Ann Polytechnic. Free.

# campus lowdown

## At the Heartlands

*At the Heartlands* is Odyssey Dance Theatre's (ODT) 12th local production. Comprising four dances, *At the Heartlands* aims to "bring the audiences and underprivileged communities closer to the Arts". These dances were choreographed by Mr Danny Tan, the founder and Artistic Director of ODT. Performed together with Queensland Ballet Company (Australia), *Wings* is one of his highly commended works. A dynamic and vigorous dance performed by the principal dancers, this piece was presented in Australia in 1998, and in Hong Kong in 2001. *The Roots*, the third piece, intertwines contemporary dance techniques and Chinese classical dance moves.  
30 & 31 October. 8pm. University Cultural Centre, NUS. \$16, \$21, \$31 from SISTIC.

## Uncertainties of Life

*Linger*, presented by the National University of Singapore's Dance Synergy ballet group, explores the journey of life's uncertainties as it travels through the tunnel of human emotions - a changing kaleidoscope in itself. Sharp and sinuous movements, mixed with infectious pulsating rhythmic beats that incorporate jazz and modern dance elements, will display the fluidity of art and body motions of an ensemble of 60 dancers. Led by resident choreographer, Mr. Fan Dong Kai, an accomplished dancer and Artistic Producer of the Singapore Chingay and Events Network, audiences can look forward to experiencing a visual spectacle.  
3 October. 8pm. University Cultural Centre, NUS. \$12, \$15, \$18 from Kelvin Koh 90250578.

## Tuesdays at the Movies

The School of Film & Media Studies (FMS) screens classic films every Tuesday of the week. Entitled *Tuesday at the Movies*, this programme features films in various genres from adventure-comedy to science fiction. Sandra Salas, Visiting Lecturer with FMS, will open each screening with a short introduction of the movie, and will answer questions at the end.  
24 Sept - *The Good, The Bad and the Ugly*  
01 Oct - *The Graduate*  
08 Oct - *Casablanca*  
15 Oct - 2001: A Space Odyssey

Every Tuesday until 15 October.  
5.30pm. FMS Preview Theatre, Ngee Ann, Blk 52, #09-05. Free. Open to all NP students & staff.

## Exploring the human life through dance

Members of the *Ilsa Tari*, a Malay dance troupe from NUS, perform *Kembara*, an exploration of the human life cycle and its environment through a fusion of contemporary and traditional dance. *Kembara* seeks to enhance the audience's appreciation of life's constant revolution - from conception to death, from creation to decomposition. Journey with the performers as they take you through time at the University Cultural Centre's 450-seat theatre - an intimate venue for this dance tribute.  
5 October. 8pm. University Cultural Centre, NUS. \$10 from Imeelia, 9693 0539.

## Classic to Contemporary

Composer Giacomo Puccini's *La Boheme* finds its way into theatre at the hands of the National University of Singapore (NUS) Law IV Production team's production of 'Cracked'. *La Boheme* (Bohemians of the Latin quarter) was originally produced as a play in 1849 and has made its way into the heart of world opera from England to Germany, Spain and the United States of America. This time, 'Cracked' seeks to combine this classic opera plot with contemporary dialogue and original scores. "Harsh, funny, gritty and inspiring", this amalgamation of styles from two different centuries will attempt to depict life's pitfalls and triumphs.  
24 & 25 September. 7.30pm. University Cultural Centre, NUS. \$15, \$20 from Soh Caili, 9875 1437.

# Rewiring

Personality profiles, fashion spreads and insightful editorials about within this portal of youth culture

# Ahead

BY DANIEL YAP



to our target audience."

The original project, also advised by Mr Yee and completed in the July-December semester of 2001, became the basis of a full-fledged publication, gathering to itself a core team of student editors, writers and designers, plus a growing handful of freelance writers.

"We are committed to gaining a greater presence in the school and online," said Jude Chan, a student editor for UrbanWire. "We are really looking at ways of getting 18-to-25-year-olds to take an interest in contributing their work and building this online community."

UrbanWire begins with "U".

One benefit UrbanWire brings to its community of youth is its openness to aspiring writers. Students need not be part of the UrbanWire team to contribute to its content and have the chance to see their work published on this broad-based platform.

They even have Ngee Ann graduates contributing to their content. "We really welcome any story ideas that our fellow students may have to contribute," said Jude Chan. "We are more than happy to get submissions that are of value to our audience."

Lecturer Robin Yee agrees fully, stating that those who would like to have a voice can e-mail UrbanWire with their story ideas. "It would be great if they could also incorporate some of the other media," he continued, reiterating that the Internet is a good channel for the delivery of streaming audio and video, as well as interactive web content.

"It's an online vehicle and the whole point is to get... readers and users to feel involved."

Aspiring writers can receive guidance and help with their work, as well as valuable exposure to the industry. UrbanWire also reaches across the world, making its articles available to some 500 publications worldwide. Formerly a writer for Bloomberg Wire Services, Mr Yee knows the importance of getting your work out to as many people as possible. He hooked up to U-wire, an online news agency which will give UrbanWire writers better exposure. UrbanWire is the first Singaporean publication to latch on to this network of writers and publishers and Mr Yee feels that this is quite a milestone.

Getting off the ground. Again.

The initial launch of Ngee Ann Polytechnic's first online magazine was a "low-key affair" - a small roadshow at the Atrium and perhaps a ragged cheer from a depleted group of students during the height of the exam season last year.

"This year, UrbanWire is hoping for a better launch at the end of the semester," says Jude Chan. "This time around, we are here to stay," he continues, "so we are trying to make sure that people can remember us or else we won't be beneficial to our community."

Wiring into the future

A launch is just the beginning - UrbanWire is reaching for bigger and better things. Hopefully, they have their eyes set firmly on the target and the support of their community. Student Editor and Marketeer Yamuna Subramaniam is well aware of the path ahead. "We're still developing and we're still new, so the biggest thing to us right now is reaching our Singaporean market, pitching the site so that it's a portal for Singaporeans."

"And from there, the next big step is going international, and that's where our freelance writers will come in. We need a wider outlook in the site to appeal to an even wider audience."

Never let a good thing go. So think one lecturer and 15 students who have turned what might have been a one-off online project into an ongoing publication.

Originating as a final-year specialist project for five students from the School of Film & Media Studies, managing UrbanWire is now a permanent feature in the polytechnic's already diverse publication portfolio.

Ngee Ann's first-ever entertainment/lifestyle e-zine aims to be the source of the best of other media, including content from the Ngee Ann Tribune, *hype* magazine, Radio Heatwave and student video productions.

"I knew all along that I wanted a site like this, an online news site," said Mr. Robin Yee, lecturer-in-charge of the UrbanWire team. "A site like this can incorporate content that is relevant and attractive



# Make Me Over

**Makeover salons are making big bucks banking on the prospect of instant beauty. Christine Yee looks beyond skin deep and tells it like it is.**

**P**unk rebel or glam queen? For the right price, you can be both. Makeover salons are enticing the youth market segment of 16 to 25-year-olds with beauty on demand. With advertising in popular teen magazines, these salons also sport strategically placed outlets at highly accessible shopping malls along Orchard Road and other youth hotspots.

It's no secret that the youth market is very lucrative and for salons like Chez Vous and Beauty Box, therefore tapping into it was an obvious choice. "They have lots of rich parents around!" joked Samantha Kwan, Chez Vous' Senior Manager.

"Youths, especially girls, like doing makeovers," reckoned Muush Alias, the Business Manager at Beauty Box, explaining why 90 percent of his clientele is female. A good part of the remaining ten percent, Muush believes, only come "because of their girlfriends".

Revealing his marketing strategy, Muush said his salon would "target youths in certain months like June, when they have their holidays, [and] November and December, when they have their prom nights".

"In this makeover industry, people want a sense of glamour, a sense of importance... because they don't feel valued by other people," pointed out Dr Victor Loh, a general practitioner and part-time counsellor with Gethin-Jones Medical Practice.

Yes, an 8R digitally enhanced colour photograph of yourself would probably boost your ego. But in going for makeovers, are youths *kow-towing* to the message that we are not beautiful enough as we are? Are we allowing these salons to profit from our insecurities, feelings of inadequacy and innate need for acceptance? Target Audience Analysis

"Maybe you're dissatisfied with yourself, so you want a completely different image... that's why you go for makeovers," mused Ashley Chia, 19, a Mass Communication student at Ngee Ann Polytechnic.

"Some youths don't have a secure sense of who they are," echoed Dr Loh, "Perhaps because of the way they judge their looks and the way they perceive people judge them, youths tend to be very concerned about the way they look."

Dr Loh feels that "makeovers themselves are neutral, they can be good... they can be bad." He said a makeover might give "some degree of confidence" to a youth with a negative self-image. He warned, however, "You have to temper the effect by the fact that we cannot base our self-esteem purely on the way we look."

Ego-boosts and self-affirmations aside, some youths have makeovers for purely pragmatic reasons. Najibah Abdat, 19,

and Kaleena Kwan, 19, both applying for jobs as air stewardesses, went for makeovers for their resumes. "Image and looks are important for the job," Kaleena rationalised, "You want to stand out and make a good first impression, even if it is only with a photograph."

Chin Koh, the resident stylist at Beauty Box, also added, "They just like to catch their youth, just for memories. Some girls want to take pictures with their good friends; it's a memory thing." Echoing these sentiments was Quek Si Ming, 20, who said, "It's nice to have a portfolio of yourself you can flip through when you're old."

Great Expectations

"You expect yourself to look completely different, and be really very pretty. To be glamorous for one day - you feel like a star!" said Chia.

Speaking in his capacity as a counsellor, Dr Loh's response to her reasons was, "I worry whether she's building false expectations. Isn't she a star already; isn't she special in her own

way? Why must we be stars in the way society wants us to be?"

Such external societal pressures on youths, according to Dr Loh, are especially prevalent in countries with very strong media and advertising, where "people use a pretty face to sell products" and where "people are valued basically for their looks". Youths can also exert internal pressure on themselves and this stress stems from their insecurities.

"Society has made it very hard for a young person to grow up happy and secure," Dr Loh admits. Curbing the problem of negative self-images among youths, Dr Loh believes, "is about being able to get young people to grow up happy to be themselves, whoever they are".

Makeovers were designed to be enjoyed and to evoke positive experiences. Makeovers let us look better and more "acceptable", for an hour or two, immortalising the image in photographs. Makeovers only become problems when we obsess over the image of what we were and believe that our happiness can only come from looking that way.

# Matters of

**Christine Yee and Muhd Hafiz Nordin look at issues of the self and the lengths to which some will go**



# Body Over Mind

Muhd Hafiz journeys through the body beyond the physical, looking at what drives us to bodily perfection while ignoring psychological toils.

student at the School of Physical Education and Sports Science at the National Institute of Education, and an avid bodybuilder that "most people do not even know they are suffering from anorexia".

People who suffer from reverse anorexia display symptoms and characteristics that uncannily resemble anorexia – a condition more commonly suffered by women. The men tend to be loners as they cannot bear to feel imperfect and incompetent. Going to the gym to work out is therefore the perfect foil as bodybuilding is essentially an individualistic pursuit.

The initial noble intention of working out for better health is skewed by the need to conform to ideals propagated by the media. For those who are not Brad Pitt look-a-likes, beefing up is the only way to go. Matthew Lee, a final-year Mass Communication student at Ngee Ann Polytechnic, attested to this notion when he claimed that since he lacked height, he had to be big and stout to look good.

At 1.75 metres tall, Selwyn Lin, a second-year Accountancy student, already boasts a muscular frame, but apparently that is not sufficient for the rugby player. Currently tipping the scales at 75 kilograms, he aspires to be 90 kilograms of "pure muscle mass". When asked whether he thought that was too big, he said, "No, I know a lot of others who are bigger than that."

On the other hand, Ling Lii Shyan, a final-year Mechatronics Engineering student prefers to go for muscle definition instead. He thinks that 70 kilograms is ideal for his dragon-boating activities.

Former national bodybuilder Kassim Suarno advocates the "ripped and cut" look, using a training method that enhances muscle definition. Besides that, the full-time gym instructor says that it is fitness that matters and not size. He attributes the need for size to the male ego and the male desire of "never wanting to lose".

Stevenson Lai, Head of Sport Psychology at the Singapore Sports Council explains, "If a person's reason for adhering to a strict exercise regime is to keep fit and stay healthy, this person can be seen as being intrinsically motivated."

"People who go to the gym for the purpose of wanting to look good... such a reason is perfectly fine as well." But he stresses that a person should be not be too "preoccupied with results".

"It is important to realise that the process, things that one is supposed to do and have control over, involved in achieving the outcome must not be neglected."

A fine example would be New Urban Male 2002 winner, Remy Mitchell Low. In spite of winning the title, he is not stepping off the gas pedal at the gym. He continues to train hard and smart at the gym to maintain his ripped body. He sums it up by saying, "Getting bigger does not necessarily mean getting better."

# Esteem

With the advent of plush fitness centres like California Fitness Centre and Planet Fitness, having a good body has never been more in fashion.

The media, too, perpetuates this perception by making a mockery out of scrawny-looking guys, and making gods of the muscular ones. Thus we see guys with smaller builds push themselves to get the muscular body that society approves of, regardless of the personal cost. Good for a few laughs on the telly, but in real life, such overzealous efforts to change the body are not always a matter.

Body image satisfaction is imperative to young men and women alike. Perhaps it may seem that women have it harder than men, what with the relentless media portrayal of desirable women being slim and fair.

But the men are not spared either. If a woman's desire to be thin completely engulfs her and drives her to compulsively control her eating habits, she is said to be suffering from bulimia or anorexia. A little known disorder that exists among men is body

dysmorphic disorder, more commonly known as 'reverse anorexia'. When suffering from this condition, a guy thinks he is not 'buff' enough, even though by societal standards he would be considered a well-muscled individual. Those suffering from this disorder consume carefully measured amounts of protein and other supplements to enhance lean muscle mass. Done in moderation, this practice of controlled protein intake reaps great health benefits. But when it becomes an obsession, it causes more harm than good, especially when men resort to taking anabolic steroids for faster results.

The use of steroids has been linked with cardiac disorders, increased blood pressure, liver problems and even mental disorders. Another side effect of steroid use is the development of acne due to the increased levels of hormones. Ironically, the guys, who are in this to look good, choose to bear with the unsightly acne in order to achieve that bigger physique.

You might think that such a condition is not rampant amongst youths here. On the contrary, Zaid Rasid, a former



# iding the airwaves

**T**hese days, the idea of glamour and style has transcended the entertainment industry and tiptoed into the serious world of news broadcast.

Newscasters are stringently selected not only for their expertise but also for their appeal to the audience. Yet, even with the likes of Cheryl Fox on screen, it would undoubtedly be aggravating to have to watch a newscaster's mouth open and close, forming words that you can't understand because the audio levels are too low. Punctuate that with a cut sequence of dramatic footage of natural disasters and you're even more annoyed.

To those who are regularly at Canteen One for a meal, this is probably a common irritant when you're watching Channel NewsAsia on the television sets. Now, however, Campus Television (CTV) will provide you with an exciting new line-up of programmes, including live campus news, which you will definitely be able to understand and enjoy.

## View point

BY KIMBERLY MAH, STATION MANAGER & MARK NG, PROGRAMME DIRECTOR



### Programme line-up

Programmes especially for you, be sure to watch out for this new line-up at Canteen One from Tuesdays to Fridays every week.

Tuesdays & Fridays	1130 - 1200	Wednesdays & Thursdays	1000 - 1015
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Celebrities Uncut</li> <li>CCA Snap Shots</li> <li>The Music Eye</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Campus TV News</li> </ul>
	1400 - 1430		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project: Action!</li> <li>CCA Snap Shots</li> <li>Picture This</li> <li>The Music Eye</li> </ul>		

### Campus TV News

This semester, *Campus TV News*, presented and produced by Mass Communication Television Journalism students, is presented live for the first time. To keep yourself updated on what's going on around campus, be sure to look out for this programme that will keep you highly informed about issues that affect you.

### Celebrities Uncut

*Celebrities Uncut* is one of CTV's first productions. This programme will give you an insight into the lives of the celebrities such as local talents like Koh Chieng Mun and Darren Seah. Hosted by third-year Mass Communication student, Ya'sin Razak, this programme promises to be highly entertaining, bringing to screen an exciting and raw look at your favourite personalities.

### CCA Snap Shots

*CCA Snap Shots* is a series of five-minute glimpses produced by CTV at the exciting activities that Ngee Ann's CCA groups provide. From cultural groups to sports clubs, *CCA Snap Shots* gives you a chance to discover more than just basic information about each CCA.

### Project: Action!

*Project: Action!* showcases the various projects produced by the students of the School of Film & Media Studies. Be entertained by the wide selection of projects including documentaries, studio interviews and short drama productions.

### The Music Eye

*The Music Eye* proves that music videos aren't limited to major record labels alone. This programme will immerse you in music videos that feature local and student bands. Produced by students of the School of Film & Media Studies, these videos are simply by students for students.

### Picture This

*Picture This* will showcase quirky animation sequences fashioned by students from the Film, Sound and Video course. Watch out for these short segments and be intrigued by the antics and actions of their originally designed characters.

## Soundbites

BY WESLEY GUNTER, PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

**F**our months ago, I landed the position of Programme Director. Together with a team of dedicated and patient people, we have created a new outlook for Radio Heatwave for you.

Just to fill in you in on the history bit of our radio station, let's see...

Heatwave started in 1992 as Singapore's first campus radio station. We have our own radio covey where the student deejays present their shows from. If you're walking past Block 23, you might catch glimpse of a large window. Take a look in and wave in at the deejay who's presenting. It's been affectionately termed the "fishtank", so do drop by for a visit.

You probably have heard us at Canteens One, Two and Three and the Atrium. Yup, that's us.

Our shows run 'live' from 9 am to 7 pm, and you can even get us over at [www.radioheatwave.cjb.net](http://www.radioheatwave.cjb.net) with our Internet streaming.

This time round, we are going all-out for the one-to-one approach with our programmes. Heatwave is going to be more personalised, and we hope to make the radio station a music hub on-campus.

Ngee Ann can look forward to a whole new range of music genres such as trip-hop, acoustic sounds and even new age. We still have the chart lists for all you pop-fans out there and special segments for our Malay speaking listeners, Rentak Campus and Yi Wei Dian Tai for the Chinese speaking students.

We also promise the coolest morning shows with Sabrina & Dorothy, Novocaine & Sexy Sadie, Hanafi & Elaine and Richmond & James. So while you're grabbing your breakfast on-campus, be sure to tune in your ears to us!

Oh and if you want to give us feedback or tell us what you want, drop us an email at our website: [www.radioheatwave.cjb.net](http://www.radioheatwave.cjb.net)! Remember, **it's what you want!**

## Album Review

BY FARAND NGOH, ENGLISH MUSIC DIRECTOR



**T**hose crazy *chilli padis* are back, with not as much spice as last time, but definitely just as hot as ever with their new album *By the Way*.

Red Hot Chili Peppers' distinct sound is still displayed here – a wide spectrum from freestyle rock to melancholic ballads.

Their latest single *By the Way* has been leaping up the Top 100 Billboard as well as local charts. The song functions as a good opener to a very listenable album too. Long as it may be (16 tracks to be exact), producer Rick Rubin has made listening through the list a smooth journey. Flea's trademark "let it all out" bass style still plays a main part in most songs.

However, Anthony Kiedis seems to be exploring a change of style with a significant increase in mellow songs such as *Dose* and *I Could Die For You*.

*On Mercury* will be an eye opener too, not unlike a reggae piece, but on hyperactive mode.

One thing's for sure, ever since John Frusciante made a comeback for the production of their previous album *Californication*, it has been nothing short of a brand new life for the band. His strings and vocals still complement those of Kiedis and the *Red Hot* style.

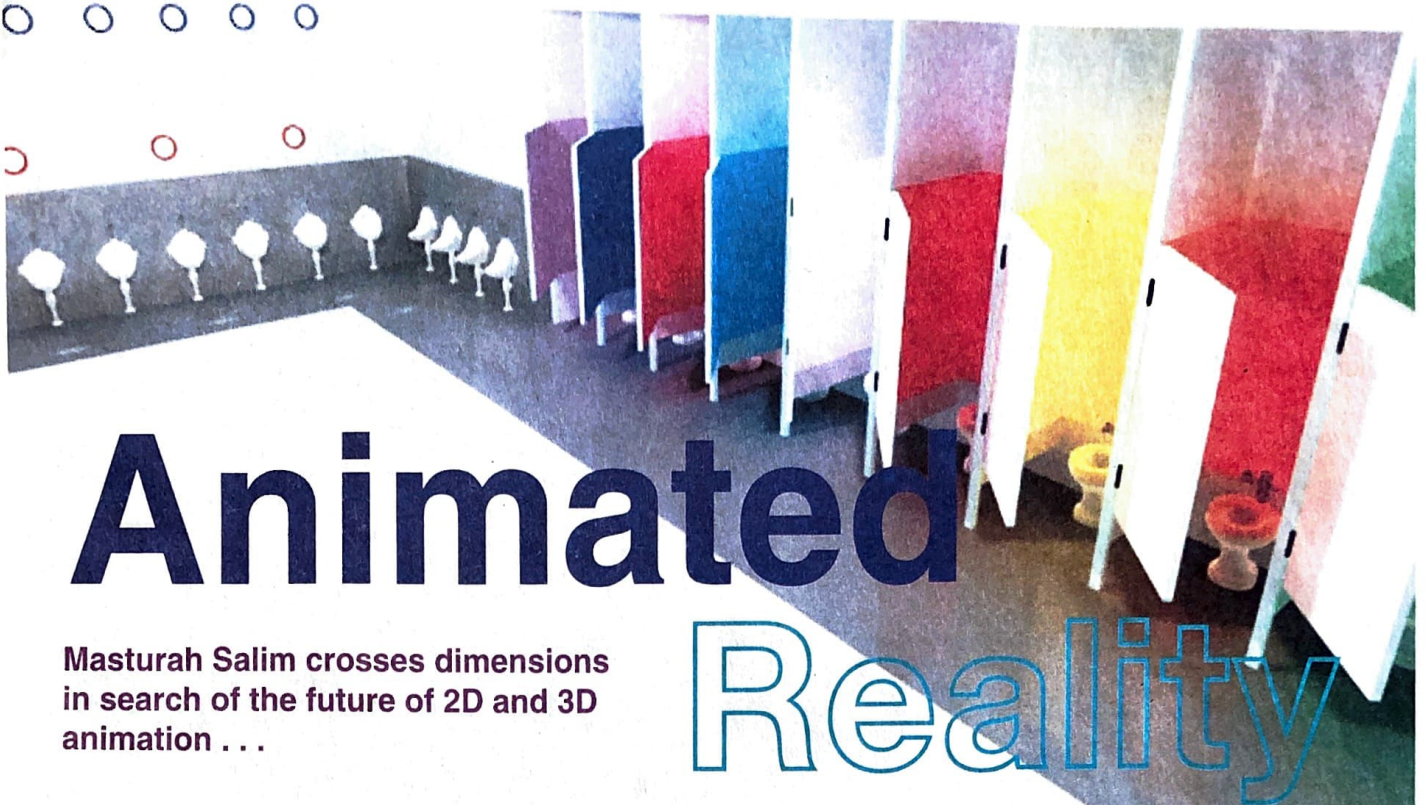
On the whole, the album will be a good buy but what can we say, it's never easy to outdo yourself after releasing an album as successful as *Californication*.

Programme Highlights

	0900	1000	1100	1200	1300	1400	1500	1600	1700	1800
Monday		Wake Up Sabrina & Dorothy	That Rock Joel	Lunch On The Rocks Pebbles	Yi Wei Afternoon Dedications Sheena & Anita		Eden Echo	Women in Pink Shirlynn		Yi Wei Er Ren Ju Le Bu Sharry & Danny
Tuesday		Morning Madness DJ Novocaine & Sexy Sadie	Ctrl Alternative Delete Kara	Black-out DJ M.C	Yi Wei Top 20 Madeline & Shavone		Strings Attached G	Served Chilled Christine		Yi Wei Music A&E Edeline & Anita
Wednesday		The Morning Show Hanafi & Elaine	Radioactive Angie	Oooh Aaah Waah Uzy	Automation	Rentak Faridah	Trippin' Zayed Talib	Pop it Up Zulk		Yi Wei Music Ling Mei Edeline & Madeline
Thursday		Thursday Broilies Richmond & James	Groovebeats Debbie	The Mos Real Show Kevin	Yi Wei Er Ren Ju Le Bu Sharry & Danny	Rentak Suharti & Zul / Uzy	Track Fusion DJ Niki	Indian Beats Anne		Yi Wei Free Expression Ying
Friday			Automation		Yi Wei Just Say It Siming & Ying		Heatwave Top 20 Hilary Hoe & Farand Ngoh			Yi Wei Si Ren Hui Guan Siming & Shavone

radio  
heatwave





Alvin Sebastian Hoo's animated interpretation of toilet cubicles

# Animated Reality

**Masturah Salim crosses dimensions in search of the future of 2D and 3D animation . . .**

**T**oy Story started the trend in 1995. Soon, other fully computer-generated (CG) feature films like *Antz*, *A Bug's Life*, *Shrek* and *Jimmy Neutron* appeared on the big screen.

Pixar Animation Studios, makers of *Toy Story*, have pushed the boundaries of animation with cutting-edge technology and facilities. CG animation films are the rage now with over 40 films in pre-production according to [www.matchmove.com](http://www.matchmove.com).

While audiences are ooh-ing and ah-ing over the 3D effects, the appeal and success of CG/3D animation films lie not only in the animation, but also the storyline. According to James Finch, a layout artist with Disney, in an article on [wired.com](http://wired.com), "The beauty of animation is in its moments of storytelling and less about the big special effects."

Many agree that big special effects take a back seat to the storyline. "If you have the technology but lousy storyline, the movie will not do very well," said Mr David Kwok, founder of the Singapore Animators Connection (SAC), an independent club that showcases local works. "The story, the content is the king," he added.

Mr Nisar Keshvani, lecturer at

story line, then the audience is not going to be sucked in."

Where has the audience's growing preference for CG/3D animation left traditional 2D animation? Has the art of "cel animation" of drawing and colouring the characters every movement, cel by cel, fallen behind or out of favour?

Alvin Sebastian Hoo, 23, a graduate of Nanyang Polytechnic who took up Digital Media Design and is now a freelance animator with the SAC club, said, "No. I regard traditional animation as the 'mother of CG'. It's the [basis] of animation and it's a requirement." The people at Disney have stuck to this same belief, choosing to return to the traditional 2D animation for their latest creation, *Lilo & Stitch*.

With local audiences becoming more receptive to local productions' especially local films, what is happening to our local animation scene?

While some may scoff and say that Singapore doesn't have much of an established pool of animators, it is there and it is growing at a fast pace, especially since tertiary institutions are offering more computer graphics courses. Websites also offers tutorials in basic animation skills. "Unfortunately in Singapore," said Mr Keshvani, "it's a bigger element. It's not just animation; it's to do with the arts. Anything that is outside of the norm, you face a battle."

Our local animators do face the uphill task of gaining recognition for their work. Since many of them produce clips - 10, 20 or 30 minutes animation - their works are deemed too short to be featured on the big screen. However, some of their works can be viewed at [animation.org.sg](http://animation.org.sg) or at the creators' website. The Singapore Film Festival also has an animation category that features the works of local talents.

Local animators face stiff competition from their counterparts from Australia, Philippines and Hong Kong who are working or studying here.

Also, with a rising number of institutions offering 3D animation courses, the number of local animators is growing and they will be vying with each other and the veterans of this field for job

opportunities. Animation does not come cheap. The software required to create 3D works can come up to hundreds of dollars each, depending on the software brands - SoftImage costs about US\$495 whereas MAYA software, which is commonly used, can cost between US\$69.99 to US\$1,999. The current economic downturn has also made it especially difficult to find work. Many animators are now offering their services on a freelance basis or have gone overseas to either further their studies or work in more established animation industries in Hong Kong, the U.S. and U.K.

Founded in 1999, the SAC ([http://www.geocities.com/cg\\_sac](http://www.geocities.com/cg_sac)) manages close to 100 animators in terms of finding work opportunities, and the number is growing with polytechnics like Nanyang and Temasek offering courses like 3D animation and digital technology courses. Ngee Ann's School of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and FMS also offer these courses. ICT offers them in one of its diploma programmes - Multimedia Computing and FMS under their diploma programme in Film, Sound and Video. FMS also offers these options as electives for third-year Mass Communication students.

Other than managing local animators, the SAC looks out for potential investors and employers. Said Mr Kwok, "My current mission is to help find jobs for our animators. No 3D companies are hiring. And there are not many 3D companies left. I'm trying to help facilitate the setting up of companies here." Mr Kwok has been working hand-in-hand with people in the industry as well as the related bodies like CG-3D and 3D Sense to promote the growth of 3D animation in Singapore.

He adds that while Singapore does not have an established animation industry, it does have the talent and the people.

Also, 3D animation competitions like ComGraph Asia-Pacific Digital Art and Animation held in Singapore between 18-21 June, the Animation Festival and the Vancouver Effects both held in Vancouver, are held annually to help attract interest and to allow local animators to showcase their works. Organised by the SIGGRAPH Singapore

Chapter which was set up in 1998 to promote computer graphics in Singapore and the Asia-Pacific region, ComGraph attracted 66 entries last year, both local and in the Asia-Pacific region, and the number of entries looks set to grow. Local animators' works like Alvin Yap Wei Ming's *Morning at the Market* and Loo Vin Ping's *Against The Tide* have won national awards and gained finalist entries in international festivals like ComGraph and the Japan Digital Animation Festival. Local arts TV station, Arts Central has also broadcast their works and profiled the creators. As such, there is reason for belief that animation will continue to grow and expand.

Mr Hoo is optimistic about the future of the local animation scene. "If our animators are united, I am sure one day our local production can hit the big screen. It is a matter of time and opportunity," he said. However, he added that with Singaporean audiences becoming more exposed to high quality 3D animation movies, they would also be expecting the same workmanship from the local animators and will compare their works with the likes of the Oscar-winning *Shrek*.



Ngee Ann Polytechnic's School of Film & Media Studies (FMS) agrees, "I'm a firm believer in a balance of both. So, if you have fantastic technology or animation, but without

Disney's Lilo & Stitch



© Disney Singapore



in your face

# Suede-d

BY AMANDA KOH

Over

**S**uede is the quintessential Brit band. With the West London accent and nonchalant air, they embody the style of their music simply in being the way they are – smooth, fashionable and genuine (leather).

Some have labelled them "the best band since The Smiths" or "as good as the Sex Pistols". To reach legendary status on par with two of the best British bands, Suede certainly has made it, with Blur's front man Damon Albarn citing Suede as the pioneers of the current wave of British Pop.

Since the release of their first single *The Drowners* 10 years ago in May, Suede have managed to get a following of sorts, with fans from all over the world going, well, Star-crazy.

Suede is a band you either love or hate. Those who fall in love with them would fall in love with all things Suede – from their whiny, nasal sing-song tunes to their flamboyant hip swinging stage presence.

When asked whether they perform more for themselves or for an audience, guitarist Richard Oakes honestly replied, "We are more of an audience-performing band. It's a two-way thing, really. Especially in the old days we've always found it more difficult to perform ourselves... it's something you have to learn, we're getting much better live, I think we're pretty good live, at the moment."

Suede has already performed twice in Singapore – once in 1997 with a sold-out concert at the now-defunct Harbour Pavilion, and again in 1999 with 90 percent ticket sales at the same venue. They referred to the concerts in Singapore as "one of the best gigs [they've] played."

"One of the best ever. Definitely in the top three," Brett said, in 1997, after the band's first concert in Singapore, "we expected it to be dull. We've been told by some excellent liars that the audience would sit and not move! We respond to excitement y'know."

When asked if they would be staging another concert in the near future, Simon Gilbert, the band's drummer said, "Yes definitely... One of the best gigs we've played was the last time in Singapore. It

was fantastic, so we can't wait to come back again."

## The Beautiful Ones

Suede, made up of lead vocalist Brett Anderson, 35, bassist Mat Osman, 35, guitarist Richard Oakes, 25, drummer Simon Gilbert, 37, and latest addition, keyboardist Alex Lee, 31, seems to have finally settled down.

The band has had two members leaving in the course of their career. Guitarist Bernard Butler left after Suede's debut album, owing to "artistic differences". Later, after the Head Music tour, keyboardist, backing vocalist and Simon's cousin Neil Codling, made a shocking announcement in 2001 to leave the band due to his long-time illness, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome.

"[Neil's] not going to be in the band again," said Mat Osman. "He lives around the corner from me and he's still ill... it (being in a band) is probably the worst job he could have possibly been in, [with] all the things that are really bad for him".

Neil, a favourite among the girls, was the best looking of the lot and had a strong, intense, on-stage presence. His leaving caused many critics and fans alike to believe that Suede's era was over.

However, Suede has emerged, with "a kick in the bum, a new sorta freshness, a new enthusiasm," quipped Simon, speaking on the change in the band's line-up.

## A New Dawn

The band has since matured – not as people – but as a band.

"We certainly couldn't have matured as people. I mean, being in a band keeps you in this permanent sorta adolescence, really. You're kinda like preserved, you're mentally pickled," joked Brett.

But Brett, with seriousness behind his sunglasses, said he hopes the band has matured since their earlier songs like *Animal Nitrate*.

"Personally, I think the only way I have developed my songwriting is actually to simplify it. I think I've matured in that sense. I think in the earlier songs it was difficult to understand what they were about and they used a lot of slang, a lot of London



Suede's showcase at in Singapore recently gave fans a preview of their new album releasing in late September

club realisms and stuff... the songs now are more universal and that's the kinda direction I've always been wanting to achieve, really. I don't think I could've written a song called *Positivity* in 1992. It would've been a lie."

Their new album, *A New Morning*, was labelled by Brett as "closer in spirits to the debut", and he hopes that "it's got that kinda almost naivety as the debut record."

The message they wish to bring forth with the current album is that "real life can be great". It is supposed to be "optimistic and kinda unpretentious... fresher, cleaner and warmer".

With that fresh, clean sense in mind, *Positivity* is the band's happiest song to date. "We've never written a song with such a strong positive sense in them before," noted Brett. But as with every Suede song, the meaning behind it is not so simple.

"The song isn't just about seeing the world in a 'Disney-esque' kinda piece of sugar. [It] is very much about coming out of a period of darkness into a period of light. He adds, "the song is very much entwined with the concept that you can't experience profound happiness without having experienced profound sadness."

Yes. The band has matured.

## Trash

As with all 'real' bands that perform music they write, Suede thinks that manufactured pop music is "a mechanical system of cynicism and money". He maintains that in Britain, there have

always been two separate charts, that there has always been an obvious segmentation of the pop scene and the indie scene. And it is obvious where Suede's sentiments lie.

At the same time, Brett recognises that some of the bands, like *The Strokes* and *The Hives*, which have taken over the British charts while they were away, do have "pretty good stuff".

"I think there's a lot of good, new things around... We're not the sorta band that sits around and gets bitter because other bands are getting the attention. It's just the nature of music... we've been in the limelight a lot over the last 10 years at various points in time, and it'll be very ungenerous if we'd sit around and get bitter. There are a lot of great bands around, and I think that's the nature of cutting-edge alternative music. There'll always be someone new and exciting."

## Lost in TV

Fans were given a special treat on 15 August when Suede held a private showcase at the Caldecott Broadcast Centre's TV Theatre. They played an hour-long acoustic set with songs from their new album and some songs from previous albums. The intimate setting, complete with candles around the studio and throw cushions on the stage for fans to gather around, was sealed when Suede came out and played with true melancholy.

Indeed, Suede is the quintessential Brit band, always promising great music, concerts, and clever quips, then delivering it with true style.



Adli bin Samad (top) and Elifan Abdul Hadi (bottom)

# Making the Band

Delving into the hive of student-formed bands in Ngee Ann, **hype** on campus uncovers sheer passion and enthusiasm for their craft

BY SUE-ANN WOO

For the past eight months or so, the band has worked on their songs, polishing their sound. "The name means reaching the peak of the mountain," Adli explains. His band comprises six members – one drummer, two guitarists, one bassist, one keyboard player and one saxophonist. He confesses to preferring the drums though.

"I'm really interested in it. I actually taught myself how to play the drums!" So keen is Adli that he crafted his skill through watching others perform and from videotapes. He also doubles up as the front man and lead vocalist.

Another young man who has been into band culture is Elifan Abdul Hadi. He is a proud owner of an electric Epiphone guitar, and is one-third of a "punk-rock experimental" band formed in 2000. "Actually, I believe that music runs in my family," he confides.

"I've been brought up listening to music. Even my father. When he was in his heyday, he was in a band of his own," he laughs.

The three-piece band cites Sonic Youth, Radio head and all-girl band, Sleater-Kinney as their influence. When asked why an all-girl band would be on their list, Elifan said, "I suppose we admire their quirky sounds, and their energy vibe. The vocalist is hyperactive!"

Most group bands start off with at least a three-piece set: drums, lead guitar and bass. Equipment-wise, some of the members painstakingly save up to afford their own gear like drum sets and guitars. Adli forked out \$600 on a drum pad to practice his act. "It's essentially just like playing a real drum set, just that it's made of plastic." He explains that a drum pad would let you brush up on the moves, minus the hassle having to sound-proof the room or calming irate neighbours.

There are places with people willing to lend a listening ear to their acts. Elifan and his mates troop down to a jamming studio at Yishun. With a sheepish grin, he shares, "When we run out of money, then we will go down each other place to hang out in. But when we do have money, then we go down to this place called 'Lee Kwong Seng Music' where we can jam or even record our pieces." Definitely a step towards cutting their own album perhaps? "Yes, we hope to," Elifan chirps. His band has ten original tunes that they hope to put together.

In terms of staging their shows, Scale Zenith has even gone on to perform at the Atrium in August 2002. "We play a little rock, a little jazz, a little instrumental... Our favourite piece is Santana's 'Smooth'" Adli says.

Maybe in the not-too-distant future, we will get to see Ngee Ann's very own bands making it big in the world of music corporations and record labels.



PLASH, SNAP, RUN (anticlockwise from left): Pool party  
by Yi Wei Dian Tai and Y.E.S. 93.3FM; Channel U artiste  
Wong and third-year MOT student Angelyn Yang, who  
on the TV show "SNAP 2"; and participants from the  
National Day Team Rally rushing to their next destination in  
the scavenger hunt. (Pictures: Andy Soh, Matthew Lee and Priscilla Tang)



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**IN**  
**OF IT**

# National Day Rally

BY ANDY SOH  
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**T**he National Day Team Rally at the Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) sports complex on 7 August saw NP staff and students celebrating National Day with student performances and a scavenger hunt, using racial harmony as its theme.

This year's event, organised by the Student Development & Alumni Relations Office (SDAR), had participants answer trivia questions about Singapore and its history while searching for checkpoints around the campus.

In line with the racial harmony theme, each team of five had to have members from at least two ethnic groups. Teams with members wearing ethnic costumes also won prizes sponsored by SDAR.

Fifty-nine student teams and 10 staff teams took part in the event from 5.30 to 8 pm.

Principal Mr Chia Mia Chiang felt that it was necessary for NP to celebrate the "nation's birthday". "We didn't have an equivalent event two years ago when I was new in the polytechnic. We didn't have a celebration [and] I felt a little bit awkward," he said.

Mr Chia, who also participated in the hunt,

explained the National Day Team Rally's significance. "Last year, we had student performances at the Atrium. So this year, we thought we might also have a few things all combined into one – racial harmony, National Day, bonding among staff and students, [and] fitness," he said.

Before the hunt began, various Co-Curricular Activity (CCA) groups, such as the Malay Cultural Club, Indian Cultural Society and the Ngee Ann Wushu & Lion Dance Association, performed dances and martial arts on the stadium track for the estimated crowd of 400 who filled the sports gallery.

After the principal declared the start of scavenger hunt by hitting a gong, the participants began searching for eight checkpoints in campus, including the School of Film & Media Studies' office and the swimming pool. The participants had to answer trivia questions, such as what the colours on the Singapore flag symbolise and who the first Chief Minister of Singapore was.

Mr Liew Hean Wah, Deputy Director of the Human Resource Office, enjoyed the scavenger hunt and felt that the day's highlights were the student performances because of the effort they had put in.

Dragon Boat Team 2, formed by Dragon Boat Club members, came in first for the student category while the Human Resource Office team won in the staff category.

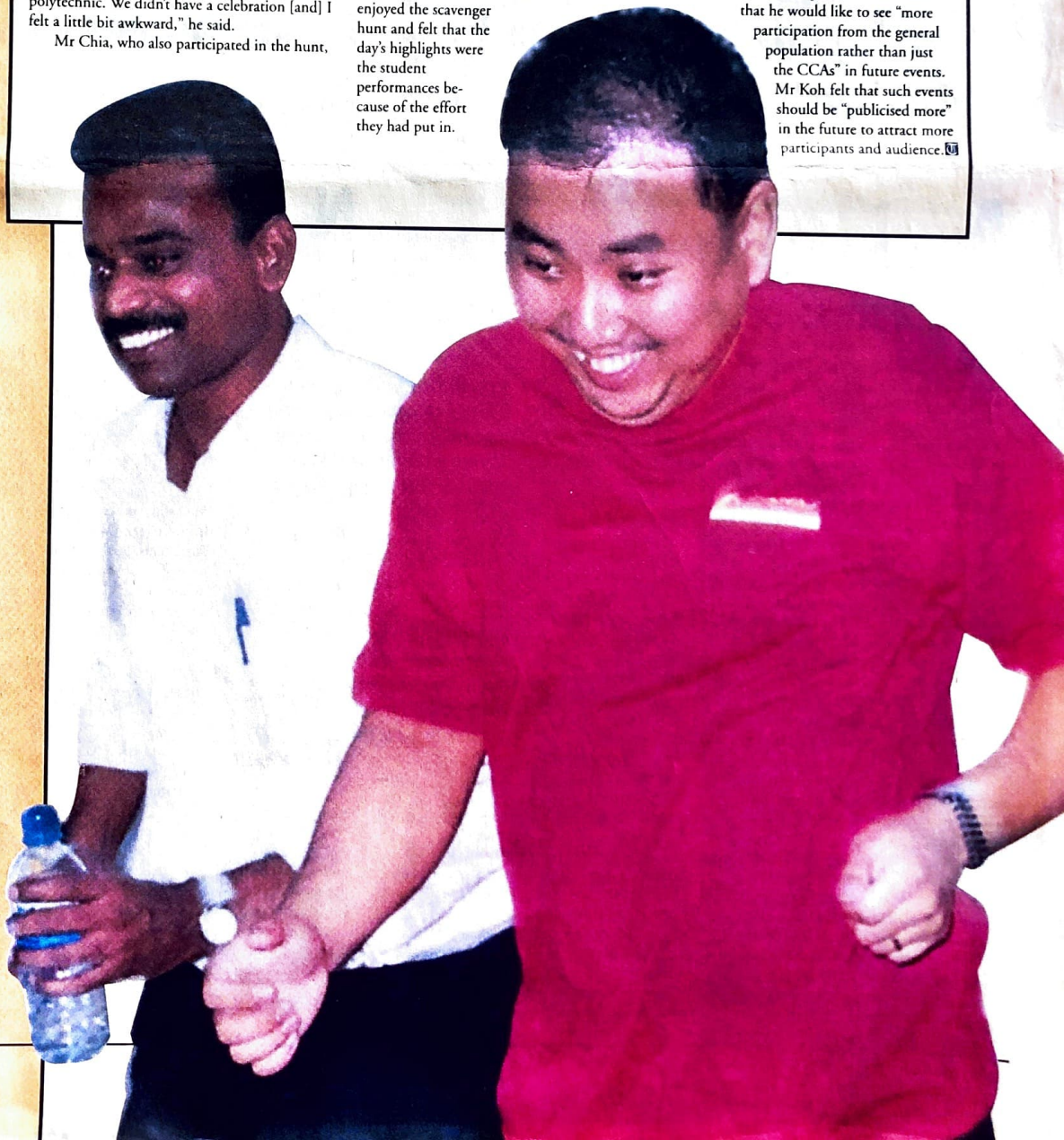
After a second round of performances by more CCA groups such as the Tae Kwon-Do Club and the Silat Club, Mr Chia gave away the prizes, which included sports shoes and T-shirts, to the winners.

Although the scavenger hunt was open to all NP staff and students, most of the student teams were formed by members of CCA groups, while only nine teams were formed by students who knew each other from class and other non-CCA means.

Dragon Boat Club member Genevieve Teo, 18, third-year Mass Communication student, said after her team won the students' competition, "It's good publicity for Dragon Boat [Club]."

While the large number of student participants showed they appreciated the event's significance, Mr Koh Say Yong, 35,

Student Development Officer, said that he would like to see "more participation from the general population rather than just the CCAs" in future events. Mr Koh felt that such events should be "publicised more" in the future to attract more participants and audience.





# Not a girl, not yet a woman



BY AMANDA KOH  
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I'm not a girl, not yet a woman. Yes, laugh at my lame attempt at being Britney, but that line really does reflect where I am now.

Most of us are at a point where we have grown out of our rebellious adolescent stage, but have not quite transformed into a full-blown, life-sized adult. We are trapped in a rut called "Transition".

As a child, my dreams in my own utopia were endless, and my ideals of the world seemed like a fairytale, with Prince Charming saving the world, and good triumphing over evil. Back then, everything mattered, and every problem seemed solvable.

If only.  
I've grown out of certainty into uncertainty. From black and white to

countless shades of grey, and then some.

A friend who has just officially become an adult this year doesn't let the state of the world bother him. When I say that I admire his carefree take on life, he simply tells me that it is just plain ignorance. Perhaps ignorance is bliss?

The rest of us who decide that we don't want to remain ignorant of events going on around us, simply become cynical and sceptical. Everything comes under a magnifying glass, to be scrutinised over and over again for subliminal messages or hidden sarcasm. We've become so angry with everyone and at everything, that we forget about the simple yet crucial things in life like compassion and joy.


We don't want to save the world any more, and don't even try because the state of the world is beyond our control, and it's too late to do anything anyway. When anything bad happens, we just shrug it off with a casual "That's life".

Where have my previous convictions gone? Probably lost in the myriad of deadlines and papers. Where are my dreams? Chuckled away in some cobweb-infested part of my head because maybe I have grown to realise that childish dreams aren't worth prime space.

Now I look at my future and it seems that I'll grow up into "one of those" adults. If the 8-year-old Amanda were here right now, seeing what I'm seeing, I'm sure she'd be utterly disappointed with the 35-year-old Amanda, with the 9 to 9 job, 2.5 kids, cynical and no dreams, mind preoccupied with unpaid bills and the next promotion.

However, thank goodness I'm in this transitional rut, where right decisions can be made, so come what may, the rat race will not come between me and my convictions.

I hope that even if the big, bad world does scare you and makes you feel like you should be someone you're not, you won't change. Use the ideals you had as a child as a beacon. Your ideals, coupled with what you've learnt growing up, seasoned with a dash of salt and pepper, should give you some sort of direction and a firm ground to set your feet on.

Suddenly, growing up seems scary and uncertain. But with my head and heart still intact and very much connected, I think I'm ready to be a woman, taking on the world, armed with child-like dreams and more. 

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## Choosing to care more for Mother Nature

BY CHIA SIHAN  
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A second-year Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) student won this year's HSBC-NYAA Youth Environmental Award as a result of his environmental contributions.

NP's School of Business & Accountancy (BA) nominated Business Studies student Peter Lee Keng Lim, 18, for the award for starting the LeafLife Network, among his other contributions. He had previously received the merit award in 2000.

Established with support from the Ministry of Environment, the Youth Environmental Award is jointly organised by the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation and the National Youth Achievement Award.

The award recognises youths between 14 and 25 years old for outstanding contributions, achievements and commitment towards environmental protection and nature conservation in Singapore.

Peter, who would "rather keep a low profile", felt that the award was "just a bonus".

BA launched the LeafLife Network in January 2002 to promote environmental awareness to students in an interactive and light-hearted way. Peter felt that to the average Singaporean youth, putting that awareness into practice seemed uninteresting and possibly unnecessary.

"Everything you do, counts. Things like recycling paper and plastic bags, or using laundry water to clean the floor. Small things make a difference," he said.

After representing Singapore at international environmental conferences, the President of NP's LeafLife Network felt that his overseas exposure had strengthened his motivation for the cause that almost all waste is recyclable.

"In Germany, people teach their kids how to recycle everyday stuff, like shopping bags. You'll see that almost everyone has brought their own bags to carry their grocery," he said.

"Their mentality is that the more you throw, the more you pay. They're just weighing the pros and cons of life, and I think they've made good choices in terms of caring for the environment."


Peter had proposed a nation-wide dustbin design contest to the National Youth Council to stimulate among teens a deeper awareness of the environment.

"Dustbins are situated everywhere. Yet you still see litter lying around," said Peter. By making a dustbin attractive to stand out from a plain background, it could entice people to use it for rubbish, he said.

Peter was also involved in organising the Ngee Ann Inter-Department Eco-Camp, a youth forum cum environment camp for NP students to discuss environmental issues, from 27 to 28 July and 3 to 4 August. He felt that NP students were "underprivileged" in the past.

Peter said, "The level of environmental awareness is pretty low in NP, but there weren't many activities for students to participate, in the first place."

"That's the aim of the Eco-Camp: to let NP students understand the importance of environment awareness and discuss on how to improve on the environmental side of our campus."

"Our activities are fully supported by our principal Mr Chia Mia Chiang," he added. They also work closely with the Campus Green Team, an environmental group that involves NP lecturers of the various Schools. 

*Everything you do, counts. Things like recycling paper and plastic bags, or using laundry water to clean the floor. Small things make a difference.*

- Peter Lee, 18,  
President,  
LeafLife Network

*We [youths] get so complacent with the environment, failing to realise the increasing statistics of waste.*

- Julia Poh, 19

BY DEEPA THANASEELAN  
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## Eco-awareness sweeps across the campus

Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) first campus-wide Eco-Camp succeeded in its attempt to go beyond being informative by having students suggest practical means of improving the environment.

Organised by the LeafLife Network from NP's School of Business & Accountancy (BA), the camp was held over two weekends in July and August.

More than 30 students from various Schools with a common green interest participated.

"The camp has been successful because it has helped trigger awareness in students, getting them to suggest ideas such as holding a Recycling Day and Environment Drive," said Peter Lee Keng Lim, 18, second-year Business Studies (BS) student and the President of the LeafLife Network.

The LeafLife Network is an environmental awareness group Peter set up in January.

During the camp's closing ceremony, Julia Poh, 19, third-year Early Childhood Education student, and her group presented their mission statement "To be responsible for our one and only environment" through a comedy skit.

"When we visited the Tuas Incineration Plant during the camp, I was shocked to see the enormous amount of rubbish that is collected every day. We [youths] get so complacent with the environment, failing to realise the increasing

statistics of waste," Julia said.

The group also pitched recommendations such as setting up a student recycling committee to work with the Campus Green Team (CGT), which comprises staff representatives from various Schools.

Cai Shi Wei, 17, first-year Biotechnology student, and her group came up with "A vision to echo environmental awareness to all NP students". Their suggestions included allowing NP students to manually switch off canteen lights when not in use and increasing the number of recycling bins around NP.


Another student suggestion was to tie up with recycling firms instead of government subsidiary companies, said Ian Cai, 18, second-year BS student and committee member of the LeafLife Network. This would mean more flexibility and creativity in providing attractive recycling bins and hence, encourage students to recycle more, he said.

Principal Mr Chia Mia Chiang assured the participants during the closing ceremony that the CGT would oversee the tying up with recycling firms and reflect on the practical suggestions the students had made.

Earlier, Mr Chia said during the opening ceremony that not many young Singaporeans think about environmental issues and that the Eco-camp was time well spent. He hoped that it would be a headstart for future larger-scale camps involving the four polytechnics.

The Eco-Camp saw speakers like Mr Mui Cheng Hock, then Deputy Director of Estates & Development, who talked about the ways NP conserves energy. The students also visited Labrador Park, PUB Ulu Pandan Reclamation Plant and the Eco Recovery Centre.

The camp had helped to network green-conscious NP students, said Ian.

"Under BA itself, it is hard to identify people with a green interest, not only in our School, but in other Schools as well. That is why the Eco-Camp helps to identify these people and bring them together," he said. 



# Going the distance

Youths from different religions make a Walk for Peace down Orchard Road

BY SAMANTHA CHAN  
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In conjunction with World Youth Day, some 250 youths from over six religions walked a stretch of Orchard Road as they joined hands in promoting peace on 28 July.

Youth for Peace, a two-day inter-religious event that began on 27 July, aimed to help young people better understand the idea of peace. Participants as young as 12 represented the Baha'i, Brahma Kumari, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, Zoroastrian and other faiths.

As part of Youth for Peace, participants camped overnight at the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (FMM) House where they exchanged views on different aspects of peace such as religious peace and world peace.

"Peace is the unity of one kind," said Yin Thing Ming, 25, from the Baha'i Youth Group. "Only with unity can world peace be achieved." She saw the inter-religious event as a good chance to learn and interact with people from other religions.

The youths at the camp also painted peace banners with phrases such as "Friendship Beyond Boundaries". Franciscan Friar John-Paul Tan, one of the event's organisers, said that the youths were demonstrating their understanding of different religions and races working together for peace.

The two-hour walk, held on the second day, began at the FMM House in Holland Road.

Youth organisers distributed cards printed with a "Prayer for Peace" to passers-by and invited them to join the walk to promote peace.

The eventual crowd of about 350 people, made up of the youths and passers-by, gathered at the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd in Queen Street. Youth for Peace ended with the leaders from the participating religions reading verses from their respective scriptures.

"Young people are our future leaders and they have their whole lifetime ahead to do something," said Franciscan Friar John-Paul. "If we can make young people realise that religion is a unifying force, we can make this world a better place to live in."

Gerald Louis, 19, third-year Mechanical Engineering student, was among the few Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students who participated in Youth for Peace. Gerald had learnt about the event through his organisation, the Focolare Movement, which advocates world peace. He felt that few NP students had joined as they were either unaware of the event or too busy to participate.

Muhd Hisham Alian, 20, third-year Electrical Engineering student and President of NP's Muslim Student's Society, was one of the students who was unaware of the event. He was certain he would participate in Youth for Peace otherwise.

"As a Muslim, we must understand and learn what Islam is all about before understanding other religions. We should show

our Islamic nature through ourselves to let people understand," he said.

Chairperson of Christian Fellowship Education student, Sharon Tan said,

"It is good to understand other religions, but what we believe are different so it is hard to even talk. We will keep debating so it is better not to talk about it."

Sharon, 22, added that Christian Fellowship could promote peace through prayers.

MOVING FORWARD: Youths of different religions walk together to promote peace in this world. Another part of the programme saw the young people camp overnight and discuss different aspects of peace. (Picture: Noel Hidalgo Tan)

## All-inclusive netball through Mixed Street event

BY SUHARTI SAMSUDIN  
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Despite netball being a traditionally women's sport, men once again tried out their skills at the Mixed Street Netball competition organised by Ngee Ann Polytechnic's Netball Club.

"There's nothing to be shy about playing netball because you're a guy," said Terence Lam, 19, third-year Business Studies (BS) student who took part in the event for the second consecutive time with his class.

Held on 16 and 17 August, the event saw 20 teams register, each made up of four women and the basic requirement of two men.

The response was better than the expected turnout of about 15 teams, said Wong Peck Hong, 18, vice-president of the Netball Club and second-year Banking & Financial Services student.

The event's inclusion of men is in line with the Netball Club's objective of increasing male participation.

Pearline Kong, 19, third-year BS student

participant, felt that the idea of having men involved in the event was "good as it adds to the quality of the game".

Jasmine Ho Hui Hua, 18, event coordinator for Mixed Street Netball and second-year BS student, agreed. "The game gets more active because guys run around even more," she said.

Mixed Street Netball games are played on a half court rather than a full court, with four in a team compared to the usual seven. No fixed positions are given to participants.

The game lasts for only seven minutes, with the requirement that at least one man from each team plays at any one time during the match.

- Terence Lam, 19

This year's event ended with the champion team, Pui Pui, thrashing rival, Lightning, 6-1.

Participants received Co-Curricular Activity (CCA) points and goodie bags while the winners received trophies as well.

The club is planning other events, such as Mixed League Netball in the next semester that will involve different Schools and CCA clubs.

## Muslim Students' Society raises \$1,200 for charity

BY SUHARTI SAMSUDIN  
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This year's Islamic Awareness Week (IAW), organised by Ngee Ann Polytechnic's Muslim Student's Society (MSS), saw almost \$1,200 collected from their charity drive, four times more than last year's IAW.

Held between 12 and 15 August, IAW saw a switch in concept from previous years, where MSS set up booths to sell items such as Islamic books, brochures and veils.

"We decided to do it in terms of community service this year, where students can volunteer by registering earlier," said Shuhaibah bte Sulaiman Syed, 18, chairperson for IAW and second-year Multimedia Computing student.

The student volunteers registered to collect funds with donation tins or by selling teddy bears.

"We've had really good response, despite the very slow first day [of the drive]. But things picked up, and we've even had non-Muslims registering," said Shuhaibah.

Nurhidayah bte Mohamed Kamal, 22, vice-chairperson for IAW, estimated that more than 30 people registered, with six non-Muslims. Only two of the six turned up to do the work, however.

The volunteers sold at \$6 each the teddy bears MSS bought from Mercy Relief, a non-profit, non-Islamic humanitarian aid organisation that operates in Singapore.

Mercy Relief helps orphans, victims of war and victims of natural disasters, especially within the Asian continent. It provides humanitarian and financial aid, such as raising funds and building resources like manpower and equipment.

Of the \$1,194.20 collected, about \$800 were from the tins while the rest were from the teddy bears. All money from the drive went to Mercy Relief.

MSS also hopes to promote racial harmony within the campus through IAW.

"Mercy Relief is a non-Muslim organisation, and the money will go to orphans etc, regardless of religion. We want to show that we do care, no matter whether you're [Muslim] or not," said Shuhaibah.

The charity drive was also in line with MSS' objectives to encourage youths to contribute to the less fortunate, and to provide "an eye-opener for youths to realise the presence of unfortunate children around the world", she added.

IAW ended with a closing ceremony at Lecture Theatre 73A on 15 August.

Attended by about fifty people, including the MSS committee and the IAW volunteers, it included a talk by Mr Zulkifli Ismail, a lecturer from Perdaus, who urged everyone to "foster goodwill among mankind through charity work".

Perdaus is a social and educational development organisation for the Malay/Muslim community in Singapore.



# Unleashing the 'qi' within

BY DANNY TAN  
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**T**he 25 members of the Nam Wah Pai club in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) specialise in qigong – the art of using the body's internal energy.

Besides qigong, Nam Wah Pai, literally the "Southern Chinese Sect" in Chinese, incorporates full contact sparring, Judo's throwing and sweeping movements, and Aikido's joint locks in its training.

Tan Ying Fang, 18, club president and third-year Business Studies student, said, "If you use qigong, it will help smoothen your blood circulation. My bruises heal very easily! I feel healthier, in the sense that I haven't had any sickness for the past three years, though I don't know if it's just me or the qigong that helped."

Koh Hui Te, 19, third-year Horticulture & Landscape Management student and the club's project co-ordinator, said, "When you reach a higher level, you can feel this 'qi' within you, like various parts of your body feeling warm. It shows that your 'qi' is travelling through."

Coached by a fifth dan black belt instructor from the Nam Wah Pai headquarters in Geylang, the club won five individual gold medals in a full-contact sparring competition in March.

The competition involved NP, Nanyang Polytechnic and the National University of Singapore – the only other two tertiary institutions that have a Nam Wah Pai club.

Each practitioner must

learn sparring and sets of movements as part of his or her progression to different coloured belts, from the basic white to the advanced black. Qigong is also tested, from the higher level of brown belt onwards, by breaking bricks, tiles and sticks with primarily the hands and shins, said Ying Fang.

"Especially for girls, you do get small

injuries like cuts and bruises from sparring with guys. There's some roughness involved in sparring, even though it is non-contact," she said.

According to Ying Fang, the club's membership has declined over the years, with an average of five new members each academic year. She said, "Last time at the registration booth during the freshmen registration, we were asking some girls to join, and they just laughed and walked off. It's tough to get girls to join the club."

Mr Koh Say Yong, 35, Student Development Officer in charge of the Nam Wah Pai club, offered reasons for the sport's low take-up rate. "Maybe because there are too many clubs around, and people may not be so interested in martial arts anymore," he said.

Nam Wah Pai training isn't just physical, but mental as well. A person who shows off his skills, said Hui Te, only shows that he is not self-disciplined. "You must know when to control and when to let it go... it has taught me self-discipline as a form of defence," he said.

Hui Te, who is currently a brown belt holder, wants to continue his training after he graduates. He said, "I hope to get a black belt (one dan) after all the time I spent. It shows that you have reached a certain level. Actually, a black belt is the beginning of martial arts. It shows that you have reached the minimum requirement to be a martial artiste. There's still a long way until nine dan."

A black belt at nine dan is the highest level attainable. Instructors from the Nam Wah Pai headquarters grade the club members each quarter of the year.

Ying Fang said daily practice of qigong is necessary for the development of the energy in a person. She keeps motivated for the weekly training sessions "by reminding myself that I will be losing all the calories and fats [consumed] during the week."

*For more information, join the club's weekly training sessions at 6.30 pm on Wednesdays at level three of Blk 18, beside the Co-Curricular Activities (CCA) clubhouse.*



USING THE FORCE: Members of the Nam Wah Pai club learn how to use the body's internal energy, or 'qi' as part of their martial arts training. (Picture: Nam Wah Pai club)

# Ambassadors in the making

BY CHIA SIHAN  
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**S**tart practising your handstands, if you are interested in becoming a Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) Ambassador.

That is the advice given by the President of the NP Ambassadors Angelina Ang Ling Na, 20. A third-year Business Studies student, she said that apart from being spontaneous and confident, a student ambassador should also be eloquent and quick-thinking, even performing unusual acts when necessary.

The student ambassadors are part of NP's outreach and marketing efforts. This year's annual recruitment drive from 24 to 26 July outside the Corporate Communications office attracted 284 applicants, with 74 students short-listed for interviews. To qualify as an ambassador, students must pass two rounds of interviews, one by current student leaders, and the other by NP's Corporate Communications officers.

One of the ambassador leaders Stellina Sim Zijun, 20, third-year Early Childhood Education student, said, "We screen the applicants by asking them a variety of questions, the most common being a 'scenario' question. It's to test whether they can react to a situation quickly."

The number of selected ambassadors is yet to be confirmed, as Angelina said, "It depends

on the quality of the lot. We don't have a fixed quota." The Corporate Communication officers will be conducting the second round of interviews in September.

Besides setting up road shows at Orchard Road, giving presentations to secondary schools and representing NP at inter-polytechnic and public forums, they also help build school spirit within campus.

"We had a Spot-The-Tattoo contest during this year's Open House. The point of it was to get students to put on the NP logo, which we distributed throughout the campus. We even spotted the logos on some Singapore Polytechnic ambassadors' faces!" said Angelina.

Newly recruited ambassadors undergo teamwork and etiquette training at a camp in November with seniors, NP officers and external consultants from Nu Quest Management, which specialises in creative thinking and leadership programmes.

The most rewarding aspect of being a student ambassador was the chance to meet people from all walks of life, Stellina said.

"We participated in dialogue sessions with delegates from various schools, and had the chance to play host to visiting students from St Francis Methodist School and St Patrick's School, to name a few. It's fulfilling to see that the students we talked to have a better view of polytechnic life and education. Having gone

through the stage of deciding whether to choose a junior college or polytechnic, we're in a good position to offer them opinions and open up the choices they have," she said.

"When President Nathan attended a soccer match in NP, we interacted with his entourage over a meal in the Staff Hub after the match. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience," Angelina said.

NP Ambassadors are also given allowances for meals and transport, and Co-Curricular Activity points for their community efforts.

As the ambassadors' assignments are on an ad-hoc basis, they do not have a fixed meeting schedule. However, each ambassador is required to put in two hours of administrative work at the Corporate Communications office over a period of three months, said Stellina.

"The bulk of our assignments come during the first half of the year, as that's when we're busy with the Open House and orientation," she said. Once a candidate is officially accepted as an NP Ambassador, he or she is included in the ambassadors' extended family, and expected to serve throughout the three years in NP, said Angelina.

"We are a big and cosy family. The most important part of being a student ambassador is to be able to work happily in the ambassadorial team. Our friendships go beyond our assignments in NP."



AMBASSADORS AT LARGE: Stellina (left) and Angelina are part of NP's goodwill corps. All applicants must pass two rounds of interviews and undergo etiquette training to become NP Ambassadors. (Picture: Chia Sihan)