

NP energy bill falls \$420,000 a year on conservation measures

NP's energy saving tactics have been successful, cutting down the electrical bills massively. Dedrick Koh reveals what exactly helped NP to save \$420,000 in a year.

Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) saved about \$420,000 in one year in energy bills after creating more awareness of energy saving methods. This saving is double the school's initial target.

Mr Mui Cheng Hock, 53, Director of Estate Management Office, in response to *Tribune* inquiries, said that the school has saved approximately 10.6 percent on energy bills after implementing a campus-wide energy saving policy. The savings was calculated by year-on-year comparisons of energy consumption during July 2002-June 2003 with July 2003-June 2004. The school spent \$330,000 every month in the earlier year.

Mr Mui also chairs a two-year-old energy panel created by the school. The panel, consisting of school directors and energy managers, aims to create awareness of energy conservation.

The school directors are consulted when buildings under them use more energy. The panel is also responsible for making students more aware of the school's stance towards conserving energy, including the habit of switching off unused lights or electrical appliances. Mr Mui describes this as a simple, yet effective method.

A website listing ways to help conserve energy, and energy managers monitoring usage in each building are other means employed.

Mr Mui said that the measures have always been in place in NP, the only difference being the panel formalising such measures and making them better known to the students and staff.

Mr Mui also described the measures as being part of our "social responsibility".

Where this is not an automatic response, the Estate Management Office has enforced the savings by controlling electrical supply.

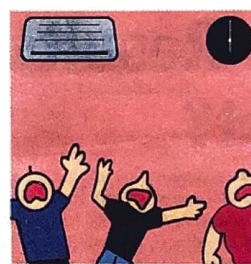
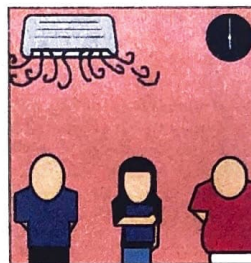
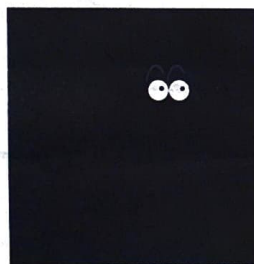
Mr Goh Peng Wah, 39, an administration manager in the School of Business & Accountancy (BA) said that teaching staff in BA has to endure working in non-air-conditioned offices when the air-conditioning is shut down at 6 pm.

But he understands why such measures have to be taken. Mr Goh admitted that "One of the most expensive item[s] on the energy bill is air-con." He further emphasised that it was not efficient to leave the air-conditioning on for a handful of staff.

"You have to optimise resources," he said.

According to Mr Goh, some staff use electric fans when the air-conditioning gets turned off but most lecturers in the School of BA usually leave the offices by 6.30 pm. During marking periods, when lecturers have to stay as late as 9 pm, arrangements are made with the Estate Management Office to leave the air-conditioning on. Mr Goh said, "As long as we keep them informed, they know what to do."

The newest buildings, NP Convention Centre and the Teaching Hub, were designed to use resources more efficiently.



COST SAVINGS MEASURES: Energy savings motion sensors and timed air-conditioners. [Illustrations: Loo Yong Ping]

However, Mr Mui said that the school did not invest in installing energy efficient appliances throughout the campus, as they did not find it cost efficient. Mr Mui said, "We must not go into this mode where we pay money to save money."

Mr Mui said that such appliances may take up to eight to 10 years to recover their costs; whereas the current savings were achieved without spending "a single cent", by simply using "common sense" methods.

Not all have complied with the energy conservation measures. "There will always be people who will not put in the effort," said Mr Mui. He warned that for such measures to be successful, it has to be a "sustained concerted effort".

Mr Mui also revealed that constant checks were carried out to ensure that energy isn't supplied needlessly to booked facilities. "During the holidays [when there is more wastage] we check a lot," said Mr Mui.

Mr Mui admitted, "You can only show people the need to be socially mature," but that a "conscious effort has been put in to ensure efficient energy usage".

Tan Yong Meng, 19, a first-year student from Electronic & Computer Engineering (ECE) who constantly has to stay back late in school to finish his assignments is unaware about such measures. Yong Meng said that he has yet to be inconvenienced by air-conditioning being cut-off at a certain time as he mainly does his work at the Atrium or the library.

But NP isn't the only polytechnic to have students oblivious to such measures. Mr

Laurence Tan, 31, an administrative officer from the Office of Estates from Republic Polytechnic (RP) admitted to facing similar problems.

Mr Tan warned that the higher energy costs in polytechnics could result in higher school fees; a consequence most students are not aware of.

With just 2,000 students, a fraction of NP's 14,000, RP's monthly utility bills of \$50,000 is higher than NP's, using simple extrapolation.

He said RP saves about \$5 an hour from implementing similar methods as NP; about 10 percent on energy bills. When approached by *Tribune*, the other three polytechnics chose not to comment on their energy-saving measures.

However, Mr Tan feels that RP temporary campus at Kay Siang Road is at a disadvantage when it comes to conserving energy as they have to switch off the appliances manually unlike other polytechnics as they do not have an automated system to shut down power. Their new campus at Woodlands will have automated controls to turn off power.

According to him security guards also patrol the school and ask students to vacate parts of RP when they are not supposed to be in use.

Mr Mui said the energy panel has no savings target set for next year but warned that, "There will come a time when all savings will plateau."

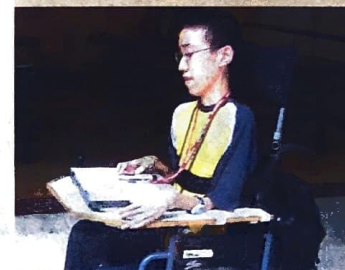
It is also uncertain if the recent shift to a five-day workweek for civil servants will result in more energy savings, though it is a reasonable possible outcome.

Mr Mui also said that there are no plans to implement any further schemes related to energy conservation at present.

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A Time of Leadership



BY EVON WONG
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It's easy to peg this semester as the one with new-old leadership.

Why do I say this? On the national front, Mr Lee Hsien Loong had been waiting for many years, being groomed and tested before stepping into the shoes of Prime Minister on 12 August.

Here in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP), our Principal Mr Chia Mia Chiang served his full four years before breaking with tradition and staying on with us after his term of office, despite receiving more attractive offers.

Even the new president of our Students'

Union (NPSU), Mark Jonathan Mohan, has been working and honing his skills in the union for the last two years of his life.

Are there any similarities among them? Well, by all their declarations, they are going to listen to and work for their constituents more.

PM Lee slayed several sacred cows after he took office. The two we like most are the five-day work week for civil servants, and the bonus that even school is covered, and for those of us joining the workforce in a few years, medical coverage for the future members of working women.

Mr Chia is promising to send many more of us overseas for exposure and community service, with some help in terms of subsidies, we hope. Together with him overseeing changes in the way Interdisciplinary Studies (IS) will be taught, we are expecting future NP graduates to be more global in thinking, more ready to take risks and self-reliant, and less obsessed with self, which can only be good for us and our society.

What about Mark? He is pledging to be the voice of the students, which means listening to us more and working harder for our benefit. While he is not ready to make any official announcements yet on plans or specifics on his vision, his team will meet to deliberate on this

just after Tribune goes off to print. We sincerely wish them all the best.

We also hope that the NP community will care more about the union's work and make them accountable as leaders, whether that means volunteering to help them in their programmes, such as the recent fundraising funfair, or giving them constructive feedback on how to improve and wisely spend the \$18 union dues that each of the 14,000 of us pay compulsorily every year.

When I was my secondary school's basketball team captain and Head Prefect at my primary school, I just used to think, "Wow, I can boss people around and not be scolded by an adult or a fellow student." It just felt so overwhelming. But with age, I realised the importance of a leader as the key who holds and shapes the team's morale and abilities.

Knowing that, we want to see the NPSU succeed and grow from strength to strength. We look forward to them exhibiting in their leadership more of the global thinking, caring, creative and risk-taking traits that will be increasingly a trademark of NP graduates.

For it is when our leaders do well and are committed to the long term that they take us to greater heights collectively. ■

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Tribune, 2004

NPSU Election Results: What to Expect?

BY TEO KAI WUN
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Mark Jonathan Mohan, 25, a final-year Electrical Engineering (EE) student, who has been with the Ngee Ann Polytechnic Students' Union (NPSU) since his first year, is its new President.

"[I] want to be the voice of the students and make them heard. In a sense, we are their mediators," said Mark, who was elected on 12 August.

He will be overseeing NPSU activities such as the upcoming blood donation drive and next year's matriculation maze.

The new NPSU committee had their first meeting on 28 August. One of their top priorities is to form a strong group dynamic before reaching out to the students, as Mark emphasised that he wants to get the committee "integrated with the union working attitude".

It's not surprising that even third-year NP students that Tribune spoke with were oblivious to the election results of NPSU.

"Students Union? I don't know... was there an election?" said Lu Ling Yan, 19, a final-year Business Studies (BS) student.

It appeared that some representatives from the various student bodies were themselves taken by surprise.

This is because they were informed that they could run for the NPSU committee on the same day and meeting that both the nomination and appointment were to be announced.

Voting for the key office bearers of the NPSU was restricted to representatives of the student bodies, which includes Co-curricular Activity (CCA) groups, student faculty groups, and the previous NPSU committee.

According to Mark, four of the 15 members of the new union's committee have been re-elected from the previous team.

Chairman of Student Council

A critical part of the Student Union (SU) is the Student Council, which is the body that serves as the voice of the students, assisting SU to make plans and decisions. Although every student is automatically a member of the Student Council, it is possibly even less well known.

Film & Media Studies Society (FMSS) representative, Francis Tay, 19, is the newly elected Chairman of the Student Council.

The second-year Mass Communication (MCM) student felt that some of the 30 or so representatives from the student bodies felt that the election was "rather impromptu", and thought they should have had more time to know the nominees better.

"I suppose they could have done better by extending the invitation for the election," said Francis, "but I'm sure they had their own difficulties... it's not easy."

Francis's role is to promote clear communication between the Student Council and Students' Union as well as within the various student bodies.

In addition, he hopes to interest more students to become aware of the NPSU and its activities.

"Many of us didn't know about the Students' Union or even the Student Council... I think what they [SU] really needs to do [is] to engage the students," said Francis.

Francis looks forward to creating "opportunities for student bodies and SU to communicate between one another" and thus promoting a collective environment.

However, he points out that it has to be a two-way communication; if the students are not opening their doors to the NPSU's efforts, their [SU] actions will end up futile.

"It's a challenging role," said Francis, "but it will be a good way for me to serve the NP students." ■

Upcoming Events

September:

Poly Stage F'Actor's Drama Performance

Two drama performances: "Bottled Dreams" and "Hide It" will be staged. Both plays will be exploring teenage issues like friendship, betrayal and the pursuit of dreams. "Hide It" is written by Poly Stage F'Actor's own playwright Lian Jiayuan.

Date: 24 Sept

Time: Evening

Venue: LT 26

Charity Concert-De Dolce Luna

In aid of the President's Challenge Fund, various student cultural clubs in Ngee Ann Polytechnic are staging this night of performances.

Date: 25 Sept

Time: Evening

Venue: Ngee Ann Convention Centre

October:

FMS Youth Expedition Project (YEP) in Yunnan, China

Up to 25 FMS students, accompanied by lecturers, will be going to Yunnan, China, for

14 days to do projects with students from Dali University. Projects include doing a rebranding exercise, installing a computer system and filming a video. A cultural tour will follow [see pg 12].
Date: 30 Oct - 14 Nov
Venue: Dali University, Yunnan, China

November:

SIF-funded trip to Hainan, China

Students will go to Hainan, China, to build a biogas tank. This 14-day trip includes a four-day tour at the end. The cost of travelling for each student is \$550, and a deposit of \$300 is required to confirm a place.

Date: 1 - 14 Nov

Venue: Hainan, China

December:

NP Concert Band- Rondeau XIX

The band will perform classical pieces in their 19th performance.

Date: To be confirmed

Time: 5.30pm

Venue: Victoria Concert Hall

Admission: Tickets at \$10

Fast Food in NP?

nptribune.com poll: Fast food service you'd like on NP Campus

Burger King (22)	30.99%
Long John Silver's (14)	19.72%
KFC (12)	16.90%
Pizza Hut (7)	9.86%
No Fast Food (7)	9.86%
Others (5)	7.04%
McDonald's (4)	5.63%

Spotlight: The Man at the Helm

Mr Chia Mia Chiang's term as Principal of Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) ended on 31 March but he stayed on despite more lucrative career options. LIYANA OTHMAN comes face-to-face with the man at the helm of NP and finds out why he feels it's all worth it.

Mr Chia Mia Chiang was to have ended his term of office on 31 March, after four years as Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) principal.

But after discussion with the Ministry of Education (MOE), Mr Chia decided to stay on despite more lucrative career options in the civil service. This makes him NP's first principal to work beyond his contract.

What made him want to stay on?

Mr Chia said no other job can offer him both the chance to see "the organisation grow and getting thanks from Ngee Ann graduates".

"It's very touching when they send me their emails, pictures and update me on how their lives are going," said Mr Chia.

There were also more practical reasons.

"I thought it would be useful for me to stay a while more because there are so many revamps in place," said Mr Chia.

"There were physical changes in campus – the Teaching Hub and the Convention Centre had just been built. The Ngee Ann Learning Model and IS curriculum needed to evolve and change.

"I also wanted to create more opportunities for students to go overseas. I'd like [to see]... at least one in two NP students get to go on overseas trips or internships during their education here."

Commenting on the value of Mr Chia staying, Deputy Principal Mr Tan Hang Cheong, 50, said, "In the past, we have principals who have been here longer than that (four years)... it is good with a principal who is here for a longer period of time... we can see a continuity of certain policies and initiatives [for him] to see them through."

"We are in the midst of implementing our third strategic plan... there are many ideas we want to carry through and I think it will be good [that Mr Chia has stayed on]," said Mr Tan, "Mr Chia is very focussed and committed to his job.



MAN OF PRINCIPLE: Mr Chia Mia Chiang explains his rationale for staying on. (Picture: Cheong Shwu Ping)

He considers the well-being of the students and staff before he makes a decision."

The principal

Apart from creating more opportunities for students, Mr Chia said that when he does leave, he'd like to be remembered as a "caring, committed and dedicated" principal.

It's for this reason that Mr Chia makes the extra effort to remember names and details of the students he comes in contact with.

"I have so few opportunities to mingle with all the students... so I try to remember as many of the students' names as I can," he said.

Ng Peijun, a final-year Business Studies (BS)

student who met Mr Chia at a feedback session between NP Ambassadors and the management remembers Mr Chia as "fatherly".

"Even though he's in a rush, he'll always make an effort to talk to the students... he treats NP students like they're his own children."

Haslina Abdul Halim, a final-year Mass Communication (MCM) student who is also an NP ambassador was "very happy" when she heard that Mr Chia was extending his stay as the principal.

"He says 'Hi, what's up Has[li]na?' when he bumps into me at the Atrium... That's what I like about Mr Chia... he makes an effort to be friendly to the students."

Mr Chia said, "Each time I come into contact with a new student, I think: 'How can I make his or her education in NP better?'"

But being a principal does not just entail building rapport with the students, but also "creating a shared vision" for all 1,600 staff.

Speaking of this vision, he said, "My hope is that parents will think of NP as a poly that prepares their children... for the future and that during an NP student's three years here, he or she will find it an exciting, rewarding and purposeful experience."

The family man

"Most people see me as a private family man," he said.

Aside from his hectic schedule, he spends his free time jogging and taking long walks. "I contemplate life, read and think how to be a better person," he added.

He said that he wants to better himself in all aspects of his life – especially as a father to a 13-year-old and an 11-year-old.

And as a father, he believes that he should never pressure his daughters to make any choices they don't really want to.

He said, "I believe that the young should be able to exercise their own choices."

The ex-teenager

Exercise is something that Mr Chia did a lot of as a teenager. A self-confessed "sports freak", Mr Chia canoed, ran and played billiards so much he "dreamt of coloured balls rolling around".

Like typical teens, Mr Chia enjoyed Mandarin pop and English bands like the Eagles and Bad Company in his free time.

But he had his share of idiosyncrasies, such as doing 10-Year Series problems from 8pm to 6am because he found it "invigorating".

"I'm sure there are NP students who were just like me," Mr Chia said with a grin. ■

Are you ready for action learning?

BY TEO KAI WUN
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Following the initiatives of the Ministry of Education (MOE), the School of Interdisciplinary Studies (IS) will be actively developing innovative and enterprising qualities in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students.

The biggest changes that students can expect from this move, that will take effect in the next academic year from May 2005, are:

- a reduction in curriculum time,
- shift in emphasis from product to process and
- less-structured classes.

Curriculum hours for the IS modules will be cut to 300 hours for each student's three-year stay in NP, and students in level 3.2 will also be exempted from taking IS modules.

Now, Quality Management & Engineering (QME) students spend as many as 540 curriculum hours and even those with the least class time have to spend 360 hours on IS modules.

The mindset change to put process above

product will occur in level 2.2, when students will be engaged in Action Learning.

According to IS senior manager, Ms Jacinta John, 52, students will need to take only one IS module (Action Learning) in level 2.2, instead of the current two.

A major difference is that the motivation and scope of the project will come entirely from each group of students. They are the ones deciding the nature of their project and the skills they need.

Within that one Action Learning module, students can pick from a spectrum of endeavours to work on in a semester: from community work to business ventures.

For example, one may choose to create a website for an old folks' home. The group can then establish the objectives for the website, design the layout and finally upload the operational website.

Along the way, students may have to pick up other skills to help them in their goal (eg. learning Flash to create animation within the website).

Working in groups largely on their own, students will have weekly one-on-one sessions with an NP staff mentor, who will provide them with guidance and support through the semester, assessing them on innovative and enterprising traits demonstrated.

"It provides more opportunities to demonstrate learning qualities such as self-confidence, courage, initiative and teamwork," commented Ms John on how Action Learning will enrich students.

Ms John emphasised that given the "focus on the process and not on the outcome", students enrolled in Action Learning will be assessed more on their resourcefulness and initiatives in overcoming challenges, rather than on how successful their project is in meeting objectives.

This shift in weightage allows students not to be paralysed by the thought of failure, but to dare to try innovative approaches.

"The world today is changing rapidly, it is filled with chaos and uncertainty; students need to learn the life-skills to march with the flow of society and the economy," explained Ms John.

Reflecting the improvements, the trademark Ngee Ann Learning Model (NLM) will be renamed ENLM, where E stands for Enhanced.

However, some students were sceptical about the new scheme.

"Sounds like Action Learning may take up a lot of our personal time," said Katherine Wu, 19, a final-year student from Business Studies (BS).

Others felt this is a change for the better. "I think it will help in teaching us dexterity,"

said See Chee How, 19, a second-year Banking & Financial Services (BFS) student, "plus, there's going to be shorter hours, it's good news."

Also looking forward to this is Mr Chiam Kah Min Michael, 43, a lecturer from the School of Business & Accountancy (BA).

Feeling that Action Learning would be beneficial to students and lecturers alike, Mr Chiam said, "It's quite fun, there're no boundaries in exploring the different content students can work on."

Mr Chan Yoke Khiong, 47, an IS lecturer said that should he be mentoring a group that is working on a project entirely out of his scope, he plans to "read up and be in tune with the student's work". ■

The main innovative and enterprising qualities that Action Learning instils and tests:

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| • Self confidence | • Creativity |
| • Self Reliance | • Curiosity |
| • Resourcefulness | • Critical Thinking |
| • Motivation | • Initiative |
| • Perseverance | • Pro-activity |
| • Resilience | • Risk taking |
| • Imagination | • Seizing and creating |

[Source: IS]

ICT staff and students' winning streak

BY DIYANA ALAN
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Since early July, several students and a lecturer from Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) School of Infocomm Technology have earned awards in national, regional and international competitions. In such a short period of time, the school's standards of excellence have certainly improved as reflected by the multiple successes.

In July, Worldskills National Gold Medallist 21-year old, Aaron Tan, who graduated from NP last semester, brought glory to the school with his win in the Web Design category.

That same month, ICT lecturer Mr Terence Choo, 40, was awarded the PS21 award for his commitment to the education system and other external efforts. He was the only polytechnic lecturer to be given the award this year.

More recently, final-year students, Lee Chee Yuan, 19, from Information Technology (IT) and Low Yi Yang, 19 from Multimedia Computing (MMC) came in first and second place respectively in the Microsoft Office 2002 Competition. Chee Yuan has also been named the World Champion [see pg 10].

The possible reason for these achievements

according to Director of School of InfoComm Technology, Ms Angela Wee was the determined efforts made by her staff and students.

She said, "I am proud of the achievements of the staff and the students. Their successes don't come by sheer chance. There had been a lot of passion, teamwork, dedication and hard work behind these successes."

Mr Choo who was acknowledged for his excellence in public service, added, "I have to thank Ngee Ann Polytechnic which has provided me with many training opportunities to improve my professional and service quality skills." According to Mr Choo, his efforts were acknowledged largely due to the relationships with his co-workers and students.

"The School of ICT has been very actively encouraging use of innovative and progressive teaching methods and has organized many teaching forums. All this nurturing from the School together with the guidance and strong support of my Director Ms Angela Wee and Reporting Officers, Mr Charles Keck & Mr Wang It Peng have given me the inspiration and confidence to try different teaching methods which have fortunately been well-received by my students," he wrote in a note thanking his fellow

The School of ICT has been very actively encouraging use of innovative and progressive teaching methods and has organized many teaching forums.

Terence Choo, 40,
ICT Lecturer

colleagues upon winning the PS21 award.

For former graduate, Aaron who was intensively trained by his ICT lecturers, the probable reason for the school's achievements was largely due to the commitment of the leaders in ICT.

"The lecturers identifying these kind of opportunities for us (the students) to join these competitions really helps us," he said.

He credited many of his lecturers, Ms

Wee and the support he gained from NP. "For Worldskills, I had three coaches behind me who pushed me to go for the Gold medal every single day. Even the director emailed me occasionally to motivate me for Worldskills."

As for Chee Yuan and Yi Yang, their lecturer Mr Mani Nachimuthu, 34, lecturer of ICT who coached both students for the competition had said in an earlier interview of their success, "both are very determined, they are both very, hungry to win. Whenever we call them, they come... we coach them, finally they got it."

This spirit of pushing the boundaries of communication and rapport between the staff and students in the School of ICT was probably the winning formula to the ICT's successes.

After all, Director, Ms Wee stated, "The school puts much emphasis in creating the framework to develop and unlock the potentials of staff and students - that's one of our key missions."

Indeed, Ms Wee's vision of ICT is slowly but surely being realised and it may not be long before ICT has more accolades to its name.

Talent spotting for several other competitions have begun and the selection for next year's Worldskills competition is underway. ■

Youthful Art

BY JACQUINE CHOW
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Most schools in Singapore punish colourful scrawls on walls as the work of vandals, but The Graffiti Competition in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) not only gave them a platform for expression but rewarded them.



SPANISH FOR STYLE: One of three winning pieces named 'Estilo' meaning style in Spanish done by Lou Zhe Loon (Picture: Jacqueline Chow)

Among the prizes for the contest's winners at Bazaar Thr3e in the Atrium were one Microsoft OneNote 2003 worth approximately \$350, BMG prizes like CDs and posters of Avril Lavigne, Usher and Maroon 5 and four wrist pads.

Some nine teams, with the option of having up to five members each, participated.

Each team had three hours to complete their piece and was provided three cans of spray paint of their choice. In addition, they could use other colours that they brought.

NP student Lou Zhe Loon, 18, a first-year Electronic & Computer Engineering (ECE), joined a team of Cedar Secondary School girls and another of two National Institute of Education (NIE) students as the top three.

Cindy Lye Zhijun, 20, marketing manager of organiser SGEventors said, "We have also given the golden opportunity to all the graffiti competition participants to express their

"We have also given the golden opportunity to all the graffiti competition participants to express their creativity again at a public concert at Sentosa."

Cindy Lye Zhijun, 20,
marketing manager of SGEventors

creativity again at a public concert at Sentosa. It is the Hoobastank Concert."

According to the final-year Internetworking Communication (INC) student, the board the teams will be using at Sentosa will be about 2.4 m by 1.8 m, bigger than the 1.8 m by 1.2 m board used during the competition.

"Besides giving an avenue for student creativity, the Graffiti Competition was also used to 'liven up the bazaar atmosphere and for the participants to have fun' during the bazaar on 27 July at the Atrium, Cindy said.

The winning pieces of the competition had to fulfil three criteria - meaningful interpretation of the theme "Youth", creative use of medium and colours and overall presentation of the graphic. Zhe Loon, who clinched one of the three prizes single-handedly, fulfilled these criteria.

Zhe Loon explained his use of the word *Estilo*, Spanish for style, because "style is a big part of youth".

He said, "I settled for blue, white, black, sea blue and metallic blue". His rationale for using mostly blue is because he feels that "blue represents youth and is a colour that most youths would wear".

Zhe Loon attributes his win to the fact that he relies "on instinct" then his talent. ■

Tray Return System - Ignored?

BY REHANA JAFIR
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Been returning your food trays after use? If you have, you may be one of the few students across campus who do so.

Most students are not aware of the Canteen Tray Return System (CTRS), implemented in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) since July 1996. The CTRS encourages both staff and students to return their trays and utensils after use.

Eight years on, the success of this system is yet to be seen.

Mr Alfred Tan, the Deputy Chairperson of the Campus Green Team (CGT), a staff organisation that takes care of environmental issues in NP, including the CTRS, admits the campaign is not doing well.

"Somehow [the campaign] never hit home with most of the students," said Mr Tan.

During a Tribune straw poll of 50 students conducted across Canteens one, two, three and four, only 18 had heard about CTRS and seen posters encouraging them to practice it.

Of this number, only four students claimed they return their trays and utensils, and only occasionally.

Ritav Kho, 21, a Building Services Engineering (BSE) graduate student in 2000, claims she had never seen or heard anything about CTRS during her course of study in NP. When she was pointed to the posters in Canteen Two, she was not impressed saying "If the campaign was so important... why hasn't there been more publicity or incentives given by the organisers?"

The CTG revived the campaign a year ago on 11 November, during the national Clean & Green Week. The timing was unfortunate, as the school is almost deserted during the holiday period. Student helpers were also placed at the tray depository points, with drink vouchers to give away for a week in April.

The timing of the publicity for CTRS - 19 April, 16 July and one in October is bad. April and October are usually the busy periods for students as they are bombarded with final projects and examinations, while July is the start of the academic year, where students, old and

new alike, are more concerned about getting orientated with their classes and the campus.

Mr Tan, a Building & Environment (BE) lecturer in his late 40s, agrees that the timing of the publicity efforts is bad, but claimed nothing could be done about that.

Another major resistance to the success of CTRS is the mindsets of NP students. Mr Tan cites 'peer pressure, sheer forgetfulness, plain laziness, and lack of benefits given' as the students' reasons for not practicing the system, which polled agreed with.

Salbiah Abdol Manan, 18, a second-year Business Studies (BS) student said she did practice this back in secondary school, but not here in NP. "It's really quite [troublesome] to firstly look for the [point] to leave our trays and what's more, it's quite weird to do it, because none of my other friends do it."

Another popular excuse given by the students was that the canteen cleaners are always around to clear the tables. Yeo Inn Ann, 18, another second-year BS student said "the canteen uncles are always very [zealous] in clearing our trays... sometimes even before we actually finish our food! I think if we started helping them it may just end up being more troublesome for them."

Mr Anthony, a 67-year-old Canteen one cleaner, agreed, saying, "it's [much] easier if we clear the trays because then we can do it faster."

Droppings on canteen furniture by birds drawn to leftovers is another reason students should work with the canteen cleaners to take part in the CTRS.

Mr Tan said, "It's [become] not only an issue about being responsible, but now it has also become about hygiene and health."

Should disciplinary action be taken against students who refuse to return their trays?

Mr Tan believes that the CTRS campaign should be practised through a change of mindset. "It's easier to work with students when they do not feel threatened or when they feel forced..."

"After all, the campus is like a second home to our students and maybe they will feel responsible for making the campus environment a cleaner one," said Mr Tan. ■

Disabled Facilities: Are They Adequate?

BY TEO KAI WUN
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Grumbles about 'hilly' Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) are common among students who must painstakingly walk the slopes, what more for students with problems walking? With International Day of Disabled Persons coming up in December, *Tribune* susses out the challenges of manoeuvring around campus.

It's good enough for him

17-year-old Mohammad Zaki Bte Jurani commutes to and from NP on a London cab. The freshman in the School of InfoComm Technology (ICT) suffers from Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, an irreversible disease that weakens and destroys the muscles.

To arrive on time for an 8am class, Zaki must wake up at 5.30am to get ready. He pays \$20 a trip for the London cab because it is the only one that can accommodate his motorised wheelchair, which cost around \$5,000.

Though NP is on uneven grounds, Zaki still chose it, saying that facilities for the disabled are good here, allowing him to move to where he needs to be with ease.

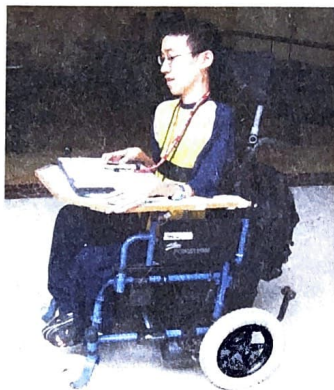
"At first, I wanted to go Nanyang [Polytechnic], but it was too far," explained Zaki, "and Singapore Poly[technic] terrain wasn't very friendly."

The unconditional care and concern he receives from classmates and lecturers have made the epilepsy sufferer's learning experience in NP much smoother.

"Most of us help him move around in school," said Chan Xian Zhi, 16, one of Zaki's many classmates who help him adapt to the new environment.

Zaki believes even his lecturers treat him better and "paid more attention" to him.

"I've gathered the class together to help Zaki," said ICT lecturer Mr Lim Fang How, 45, who is also Zaki's mentor, "they form a roster among themselves to pick and fetch Zaki; helping him



AGAINST ALL ODDS: Mohammad Zaki Bte Jurani has to face obstacles caused by Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. (Picture: Teo Kai Wun)

to move from classroom to classroom."

Mr Lim was also quick to add that, despite the odds that Zaki has to go through, he has "taken on the challenge well" and that his classmates are "very friendly towards him".

However, problems do arise for wheelchair-bound Zaki, such as difficulties accessing places like the library and taking the lifts.

According to him, it takes four to five minutes for the lift for the disabled at the Atrium to go up to the library on the second floor.

Taking the lift at ICT Block 27 is also a hassle. Classmate Xian Zhi cited instances where inconsiderate schoolmates would barge into the lifts without giving way to Zaki.

"We have to 'chope' the lift area so that he [Zaki] can get into the lift," explained Chan.

Mr Lim also suggested that the toilets at the ICT block should be more handicapped-friendly, such as having railings in the cubicles.

Though contented with the facilities in NP, Zaki yearns for some improvements, such as more ramps to increase accessibility. In that area, he added that the Estate Management Office has

been helpful.

"They said to let them know what I need and they will try to help me," said Zaki.

Mr Mui Cheng Hock, 52, Director of the Estate Management Office, said that he has accompanied Zaki, who is one of a handful of handicapped NP students, around campus to see how they can improve the disabled facilities along the routes where Zaki needs to go. "We will see how we can make his stay in Ngee Ann as comfortable as possible," said Mr Mui.

"Overall, not friendly"

Despite standing at 1.42m, 22-year-old Mohamed Salleh Bin Abu Bakar and his crutches are hard to miss.

"Ya, I've seen him [Salleh] around in Canteen one, sometimes I wonder how he manages to come here [Canteen one]," said Gracina Lim, 19, a final-year Business Studies (BS) student.

Salleh has to take each step with care due to his brittle bones, a condition also known as Osteogenesis Imperfecta. His condition is caused by irregularities in the bones' protein formation, making the final-year Electronic & Computer Engineering (ECE) student more susceptible to fractures.

According to the UK-based Brittle Bone Society, this condition may result in sufferers having more than 100 fractures, Salleh claims that neither his lecturers nor the Estate Management Office has come to him to offer assistance.

"They have never approached me at all," said Salleh.

Still, Salleh stresses that this is possibly due to them believing that he is "managing well" by himself. "I'm quite independent," he confessed.

"Overall, not friendly..." commented Salleh on NP's facilities and architecture, "especially the flooring. The bottom of my crutches is made from rubber and when it rains or if the floor is wet, I fall easily."

Salleh adds that because "NP has quite a lot of open space", when the rain comes, he is often confined to the dry ground within a building. Rainwater often splashes on building floors and

he requires either help from his friends or simply has to wait out hours for the rain to stop.

Going to the library is also a task for Salleh who says that the lift for the disabled up to the library from the Atrium malfunctions, and Block 73, where the Co-Curricular Activities (CCA) meetings for both Poly Stage F'Actor and Malay Culture Club are held, also poses difficulties.

"There's no lift at Block 73," said Salleh, "it's very difficult for me to climb up".

Mr Mui reasons that Block 73, along with Block 18, has only four storeys and thus is not equipped with lifts. However, he said that should any student need help in accessibility, they should head for the Estate Management Office so that they can deal with the problem.

Sometimes, it's not just the facilities

For Mr Jonas Lee, 41, a lecturer with the School of Business & Accountancy (BA), going the extra mile for a physically-disabled student earned him the Supportive Teacher Award given by the Asian Women's Welfare Association's TEACH ME Services.

Nominated by wheelchair-bound ex-student Lee Jun Hui Jan, Mr Lee had helped Jun Hui by offering his time, arranging for classmates to help Jun Hui move about and lending a listening ear.

Despite teaching Jun Hui for only one semester, Mr Lee continued to be kind to Jun Hui throughout his stay in NP. He would travel to Jun Hui's home to pass him lecture notes, helping Jun Hui save an average of \$35 for each trip to school in a London cab.

"There was chemistry between us," said Mr Lee, "and we became friends". Even today Mr Lee visits Jun Hui to catch up and offer his unconditional care and support.

Mr Lee was also one of NP lecturers who helped push for the lift for the disabled located at the Atrium to make NP a more handicapped-friendly environment. Though Mr Lee believes NP has adequate disabled facilities and compassionate lecturers, he thinks disabled students "must put in the effort" to make their learning and stay in NP worthwhile. ■

The FMS Connection

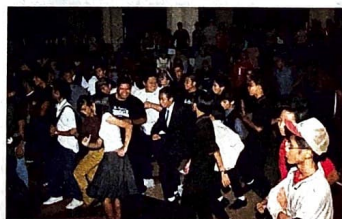
BY DANIEL ZHANG
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A novel scheme run by the Film & Media Studies Society (FMSS) is encouraging all 900 plus students from the School of Film & Media Studies (FMS) to connect with students outside of their year and course of study. FMS Connect aims to create strong networks by grouping them into 'families' of 18.

These self-help groups allow juniors to tap into their seniors' expertise and experience such as in self-securing good internships, while juniors can help seniors with their work, for instance, being actors in their productions. This might also bridge the gap between students of the two sister courses of FMS, Mass Communication (MCM) and Film, Sound & Video (FSV), forming a wider network for the future.

Pay-It-Forward, a Channel NewsAsia movement, encourages people doing good deeds not to expect repayment but instead, to ask for the good deed to be passed on by the beneficiary helping another person.

FMSS will adopt the movement, hoping



MOSHING AT ATRIUM: FMS students connecting through the medium of music at the Friday the 13th: Pure Aural Pleasure party. (Picture: Daniel Zhang)

students will help others among their FMS Connect groups. Pay-It-Forward cards will also be distributed and the best FMS Connect group will receive \$500 as an incentive based on the deeds recorded on their cards.

"FMSS realises that networking is pretty important in a rather competitive industry of the media... if you want to have better career paths and better opportunities," said Francis Tay, 19, the project leader of FMS Connect and a second-year Mass Communication (MCM) student.

Ruth Song, 21, a MCM 2003 graduate, agreed, saying, "Networking is the lifeblood of any person wanting to work in the media... If you want to do well in the industry, start networking even before you graduate."

To create more chances to network, FMSS will be holding activities. One such event was the Friday the 13th: Pure Aural Pleasure party, which saw eight rock bands with FMS members performing at the Atrium in August [check here: <http://www.nptribune.com> for the concert story].

Francis said, "We also have sports events, street soccer events lined up for them [FMS students]."

But apathy is a challenge FMSS faces from some. Alan Cai, 17, a first-year FSV student commented that students didn't care about the scheme and were highly unlikely to change their minds despite these efforts.

Disagreeing, Valerie Lim, 17, a first-year MCM student, said, "I think it [FMS Connect] is a good way to help Mass Comm students and FSV students get to know each other, and it's important to interact."

Despite their different stands, both share a

common problem: They, like many others, don't know which 'family' group they are placed in, although postings of the groups were sent to all students via NP email and are available at the FMSS website.

"I'm not sure about my [NP] email at all because I haven't been checking," said Peter Li, 23, a final-year MCM student.

MCM lecturer Mr Brian Lee, one of FMS Connect's advisors and originator of the idea, admits that many things can still go wrong for FMSS but the society has tailored the concept, including changing the name from FMS Families to FMS Connect. In addition, FMS Connect is less orientated towards the Pay-It-Forward scheme, instead focussing on networking.

"I would say that it's a very grand and noble ideal plan but whether or not it will work will depend on how well it is received by the students," said Alphonsus Chern, 24, a final-year FSV student. And when asked about his group, he replied, "No, I have no idea, but it sounds like something interesting."

Log on to <http://fms-society.imss.net/> for more information on FMS Connect. ■

National Heartbeats

BY GOH SZE HUA
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EXTRAORDINARY PERCUSSION: Members of the S21 Sub-committee turn bottles into musical instruments. [Picture: Goh Sze Hua]

You might not see how Michael Jackson's famous moonwalk and a rendition of William Hung's infamous version of "She Bangs", even if it's renamed "Merlion Bangs", have anything to do with Singapore.

But the audience at the Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) Staff Excellence Award Presentation cum National Day Observance ceremony 2004 didn't seem to mind.

The celebrity-mimicking performance by the staff of the School of Life Sciences & Chemical Technology (LSCT) cracked up audience at the Convention Centre on 6 August. About 900 staff and another 900 students attended.

It was a light-hearted chapter after 28 winners from 13 different categories were honoured with the Staff Excellence Awards.

Ms Elizabeth Thorarajoo, 43, a lecturer from the School of Interdisciplinary Studies (IS), was one of four recipients of the Best Work Improvement Teams (WITS) award for their work on improving the web enrolment system.

"It... also goes to show that if you share your skills and knowledge, it goes for better work performance," she added.

Mr Terence Choo, 40, from the School of InfoComm Technology (ICT), is a two-time winner of the Staff Excellence Award [see story on pg 11]. Mr Choo won the GEM award, which stands for "Go the Extra Mile".

"We're not only teaching them, we want to build up their interest and confidence and at the same time, correcting their character," he said.

Speaking of rounded students, different groups displayed their talents that day. Their multi-cultural performance included hip hop dances put up by Dance Prodigy and Dance Senorita, a traditional Malay dance performed by the Malay Cultural Club, and the Scottish Bagpipes troupe from Anglo-Chinese School (Independent), which gave a rousing welcome to the Guest-of-Honour Mr Matthias Yao. Mr Yao was then Senior Minister of State (Prime Minister's Office) and Deputy Secretary-General of National Trades Union Congress (NTUC).

Li Jing, 21, a Chinese National from the School of Engineering (SoE), was one of the performers for the ceremony.

Speaking in Mandarin, she said that she felt excited and nervous at the same time and was very proud to be part of the performance.

This is her first time celebrating Singapore's birthday and she remarked that Singapore is "like a big family" and that the array of performances proved her point.

This finale was a medley of National Day songs led by organisers the S21 sub-committee. The committee members spiced up the sing-along session with some unusual percussion instruments such as large water containers, chopsticks, cans and bottles *a la Stomp*.

On his choice for the performance which best reflected Singapore, Mr Chia Mia Chiang, 53, Principal of NP, said, "I think the most telling was in the multi-racial dances, but the unifying element was in the last performance with the repertoire of songs. I think the group did a good job!"

Nipping the Smoking Problem in the Butt?

BY AMY TAN
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A new and unpublicised rule, which bans students and staff from smoking at the bus stop immediately outside Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP), says that first offenders will be given a warning, while those caught a second time will be slapped with a \$40 fine.

Around 200 NP students have been caught for smoking there since the rule came into force early August, but none have been fined at press time, according to Mr David Lui Eng Chye, 56, Director of Student Services Office (SS).

The rule became necessary both "because we have been receiving a lot of complaints [of pollution and damage to the school image] from both the staff and students" and because of more inconsiderate smokers, he added.

"Some of the smokers litter at the bus stop... because of the minority who do not care about others, we have to implement this rule," said Mr Lui.

He added that, "There are many non-smokers who have... no choice but to stand in the midst of smokers and become passive smokers."

Mr Lui has since received much feedback and resentment from NP students who were caught. Most of them questioned the school's authority to ban smoking at the bus stop and fine students.

According to Mr Lui, "The school built and maintains the bus stop, so it is within our compound and yes, we are allowed to ban smoking at the school's designated area. (Ministry of Education) gives schools the right to fine their students. NUS fines [them] up to \$250 for smoking," said Mr Lui.

Foong Min Mei, 19, a final-year student from the School of Film & Media Studies (FMS) who has been warned for smoking, feels that "it



SMOKING SNUBBED: New non-smoking school rule at bus stop targets inconsiderate smokers. [Picture: Amy Tan]

would be more logical if they limit a certain part of the bus stop [for smoking]."

"We don't want to designate areas where people can smoke because we don't want students to feel like the smokers are bad people and condemn them, even though smoking is a vice. That's why we don't even have signs put up [to tell students about the ban]," said Mr Lui.

Instead, supervisors are stationed at the bus stop to catch smokers.

Despite the lack of signs, this new rule has been spreading by word of mouth.

Still, some students are not confident the measures will help much. "The new rule isn't that feasible because there are smokers everywhere you go, not just in school and besides, the smokers designate their own areas to smoke," said Matthew Yeo Chip Kheong, 23, a final-year student from the School of Business & Accountancy (BA). The non-smoker is unfazed by students who smoke at the bus stop.

Gretchen Tan Xing Hui, a final-year student from the School of Engineering (SoE), also feels the rule is not foolproof. Said the 19-year-old, "People will still hide in the toilets to smoke or find some place else in school to smoke."

New Student Home Page Offers New Forum

BY TEO YU FENG YVONNE
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Could a new school spirit and sense of belonging be nurtured if more of Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) students exchanged their opinions with others in school?

Mr Vickneshwaran Thangavelu, 34, a Student Services Officer, hopes so. The moderator of the new student forum, promises it will be an improvement over the previous, "primarily a more of a buy and sell kind of thing, [with] classifieds, so there wasn't really a forum *per se*".

He said, "Students would like some kind of forum where they can discuss topics that are relevant to them, things that they want to discuss among the campus community, so we thought that it would be a useful feature to have."

Mr Vickneshwaran said the idea came about from a focus group of students and the Computer Centre (CC) developed the student home page.

Mr Vickneshwaran pointed out that students "don't really get to see the other students from the other schools" except during Co-Curricular Activities (CCA) or Inter-Disciplinary Studies (IS) classes. Therefore, with the student forum, "there's a lot of potential for students to meet, discuss, exchange ideas" and trade.

Vinod s/o Saladory, 18, a second-year student from Electrical Engineering (EE) said, "I think school forums are better. You know the people around, you want to buy things easier. Outside,



NEW FORUM: A new avenue for students to meet and interact online. (Picture: Tan Bei Zhen)

you got to waste my time and got to convince them."

Mr Vickneshwaran added these discussions should "be fun also, it shouldn't be all about school..." He also revealed that the student forum "will also give us [the administration] a good yardstick on what students are feeling".

However, Alvin Choo Zhen Xiang, 17, a first-year Biomedical Science (BMS) student said, "Most likely I won't participate because I don't like to give opinions." On the other hand, he said he might be vocal if the forum is public.

But Mr Vickneshwaran wasn't the least worried, he said, "If it's user friendly, and if it's relevant to them, and if it interests them, I think

people will naturally participate whether it is a school forum or outside of school."

No target has been set for the forum activity as Mr Vickneshwaran said they "want to see quality post rather than quantity", so he hoped that students would not use this to "discuss mundane things".

Censorship will be avoided "as much as possible" unless messages contain things like defamation, false accusations, sensitive issues and exchanges that degrade others.

Eventually though, both Mr Vickneshwaran and Computer Centre (CC) would like to see students as moderators.

He thinks that in this way, "students can have ownership of the forum rather than [imagine that] staff censor what students think, we don't want students to think that either. We want students to have a free flow of ideas... have a healthy discussion".

Other improvements to the new Student Home Page include aggregating various features that "students will need in one page".

"Students will have direct access to their e-mail rather than go through several layers."

With the new Student Home, students can customise their page as well, for example, add quick links, bookmarks and personal reminders.

Mr Vickneshwaran added that department announcements "are usually relevant to their own schools or divisions, it's not a generic notice. So it will be relevant to them."

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Convention Centre Improvements

BY DIYANA ALAN
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The Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) Convention Centre has undergone minor improvement works to fine-tune the aesthetics of the building.

The maintenance project raised some eyebrows because the \$14.8 million building is less than two years old.

Said Josephine Mok, 20, a student from Multimedia Computing (MMC), "They stopped quite a while and were not doing anything about the construction area. It's quite inconvenient for us with all the works going on. I thought the contractor went bankrupt and the school had to employ a new contractor to finish up the job."

But Director of Estate Management Office, Mr Mui Cheng Hock, said, "As with any building in use, the amount of money spent will be based on the usage we'll have. This is a living building, it is in use all the time."

Mr Mui also clarified that a lot of maintenance work was required for the Convention Centre to function properly. His office could not provide figures specifically for the maintenance of the Convention Centre because their figures are composite ones for the whole campus.

One of the several improvements was on the



MORE IMPROVEMENTS: Students will benefit from the works on the Convention Centre. (Picture: Diyana Alan)

ceiling of the Convention Centre. Mr Mui said, "We're currently trying to improve the acoustics of the foyer used mainly for performances. When we first used it, there was a bit of echoing."

Maintaining a large building such as the Convention Centre, will take up more resources,

although Mr Mui emphasised NP keeps to the allocated budget.

"We use the school funds wisely. All the facilities are built to update its [the newer buildings] usefulness and we should be rightly proud of these buildings," said Mr Mui.

According to Mr Mui, the Convention Centre was built to replace the Octagon and the Teaching Hub to replace the previous Block 56, as the facilities were rundown and old.

The Convention Centre mainly caters to NP students although several rooms and spaces are occasionally rented out to other organisations. Mr Mui confirmed that the money is added to NP funds. "All funds will go to the [NP] poly but renting out spaces in the Convention Centre does not happen very often as most of our students book the Convention Centre for use."

Mr Mui also said, "When the Convention Centre was built, the main priority is for Ngee Ann Polytechnic students, mainly for graduations and examinations. The centre also doubles up as multi-purpose hall and so far, we're happy that our NP students are using the place."

He added that he was glad that NP aim of building a student facility has been achieved and that the Convention Centre is not seen as a "white elephant" considering the weekly events and activities that it is used for. ■

Another Way to Flaunt your I and Es

BY TEO YU FENG YVONNE
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The Innovation & Enterprising Network (iE_Network), aims to bring out the entrepreneur and innovator among students from the School of InfoComm Technology (ICT).

The new special interest group, set up since June, will be open to all students in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) within a year, said the network's president Jagdeep Singh in an email interview.

The idea for the club began at the "Entrepreneur Incubation Cum Team Building Camp" held by InnoHub in May, which both the final-year Information Technology (IT) student, and his vice-president attended.

Jagdeep said the club exists to "direct students to InnoHub [Innovation Hub] people for assistance in setting up their own business".

Students who have an idea can go to iE_Network for assistance, the club will study it and recommend feasible ones to InnoHub.

Jagdeep said that, "Most of the people they do have very good idea[s], but they are too afraid to speak up. But when they are with us, we will make them very comfortable and we will motivate... them so that they can tell us. So basically we are getting ideas from people and turning them into realities."

"If the [InnoHub] committee thinks that the idea is feasible, the idea has commercial value and the idea will attract business, the student will be given a grant of maximum \$3,000 and a supervisor and mentor will be appointed to guide the student," Jagdeep said.

But with about four other students' bodies under the School of ICT and with eGarage promoting similar values, the iE_Network will need to find ways to differentiate themselves.

Unlike the eGarage, which promotes innovation and enterprise in the IT realm, this network is "concentrating on the business part of it," said Nallalagi Asha d/o Nadarajan, 18, the club's Vice President.

In another e-mail interview, the second-year Multimedia Computing (MMC) student added that the network also concentrates on promoting the 5Cs, which are collaboration, confidence, creativeness, character and courage.

Students who join the iE_Network can expect to learn more about themselves.

Having themselves grown more vocal, more aware of their strengths through the activities in the InnHub camp, Asha said they are planning to "organise similar activities where other members will also learn more of themselves, a brand-new them".

The club has about 30 to 40 members, who mostly are second- and final-year students. Jagdeep aims to have 60 to 70 members at the end of the year.

Asha said the club had not face any challenges. "It was not very difficult to set up... because... our government is very keen on this entrepreneur thing, so our School of ICT was very, very encouraging," Jagdeep explained. ■

Internal Security Exhibition in NP

BY TEO KAI WUN
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Fake passports, a suicide bomb vest, and extracts from the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) manual were found in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP), but instead of panicking, students flocked to see the terrifying artefacts.

The Internal Security Department (ISD), on the invitation by NP, displayed its Heritage Centre mobile exhibition at NP Convention Centre, from 6 to 8 September to increase awareness of historical events and current issues that can affect Singapore's security.

It is the first time that the exhibition is on display in an educational institution.

The exhibition was in line with a final-year Interdisciplinary Studies (IS) module, World Issues from a Singapore Perspective (WISP), and students enrolled in the module had to visit the exhibition as part of their graded assignment.

"Most of us [Singaporeans] are pretty complacent, feeling that life in Singapore is safe," said Ms Evelyn Ng, the WISP lecturer and module leader, on the need for an exhibition that examines the threats and dangers that can affect Singapore.

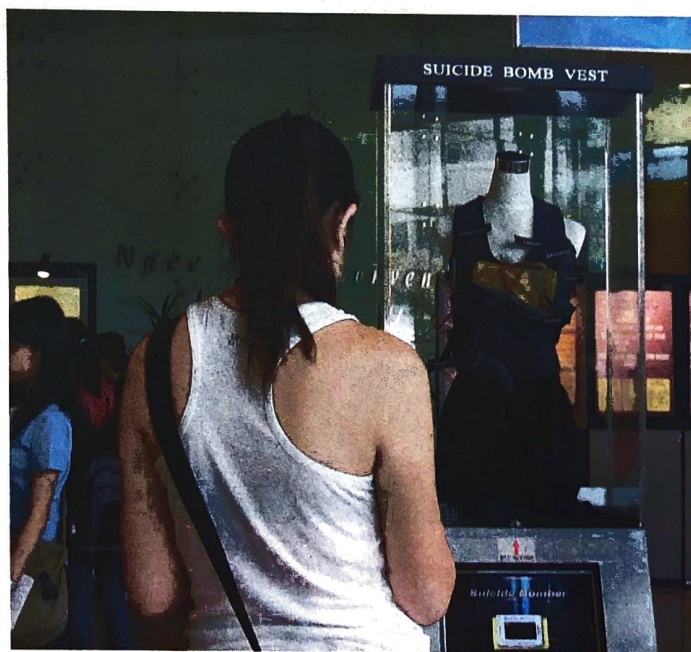
Ms Ng, in her 30s, is also one of the organisers of the event. She told a campus television news reporter that she had invitations sent to both secondary schools and junior colleges in the West to attend the exhibition as well.

NP staff and students are privileged to have the opportunity to view the exhibits, because the Heritage Centre at Onraet Road is not open to the general public, said an ISD officer who is not named for security reasons.

Photographs and videos were not allowed to be taken due to the sensitivity of the exhibition.

He said it was important for, "the man on the street...[to] have access [to information on internal security issues]".

On display were panels that illustrated issues



INTERNAL SECURITY ISSUES: On display was a replica of a bomb vest (above) used by suicide bombers and related material in the computer display. (Picture: Teo Kai Wun)

such as terrorism and communalism, with case studies such as the Maria Hertogh racial riots that happened in 1950.

"It brings awareness of things that happened in the past... that may happen [again] in the future," said Ms Ng.

The exhibition also touched on present-day concerns, like the threat of suicide bombings, with a three-dimensional replica of a bomb vest that suicide bombers wear and a monitor showing the devastation that it can cause.

A fake passport was also showcased to

demonstrate how a terrorist can easily penetrate Singapore if security screenings and levels were not up to standard.

Chew Hui Shi, 19, a final-year student from Business Information Technology (BIT), feels that it was "good that NP gave us the chance to view it as now I see the significance of internal security".

Agreeing, another final-year BIT student, Lindsey Chia, 19, said, "It really increased my awareness of security issues. I hope there will be more of such exhibition[s]." ■

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LSCT Research May Save Seahorses

BY ALICIA CHUA
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Researchers from the School of Life Sciences & Chemical Technology (LSCT) could be ensuring a good supply of a valuable traditional Chinese medicine while ensuring that seahorses will not be driven to extinction.

Their final-year project, which involves six alumni and two Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students, seeks to culture Hippocampus comes, a species of seahorse in South East Asia, in captivity. They also need to find suitable feeds for juvenile and adult seahorses. All their experiments are conducted on St. John's Island as the equipment required has to be near the sea.

This research with scientists from the National University of Singapore's (NUS) Tropical Marine Science Institute (TMSI) was initiated in LSCT in May 2002 by Dr Sukumar Ponnusamy. Since his departure from NP, the project has been headed by LSCT's Director, Dr Sushila Chang-Krishnaswamy and Deputy Director, Dr Phang Chiew Hun, both in their 40s.

According to Dr Phang in an email interview, "Seahorses, in general, are not well studied with regards to the biology and reproduction."

The demand for seahorses as traditional Chinese medicine is another important factor that inspired the research. Dried seahorses are a

precious commodity and can fetch up to \$ 2,000 per kilogram in the Hong Kong market.

The difficulty in growing them in captivity has contributed largely to this species being endangered. From 15 May, seahorses have been listed under the Convention on International

We've been able to let the seahorses stay in an environment that's less stressful and stable enough for us to run experiments on them

Darren Choo Wei Jie, 20,
Biotechnology Graduate

Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), making it illegal to procure seahorses from the wild for trade.

However, old habits die hard and the demand for dried seahorses in Chinese medicine will be difficult to abolish. Therefore, there are hopes that this project will also open doors to the market by "providing alternative sources for



SEAHORSE SAVIOURS: Lim Wei Xin (left) and Tan Zhen Qin (right) finding the right diet for the seahorses
(Picture: Leonard Goh)

Chinese medicine so they won't [have to] catch them from the sea," said Aloysius Tan Yong Cheng, 20. The Biotechnology (BIO) graduate is a team member.

The research team has been successful in creating a hatchery system that is conducive for

the culturing of seahorses.

"We've been able to let the seahorses stay in an environment that's less stressful and stable enough for us to run experiments on them," said Darren Choo Wei Jie, 20, another BIO graduate.

The hatchery system is a re-circulatory system that uses sea water and in-built biological filters. Said Dr Phang, "the system was tested and found to be effective in culturing juvenile and adult seahorses".

When cultured in captivity, few young seahorses survive due to their fussiness over food. So the challenge for current students working on this project is to find suitable non-live feed for the seahorses. Darren sombrely noted, "You'll go crazy if you own a seahorse and you have to go to [the] sea every day to harvest live feeds. So if you formulate non-live feed that people can keep beside their tanks, it'll open up even more doors in the market." Non-live feeds can also offer nutrition not available in live feeds.

This research still has a long way to go, but if it is successful, it will be the starting ground for great things. Besides the possibility of restocking the wild with seahorses, Darren hopes that more institutes like the Agri-food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA) will consider breeding seahorses if they see that NP has been successful in its research. ■

Engineering Magic for IMM Shoppers



MOUSING AROUND: IMM shoppers are enthralled by NP's micromouse exhibit (Picture: Daniel Zhang)

BY DANIEL ZHANG
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Shoppers at IMM relished a taste of Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) School of Engineering (SoE) at its 'Magic of Engineering' event on 7 and 8 August.

"It is the first time we [School of Engineering] have the opportunity to be here [at IMM]... [and] we want to show that engineers can be more than [who] people first think [we are]; engineers are in the area of business, the area of management, and not just in the area of design," said Mr Tan Boon Lee, 43, a lecturer from the division of Electronic & Computer Engineering (ECE). Mr Tan is one of the organisers of the student showcase.

Past-year projects, along with exhibits that represent the various divisions, were showcased

to the public at the mega mall.

About 100 students and staff from the Alpha Centre, Electrical Engineering (EE), Building & Environment (BE), Biomedical Engineering (BME), Aerospace Technology (AT) and ECE were involved.

One of the exhibits was AT's flight simulator computer program. Members of the public were given the chance to soar in the virtual skies using the simulator. A few of young ones even expressed interest in joining the course when they are old enough.

Alpha Centre also took the opportunity to showcase their award-winning micromouse exhibit. The Alpha Centre bagged the titles of Champion, First Runner-Up and Fastest Run award with its various entrants at this year's IEEE-APEC Micromouse Competition

at Anaheim, United States. Micromouse is a competitive robotic game where an automated robotic "mouse" is placed in a maze and has to navigate through it in the shortest time possible.

Said Teng Wei Kei, 18, a final-year ECE student, attached for about three months to the Alpha Centre for his final-year project, "Actually, they [the public] are quite interested in this little device that goes really fast through the maze... We want to create an awareness of this game that

It is the first time we have the opportunity to be here... we want to show that engineers can be more than [who] people first think [we are]; engineers are in the area of business, the area of management, and not just in the area of design

Mr Tan Boon Lee, 43, Lecturer,
Electronic & Computer Engineering

we have."

Speaking in Mandarin, a member of the public, Mr Siew Kwok Luen, 49, said, "The micromouse had looked easy to me, but they [Alpha Centre staff] explained to me that it looks easy, but when the micromouse is placed in the maze, it might go in a different direction [than planned]... I feel that the things here [at the Magic of Engineering] are all very interesting." It was the first time that Mr Siew, a repairman, had

seen a micromouse game.

Other exhibits included an automated fish tank, a talking SMS programme, a Body Mass Index (BMI) machine and 'Gerlock', an auto-locking pram.

Besides the exhibits, the public was entertained by performances from NP Co-Curricular Activities (CCA) groups such as NP Strings, NP Concert Band and NP Chinese Orchestra (CO).

"We wanted to give shoppers at IMM a different perspective of engineering," Mr Tan added, "We wanted to entertain them and we requested SDAR [Student Development & Alumni Relations Office] for help... the response [from the CCAs] was overwhelming... I'm just surprised, you know, that so many students would take all the effort to come down on a Sunday [and Saturday]."

A song performance by eight NP students from the Hearing-Impaired (HI) Club was another highlight of the event. Radio Heatwave, NP's campus radio station, was roped in to entertain the crowd, as well as to draw attention to the exhibits at the event.

It was also a chance for the station, run by final-year Mass Communication (MCM) students, to be seen outside of NP. "When we were actually broadcasting live there at IMM, you could see that a lot of people actually enjoyed the trailers... and they were very excited to know that there was such a thing as a school campus radio station. And I think that does good for Ngee Ann as a whole," said Daryl Epimaco, 24, Programme Director of Radio Heatwave.

Mr Tan told Tribune that more of such events will be held in future. He commented that the projects showcased at IMM were not all that the School of Engineering had, as some projects were under repair or were still under development. He added, "This is basically our trial run for the bigger events in the end of the year... We are definitely going to do a better one." ■

NP Student World Champ in Microsoft Office Word 2002

BY TEO YU FENG YVONNE
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NP STUDENTS ARE TOPS: Lee Chee Yuan (right) and Low Yi Yang (left) with their trophies and certificates from the Asia-Pacific Regional competition (Picture: Yvonne Teo)

A final-year Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) Information Technology (IT) student was crowned both the Asia Pacific Regional and then World Champion for the 2004 Microsoft Office Specialist Worldwide Academic Competition in the Microsoft (MS) Office Word 2002 expert category.

According to Mr Mani Nachimuthu, 34, lecturer of School of InfoComm & Technology (ICT) and one of the two coaches for the MS Word category, Lee Chee Yuan, 19, is the first NP representative to be crowned the worldwide champion for this competition.

This is NP's second attempt over a period of two years. The first try was last May, and NP competed at a core rather than expert level.

Chee Yuan achieved a perfect score of 1,000 in about seven minutes and 30 seconds, winning the Asia Pacific title of the Microsoft (MS) Office Specialist Academic Competition—Microsoft Office Word 2002 expert category on 25 July. This score was then pitted against the other regional champions to determine the world's best, according to the game's official website.

NP Multimedia Computing (MMC) final-year student, Low Yi Yang, 19, came in second for the Asia Pacific region by scoring 967 in less than 10 minutes.

Chee Yuan said he was, "overjoyed already because I never expect[ed] that I would win as I was expecting the competitors to be very, very strong... but after all I feel my hard work really pays". Mr Mani said that "we are very proud of them".

To win the competition, participants had to answer 14 questions about MS Office Word 2002 on the computer, both accurately and in the fastest time, within 50 minutes.

According to Mr Fulu Ismail Ahmed, 51, lecturer of ICT and the other coach of the MS Word category, the world ranking of the competition was announced on 6 August. The rest of the positions have not been revealed at press time.

The regional finals of the competition was held in Jiaotong University in Shanghai on 25 July. 20 participants came from Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Taiwan, China and Korea, competing in two categories—MS Word and Excel 2002 in

their native languages. Each category involved 10 participants. Yi Yang said that the competition room just fit two rows of five tables, where each table has two computers.

According to Mr Mani, Chee Yuan and Yi Yang had only about 10 hours of training before the competition. The pair also practised and exchanged ideas at night, for about two hours before the day of the competition.

Mr Mani, Chee Yuan and Yi Yang agreed that determination, hard work and constant practice were vital in winning this competition.

Mr Mani said, "... they are both very hungry to win; whenever we call them, they come, then they support us, we coach them, finally they got it." Yi Yang said, "When we are awake, we are practising other than sleeping." Chee Yuan also commented that it "depends a bit on luck", because he had a mere three days to practise before setting off to Shanghai as he had just come back from vacation, and being a week late for school he even had to worry about catching up with his studies.

The questions in the Regional Competition were exactly the same as the ones they took during the national competition, but according to Chee Yuan, participants from other countries said they also had the same questions for their regional competitions. Chee Yuan explained that because he has "a good memory... that's why my timing is getting faster and faster".

Mr Mani is confident of retaining these titles next year. He added that he will recruit Chee Yuan and Yi Yang if they are willing. Yi Yang said, "I think I will take part next year because I want to try the Office 2003."

However, Chee Yuan has some reservation, "If the prizes are more attractive, because I heard [that in] other countries they have cash prizes."

For their excellent performance, the pair won for themselves each copies of Microsoft® Office Student and Teacher Edition 2003 and Microsoft® Visio 2003. In addition they were sponsored for the 4D3N trip to Shanghai for the regional finals.

Regional Champions will receive laptops computers and the World Champion gets to go Redmond, Washington, USA for a visit to the Microsoft headquarters. ■

Cyber Entrepreneurship

BY JERMAINE ANG
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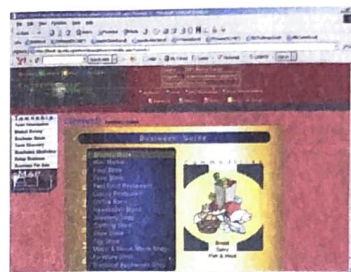
Entrepreneur World Game is the latest online game to be developed in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP).

This educational game, which seeks to sharpen entrepreneurial skills among non-business students, is a joint project between the Teaching & Learning Centre (TLC) and senior lecturer Mr Tsang Pui Sum of the Building & Environment (BE) division of the School of Engineering (SoE).

"I believe in the future that students want to set up their own businesses. Even be your own *tau kay* [boss] instead of working for... someone else," said Mr Chai Theong Ham, 43. The manager of the Educational Research & Development arm of TLC hopes this game will help students "experience" a little of the working world.

Players have to answer questions in formats similar to *Hangman* and *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire* to gain capital to build their businesses. Using a software called Game Builder, lecturers pre-define the type and number of questions to suit their different needs.

Aside from gaining capital, students have to choose a business to pursue. Needing to name the company, as well as doing research on competitors, the intended market and deciding how much to price products of their virtual company make this a realistic simulation of the challenges of setting up a business.



VIRTUAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: NP game preps students to start their own business (Picture: Jermaine Ang)

If it sounds like a lot of work, the game was really designed so that students from the different schools will be able to understand and play the game. In fact, only "simple accounting and simple knowledge is needed," said Mr Chai.

A pilot test of the Entrepreneur World Game was conducted with 200 final-year BE students in the first week of September with another run planned for the end of the month.

"Very fun and interesting...through the game we learnt a lot of things. We had to spend time planning, doing market surveys and research before we played the game. And we also hope to one day get into the hall of fame," said Jolene Ng, 24, a final-year BE student.

Another final-year BE student Ng Wu Jie, 20, also had positive comments, "Very interesting. We also learn skills on how to set up a business and financial planning." ■

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Eco-Friendly "Fox"

BY SHAFULNIZAM ABDUL RASHID
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Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) Mechanical Engineering (ME) Division might just have found the solution to the recent oil price hike in "Fox" – a fuel-cell powered transportation medium.

In a collaboration with Gashub Power, the ME Division has developed fuel cell technology that converts hydrogen and oxygen into electricity through an electrochemical reaction.

In his speech during the launch of the Fox on 15 July, Mr Roger Khoo, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for Gashub Power, said, "by leveraging on Gashub's components technology and Ngee Ann's strength in mechanical engineering... this industry-institution partnership will provide great momentum in fuel cell research."

In an e-mail reply, Mr Lim Eng Seng, 52, Technology Centre Manager of the Energy Management Technology Centre for NP, said that with this collaboration, "We are able to produce the first fuel cell powered bicycle in Singapore."

He hopes that the Fox "will be [used] as the personal transporter for indoor shopping and movements in large offices and warehouses".

The team at Gashub is tinkering with air pumps to increase the fuel cells' efficiency. Prior to this, the transporter was fitted with a mini fan to pump air into the fuel cells.

Although the "Fox" is not made for long distance travelling, it can last for as far as 20 km at 15km/h, about twice as fast as the average walking speed, before it needs to be refueled

with hydrogen gas. Being eco-friendly, the by-products of the reaction are only heat and water. The product can also function in reverse mode.

The prototype, shown during the launch, looks like the bulkier cousin of the skate scooter. The "Fox" can be carried up the stairs and into the elevators. Storage is a breeze, too, because it can be collapsed and kept under the bed or in the closet. This makes it ideal for travel across campus in between lunch breaks and tutorials.

Four final-year ME students helped make this transporter a reality as part of their second-year Air-Conditioning module. The team had to choose which topic to work on for the rest of the semester and decided to choose the topic "Fuel Cell Personal Power Transporter" before completing the project on 15 July.

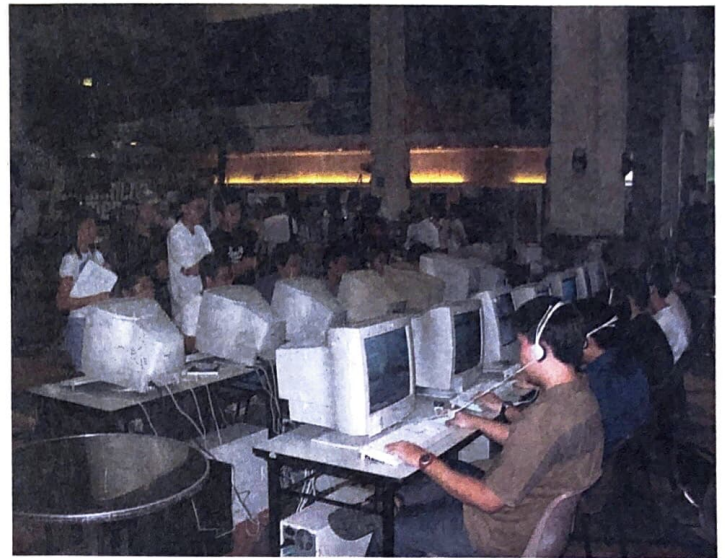
One of the four, Manesa Bre Abdul Karim, 25, now in her final year, feels the project was satisfying even though their team was only partly involved.

She said, "Although it was Gashub which worked on the fundamentals of Fox like drafting and putting the fuel cells together, [we] were involved in the purchasing of raw materials and fabrication of the basic parts."

Already, the team at NP has ideas to enhance the "Fox". Mr Lim said, "We wish to improve on the design of Fox to make it lighter and more energy efficient."

However, it will not be until at least one year later before we see the "Fox" on the roads.

Mr Lim said that while the product will not require any licence to run, it will be tested on One North located at Buona Vista before it can be approved for commercial use. ■



GAMING HAVEN: About 80 contestants battled it out at *theurbanwire.com*'s gaming competition for a chance to win a \$500 Creative MP3 player. (Photo courtesy of Caleb Ng)

Three second-year School of InfoComm Technology (ICT) students found it pays to play. Jeffrey Ng, Lee Wei Xiong and Luan Chang Ye swept the top prizes at the two-day Gorky Zero gaming competition organised by *theurbanwire.com*.

After less than one hour of virtual shooting at Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) Atrium on Sep 10, Jeffrey emerged champion with a near perfect score of 90%, winning himself a Creative Zen Touch MP3 player worth \$499.

The other two tied at 88%, but Wei Xiong's shorter time earned him the second prize of a Canon Bubble Jet i255 printer.

The trio were among about 80 participants who thronged the 14 game stations set up beside the School of Life Sciences & Chemical Technology's (LSCT) bazaar, by *UrbanWire*.

The popular lifestyle/entertainment e-zine produced by final-year students from the School of Film & Media Studies (FMS) has given away thousands of dollars worth of prizes and collectibles to readers in recent months.

Besides gamers, many onlookers also won PC games and other game merchandise sponsored by Innovative Distribution, Pacific Internet and Guerrilla Games. Radio Heatwave kept the crowds entertained during the gaming. ■

Environmental Efforts of BE Green Volunteers

BY JACQUINE CHOW
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I solving clues in the outdoors appeals to you, you might want to sign up for a challenge of a different kind during the holidays.

The Native Plant Hunt, organised by Building & Environment Green Volunteers (BEGV) from Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) School of Engineering (SoE), is offered free to members of the public on scheduled Saturdays. Held at Hindhede Nature Park, this educational activity allows participants in groups of three to five to learn more about the native plant species growing at the park in a fun way. The park was adopted by Ngee Ann Polytechnic on 17 April under the Adopt-A-Park Scheme of the National Parks Board (NParks). The next two hunts will be held on 30 October and 4 December.

Ms Genevieve Chua Yen Kheng, 29, Outreach Officer of NParks, said that the aim of the Native Plant Hunt is to allow the visitors to learn more about our native flora.

Ms Chua revealed, "Each participating team is given a set of clues that will lead them to different plants growing at various coor of the park. There are altogether eight plants to be discovered and participants will also get to know a little fact about each one of them."

The BEGV also caters to bigger groups from secondary schools. BEGV Chairman Effendy, 22, said, "Besides the public, we actually organised a Native Plant Hunt especially for Shu Qun Secondary School on 25 August."

The second-year BE student added, "We



ON THE HUNT: Youths enjoying the native plant hunt at Hindhede Nature Park. (Photo courtesy of NParks)

are concurrently doing an inventory check and research on the butterfly species at Hindhede." The information garnered from the research will help in biodiversity conservation plans by NParks.

BEGV has also organised other activities such as a two-day and one-night camp at Kota Tinggi Waterfall in Malaysia for a group of 20 secondary school students on 4 September. ■

ICT's Award Clincher

BY S. PRIYADAKSHINI
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Mr Terence Choo, an Infocomm Technology (ICT) lecturer at Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) has won as many as five teaching and public service awards, the latest being his PS21 Star Service award and a GEM (Go the Extra Mile) award.

Mr Choo, 40, was awarded the PS21 award by Defence Minister Rear Admiral Teo Chee Hean for his contribution in the education sector. Despite having taught for just four years, he was the only winner in the five polytechnics to receive this award. Only 69 people won the award after being chosen from over 120,000 public officers.

"I need to thank the School of ICT for giving me many training opportunities to improve my professional and service quality skills," he said.

Mr Charles Keck, Mr Choo's reporting officer, believes that "his dedication, commitment and positive attitude towards getting work done" and his "selflessness" helped him to clinch this award. "Mr Choo is such a good teacher because of his passion and drive to excel," Mr Keck added.

This semester Mr Choo also won the GEM award, presented at the National Day Observance Ceremony on 6 August. He won the same award in 2002, two years after its introduction.

During the Industrial Training Programme (ITP) period, Mr Choo's mobile phone was usually switched on "24 hours a day". He counselled students on internship, even when they had their Liaison Officer (LO) to turn to. Mr Choo, the Deputy Manager for Industry in his school, believes it is important to let the students know that they are always "cared for".



STAR LECTURER: Mr Choo receives his PS21 award from RADM Teo Chee Hean (Picture: Terence Choo)

Mr Choo's past awards include the Ngee Ann's teaching award 2001 and 2003. Mr Choo emphasised that teaching now is no longer just about imparting knowledge to the students.

"I want to build their character and give them confidence and responsibility as well. I want to help them become responsible Singaporeans."

Winnie Ong, 20, a final-year Information Technology (Mobile Computing) (MBC) student said Mr Choo "really deserves this award because he has a great passion [for] teaching".

"Being devoted and passionate is part and parcel of teaching. This is not an office job, it's education," he said.

He even tutors his students on public holidays. "[I]f a student needs a bit more help in his work and he is willing to put in the effort, then I am happy to give him the extra coaching needed because it will help build up the student's confidence level," added Mr Choo.

Despite the awards, Mr Choo is humble. "My PS21 award was a victory for Ngee Ann. Without the school's nurturing and the guidance and support of my director and reporting officers it wouldn't have been possible." ■

Hoobastank Pre-Act

BY JONATHAN HO WEI XIN
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SGEventors may have done well for the three bazaars they ran on campus, but the student-based company's first external event was far from satisfactory.

When Hoobastank, who are popular among teenagers for tracks such as "The Reason" and "Out of Control", staged their concert at Sentosa, the five Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) entrepreneurs were behind the pre-gig activities that lasted from 3pm to 6pm.

Marketing manager Cindy Lye, 20, claimed that SGEventors beat other professional companies pitching for the job because, "We have very creative ideas and we can relate to the youths better."

"...the main organiser realise[d] the potential of a group of 5 creative and dedicated youths. The pre-events concert is very crucial, as it will drive the concert goers to a certain level of excitement and anticipation for the concert," the final-year Internetworking & Communications (INC) student added.

However, there was no such pitch, according to Ms Jean Tan, Managing Director of Windflowers Entertainment that brought Hoobastank here. She added that her company had never asked any others and she was less than satisfied with SGEventors's performance.

"Maybe my expectations were high, but during the brainstorming session meeting... most of the ideas came from my intern Kris," she said. The main reason she'd engaged them, "a festive array of stalls but that didn't materialise, even after reducing the prices [of the stalls]," she said.



THE REASON: SGEventors tried to give NP students more reasons to watch Hoobastank. (Picture: Tan Bo Zhen)

FAST FACTS ON HOOBASTANK "THE REASON" TO BE HERE

- Held on 14 August
- Held at Siloso Beach, Sentosa
- Activities include Hottest Hunks and Coolest Babes contest and Graffiti Mania

"They may be executors, but in creative areas, where we expect ideas, I found them lacking."

The team of students and graduates from Engineering and Information Technology disciplines are not trained in event management.

Finding participants for this event was not easy task. The SGEventors team held a graffiti competition during Bazaar Thr3e in July at the Atrium, to attract participants for the pre-act.

Cindy said, "we are sure we will organise more events... even on a bigger scale".

Phat Trip or Bad Trip?

BY NADIAH YUSOFF
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Poor publicity and last-minute preparations saw only up to 170 attendees for the Hip Hop cum Pageantino Nite 2004 organised by Ngee Ann Polytechnic Students' Union (NPSU). All 300 tickets were sold.

Though it was themed 'Phat Trip', a hip hop slang for cool trip, the audience was less than cool after waiting for about 40 minutes to get in. Some even began pushing and pretending to break down the glass door.

The 30 July event, slated to start at 6 pm, was delayed because the NPSU had a final rehearsal before the event started.

Only about 105 people were present when the show started. Even the three rows reserved specially for family and close friends of the pageant contestants, sponsors and invited guests were empty, until an hour into the show with the arrival of the sponsors.

Despite the small turnout, the audience got pretty wound up when ex-actress and hostess of Hip Hop cum Pageantino Nite 2004, Eileen Wee came up on stage.

The number grew to more than 140 after the 30-minute break at around 8 pm. The audience was once again left at the lobby for half an hour so that NPSU could clear the chairs and prepare for Hop Nite, where the audience members dance as if they were in a club.

Mohd Shakil Samsul Ariffin, 19, a final-year Mechatronics Engineering (MTE) student and one of NPSU's publicity officers admitted that "the turnout was a bit disappointing".

He also said that "the crowd was much

better last year" and commented that "not much publicity was done for this event".

Compared to last year where flyers were given out to remind students of the event, this year, the event banner was only hung along the walkway leading to the library a day before the event. Even so, the banner was half done, with the sponsors' names excluded.

"The thing is we've submitted all our posters and everything else on time but there was a slight printing problem and we could not rectify it in time," added Shakil.

The event, sponsored by De Character, Beauticontrol, Tupperware and FreshLook contact lenses, had a budget of about \$3,000.

Vanessa Lok, 18, a first-year Business Studies (BS) student said she only knew about this event as her friend was one of the pageantino contestants. "They should have more promotions about Hop Nite because there [aren't] a lot of people here," said Vanessa.

Mohd Fadzil, who is in his early 20s, a member of the Community Service Management (CSM) in Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP), suggested that the price of the tickets could be halved from the original \$6.

While others said "technical stuff" had to be improved, Roy Ashurai, 18, a second-year Business Studies (BS) student from NP said that "how it's carried out has to be improve[d]".

"It sucked big time ... there should be more gusto in the show. That's what it lacked," said Roy.

Everyone Tribune interviewed said that they'd attend the event again next year, except Roy, who said sarcastically, "With a big loser sign on my forehead, yes."

Yunnan Cultural Expedition

BY PRASAD NAGAS
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Unlike many before it, this overseas community service project won't require hard physical labour like digging wells and rebuilding a school. But the Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) team bound for Yunnan will still need to brave the harsh living conditions in Er Yuan for two weeks of their expedition.

Apart from sleeping in sleeping bags on the Youth Centre floor in temperatures as low as 6 degrees Celsius, the team of 23 students and two lecturers from the School of Film & Media Studies (FMS) will have no running water.

The Youth Expedition Programme between 30 October and 17 November, will allow the students to work on projects jointly with the students in the village Er Yuan, within the city of Dali. This includes a promotional media project for a locally manufactured fruit juice, Qin Mei Shuang and a local craft item, the Yen Thia (Chinese Ink Pad).

"We want to promote community service spirit with the students. Youths have a good life here. We want to give them a... simple life," said the lecturer-in-charge, Mr Peter Yeo, on the rationale for the expedition.

Serene Ho Jing Min, 20, a second-year Film, Sound & Video (FSV) student, who had wanted to visit Yunnan since she was 10 years old, is prepping herself to "bring more thick clothing", reading up on Dali and staying in good health.

The NP team will also teach conversational English to the youths and purchase a Personal Computer (PC) system for the Youth Centre. Software in English will be installed in the PC so that the youths will be able to access it even after

the FMS students return.

"We intend to buy the whole system in China. We want them [the students there] to know the PC market," said Mr Yeo.

Youth Expeditions like this receive up to 60 percent subsidy by the Singapore International Foundation (SIF), which can give another \$5,000 to defray costs of the project. SIF requires a minimum of 25 people for the expedition and at least two weeks to be spent on community service. If these are met, each student will have to pay only \$450 for this trip.

After the two-week stint to help the centre, students will be treated to five days' of cultural and historical learning.

In Li Zhiang Old City, students will be exposed to traditional music and costumes in the city, which is a tourist attraction.

Students will also get to walk around Li Zhiang Snow Mountain, fully immersing themselves in its natural beauty and getting to know the people living at Lu Gu Lake.

This community is unique as the females are the dominant gender, with the men marrying into their households.

"I don't really see any wrong with marrying into the woman's family. Perhaps we are too accustomed to our social norms and thus most people would feel uncomfortable," said Chen Wei Li, a final-year Mass Communication (MCM) student.

"It would be interesting to actually see how different their way of life is compared to ours."

At press time, Wei Li is one of five males who signed up for the trip. Currently, there are about 13 participants and unless they are able to increase the number to 25, the 60 percent subsidy by SIF will be forfeited.



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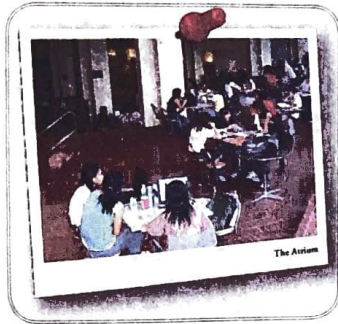
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Places to Hang

Is The Atrium the sole social hub on campus? Tribune reporter Shaifulnizam Abdul Rashid takes an in-depth look at three other popular watering holes and sees how The Atrium fares against them.



Capacity
Seats 268 persons (and 480 standing room)

Food/ Snacks
Campus Deli/ The Splash/ 4 vending machines: 3 for drinks, 1 for snacks/ 1 water cooler

Other Amenities
2 toilets/ automated lockers: 48 small/ walk to Canteens 1 & 2/ NP Book Centre/ Self-service Automated Machine (SAM)/Post box/ Student Services Office

The Good
• Laptop-friendly with 136 power plugs
• Next to the bus stop

The Bad
• Crowded, especially between noon and 5pm
• Noise from occasional bazaars/events

Common Dwellers
Everyone but mostly first-year students

Our Verdict
With various food choices, it's ideal to just chill with friends after class or during breaks.



Capacity
Seats 144 persons

Food/ Snacks
3 vending machines: 2 for drinks, 1 for snacks/ 1 water cooler

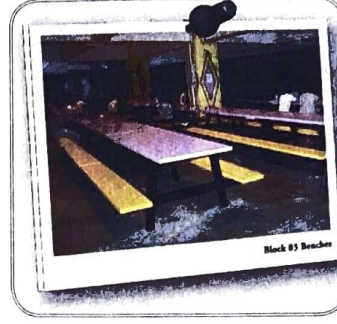
Other Amenities
2 toilets at Blk 23/ manual lockers: 54 small, 35 big/walk to Canteen 3

The Good
• Laptop-friendly, with 72 power plugs
• Study-friendly because of quieter environment
• Fans provide good air circulation

The Bad
• Toilets and food a distance away
• Occasional traffic noise from the adjacent road may hinder studying

Common Dwellers
ICT students

Our Verdict
Perfect for studying because of its rather serene environment.



Capacity
Seats 200 persons

Food/ Snacks
3 vending machines: 2 drinks, 1 snacks

Other Amenities
2 toilets at Blk 82/ manual lockers: 84 small, 28 big/ walk to Canteen 5/ walk to two food courts at Singapore Institute of Management (SIM)/ NP Co-op E-mart (snacks, drinks & copier)

The Good
• Laptop-friendly, with 96 power plugs
• Photocopy service

The Bad
• Toilets a distance away
• Falling leaves at outdoor seating a nuisance

Common Dwellers
• Engineering students and students taking courses at SIM

Our Verdict
Aside from the photocopying service, its close location to SIM's food courts is a plus point.



Capacity
Seats 141 persons

Food/ Snacks
1 stall selling snacks and drinks

Other Amenities
Sports facilities: gym, pool, sports hall, stadium/ near Canteen 2

The Good
• Near campus's back exit towards Jalan Kismis

The Bad
• Very bad lighting
• Not much to eat
• Not laptop-friendly

Common Dwellers
Students using the sports facilities, CCA club members whose clubhouses are up at the Sports Hall's third floor

Our Verdict
While the canteen's fare is not impressive, it attracts its own crowd of sporty people and CCA club members.

Digital Radio Broadcasts in School in Near Future

BY PRASAD NAGAS
nptribune@yahoo.com.sg

In a year or two, you will be able to both see and hear Radio Heatwave (RHW) broadcasts on campus.

The enhancement, a first for any campus in Singapore, will come with better sound quality as radio programmes produced by Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students are digitally broadcast using Digital Video Broadcasting (DVB).

This is the result of a collaboration between the Electronic & Computer Engineering (ECE) division and School of Film & Media Studies (FMS) to exploit the relatively untapped potential of Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) technology.

DAB is a form of "multimedia", according to Mr Chua Beng Koon, 48, a senior lecturer of ECE. It makes use of digital technology instead of the current Frequency Modulation (FM) system, which can only handle analogue programming, to transmit audio programmes. This technology has been adopted by many developed nations, including London. Singapore followed suit through SmartRadio nearly five years ago.

SmartRadio is the first digital radio service in Asia, offering better sound and reception



DIGITAL RADIO: Visuals and text are what you can expect from RHW in the future. (Picture: Amy Tan)

qualities than its FM counterpart.

Less than half of the 13 SmartRadio stations are digital-only. These include Club Play, which plays techno and trance hits, and Bloomberg financial news. The other seven stations are FM radio stations like Class 95 and NewsRadio.

Following SmartRadio, the two NP divisions also want to broadcast content through this technology. It was simply a division of labour. The Mass Communication (MCM) half of FMS will take care of the content to be broadcast while ECE provides the technical expertise.

ECE started to develop their DAB receiver since 1999 when it was introduced in Singapore. Two years later, they exhibited it at the Broadcast Asia 2001, an exhibition for electronic media.

"It has been a dream of both FMS and ECE [to collaborate]," said Mr Chua.

This semester, 38 final-year Advanced Radio Production MCM students will be transforming one of their five radio capsules into digital ones.

Mr Kwek Chin Ling, 46, an FMS radio lecturer said radio students will benefit because "this is the trend for future radio development". He also added that the students should be equipped "with the knowledge of DAB before they enter the industry".

Despite DAB being available, it has failed to gain broad acceptance because of its cost.

DAB receivers are selling for \$300 to \$400 more than a FM receiver. However, Mdm Eva Rosdiana, 32, a lecturer from ECE said, "The

market is small so the technology is expensive. But when the market is big, prices will be less." She added that the increasing market for DAB products and then decrease in price will allow DAB to become more popular in Singapore.

As ECE will be providing receivers they have already purchased, NP students and staff will not have to worry about paying for DAB broadcasts.

Another hurdle DAB faces is its indoor signal is inferior to the FM receiver's, rendering its clear sound useless indoors. These problems, however, can be encountered through education.

This prompted the introduction of final-year ECE module, Digital Audio & Video Technology last July. This module teaches DAB and DVB technology. Last year, it gave 135 students hands-on experience in operating the systems and knowledge about a technology expected to be popular in future.

This year, 106 students are enrolled in the first semester and fewer expected next semester.

But NP's DAB evangelists are not content to convert just the polytechnic. A DAB workshop was held on 23 September primarily for secondary school students and teachers, to introduce the technology to them. The free full-day workshop was equally divided into theory and practical components. ■

两校联盟续友好关系

李慧芳
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义安理工学院早在两年前与浙江大学城市学院签署备忘录交流计划,希望来自不同文化背景的师生们以互相学习的方式吸取宝贵的经验并促进两校之间的关系。

这个学期轮到浙江大学城市学院派出12位(四男,八女)来自工程系,工商系和大众传播系的同学到我校交流。这回的带队讲师是钱诚一教授。钱教授无论在报业,研究或教学方面都十分有经验。他与义安理工学院的学生们分享他在学府里负责的一些研究课题,那包括了报业的发展与改革和新闻史方面的问题。

钱教授说:“这里的教学设施非常齐全,设备都很先进。这段时间与师生们的接触让我从中学习了很多东西。”

Tribune了解到参与这项交流计划的选拔过程不简单。被选中的同学们不仅要拥有优异的成绩,还必须参与社区活动。他们的英语也要达到一定水平才可以与当地的师生们沟通。那12位顺利通过面试及测试的同学们都是二等奖学金以上的得主。

除了以上那四点,这次的交流计划肯定是一项高昂的投资。几位交流生透露,他们得花上大约新币四千元才可以参与这项交流计划。这四千元包括了他们在新加坡的生活开销,飞机票和其他的费用,当然也少不了那笔缴交给原先学校的教务费。是什么原因让他们愿意付出这么高的代价来到这里交流?

彭怡,21岁,工商管理系的交流生,说:“中国的教育制度比较注重年终会考,相反的,这里则比较注重平时。学校的projects很多,同学之间的合作也比那里来得多。”

看来两校之间的交流计划对修读理科的交流生们有着非常大的帮助。

方军华,21岁,机电系的交流生,说:“参加这活动主要是为了增加自己的见识,国外和国内在教学模式,生活方式,人际关系都有很大的不同。相信通过这活动可以使我在学



雨昕,彭怡,晏子和志文是这个学期来自浙大城市学院的其中四名同学。(照片:李慧芳)

习生活上都会有很大收获。”

谈完所谓的硬件也就是修读理科的同学们,也应该转移到软件,也就是听听修读文科的同学有些什么话要补充。

李魏晏子,20岁,大众传媒广播系的交流生,说:“这里的人都很友善,也蛮帮助我们的。大家互相照顾,令我非常感动。我想这是因为大家可以理解在异乡的思乡之愁吧。”

一连串的好评不但来自交流生,义安讲师也对交流生的态度赞不绝口。

蔡明勤,48岁,电脑与电子工程部的高级讲师,说:“由于英语不是他们的母语,所以来到这里中国学生都不是很喜欢presentation,我想是因为在内地他们很少有机会present。”

蔡讲师也提到这群交流生做起事来非常积极和认真。他们在中国上课多半是注重于理论,因此到了新加坡,技术并不是很好。

“他们遇到电脑难题时,都不会主动去尝试动手,而是翻书设法找出解决方法。”蔡讲师说。

不过,他觉得中国学生的吸收能力快,只要多花点时间就可以在技术上取得进步。对于这项交流计划,蔡讲师抱着乐观的态度期待更多类似的机会与其他学府合作。

你争我夺K歌总决赛



K歌比赛圆满结束,参赛者们脸上都流露出喜悦的笑容。(照片:李慧芳)

李慧芳报道
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首届由新加坡四所理工学院除了共和理工学院,联合的中国留学生K歌比赛终于在8月14日当天到了个段落。在这次的K歌总决赛里成功夺下第二名K歌美后的刘希文,正是就读在义安理工学院质量管理工程系的三年级同学。她独唱了那首李纹的<我依然是你的情人>,深深的打动了在座的观众。

希文说:“我真的没有预料到自己能够得到第二名。我想可能是那天的台风还不错吧,所以才会比较突出。”

“当然那天还有许多朋友前来支持我,真的非常感动,我特别感谢他们在场的支持因为那给了我很大的信心和鼓励。”

在这次的总决赛里,一共吸引了27位来自不同理工学院的同学前来大展歌喉,表现才艺。这27位K歌选手都是经历了一连的选拔过程才脱颖而出的,个个都实力相当。这场K歌比赛分为两个组别:独唱和组合。无论是哪个组别,竞争都十分激烈。能够进入总决赛的参赛者们都必须使尽法宝,让自己

在四个评委面前显为突出。四个评委将通过四个评分标准来给参赛者们打分;它们分为咬字,唱功,台风,以及服装。

这场首届K歌比赛是在义安理工学院的28号讲堂里举行的。平时严肃的讲堂在总决赛那天转变成成为27位参赛者争夺冠军宝座的舞台。那一天,28号讲堂的360个座位都给观众给坐满了。由此可见这场比赛是多么成功。

何璐,21岁,中国学生会主席,说:“虽然这场比赛没有很诱人的奖金和奖品,有的只是一些奖杯和参赛的证书,可是大家还是踊跃参与。”

比赛进行的整个过程非常激烈。演唱的人紧张,看的人也替他们捏了一把冷汗。就拿第一位参赛者者,李晓君来说吧,他虽然带病出赛,可是还是非常尽力。他把周杰伦的那首<安静>唱得非常投入。虽然他当天的嗓子不怎么好,唱起高音部分时有些勉强,可是在座的观众们给他的掌声并不吝啬。虽然说比赛失败了,可是晓君那尽力而为的精神是值得表扬的。

何璐也说:“这次的比赛进行得还不错,大家都期待下届的到来。”

学生与歌手之交

陈旭浩报道
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早已告别学生生涯的黄湘怡,目前正在为演艺事业的发展而打拼。24岁的她刚发了新专辑《狂想曲(新歌+精选)》,并准备飞回台湾拍一部新的偶像剧。八月四日那天,湘怡在义安的26号讲堂开了一场别开生面的校园演唱会,又歌又舞的她令观众们陶醉在欢乐的气氛中。

演唱会过后,Tribune与黄湘怡进行访谈。随着Singapore Idol的热潮,义安理工学院也有两位同学成功地进入了总决赛。Tribune要求了湘怡透入一些她学生兼歌手生活时的点点滴滴,好让那些想在演艺圈发展的学生们得益。

湘怡认为“人因梦想而伟大,如果你今天的梦想是当一位歌手或杰出的演艺人员,因该多训练或参加这类的比赛,说不定会让梦成真。”

湘怡能有今天的成就并不是一朝一夕就取得的。她的求学时期可说大半是“在飞机”上度过的。刚出道的她,经常都得飞往新台两地,根本没有太多的时间可以温书。

“我觉得那时候要靠很多的毅力,还要把时间掌握得非常好。”湘怡回想道。

湘怡认为追随梦想固然重要,但学业更不能荒废:“你一定要do consistent work(固定地温习功课)不要wait until last minute(临时抱佛脚)。”

她一再强调,在学生兼歌手的忙碌生活中,家人,朋友和同学的支持是非常重要的。



热情的歌迷朋友门高举湘怡的海报与湘怡近距离接触。(照片:陈旭浩)

的。“学校的lecture[大堂课]和tutorial[小堂课]都缺了一半以上,我时常怕自己跟不上,幸好同学们都很包容我,他们都会一直帮我。”湘怡说道。

娱乐圈的竞争非常激烈,要脱颖而出,成为一位多才多艺的艺人并不容易。歌手出身的她也开始朝向演艺界发展。湘怡说这是因为她想尝试不同演艺方式所以才进入演艺界。无论是演戏或唱歌,湘怡觉得最重要的是“清楚自己的passion(热忱)在哪里,而往那方面发展。”

她认为每个人的天赋和兴趣都不一样;在娱乐圈发展,道理也是一样。她说:“不是每个歌手都会演戏,而不是每个演员都要唱歌。”

最后,本报再一次恭祝那两位成功进入Singapore Idol总决赛的同学,他们一定要努力地凭著“热忱”追随着自己的“梦想”。

有话要说!

有话不怕说,就怕没得说! Tribune 每期都会以街访的方式征求您对一些热门时事话题的意见和看法。

2004年8月22日那天,我国新任的李显龙总理在国庆日大会的演讲当中提到了他对新加坡今后的发展与期盼。李总理一再强调新加坡是属于每个年轻国人的祖国。我国的未来主人翁们应该勇于吐露心声,发表他们是如何看待一些关于国家,社会和政治上的课题。

在这第二期的Tribune,我们将针对李总理的演讲,在校园的四周与义安的同学们探讨以下的这个问题:

“如果你是上任的新加坡总理,你会如何改造社会,为年轻一代的新加坡人作出贡献?”

“我觉得我会多颁一些助学金和奖学金给那些家境不是很好的学生们。至于那些向往出国深造或是参与学院所主办的交流计划的,我也会给予他们更多的津贴好让他们可以负担得起昂贵的费用。”

—曹美安, 21岁, 二年级建筑与地产系

“我会设立更多的资金让有意创业的年轻新加坡人去企业。当然我也会鼓励商界领域的专业人士去协助这群年轻人一臂之力。比方说给他们一些经验之谈,开办企业管理课程之类的讲座。”

—林冠丽, 20岁, 一年级商务系

“政府太过注重学业上的成绩了,搞得新加坡人都只会读书,不会思考。这种教育政策该有所改善。”

—潘美琦, 19岁, 三年级生物医疗工程系

“...那些来自中等收入家庭的学生...他们往往会被遗忘。我也会制造更多的工作机会给那些四、五十岁以上的国人。”

—唐温优, 18岁, 一年级商务系

“我会出版一系列属于年轻人的报刊杂志。通过这些途径让年轻人有机会可以发表他们对于社会和政治课题的意见。我也会通过媒体制作一些有关年轻人的节目,通过这样的节目让他们唱出他们的心声。”

—陈玮玲, 20岁, 二年级生物科技系

“我会建设更多大学以便让本国及外籍学生有更多的选择。这样一来,新加坡的教育水准会吸引很多国家的学生来求学。有多几所大学也就是说能给更多的学生更多求学的机会。”

—林芸芬, 18岁, 一年级商务系

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So Close yet so far

BY GERALDINE GOH
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Tears of disappointment flowed as Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) soccer team was defeated in a nail biting extra-time penalty shootout at the Institute-Varsity-Polytechnic (IVP) finals by the combined Institute of Technical Education (ITE) team.

This is the first match the team has lost this IVP and this is also NP best performance since their gold medal win in 1997.

However, team members were seen tearing and comforting each other.

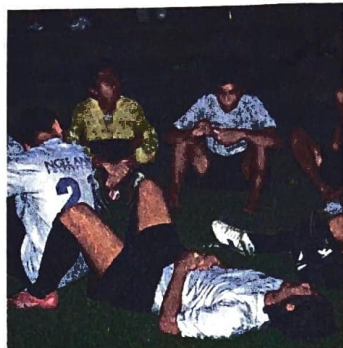
"We deserved to win because we played as a team together. It's just down to our luck," said team member, Kwek Jun Xian, 19, a second year Film, Sound & Video (FSV) student.

NP's lead in the first half of the game was brought level in the second half. A tie after full-time dragged the game into a long penalty shootout with both sides having over 10 successful penalty kicks.

NP finally succumbed and gave the win away with a penalty kick over the goalpost.

"I'm having mixed feelings now. Of course I'll be disappointed. But I'm proud of the team too," said team captain Mohammad Yazid, 23, a second-year student from Electrical Engineering (EE). "Our players really put their hearts out and played as a team. We defend and attack together. We are just unlucky. I think we had higher morale than the other team. We were so near. Just pure unlucky."

"Even David Beckham missed penalties... we definitely won't blame him [the player who



GOLD HOPES DASHED: Tears of disappointment despite best showing in seven years (Picture: Geraldine Goh)

missed the penalty shot," said Yazid.

Still, like a true leader, Yazid had encouraging words for his team, "Congrats... to me, you are all the champs!"

Said Student Development Officer Mr Gopinathan Retnam, the team's new officer in charge, "Considering we didn't have much time to train and [are] not exactly an all-round talented team, the boys played one hell of a game. They really played their hearts out and I'm proud of them."

"Skill-wise, the other team is better. But NP wanted to win... the spirit was there," he added.

The winning combined ITE team's coach Mr Emran Yusoff, 44, had nothing but praise for NP's soccer team.

"It was a good game, nobody deserves to lose... Kudos to NP for the fighting spirit."

Singing With Signs

BY NADIAH YUSOFF
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Only four of 100 members in Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) Hearing-Impaired (HI) Club are hearing-impaired.

Poor self-confidence and a sense of perceived differences are among reasons for fewer hearing-impaired students joining the club, said members Yen Wei Le, and second-year Biomedical Science (BMS) student Ming Jia Li, both 19.

On the other hand, non hearing-impaired students like them are attracted to the club, according to Wei Le, a final-year Mechatronics Engineering (MTE) student, "because it's very fun" and he "wanted to learn another language".

Wei Le is eager "to address [these obstacles] and help them to overcome [them]".

The seven-year-old club actively promotes sign language and performs at in-house events such as International Nite 2004. Through song-signing, members prove that there are ways to communicate other than through speech.

HI Club dazzled an IMM audience at the School of Engineering's 'Magic of Engineering' with their performance of four songs, including 'That Thing You Do' by The Wonders, using sign language to 'sing' on 7 August.

The signing seemed so natural no one knew that none of the performers were hearing-impaired. Some who were watching even enthusiastically sang along with them.

Tony Chua Kwee Boon, 23, one of the four hearing-impaired students in HI Club commented that difficulties may arise should the hearing-impaired students be asked to perform.

He said that "not knowing when to get ready" and "following the song that the hearing-impaired students can't hear" are some factors that make it hard for them to perform.

Kwee Boon, a final-year Electronic & Computer Engineering (ECE) student also said that though they have tried to ask first-year hearing-impaired students to join HI Club, "only few of them are considering and the rest just don't like joining CCAs".

Kwee Boon, who likes to teach sign language, is an instructor in the club. He's not been wearing his hearing-aid for three years, making it difficult to interact with non hearing-impaired students.

"We usually use pen and paper/small notebook or dial the SMS in [the] handphone to communicate with them... Sometimes it's hard working with my project partners."

Though they can hear perfectly well, the president of the HI Club, Edmund Cheow Boon Huat, 19, said the members are so used to sign language, "we are kind of used to not talking".

"In the past, because we wanted to increase our efficiency in our sign language... in the bus or MRT or on the journey home, we used to not talk... We just kept signing throughout the whole journey," he added.

The final-year Biotechnology (BIO) student, who has been learning sign language for more than a year, only joined the club because a friend dragged him in but he has stayed since because his interest grew.

HI Club also took part in the International Deaf Day on 25 September held at the Esplanade. The club presented a musical for the one-day event.

CCA Attachment for S & W Students

BY SHAIFULNIZAM ABDUL RASHID
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A new initiative by the Student Development & Alumni Relations Office (SDAR) may help sports clubs in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) in their recruitment efforts as well as drum up support for their matches.

First-year students taking the Sports & Wellness (S&W) module now have to be attached to a related Co-Curricular Activities (CCA) group for an additional eight hours, spread over four weeks.

There will be no CCA points awarded for this attachment programme.

Mr Thomas Tan, 40, manager for S & W, said, "The aim of this implementation is to expose the students to the various CCA clubs that are available [on campus]. Hopefully, we can encourage the students to take up the CCA."

He said that this attachment programme is not meant to spot and groom potential members for the CCA, so much as to foster good relations between first-year students and their peers in the respective CCAs, when they join the regular CCA sessions.

"It is a different affair altogether when students are with teachers and when students are with their own peers... [when] the atmosphere is more relaxed, there is less restriction. We wanted to make this a student-initiated effort and also student-led," said Mr Tan.

Despite the added hours, Darryl Chew Bo Xun, 17, said, "The attachment lets me play and learn with them [the Tennis Club] and with this, it helps me gauge the level and standard of



HANDS ON EXPERIENCE: S & W badminton students learning to keep score. (Picture: Shaifulnizam Abdul Rashid)

playing that I am aiming for."

The Accountancy (ACC) student attended his first attachment session with the Tennis Club during the Institute-Varsity-Polytechnic (IVP) matches to support it, observe how the game was played and also to practise his umpiring skills. He said, "We were given a piece of paper each to practise the umpiring we were taught in class and we had to umpire four matches, one set each."

Said Chan Wei Lin, 19, Vice President of the Tennis Club, "I think it was really good as they all came down and gave us a lot of support and I think that the support also scared the opponents." Unfortunately, the club lost to Temasek Polytechnic (TP) 2-3.

The S & W committee will review the CCA attachment at end of the semester. Mr Tan said that they will then consider the response from the first-year students and look at ways to improve the programme.

NP Track & Field Scores Third Place at IVP

BY SHAWN TOH
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Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) Track & Field team raced four places ahead of their standing last year in the Institute-Varsity-Polytechnic (IVP) Track & Field Games 2004, which ended on 18 September.

Said Andrew Ng Kee Yang, 19, president of the team, "I'm quite pleased with the results, it's a huge improvement from last year."

Last year the team came in overall seventh, the second last placing.

Explaining the drastic improvement, the second-year Biotechnology (BIO) student added, "One of the major factors was Raihan who was our top medallist. She bagged five medals: one gold and four silvers."

Raihan Mohd Dzuleqhran, 18, a first-year Accountancy (ACC) student not only won a gold medal for the Women's 200 m event, she broke an IVP 33-year-held record.

The four events she scored silver medals for were the long jump, 100 m, 4x100 and 4x400 relay events.

If not for the good showing in the final, those who had seen NP manage fifth and seventh place in the Women's 3 km run and eighth place in the Men's 10 km run on 8 September, would have expected a poorer performance overall.

This was a far cry from their results on the first day of the IVP games on 28 August.

They had bagged two gold medals and a bronze medal then.

Zhuo Weiqi, a first-year Business Studies (BS) student, scored a bronze medal for the track

& field team.

Two girls, each qualified for the 100 m and 400 m finals, while another girl made it into the 200 m finals.

For the guys, Shao Biao Ming 18, first-year Chemical Engineering (CE) student, won a gold medal for the Men's 800 m event, with another runner making it into the 100 m Finals.

"Everyone in the team was on the stands rooting for each and everyone on Track & Field. We were the only school making the most noise and we were jumping like mad monkeys when we won. Even when we lost, we still made lots of noise," said Leny Nuurlina Sriwahyato, 19, the secretary for the Track & Field team.

"I'm sure I'm speaking for the team when I say that we are extremely happy for the team as a whole," Leny had said, after the encouraging performance on the first day. She is also the chief event organiser from the NP Students' Sports Council.

Both of our gold medallists are national runners.

"We did expect medals from two individuals and they got it. We expect everyone to do his or her best and thank God we managed to do better than we thought we could," Leny, a final-year, Accountancy (ACC) student, had said.

The games were held at Temasek Polytechnic Sports Complex.

The schools that competed in the games were all the four polytechnics, except Republic Polytechnic (RP), ITE Combined (Institute of Technical Education), National University of Singapore (NUS) and Nanyang Technological University (NTU).