

NP Students and Staff Rally in Aid of Tsunami Victims

Nurul-Qursyah Ismail and Shereena Sajeed take a look at how students have come together to support survivors

Close on the heels of pre-Christmas charity drives, another slew of fundraising activities saw Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students united in bringing donations, this time to tsunami victims.

In one drive alone, NP student volunteers collected about \$10,000 and over 300 boxes of basic survival items over a three-day period.

While most students were out enjoying the last day of 2004, over 100 NP students spent their New Year's Eve packing and transporting relief items for some of the countries hit by the devastating tsunami that struck off the coast of Sumatra on 26 December 2004.

NP's donated goods went to Sri Lankan victims while the cash donations were given to the Red Cross Society, for Indonesia.

The NP effort was part of a national and worldwide effort to bring relief to victims in tsunami-hit countries. At press time, the death toll had crossed the 155,000 mark.

Several days after the tsunami struck, there was overwhelming response from student groups who helped set up donation drives. These included the Ngee Ann Polytechnic Students' Union (NPSU), the School of Business & Accountancy's (BA) community outreach arm, BA Community And Reachout Endeavours (BA CARES), and the Film & Media Studies Society (FMSS), as well as other Co-Curricular Activities (CCA) groups like the NP Outward Bounders.

The Student Development and Alumni Relations (SDAR) Office coordinated all efforts to better channel volunteers' energies and resources. The result was an NP-wide effort where students and staff rallied together as a concerned community.

29 to 31 December 2004 @ The Atrium

The fourth day of the disaster marked the first round of donations, through a campus-wide drive led by NPSU, the NP Outward Bounders and NP Sports Club.

NP staff and students made a beeline for the collection booth at the Atrium throughout the day, dropping off relief items.

Necessities like canned food, instant noodles, water purification tablets and the equivalent of 700 5-kg bags of rice were collected.

The 50 packing boxes provided by the Estate Management Office (EM) proved insufficient due to the generosity and students had to source for more from the Ngee Ann Polytechnic Consumer Co-operative Society Limited (NP Co-op) stores and canteens.

This collection ended at 1pm on 31 December 2004 and was delivered to the Singapore Sinhala Buddhist Association through Melissa Guna Desa, 23, a 2002 Mass Communication (MCM) graduate. These were flown to Sri Lanka.

Melissa had made an appeal to her school after receiving an e-mail regarding relief efforts of her temple, Sri Lankaramanya Buddhist Temple, which she forwarded to NP Principal Mr Chia Mia Chiang. Mr Chia informed the Director of Corporate Communications, Mrs Yeoh-Looi



UNITED IN CHARITY: BA students were among many diverse groups collecting and packing relief goods in the hope of sending them to tsunami victims by the first dawn of 2005. [Picture: Nurul-Qursyah Ismail]

Mei Fong, who organised the donation drive.

Said Mr Chia in an e-mail interview, "The heartwarming response of our students reflects their kindness and compassion towards their fellow beings. It was touching to see them hard at work on 30 and 31 December - sorting, packing and loading the collected items onto trucks. The immense human tragedy has brought out the best in our students."

Jason Mak Weng Mun, 20, the Vice-President of NP Outward Bounders and a final-year Business Studies (BS) student, was supportive of the donation drive because he felt that "something had to be done".

Jason, who was also in charge of the collection booth at the Atrium, added that clothing donations were rejected, as a lot of time and manpower were needed to check the condition of and pack the clothes. So clothes received went to the BA CARES drive at Canteen One.

About 40 students, mostly from other co-organisers, came to help at the booth and "manpower was not a problem", Jason said.

Mr Ian Wong, 28, a Student Affairs officer from SDAR, who will be making a cash donation himself, was "very pleased that all the students and staff gave a lending hand".

29 to 31 December 2004 @ Canteen One

While the collection drive was in full swing at the Atrium, BA CARES also set up their own donation drive at Canteen One, and met their target of \$10,000 raised by the time collections closed at 5pm.

Staff and students from BA also collaborated with the Andrew and Grace Home, a home for troubled youths, and Operation Blessings, a non-profit humanitarian organisation, to collect

clothes and canned food for the tsunami victims. These collections were channelled to the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA).

Ms Joyce Tang, 40, a lecturer in charge of BA CARES, was touched by the "spirit of compassion and volunteerism" shown by student volunteers. About 60 to 70 students were involved in the three-day drive, she said.

Caryn Goh, 18, a BA CARES committee member and a second-year BS student, noted the experiences they gathered from previous overseas community trips went a long way in helping them to organise their efforts in such a short time.

Beyond 3 January: Around NP

NPSU Vice-President James Tan Jun Yuan, 19, confirmed that another donation drive will take place on 6 and 7 January, and will be a collaboration of all academic societies.

The final-year Mechanical Engineering (ME) student said student leaders from these societies will make rounds at lectures and tutorials with tin cans to ask for cash donations.

A giant coin box will be placed at the Atrium and all cash or cheque donations collected will be given directly to the Red Cross Society.

Details for later relief efforts were sketchy at press time, but Tribune understands the Film & Media Studies Society (FMSS) and School of InfoComm Technology (ICT) planned fundraisers for 3 to 7 and 10 to 14 January. Donors to the latter will enjoy novel benefits such as a car wash or entry to a gaming competition. ■

LATEST: Read of NP lecturer's first-hand experiences with urgent relief efforts in Krabi, Thailand @ www.theurbanwire.com.

IN THIS ISSUE



THREE NEW DIPLOMAS Page 3



MORE YEPs Page 8



CLEMENTI ONLINE Page 8



IVP 2004 / 2005 Page 12

Dawn of New Hope



BY CHEN WEILI
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It is nice to know that in times of great need, people are willing to put their differences aside and work for the same cause.

I'm referring of course, to the Asian tsunami disaster that struck on 26 December 2004, devastating Aceh in Indonesia, the Maldives, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Tamil Nadu in India, Phuket in Thailand, and Penang in Malaysia.

Thousands were left homeless and tens of thousands more missing, with the death toll rising steadily. The United Nations predicts that it will take up to 10 years for affected countries to

recover. Basic necessities like food, clean drinking water, fuel and clothes are in short supply.

Countries from all over the globe, disregarding ideological differences, rallied around to send aid worth at least US\$3 billion (\$\$4.94 billion) at press time to help victims. Japan has pledged up to US\$500 million.

Back on campus, Tribune had wanted to launch a charity drive to deliver relief goods to tsunami-hit countries by the first dawn of 2005. But before we could go further, we discovered the BA Community And Reachout Endeavours (BA CARES), the Film & Media Studies Society (FMSS) and a few other Co-Curricular Activities (CCA) clubs like NP Outward Bounders had already pooled their efforts to work with the Ngee Ann Polytechnic Students' Union (NPSU) and Student Development and Alumni Relations (SDAR) Office to collect relief items and monetary donations for the victims.

Sure, we were disappointed at not being able to spearhead charity efforts, despite having some exciting ideas, but I encouraged my colleagues to sign up as volunteers because it didn't matter who organised this, as long as the cause benefitted.

The fact that other student organisations are working together to run charity drives is

a sign that unity is very much alive in the NP community. That's good news and it's something we can all be proud of.

While we pat our backs, let's not forget to consider what sort of damage our little island would have borne had the land mass of Sumatra not been there to shield us from the tsunami.

Judging from the geographical location of our island, Tias seems the most likely target of tidal demolition, had we stood directly in the tsunami's path. Can anyone of us imagine the sort of chain effect it would have had on our economy and lives?

And the fact that we were having our school term during December for the first time, which made so many of us grouchy, potentially saved many of us who might otherwise have been holidaying in our neighbouring countries.

Twice spared by circumstances beyond our control, how can our hearts not fill with gratitude and how can we not do what little we can to comfort and provide for the people who have lost families and friends in the disaster?

We hope that by the time Tribune goes to print, NP's charity drives will be successful, owing to your generous donations. ☐

Tribune is a publication by third-year Print Journalism students of the Diploma in Mass Communication course in Ngee Ann Polytechnic

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Tribune, February 2005

Fret Over Fee Hike?

BY ROGER LOW
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Polytechnic school fees are set to rise by \$100 in the 2005/2006 academic year. Tribune found mixed reactions across the Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) campus.

"I think a lot of people are well-to-do, so \$100 is not too much. But... those who are working [their way] through school... will be the most affected ones."

- Diana Johari, 17, a first-year Early Childhood Education (ECH) student

"We have already enrolled, so if they were to increase [the fees], they should increase [for]... the new intake... it is somehow unfair to [current students]."

- Tan Winnie, 18, a second-year Electronic & Telecommunication Engineering (ETE) student

"I'm paying [school fees] through my father's [Central Provident Fund] CPF... My father is already 50-plus... His retirement [age] is around 55... If I cut [more from] his CPF, then what is he left with?"

- Nangaiyarkkarsi d/o Silvam, 21, a second-year Business Studies (BS) student

"I [have] got to work part-time [because of the school fees increase]... which sucks especially [when] you are in [Mass Communication]... there is hardly time for anything... so it is going to be very, very difficult."

- Christine Cheong, 18, a second-year Mass Communication (MCM) student

"When I go out to work, I'll be the one paying [my parents] back. So, [the increase] it's actually all right to me."

- Lim Jie Shi, 18, a first-year Internetworking & Communications (INC) student

Jail For Illegal Software Downloads

BY ROGER LOW
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A jail term of up to six months and a fine of up to \$20,000 for downloading copyrighted files is making Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students reconsider their actions when it comes to "ripping off" music, movies and software.

The Copyright Act was amended from 1 January, to come down hard on people who obtain illegal file downloads.

"Previously, only the company can be fined. So for the first time, under the amended Act, [the] copyright infringer can face jail terms, just like thieves," said Mrs Caroline Loh, Deputy Librarian of the Library, in an e-mail interview.

Mrs Loh, who declined to reveal her age, added that the amendment was necessary "to keep pace with new Internet technologies".

For example, programs such as BitTorrent and KaZaA allow web users to download and send files— including music and movie files— among themselves.

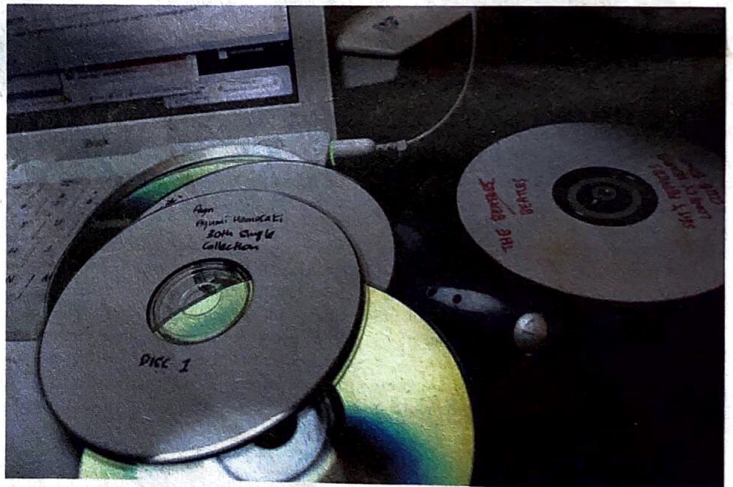
"Illegal downloading of files is a habit which students have to break away from," said Mrs Loh. "Just as students will not think of taking another person's belongings... as this would be considered theft... they should not resort to illegal downloading of songs or movies."

"Library will help to create this awareness among students and staff through announcements in various publicity channels."

Mrs Loh added that students may borrow music CDs and movies from the Library.

However, for those who borrow such materials to make unauthorised copies, Mrs Loh said, "There are Copyright stickers [on the CDs] warning users against copyright infringements. The onus is on the user to comply with copyright. Otherwise, they will be opening themselves up for civil action."

The Computer Centre (CC) denied monitoring the NP network, or even planning to do so in future, to prevent illegal downloads or file transfers.



AN END TO PIRACY ON CAMPUS: Students have to use original software or face prosecution. (Picture: Leonard Goh)

It added, through an e-mail, that NP's policies have always "adhered strictly to copyright law".

CC implied that students should have no reason to download illegal software for projects and school work when they said, "NP has helped students through the provision of core software applications bundled together with the notebooks purchased from campus."

This, however, had not stopped students from continuing to download software and applications on the sly in the past.

Most of the several students Tribune spoke to admitted to having done so but are now thinking twice given the new legislation. They spoke to Tribune on condition of anonymity.

Peter (not his real name), 17, a first-year Internetworking & Communications (INC) student, said, "I think I will get caught... I would rather play safe."

Final-year Business Information Technology (BIT) student Alvin (not his real name), 20, said, "I can feel the pressure [of getting caught], even though I am [just] one of the millions

downloading... I still need to be aware."

The law is making itself felt and eliminating sources, according to Jane (not her real name), 19, a final-year Business Studies (BS) student. She added that some Internet Relay Chat (IRC) channels that she frequented to download MP3s have now closed down.

Mrs Loh said that the Library was "reviewing the resources that we currently make available to staff and students on NPNet, to ensure that there are no copyright infringements as a result of the changes to the Act".

Even Nigel Chu, 18, a first-year Engineering Informatics (EI) student, who claimed to only use legitimate CDs and software, can understand the temptation to run afoul of the law.

He said, "People who download [copyrighted files]... [may not] have money to buy original CDs." Or they may prefer to download content because it was "much faster" to obtain them.

"You don't have to walk all the way just to buy a particular CD," said Nigel. "With a click, you can just download a song." ☐

NP Launches Three New Value-Added Diplomas

BY GARY LIM
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Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) will offer three new diplomas: Product Design & Innovation (PDI), Health Sciences (Nursing) (HSN), and Chinese Studies (CHS), from May 2005.

Design of the Times

The School of Engineering (SoE) will offer 80 new places in PDI, NP's first design-based course.

The diploma was initiated on the advice of the Economic Development Board (EDB) and the Ministry of Information, Communication and the Arts (MICA), who felt that NP needed a non-art based design course.

According to Dr Tan Ah Kat, 56, senior lecturer, existing industrial design courses in Temasek Polytechnic (TP) and Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP) focus too heavily on art and not enough on manufacturing and business. PDI hopes to fill the niche these polytechnics miss.

"Companies feedback that they are looking for people with [mechanical] design skills,

industrial design skills and marketing skills," said the Manager of Mechanical Engineering's (ME) design section and design centre.

PDI is significantly different from other more broad-based engineering courses in NP being more focussed on developing "very strong, solid skills in design".

"Design, if you like, is 5 percent outside, 95 percent inside of a product," said Dr Tan, stressing the importance of engineering designers.

PDI students must think creatively about improving a product and critique their own innovations. "In design, there is no right or wrong, just a matter of discussion," said Dr Tan.

James Tan Jun Yuan, 19, a final-year Mechanical Engineering (ME) student believes that PDI can contribute to Singapore's move into "higher value creation", revive its manufacturing sector and help Singapore become a design hub.

Nurturing Nurses

NP is planning to offer HSN to 200 students under the School of Life Sciences and Chemical Technology (LSCT).

"It is a known fact that nursing is high in demand," said Ms Ivy Ong Siow Ping, an

Administration Manager of LSCT, in her early 30s. "... most foreign nurses [recruited here] will be transferred to work in other countries," she noted.

The development of HSN is part of the Economic Development Board (EDB) and Singapore Tourism Board's (STB) initiative of attracting 1 million international patients here by 2012. HSN will go some way in providing more nurses to meet these needs.

Even though NYP has a nursing course, Ms Ong said that apart from the basic nursing skills taught, at NP, students will acquire additional life science knowledge in HSN electives like Drug Development & Pharmacology, and Clinical Trials and Intellectual Property Management, which add value to the diploma.

NP students will also be sent for a six-month clinical attachment to hospitals where NYP offers only a four-week attachment.

Ms Ong said hospitals felt longer clinical attachments prepare students much better.

HSN students will be trained at Block 81 where six-bedded hospital wards, an Intensive Care Unit (ICU), operating theatre and life sciences labs will be built, giving students hands-

on training with modern technology in nursing facilities.

A Chinese Education in NP

The School of Film & Media Studies (FMS) will offer a full-time diploma in Chinese Studies (CHS) to 80 students, in line with Singapore's plan to have more Chinese language teachers.

Students will gain a deeper understanding into Chinese culture, values and language. Besides becoming a Chinese teacher, and enjoying bursaries from the Ministry of Education (MoE), CHS graduates can expect to find work in the Chinese media industry.

An immersion programme in China at the Zhejiang University City College is part of the attraction of the course. Students also enjoy exemptions from the National Institute of Education (NIE) to pursue a diploma or degree in Education on graduation.

FMS lecturer Mr Kwek Chin Ling, 47, a committee member for CHS, said students will cover Chinese history and contemporary pop culture like studying pop music lyrics.

For more on the CHS diploma, see pg 10. ■

Love That Library Novel? Just Blog it.

BY GILLIAN WU
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The Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) Library is using the popular blogging culture to encourage users to exchange ideas and share opinions about books they have read.

Titled Readers' Choice, the new weblog that appeared in January is an enhancement of the previous book review system launched last May. Then, book reviews and comments were sent to the Library via e-mail.

As the previous book review system only allowed one-way communication, the Library felt that there may be users who have views about certain reviews but were unable to share their thoughts. Hence, the creation of the online log.

The weblog, hosted on NP's server, was developed internally using freeware and it can be accessed from the Library's homepage or directly at <http://blogs.np.edu.sg/liblog>.

While other tertiary institutions, such as Nanyang Technological University (NTU), have weblogs, they usually belong to the clubs and societies in the institution.

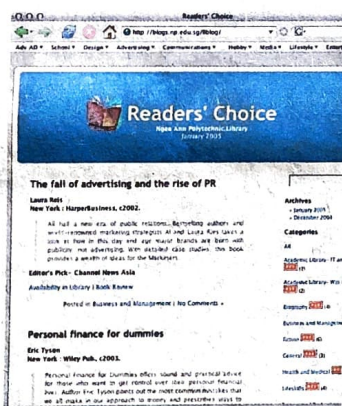
As such, NP is the first tertiary institution to have a "learning" weblog to its name, said Ms Lim Bee Ang, in her 30s.

The Reference Manager for the Academic Library, said in an e-mail interview, that with the enhanced service, besides being able to contribute book reviews, users can also comment on books highlighted in Readers' Choice.

A list of titles is posted on the weblog monthly for staff and students to consider. Each title is accompanied by a detailed summary and additional links to its availability in the Library and to book reviews.

"The Library believes that the weblog will benefit staff and students in various aspects, such as knowledge, creativity and interest," said Ms Lim. She further explained that the weblog aims to help broaden their outlook, unleash their creativity and improve their motivation and communication skills.

To encourage participation, users will be rewarded with a \$2 NP Co-Op voucher for each review, instead of for every three reviews



MAKE YOURSELF HEARD: Share your thoughts on what you read with other NP readers. (Screenshot of site)

submitted before January.

Some students, however, remain sceptical about the weblog's popularity.

"I don't think a lot of students will read it, but maybe just visit it to see what it is all about," said Nurvidayu Asmawi, 18, a second-year Biotechnology (BIO) student.

Her BIO friend, Teng Hui Min, 18, also a second-year student, added that not many students read books these days, much less, do book reviews. The Library received 142 review contributions last year.

With the new incentive and the popularity of weblogs among youths, the Library believes there will be a rise in submissions and comments.

"Readers' Choice will eventually be an active communication forum that achieves the intended objectives," said Ms Lim.

The Library acknowledged that the weblog may be misused when students contribute irrelevant or unpleasant comments. Ms Lim added, "The Library will monitor and if necessary, moderate the discussion forums."

The Library plans to integrate this weblog with other services that it feels will be beneficial to users. Such initiatives will be announced and rolled out when ready. ■

Change For the Worse?



THE NEW CANTEN: More complaints than compliments despite a \$150,000 revamp. (Picture: Roger Low)

BY KARIN XIAO
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Canteen Two's \$150,000 revamp during the October - November 2004 break, met with lukewarm response from Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students, despite a fresh look and new vendors.

Food Haven, the new canteen operator, has changed some food stalls, and renovated the canteen for a brighter look. It is also more spacious than before with the high tables and stools being replaced with conventional tables and chairs.

In a written reply, the Estate Management Office (EM) said that the "old rustic look [had been] replaced with [a] brighter and airy ambience" while the "central raised platform and planter boxes were removed for more open spaces and seating".

"Canteen Two was last renovated more than six years ago," the reply added. "This renovation was co-invested by the new canteen operator."

Students and staff have differing views about the revamp.

"The old canteen was very dull, not like this one," said Alexander Tang, 18, a first-year Business Studies (BS) student.

"The colours look nice and [the canteen is] more pleasant". The greater "variety" of food choices was also a plus point for Alexander, who does not frequent Canteen Two.

Madam D. Vijayakumari, a campus supervisor from the Student Services Office (SS) thinks that the "renovation [was] very nicely done" and the canteen looks "very bright".

While she has not tried the food, she said that, "A lot of students [have] complained why the vendors [have] changed [and] why the food is not like before."

She thinks it will be a while before students and staff will accept the new food.

"My friend says you can count the fries!" said Gooi Xiu Ping, 18, referring to the small portions offered by the Western food stall.

The first-year Early Childhood Education (ECH) student also thought that the new cash register system "holds back the queue a lot", resulting in longer waiting time to buy food.

However, she conceded that the renovations made Canteen Two "look more spacious and brighter".

Michelle Ho, 18, a first-year ECH student, agreed that the canteen's new look was "nicer" but said that the food "is still the same".

"The delicious chicken rice is gone," she lamented. "Although less salt and less sugar is used, the food is still very oily."

However, Michelle felt that some of the food had improved. "I heard from my friends who have tried the *roti prata*, that it is good."

Ahmad Mustafa, 17, a first-year Electronic & Computer Engineering (ECE) student, remarked that there was "more variety", and that food from the Muslim stall was "a bit cheaper than before". However, he remarked that while the food was "usually okay", there seemed to be "something wrong" that day.

Neither Mr Tan Teck Han, the Manager of Canteen Two, nor Ms Cecilia Tay, Manager of Food Haven, would comment on the students' feedback on the changes in Canteen Two. ■

More Bursaries, Students' Union Promises

BY GARY LIM
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Increased bursaries, a clubs and societies' subsidy system, a feedback channel and fun activities for students are some of the new initiatives the 23rd Executive Committee of the Ngee Ann Polytechnic Students' Union (NPSU) has come up with for 2005.

These new initiatives, raised during the NPSU Annual General Meeting, are part of the plan to help more students, said James Tan Jun Yuan, 19, Vice-President of NPSU.

The union has allocated \$20,000 for student bursaries in 2005. This is a 25 percent increase over the \$16,000 worth of bursaries, NPSU had given out last year.

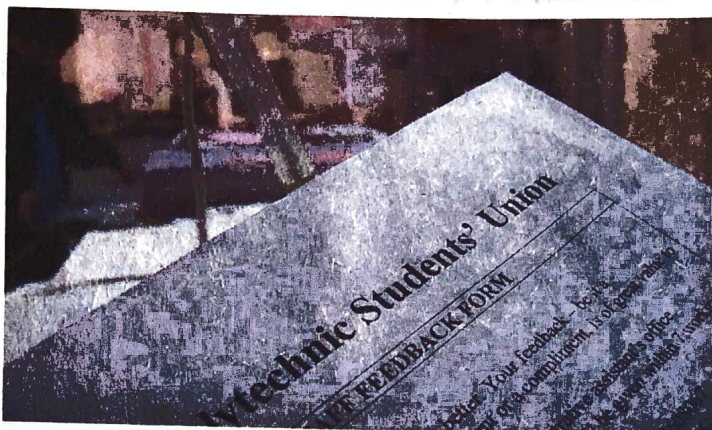
This works out to just four more \$1,000 bursaries for the entire student population. A Tribune investigative story in Oct 2003 had called for NPSU to use its \$1.3 million surplus on more bursaries.

"[This increase] isn't that big," said Abdul Rashid, 24, a final-year Mechanical Engineering (ME) student. He said he could easily point out five to 10 students who needed the bursaries.

"It doesn't make a difference, they should consider 10 or more for it [the change] to be visible."

NPSU's new subsidy system gives clubs and societies more leeway in seeking funding.

Those needing money to run their core activities in clubs and societies, go through two tiers of approval. They need to first submit their proposal to the Student Development & Alumni Relations (SDAR) Office.



HEARING YOU OUT: At press time, the NPSU feedback form has yet to be tested. (Picture: Gary Lim)

Upon SDAR approval, NPSU will review the proposal for bona fide activities like campus-wide or national-wide competitions, not for their "parties and retreats" as James said. After NPSU's approval, NP's Finance Office gives the students the proposed sum from NPSU's coffers. Each club or society can get up to \$500 in subsidy.

NPSU will now help them to negotiate for more, on a case-to-case basis, said James.

"[In the past] clubs do not know where to go," he said, hence wasting their time by approaching the wrong channels to seek subsidy.

He clarified, however, that NPSU still encouraged groups to raise their own funds as a

way of promoting independence, not wanting to cultivate an image of "spoon feeding" clubs and societies money wherever there is a request.

"[This is to] get them to be pro-active in managing their clubs," said James.

NPSU said it is also paying more attention to students' welfare and concerns by implementing a feedback system for the first time. Students can raise any pressing issues concerning their welfare by filling up feedback forms available at the counter of the union's office.

"We will get back to you in seven days. That is our promise," said Mark Jonathan Mohan, 25, President of NPSU. Within seven days, the

union will provide information in response to these problems.

Despite the NPSU's good intentions, students are sceptical.

"I would say it's [effectiveness in getting student participation is] fifty-fifty; half the time it is being used, half the time it is put there just for show," said Lionel Heng Zhen Ron, 20, a final-year InfoComm Technology (ICT) student.

He suggested that it was more feasible and effective to create an online feedback forum, as "students would not just go all the way to the office, fill up a form, if they are not happy [with student-related matters]".

While the feedback system is still in its infancy, NPSU has already planned two new activities, night cycling and a movie marathon.

"These are things that we [NPSU] do to build the intangible aspect [like bond with the students]," said James. "But they [night cycling and movie marathon] are also popular with students."

Some students, however, are not excited about these activities.

"It appeals to a selected few, it doesn't appeal to the masses," commented Rashid on both activities, which he feels are niche in nature.

"It's [movie marathon] nothing new," said Lionel, who also thinks activities like night cycling raises a question of manageability, based on his experience of seeing difficulty in handling a crowd of about 30 cyclists from the NP Outward Bounders on a night cycling trip.

"But it's better that they are doing something [for the students], better than nothing," he added. ■

IS Supports Knowledge-on-the-Go

BY CELIA CHAN
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The School of Interdisciplinary Studies (IS) has collaborated with the Library to put up an exhibition called Knowledge-on-the-Go, in an effort to encourage students to discover the Library's resources and disprove its 'boring' image.

Started in January, the three-month exhibition is held at the ISpark studio at Block 53, level 4.

There will be a different subject focus each month and topics showcased are selected from the different IS modules, such as Science and Technology or Entrepreneurship.

To encourage students to use the Library, students are given assignments they can complete only by visiting the exhibition and then gathering more information at the Library.

The idea for the exhibition came to Mr Harold Apul Siregar, 56, an IS lecturer, during the opening of the ISpark studio last May.

Mr Siregar said he had invited the library to showcase its book materials in the ISpark studio then because "there was a need" given that students gave him the impression that they believe the library is boring.

He added that students did not understand the value of the library and that IS decided to take proactive measures to "come up with a programme to bring the value of the library resources to the students" and change students' perceptions of the Library.

IS felt it was best-suited to collaborate with the Library because of its diverse array of modules and the large numbers of students it reaches.

Mr Siregar hopes the exhibition will encourage students to visit the Library whenever they receive project briefs.

Ms Wendy Lim, 28, assistant manager for the Library's Reference Services, explained that

it was a good way of promoting the books on display to students.

Some NP students, however, think it will take more than an exhibition to change their perception of the Library.

Sharlene Ann Poh Su-Lin, 19, a second-year Information Technology (IT) student, said, "Unless they are forced, I don't think students would want to associate themselves with the library. [The library] always means work."



EASY EASEL INFORMATION: IS materials liven up the ISpark studio. (Picture: Celia Chan)

She added that when students head to the library voluntarily, it is mostly to watch movies.

Second-year Biomedical Engineering (BME) student Nicholas Allan Lange, 19, reasoned that with current technology, it is simpler to get information over the Internet.

He observed, "It's so much easier. Just click the mouse."

Another IT student, Wong Chuan Wei, 20, was more positive.

The final-year student said, "The exhibition is a good way of introducing the library [to students]."

However, he suggested publicising the exhibition more to attract students. ■

ECH After Many NYAA Bronze Awards

BY SHEREENA SAJEED
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For the first time, a record number of more than 100 first-year students from Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) Early Childhood Education (ECH) Programme have signed up for the Bronze level of the National Youth Achievement Award (NYAA).

While NP has a strong presence in the NYAA scheme, it is the first time that a particular school has entered such a large number of students for the Bronze award, said Mr Thomas Tan, 40, Manager of the Sports and Wellness Programme under the Student Development Section.

The NYAA scheme launched in 1992 aims to encourage youth between 14 to 25 years to develop personal qualities of self-reliance, perseverance and a sense of responsibility to oneself, society and the nation, according to the official NYAA website at www.nyaa.org.

There are three levels to the scheme: Bronze, Silver and Gold. According to Mr Tan, as of last June, 28 students have received the Gold Award for NYAA. Regardless of the level, all participants have to complete projects in four specific areas - service, adventurous journey, skills as well as physical recreation.

Driving this is Sear Hock Rong, 19, Vice-President of the ECH Society and executive committee member of the NYAA Gold Award Holders' Alumni. He is keen "to encourage all ECH students to take up the Award scheme, so that when they graduate, they would achieve at least a NYAA Bronze Award".

The second-year ECH student added that the Award would help differentiate them from others who do not possess such credentials.

It will come in handy when these students embark on their careers after graduation.

First-year ECH students were introduced to the programme at the ECH Orientation Camp

last July. Students used their camp participation to clock hours for their NYAA Bronze awards.

As it was not compulsory to join the NYAA Bronze programme, most of them voluntarily took up the challenge.

Yeoh Hui Ping, 18, a first-year student, said she was "interested in the programme" as it allowed her to accumulate points while doing her part for the community.

Andrew Chan Xiong Qiang, 18, another first-year student, reasoned, "I joined the NYAA because I feel that it will help me in getting a job in future, as employers don't only look at academic results."

To help the students achieve the award, the ECH Committee, who also organised the Orientation Camp, will arrange visits to children's homes where the students involved in the NYAA scheme will conduct activities such as storytelling, and art and craft.

Apart from this, journalism and drama workshops and even, a one-hour taekwondo-aerobics class will also be held for the ECH students. This is done so that they will be able to clock the required hours under the physical recreation aspect of the scheme.

Mr Tan was impressed with the ECH as they are going the extra mile to help students clock up hours for their awards.

"They see the need for extra certification and the NYAA gives a student an extra edge."

In addition, Hock Rong wants to promote youth development and awareness so that his fellow students will be more involved with the community and school.

He is confident that "participation in the NYAA scheme would encourage our students to do community service, learn new skills, be more adventurous and take up a sport."

"Hopefully, it would help develop students as a 'whole' person." ■

NP Celebrates First Christmas in School

BY MARY-ANN RUSSON
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For the first time, Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students and staff spent the Yuletide season on campus and in class.

The mood in the first week of the semester, which began in December 2004, was especially depressing and glum, for students who had to come to class in what has traditionally been a holiday period. Fortunately, NP students and staff worked hard to alleviate the mood and spread some Christmas cheer.

Staff from the School of Engineering (SoE) spent three weeks constructing a 24-foot revolving Christmas tree at the Atrium – touted as the tallest revolving one in Singapore – assisted by students who helped with the decorating.

"The total cost [of the revolving Christmas tree] was \$1,000. We wanted to have a tall tree that is able to rotate, which would make the tree different from [Christmas] trees you see outside," said Mr Tan Thye Pong, 53, a Technical Support Officer for the Multidiscipline Engineering (MDE) division.

"The first tree [built in 2002] was 12 feet tall and it was pretty easy as it was a small tree. [In 2003] we wanted to make [the revolving tree] taller so it took us three months.

"This year it... only took us three weeks. The hardest thing is the installation. We don't have any hoists and we weren't building it on site, so we needed to transport the tree and install it in the Atrium using a truck with a crane."

But even when the Christmas decorations were finally taken down, the revolving Christmas tree served another purpose.

"When we un-install the tree, all the

mechanical parts (the motor and the driving mechanisms) are exposed and the students can look at it. The lecturers [will] bring their students ... to see how a design mechanism can be designed and used in this way," Mr Tan added.

SoE was not the only school getting in on the Christmas spirit.

Lecturers from the School of Film & Media Studies (FMS) got together to prepare Christmas goodies like cookies, cakes and even chocolate-dipped strawberries, which were sold at a booth in the Atrium from 15 to 17 December 2004 in aid of World Vision International. Their efforts raised approximately \$2,600 for needy children. A group of FMS lecturers also gave a special lunchtime *a cappella* singing performance of popular Christmas carols.

"We wanted to give something back during Christmas time, to spread the joy of the season and also add some life and colour to campus because everyone's coming back and they're all so down... it was really a labour of love from all the lecturers of FMS," said Ms Lorraine Audrey Paul, 33, an FMS lecturer.

The commercial flavour of the season was not forgotten as SGEvents, an event company set up by NP students, organised a Christmas bazaar at the Atrium from 21 to 24 December 2004. Students from NP, Nanyang Technological University (NTU), National University of Singapore (NUS) and Singapore Management University (SMU) sold wares from clothes to posters, accessories and Christmas goodies.

"I participate [in] almost every bazaar because I'm very interested in business," said stallholder Lim Wei Yan, 20, a final-year Electronic & Computer Engineering (ECE).



CHRISTMAS AT NP: Students enjoy the yuletide cheer in the Atrium. (Picture: Mary-Ann Russon)

Said Elbina Joyce, 18, a student from Film, Sound & Video (FSV), "Since I'm in Year One, this is my very first bazaar, and I think it's good because [vendors] can attract a lot of people to buy [their] stuff. [In fact] I'm buying something right now!"

According to Carolyn Qiu Wan Hui, 21, a second-year student from NTU, the reputation of NP bazaars attracted her to apply as a vendor.

"I heard that Ngee Ann has great bazaars all year round. This is the first time I've [set up a booth] here, and I'm quite sure I'll come back [in future] if there is a chance," she said.

Wan Hui felt that there was more to the experience than just the promise of profits. "Apart from the monetary returns, we actually find it a lot of fun to interact with our customers... You see a lot of the girls, after they buy stuff from us, they're so happy, so you feel happy [too]." ■

BA Students Rediscover Singapore in Amazing Race

BY KARIN XIAO
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School of Business & Accountancy (BA) students learnt more about local tourist attractions as they raced each other to various checkpoints in the Uniquely Singapore Race.

The annual race in its second year is adapted from American reality television series *The Amazing Race*, where teams must overcome physical and mental challenges to get to their next destination.

Each team of four students in the two-day race had to travel all over Singapore to search of checkpoints to progress.

Michelle Toh, 19, a Project Head for the event, said in an e-mail interview, "STB [Singapore Tourism Board] was interested in sponsoring such a meaningful event, of 'local flavour' [and] it was STB's hope that we could help bring the participants to 'hunt down' those unique places of Singapore, where one would not usually go." She is a second-year Accountancy (ACC) student.

Among other places, the race on 15 and 16 January brought participants to the Escape Theme Park and the Wild Wild Wet water theme park, both in Downtown East, Pasir Ris.

Some of the activities participants had to complete at the points including English vocabulary puzzles, water activities and team building activities.

The race ended at the Underwater World in Sentosa with a prize presentation for the final 12 teams. The winning team walked away with a \$200 cash prize, a \$30 food hamper and a trophy for each of the team members.

This year's race attracted 80 participants, almost double last year's 48.

Michelle puts this to the hype caused by last year's race. "Those participants that joined last year really enjoyed themselves and, this year, they gathered more of their friends to join."

Agreeing, Lee Yang Xun, 19, a final-year ACC student, said in an e-mail interview, "I missed last year's race but joined this year's because... my friend and her mates were last year's champion team... And they had [a] hell [of a] lot of fun!"

Yang Xun encouraged students to take part in future races as "it's another interactive ground and 'classroom' to learn and experience skills that were not taught in the normal classrooms".

As before, this year's race was only open to BA students.

"If the budget allows us [next year], we would definitely open up [the race] to the whole poly by allowing more teams to participate and going to more adventurous places," said Michelle. ■

Frenzied Feasting For BE Students

BY NORJAHAN MAKMON
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Some 43 Building & Environment Division (BE) students from Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) School of Engineering (SoE) gathered on 17 December 2004 at Kismis Avenue for their annual barbeque competition and treasure hunt.

Food Frenzy is a yearly competition-cum-gathering organised by the BE Society, and this is the fifth competition.

The social event, previously known as Food Competition, aims to foster team spirit among BE students across different levels and courses.

More importantly, it provides an opportunity for them to enjoy themselves before the semester gets busy.

This time, students were divided into teams of 10 and had to chalk up points to gather food items for their barbeque presentation. Their task: to creatively present the grilled food and win the top prize.

BE Division lecturer Mr Tan Choi Heng, who was invited to the event, explained, "We want them to learn to work together, building team spirit and camaraderie."

BE Society's Division 2 Head, Saranjit Singh Dhillon, 19, added, "Some of them lose contact during the holidays. This is a good chance for them to mingle again."

The second-year Building & Real Estate Management (BEM) student led the Food Frenzy committee together with fellow BE Society Division 2 Head Lock Pui Pui, 20, another second-year BEM student.

In previous competitions, participants had to barbeque food and present the finished fare creatively. A panel of judges comprising lecturers from the BE Division would then pick the



FOOD FIGHT CHAMPIONS: The victorious Red Ants team made it a hat-trick. (Picture: Lim Mei Xiu)

winning team.

In a bid to make the competition more exciting, the committee added a treasure hunt.

Participants were made to look for food items at locations such as the Atrium, the Sports Complex, Blk 34 and the Convention Centre.

To enhance bonding, they had to garner points by completing tasks which required group members to work together.

Final-year BEM student Edmund Tan Liang Ti, 21, a participant, brushed off suggestions that the games prior to the barbeque were exhausting. He said, "I'm enjoying every moment of it."

According to Mr Tan and BE Society advisor Mr Liew Chong Heng, who was also a Food Frenzy judge, teams were assessed on their performances during the games, teamwork and presentation.

"We were walking around and watching while they prepared the food to see if there's good teamwork," said Mr Tan.

The first prize of \$50 went to the Red Ants,

who built a castle out of their barbequed food. Named after the red t-shirts worn by team members, the team has been crowned Food Frenzy champions for the third consecutive year.

Red Ants member Lim Shu Shan, 21, a final-year BEM student, revealed that the barbeque and the presentation that followed were relatively easy, compared to the games.

"We were actually afraid of losing stamina," she explained. "We really didn't expect we had to run around the school just to get the food."

Even so, she felt the game was a good addition to the event.

"In the past, it was just plain cooking and nothing more. You can see the team spirit while playing the games."

"We don't usually get to hear each other being so encouraging," she added, agreeing that the event brought her team mates closer.

The event faced minor hiccups along the way. Unlike previous years, where Food Frenzy was held during the fifth week of school, this time, the competition was brought forward to the second week.

According to Saranjit, the shift was made to allow students to mingle earlier in the semester. As a result, Mr Liew and Mr Tan were the only lecturers available to grace the event.

Still, student turnout was not affected and was "pretty much the same as last year", a relieved Saranjit said.

He credits this to the novelty of the event, saying, "It stands out in the sense that it's different from the usual team activities."

"You get to know your group mates better because you don't just complete tasks with them. You also decide how to cook your food with them. It's different." ■

Green or Red Light For Subway Fast Food on NP?

BY GILLIAN WU PEIYUN
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Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students may have to wait till March for the campus' first fast food outlet, due to the need for a second tender after poor response from the first tender.

The Estate Management (EM) Office, which oversees the tendering and setting up of a fast food outlet in NP, conducted an open tender exercise on 24 September 2004.

As EM did not restrict the exercise to fast food companies, all food and beverage companies in Singapore were invited to tender for the dining area in Block 15, the size of Canteen Two.

Tribune learnt that EM invited several leading fast food restaurants such as McDonald's, Burger King and Mos Burger, to tender.

But despite extending the deadline by another week, no submissions were received when the exercise closed on 22 October 2004.

Due to poor response, plans for the site, vacated by the previous Net Restaurant after its lease lapsed, were shelved temporarily.

Fast food joints such as McDonald's, KFC and Pizza Hut, have outlets in other tertiary institutions such as Singapore Polytechnic (SP),

Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP) and Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

Having jumped at the opportunity previously to serve thousands of young fast food junkies at these schools, their lack of interest in NP is puzzling.

"These brand names have informed us that they are either committed to other projects or the student population in Ngee Ann is not big enough," explained Mr Richard Loo, 44, Estate Manager of EM.

NYP and SP have student populations of 12,000 and 16,500 respectively, while NP has about 14,000 students.

"These fast food companies need to measure the commercial viability of opening an outlet on NP," said Mr Loo.

He cited other factors, such as whether the location of the outlet is ideal and the prospect of a decline in business when students go on term and semestral breaks.

Taking into account the shift of academic calendar instituted by the Ministry of Education (MOE), NP has approximately 19 weeks in a year when few students come to school.

McDonald's and KFC could not be reached for comment as to why they decided to forego opening an outlet at NP.

Although efforts by EM to call for tenders

proved futile, the results did not deter them from holding a second tender exercise.

This second call for tender on 26 November 2004, was a closed exercise. This time only two companies, IBP Food Court Pte Ltd and Belgarath Investments Pte Ltd, were invited to participate.

When the tender closed on 17 December 2004, only one submission was received, from Belgarath Investments Pte Ltd, one of the franchisees of the American sandwich joint, Subway. They operate six out of the 19 Subway outlets in Singapore.

"Why not a more recognised fast food [outlet?]" questioned Haseena Begum Bte Abdul, 20, a final-year Early Childhood Education (ECH) student.

Students like Haseena prefer a McDonald's outlet on campus, to save themselves a trip to the nearest outlet located at King Albert Park, which is a bus stop away from NP.

The drawback for Subway, which is a popular healthy alternative to fast food, is that it is not halal-certified. This poses a problem with NP's Muslim student population.

And this is not a small issue since Mr Loo estimated that at least one-third of students on campus are Muslim.

"It doesn't really make a big difference," said

Sharifah Bte Abdul, 19, another final-year ECH student, on whether a non-halal fast food outlet that may open on campus will leave her with fewer food choices on campus.

She reiterated that she is used to the limited choices of halal food on campus and that Muslim students can still order the vegetarian or seafood sandwiches and drinks from Subway if it does eventually open.

After considering the pros and cons of this choice, EM will send in its recommendations to NP's management, who will decide whether to award the tender to Subway or not.

"We will deal with this matter in an objective manner," said Mr Loo.

While no details have been finalised, Mr Loo added that the team is considering another option if a fast food outlet in NP does not materialise.

However, he was unable to elaborate further and said that EM would be interested in getting ideas from students.

Alternatives gathered from students by Tribune include setting up a relaxing recreational area, one that can house pool tables and better karaoke facilities.

"A coffee house would be nice so I can chill out with friends," said Jasmine Keh Sock Hui, 19, a second-year Electronic & Telecommunication Engineering (ETE) student. ■

Engineering Elective For The Community

BY VICKNESH VARAN
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A SMART MOVE: Eugene Fu fixes the smart "Adaptive Wheelchair". (Picture: Vicknesh Varan)

A new Biomedical Application elective will provide final-year Mechanical Engineering (ME) students from the School of Engineering (SoE) a chance to apply their knowledge and skills for the community by helping to build mechanical devices for patients in hospitals and homes.

Dr Tan Lam Wing, 50, lecturer-in-charge of Biomedical Application, explained that his nine students will study the way a human body functions and then apply their biomedical application knowledge of mechanics to create devices that can help people suffering from movement problems. These include those afflicted with Cerebral Palsy or muscle injuries from accidents or old age.

He said, "By knowing medical problems, we can design something to cater to their needs."

Giving them a voice

Students are working on a device that will help autistic children, who have difficulty speaking, learn how to pronounce words. Students will work with the speech therapists at the Balestier Special School.

Their task is to create artificial lips and

tongue, which are attached to a doll. Students in pairs work on either the lips or tongue.

Patsy Phua, 19, a final-year ME student, hopes the speech therapy device will "help the children to be aware of the lips' shape" and aid speech therapists to teach these children how to pronounce vowels.

According to Patsy, the therapists had problems "getting the children's attention as they were more focussed on playing with their toys".

Inspiration for the bright red lips of the speech therapy doll came when Patsy and Pauline Wong, 20, another final-year ME student working on the project, visited the Balestier Special School, where they saw children being attracted to bright colours and soft toys.

While the current therapy doll can only pronounce vowels, Patsy hopes the next cohort of ME students will improve it and help autistic children pronounce words and sentences.

Providing comfort

Biomedical Application elective students are also working on an "Adaptive Wheelchair" that will cater to the needs of patients diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy.

The illness causes a patient's body to stop communicating with their brain. As such, patients cannot themselves adjust their posture to sit comfortably in a wheelchair.

The "Adaptive Wheelchair" has a seat that can be elevated up to 15 degrees and is meant to provide a comfortable sitting posture for a person weighing up to 70 kg. A bicycle is also attached to the wheelchair to allow the person pushing it to cycle instead of walk.

Eugene Fu, 19, a final-year ME student who worked on the wheelchair, said that the project provided him with a platform to help patients diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy.

"Through this experience, I understand how they feel and I get to create something that can help them," he said. ■

The Ideas Trophy That no One Won

BY NURUL-QURSYIAH ISMAIL
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The first Innovative Ideas Competition, organised by the iE_Network of the School of InfoComm Technology (ICT) on 22 December 2004, surprised participants by retaining its first prize and giving away only the second prize.

Deputy Director of ICT Mr Lee Chin Seng, the chief judge of the competition, explained in a phone interview, "All the entries were very interesting but when we pitched it against the criteria, we didn't find one that fits all."

The entries were judged on innovation, originality and practicality by a panel of four judges from ICT made up of senior lecturers, Mr Ng Weng Choh, Ms Loy-Siow Sook Min and Mr Agus Rahardja.

According to Jagdeep Singh, 21, Chairman of the Innovation and Enterprising Network (iE_Network), the competition looked out for "innovations with an IT element". The projects submitted had to "involve technology, programming and computers", said the final-year Information Technology student.

The club's publicity manager, Melvin Sim, 20, a final-year ICT student, added in a phone interview that the competition also allowed "the innovative spirit [in students] to be awakened".

Since no first prize was given out, the second prize went to Anthony Yuen Wing Kui, a final-year ICT student.

His idea was to use Bluetooth technology in the army so that soldiers can communicate with each other over a distance.

He also proposed that Bluetooth be used in conjunction with rifles. Anthony could not be reached for comment at press time.

"His entry was very creative," said Mr Lee, who is in his mid-40s.

Jagdeep felt that Anthony's concept was "very high-tech" and could be feasible in time to come,



PITCHING THOSE WORKS: Lim Su Si explains her innovation to ICT judges. (Picture: Mohamed Ali Ibrah)

with the advent of modern technology.

The first prize was an 'i' trophy, which ICT staff contributed, and \$500 worth of Singtel vouchers. The second prize was \$300 worth of Singtel vouchers and there were also three merit prizes of \$100 Singtel vouchers each.

Other innovative ideas that won prizes include enabling an inbox reminder feature in phones, as well developing a mobile bus guide in collaboration with mobile phone service providers.

In total, there were 12 entries for the competition, fielded by both individuals and groups.

However, Melvin believed that the competition's "bad timing", so close to Christmas, could have led to a lack of interest in the event.

"Students were either busy with class or they were already in a holiday mode," he said.

He also explained that since this was the first time the event was organised, people were not sure of it and tended "not to be responsive".

Generally, local students are not "knowledge-hungry and they are not motivated" if an activity does not give them a grade, said Jagdeep.

The competition was neither compulsory nor assessed.

With plans to make it a yearly event, Jagdeep is already looking ahead to the next competition and hoping it will showcase more "fresh ideas" and be even more successful. ■



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More Chances For NP Students to go on YEPs This Year

BY GARY LIM
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More opportunities will open for Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students to take part in the Youth Expedition Programme (YEP), this year, with 23 trips planned, up from last year's 17 trips.

Various schools in NP will undertake these YEPs organised by the Singapore International Foundation (SIF).

Some 10 trips have been planned for April and another 13 trips for October [see "YEP Calendar 2005"]. These will see teaching staff and students going to China, India, Indonesia, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, East Malaysia and Philippines on short-term community-based projects.

As there are many projects available in Asia, participants have the flexibility of opting for projects that will exercise skills and the knowledge acquired in their course of study. Previous participants have built water tanks, libraries and schools, as well as taught basic computer skills to the different communities they've visited.

"You don't go there to be a labourer but to learn [about] culture, befriend [people], talk about how they see life and how you see life," said Mr Jeffrey Yang Yung Wei, 51, NP's coordinator for YEP.

Students are usually given a few days of rest and recreation to go sightseeing in their area of service after completing their project's objectives.

According to Mr Yang, SIF had sent a letter stating that NP was the first and "the greatest supporter since YEP inception in 2000". To date, the number of YEP volunteers from NP has surpassed 1,000 students.

Ironically, the good response will disadvantage

future volunteers financially.

Mr Yang said that SIF commits \$100,000 in subsidies to each academic institution in Singapore annually, allocating \$1,000 to each student—a 60 percent subsidy on the costs of each trip. Foreign students receive a 50 percent subsidy, funded by NP.

This means that the SIF subsidy can only accommodate 100 NP students yearly. Mr Yang also mentioned that the amount subsidised has dropped 10 percent since the start of 2004 and is expected to decrease further due to increased participation.

In addition, the financial aid is only given to first-time YEP volunteers. "The idea is to benefit as many students as possible," said Mr Yang, who has seen the number of completed YEP projects increase from two in 2000 to 12 in 2004.

Despite the success of YEP in NP, many other students are not keen to apply for them.

"It's just not my cup of tea and I would rather stay in Singapore to do community service," said Elwin Goh Eng Kiat, 23, a final-year Film, Sound & Video (FSV) student not considering YEP.

Benjamin Lim Wen Bin, 19, a second-year InfoComm Technology (ICT) student who had participated in one YEP said, "If it's really beneficial and I can contribute, then I will join."

Mr Yang added that no amount of preparation in Singapore can fully "gear up" students for their YEP as "the environment is different, method of working is different". Throwing oneself into an uncertain environment is a cause for students' reservations in joining YEP.

For example, the Kolkata YEP (see "YEP in Kolkata" on pg 9) faced problems with student participation. "We just got 25 students [the minimum number of participants required] before the date of closing application," said Mr Sundararajan Sivakumar, 31, an ICT lecturer

YEP CALENDAR 2005

YEPs in April

Cambodia: 3
China: 1
Thailand: 1
Philippines: 1
Vietnam: 2
Laos: 1
East Malaysia: 1

YEPs in October

Cambodia: 1
China: 4
Thailand: 1
Indonesia: 1
Vietnam: 1
Laos: 3
India: 2

YEP breakdown

Building and Environment: 2
Electrical Engineering: 2
Electronic & Computer Engineering: 4
Multidiscipline Engineering: 2
Mechanical Engineering: 1
School of Business & Accountancy: 4
School of InfoComm Technology: 2
School of Interdisciplinary Studies: 1
Student Development & Alumni: 2
School of Film & Media Studies: 1
School of Life Sciences & Chemical Technology: 2

Total number of trips planned: 23

and project leader.

He thus proposed that the Kolkata YEP be opened up to students as part of their Industrial Attachment Programme (IAP), to attract more participants.

Apart from poor student numbers, staff participation is also wanting.

Mr Yang cited tedious paperwork and unfamiliar obstacles as some of the reasons for the lukewarm response.

"A lot of staff are willing to lead trips but [it's] too much work!" he commented. Participating staff have to make pre-trip reconnaissance for accommodation, emergency options in their area of operation and search for suitable projects.

There are also issues on the sustainability of these projects that often give a "touch and go" impression. Mr Yang shared that a project's sustainability depends on the participants. He cited a group from the School of Business & Accountancy (BA) who have been making annual visits to a Cambodia orphanage for four consecutive years.

Given the recent tsunami disaster, Mr Yang said that he has yet to receive news on how it will affect the future of YEP. Still, he is optimistic about the programme.

"Students mature a lot more in the two weeks [serving YEP] than in three years [in NP]," he added on the value of the expeditions. ■

NP Creates Web Presence For Clementi Businesses

BY SHEREENA SAJEED
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A group of around 240 second-year students from the Schools of InfoComm Technology (ICT) and Business & Accountancy (BA) have created 70 websites for retailers and hawkers in Clementi to better promote their wares and services.

Project Clementi Online is the first community online project to see Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students collaborating with the Clementi community.

The project was an initiative by the Clementi Community Club, coordinated by the Office of Innovation and Enterprise (IE) in NP, with lecturers Mr Ng Weng Choh, 45 (ICT) and Mr Lim Shee Chee, 41, from BA.

The initiative was a follow-up to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed with the Clementi Community Centre Management Committee at the ministerial launch on 28 November 2004, graced by Minister for Education Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam.

In an e-mail interview, Principal of NP, Mr Chia Mia Chiang said, "Many Clementi stallholders and shop owners were elated at the thought of having our students develop websites for them. This project has put their business a step ahead in reaching out to more customers, and given them a general appreciation of the power of the online medium."

"The Clementi Online project was an exciting one. It enabled our students to apply skills that they had learnt in class. It was at the same time a good community outreach project, allowing our students to interact with and appreciate the work

of stallholders and shop owners."

Clementi Online aims to jumpstart the IT revolution in the Clementi community, linking residents online and expanding the customer base of shops and hawker stalls there by giving them a web presence.

"The websites are not hosted separately by each company through their hosting companies [if any]. Rather all these websites are or will be hosted by the Clementi CC website," explained Mr Lim.

Students had to apply their knowledge of computer software such as Macromedia Flash and Dreamweaver, and even acquire new skills to help Clementi shop owners create a formal corporate web presence.

Information such as the company history, its products, manufacturing process and shop location were uploaded onto the website.

At the click of a mouse, one can now get information on the range of items a Clementi bakery, a do-it-yourself (DIY) shop and even, a jewellery shop has, for example.

Since most of the Clementi stallholders have no budget or resources to create their own websites, this proved to be an excellent opportunity for NP students to assist some of these lower-income hawkers.

Students even went out of their way to include video clips and even, recipes or recommendations for certain shops.

Zhang Jun Hao, 18, and his team mates, Carter Huang Yu, 20, and Andy Chia Loy Hon, 18, all second-year Business Information Technology (BIT) students from the school of BA, recalled visiting Deli Snacks, located near



COMMUNITY PORTAL: NP students promote Clementi stallholders online. (Picture: Shereena Sajeed)

the Clementi Hawker Centre, and interviewing the owners. They also gathered information and took pictures to upload onto the website.

Despite having other modules to cope with, Jun Hao and his teammates acknowledged that taking part in the project was a good bonding experience for the team.

Carter added that the project was especially important as they were representing NP and had to uphold the polytechnic's reputation.

Mr Koh Cheng Sia, 60, the owner of Deli Snacks, was thankful and appreciative of the students' help as he did not have the time or

knowledge to create a company website.

Mr Lam Kah Mun, 35, Manager of the IE Office felt the project was a chance for students to learn outside of the textbook by interacting with shop owners.

He said this was "a major learning experience to see how two different organisations: a community club and an academic organisation can work together" and prove to be of mutual benefit to each other.

In addition to helping businesses, the Clementi Online project also saw students recycling old personal computers (PCs) for lower-income Clementi residents and providing basic IT education to them.

"The IT students from ICT proceeded to refurbish about 100 used PCs for the district, in response to the IT needs of some of the needy ..." said Ms Angela Wee Li Kwang, who is in her late 30s.

The Director of ICT felt that the project was another good opportunity to "synergise classroom teaching and technical skills", adding that students should have a total learning experience.

It was also important that they be encouraged to give back to the community instead of always taking from it.

"Clementi Town is right next door, and is a good hinterland for us to take learning beyond our classrooms. Our polytechnic is very pleased with the outcome of the Clementi Online project," said Principal Mr Chia. ■

To visit any of the websites, go to www.clementionline.org.

YEP in Kolkata (Continued from pg 8)

Three NP lecturers and 25 ICT students went on a three-week YEP to Kolkata in India, in mid-November 2004.

What did they do:

Set up a computer lab and taught basic Microsoft Office skills in the Kishalaya Home for orphans and street children.

How did the experience benefit them:

"The trip changed me entirely. I used to keep to myself but on this trip, I am one of them [the students]." - Mr Sundararajan Sivakumar, 31, an ICT lecturer and the project leader.

"The experience has made me proud to be a Singaporean... [I've become] open to life and ideas... [I've learnt] to be more independent." - Lim Kang Ni, 21, a final-year ICT student.

"I have learnt different ways of communicating... there's a better way to say things." - Jeffery Tay Keat Hwee, 20, a final-year ICT student.

What was achieved:

The Superintendent of the Kishalaya Home sent an e-mail to Mr Sundararajan, saying that the Kolkata YEP was a "huge success" and that he would recommend that his government open up more of such future projects to India.

The Kolkata YEP was also the first NP YEP to work with an Indian government-run body to work on community-based projects.

Youth Media Conference Draws About 900

BY SHEREENA SAJEED
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The inaugural Singapore Youth & Media Conference (SYMC), organised by Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) School of Film & Media Studies (FMS) is expected to host about 900 participants, including 200 students from external tertiary institutions and about 100 invited guests, among them ministry officials, media practitioners and academicians.

The figures, supplied by Alvin Lim, 23, the Chairman of the SYMC organising committee, exceeded their initial target of 800, he said.

The final-year Mass Communication (MCM) student said that the response and the success of the event will raise "the profile for FMS and NP".

The conference that is to be held at the NP Convention and Exhibition Centre on 26 January is the first time NP will be holding such a large-scale event involving the media industry and media students in Singapore.

Organised by nine final-year MCM students, the team started work in March 2004 and worked through last year's June and November holidays to prepare for the conference.

The lecturer-advisors, Mr Brian Lee and Mr Herald Bangras, offered advice and guidance during brainstorming sessions but the core content of the media conference was determined by the SYMC team.

The SYMC committee wants the conference to be a platform for youths to share their views on issues affecting their generation.

Some of these issues include youth apathy

and its implications for Singapore, censorship, copyright and media laws, media stereotypes, Asia's popular culture, the digital divide, and the impact of new media and communication technology on youths.

The committee hopes to foster a good relationship between the media and youth, in order to deal with those issues. They see the conference as an excellent opportunity for students to network and discover for themselves interesting research in the media scene in Singapore.

"I had the opportunity to meet up with the student organisers and their staff advisors earlier this year [2004], and was impressed by their enthusiasm and the focussed approach they proposed to take," said Principal of NP, Mr Chia Mia Chiang, 52, in an e-mail response to Tribune.

In the pipeline too, are plans by both NP and FMS to bring the SYMC back as a regular event, Alvin said, although it has not been decided if it will be an annual or bi-annual event.

Minister for Education, Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam will grace the occasion as Guest-of-Honour and plenary session speaker.

Other notable guests and speakers include the Dean of Nanyang Technological University's (NTU) School of Communication & Information, Associate Professor Ang Peng Hwa, Editor for The Straits Times Mr Han Fook Kwang, as well as Group Managing Director of MediaCorp Private Limited, Mr Shaun Seow.

The conference is open to the public and ticket prices range from \$20 to \$35, with group discounts given.

Students from secondary schools, junior colleges, various polytechnics in Singapore and

even overseas students from neighbouring countries like Malaysia and Philippines are expected to attend the conference.

Apart from media students, representatives from the local media industry like The Straits Times, will also be present.

Students from local tertiary institutions such as NP, NTU, the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Singapore Polytechnic (SP) will be selected to present their papers and research findings, although Alvin declined to say how many papers were submitted.

Students with the best papers will win cash prizes ranging from \$200 to \$1,000.

Said advisor Mr Brian Lee, "SYMC aims to be the premier youth and media conference in Singapore. In time to come, we hope the conference will become a crucible for the active exchange of ideas and dialogue on youth issues, while examining ways in which the media can be a partner in highlighting and stimulating public debate about these issues."

Wrapping things up will be an informal question and answer breakout session headed by Cheek, Vice-President for Creative and Content of MTV Asia, and Alvin.

NTU's Associate Professor Ang said, "This conference is an opportunity for youth[s] to test their ideas in a simulated marketplace setting... if youth[s] can show their concerns to be rational and considered, then they stand a better chance at getting a listening ear from the government."

"I'm impressed that NP has taken the lead in organising this."

"I hope the conference grows in significance and impact and becomes a focal point for discussions on youth and media." ■

The Show Goes on

BY ABDUL GAFFUR
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Musik Art 2005, a free rock concert held in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) on 8 January, almost did not materialise when the organiser pulled out at the last minute.

Musik Art enthusiast Sathisvaran Dev Pillai, 19, a final-year Electronic & Computer Engineering (ECE) student, stepped in to salvage the situation so that Musik Art would see its second year.

"It was a big challenge to come up with an event single-handedly, especially when financial support was minimal and time was limited," admitted Dev, who had less than a month to pull off the event.

As the Student Development and Alumni Relations (SDAR) Office only allows NP clubs or societies to stage events, the Poly Stage F'Actor (PSF), a student-run concert organiser and last year's Musik Art coordinator, was roped in to serve as a liaison between Dev and the SDAR. PSF was also tasked with location booking and publicity posters and flyers.

"The Poly Stage F'Actor is a platform for creative people to come together to showcase the talents that they possess and Musik Art is considered one of them," said club President Muhammad Mahadi, 22, a second-year Mass Communication (MCM) student. Dev is also a member of PSF.

Dev raced against time to scout for bands keen on showcasing their music and to source for music equipment to rent for Musik Art.

Money was also another factor, as the SDAR approved a subsidy of only \$1,000 out of the \$3,600 proposed by Dev, less than a third of

what he would need.

"The final approval amount [was] based on the assessment of the event and, as much as we would like to help, we have to cut down, monitor and moderate," said Mr Ian Wong, 28, a Student Affairs Officer from the SDAR.

Dev said, "I knew I had to seek dirt cheap rental equipment for the event to happen and I suppose I really got lucky with it." He managed to cut the event budget down to \$1,000.

This year's event will be held at Lecture Theatre 68E, which seats 250.

On top of the larger capacity, it offers air-conditioning and better acoustics than the Atrium, last year's Musik Art venue.

Dev also managed to round up a list of local bands, such as Bathroom Acoustics, Cynical Annihilation, Enamoured, Enigmatic, Near Fatal Explosion, Sold'Out, The Leaven Trait, Ronin and Lunarin.

A criterion for band participation in Musik Art is that each band must consist of at least one NP student member.

"If there's nothing much to do at home, I will probably attend it since it's free," said Gretchen Tan Xin Hui, 19, a final-year Multidiscipline Engineering (MDE) student.

Second-year Electrical Engineering (EE) student, Muhammad Taib, 19, said, "I am definitely attending this event because it's free and Ronin and other local acts are performing."

Dev is realistic about his expectations. He said, "I do not expect a big crowd but I do hope Musik Art proves that there's still hope for local music, especially in NP where students do not have too many opportunities for such an event."

"This could be a platform for talents in our school," he added. ■

Graduates' Feedback Wanted

BY STELLA TAY
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Final-year Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students ignoring the Graduate Employment Survey (GES) are doing themselves more harm than they imagine.

According to Ms Lynn Foo, Manager of the Organisational Development (OD) Office, which runs GES, survey findings benefit many parties.

"The survey results such as salaries, employment rates and job search period reflect the profile and market value of our NP graduates so we need a good response rate to ensure that the data [is] reliable and reflective," she said in an e-mail interview.

Employers, the Ministry of Education (MOE), survey participants and current students who will receive the findings can better understand the market value and quality of NP graduates.

The annual survey asks fresh NP graduates more details about their employment status and learning experiences in NP.

GES 2005 will involve the current final-year students a few months after graduation.

Ms Foo highlighted a misconception that some people tend to have: that only those who are employed should respond.

She explained, "It does not matter whether these graduates are working, looking for work, pursuing further studies or simply planning their next move, we need to hear from them."

Ms Foo added, "their active participation... will be crucial to the success of GES."

Potential respondent Chan Wei Lin, 19, blamed apathy to ignorance. "Hardly anybody knows what this [survey] is about." The final-year Early Childhood Education (ECH) student added, "Lecturers should talk about it and tell us more about it [before graduation]."



CLICK FOR REWARDS: Survey respondents easily get incentives. (Photo courtesy of OD Office)

While details are not firm, Ms Foo promised "a series of publicity activities" to raise the awareness of GES.

For GES 2004, AXS Stations around Singapore, some close to redemption venues, dispensed 2,263 incentive vouchers for movies, dessert and bowling games, to reward survey respondents. This channel, the first in Singapore involving the distribution of vouchers, was more convenient than mailing or getting participants to collect them.

Eligible respondents who completed the GES 2004 online were also entered into lucky draws where they could win attractive prizes like branded sunglasses, Bluetooth USB Adapter, mobile phone, digital camera and Personal Digital Assistant (PDA).

These boosted response rate (for fresh and post-NS graduates) for GES 2004 to 65 percent (2,759 replies), an improvement from the 58 percent attained at GES 2003. ■

开创中文专业课程

李慧芳报道
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义安理工学院将在2005年的新学年开办中文专业文凭的课程。这项新课程是由大众传播系首次朝向中文领域的教育工作发展。新加坡急需这方面的人才,因为中小学语文老师人数是越来越少了。这项中文专业课程的目的是提高新一代的新加坡人的中文水平。

选修这门课程的同学,在毕业后可以报考国立师范学院,考取一张教育专业文凭。考进师范学院的学生可以少修一年的课程。在师范学院成绩过人之处的学生也可以直接升上国立师范大学考取大专文凭。

郭晋凌,大众传播系讲师,也是中文专业文凭的负责人,说:“同学们在二年级的时候,会有机会到浙江大学城市学院去。他们会在那里逗留差不多一个学期的时间在那里上课。同时也会有机会和浙江大学城市学院的师生们交流。”

参与这项浸儒计划是一个可贵的经验。校方与浙江大学城市学院在排课的过程中不忘要以互动的教学方式来和同学们交流。同学们可以通过历史、文学、理论等课程进一步了解中国的历史和文化。

郭讲师也说:“学生也会有实地的考察经验。他们将会到鲁迅的故乡,和兰亭书法胜地等地方了解中国的历史文化背景。”

这项新课程估计有八十多个学位,是专设给那些对汉语有兴趣的‘O’水准毕业生来报读的。有意报读中文专业课程的学生除了对语文这方面要有兴趣,中文也必须拥



进一步的了解中文,便能了解画中之意。(照片: <http://thebeatles.ru/gayatri/images/china/page-01.htm>)

有一定的水准。这是因为开办这项新课程的委员会将以主修华文程度作为报名标准,而那些在‘O’水准的会考里修读高级华文的同学们肯定占了优势。

我将来和教育部与国立师范学院的中文学系通力合作,详谈办中文专业文凭的课程编排。新加坡的中文教育工作一路走来并不容易,因为许多国人对于自己的母语已经感到十分生疏了。尤其在双语政策的影响下,新一代的新加坡人都比较注重英语。这种倾向并不奇怪,因为英语在课堂上的实用性较大,而同学们和汉语接触的时间也就只有在上课文才可能有机会以华语交谈。

由于政策上的改变,我国政府一再强调双语运用,希望国人能够中西文化贯通。郭讲师说:“面对这整体上的需求,开办中文专业课程也是一种时代代表性的象征。”

郭讲师说:“通过这门课程,希望可以传灯给下一代。”

郭讲师连同工作小组一起探讨教学大纲,教材肯定会符合各方面的要求。虽然课

程编排上技术的概念占了比较小的方面,但是它的应用价值蛮高,不会辜负专业文凭水准。校方也已经和图书馆的负责人一起合作,增加图书馆里的中文藏书,最终获益的肯定是那些选修中文专业课程的同学们。

郭讲师说:“课程将通过戏剧、编辑、写稿的方式,教导学生如何应用这个语言。校方更希望看到学生能够学习怎么活用华语在生活里头。”

郭讲师认为语言除了在情感上很丰富之外,也有它活学活用的地方。比方说在三年的学期里,同学们将会学习翻译和通译这两大必备的科目。他们也会在学习写广告词,组织辩论会和编排一出戏的过程中应用语文学,从中也能提升本身的华文水平。

语言是人与人之间情感上的一种联系,它让人们在日常活学活用的地方。比方说在三年的学期里,同学们将会学习翻译和通译这两大必备的科目。他们也会在学习写广告词,组织辩论会和编排一出戏的过程中应用语文学,从中也能提升本身的华文水平。

有话说话

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

新的一年,新的学期,万象更新。在这第一期的Tribune,我们将问问看义安的学生,看他们对2005年有什么新的期盼与展望!

2005年刚来到,新的一年,你许下了什么新年决议(New Year's resolution)以及新年心愿呢?

“我希望世界和平,不要有这么多人过着那么艰苦的生活。希望我的家人,尤其是我的奶奶,都能健健康康,长命百岁的!我也希望能赚多一点钱,还有能减肥!”
- 陈锦华,18岁,二年级生物科技系

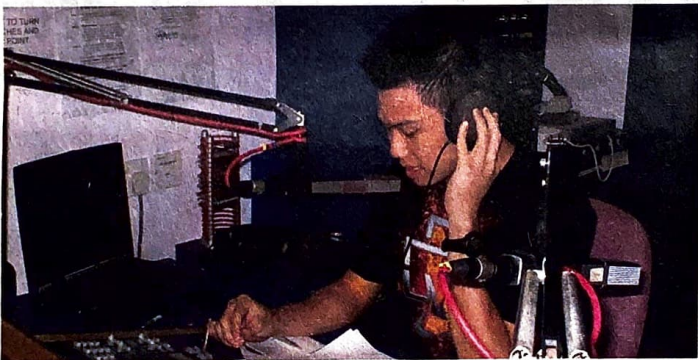
“因为我即将毕业了,所以希望今年能拿到好成绩,要进入大学也比较容易。我也希望自己的脚步能越来越专业。”
- 彭秀琳,20岁,三年级商务会计系

“希望新的一年,自己能下定决心把书读好。还有希望世界不要再有灾难了。”
- 张俊杰,19岁,三年级建筑与地产系

“今年二月份的全国大专跆拳道比赛将要来到,我希望义安队能拿第一,成功夺标!”
- 陈建城,19岁,二年级电子工程系

“2004年花钱太多了!希望2005年,我能省多点钱,不要在花那么多钱在购物上了。我希望能健健康康的继续瘦下去!”
- 麦舒惠,20岁,三年级生物科技系

义威全校DJ选拔赛



一名大众传播媒体学生正在播新闻。(照片: 陈心喻)

陈心喻报道
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今年义威电台将首次走进校园的每个科系,让只要有兴趣当校园DJ的同学,都可以前来报名。以往DJ们都是从大众传播媒体系中挑选出来。

义威电台的节目总监Daryl Epimaco受访时以英语说道:“这次开放给其他学院的学生参加,主要原因是让学生知道义威电台不是一个只局限于大众传播媒体学生的电台,而是属于全校每一个学生的。”

“我们也了解到,其实在别的科系内,有着很多有天赋,可以当DJ的同学。”

Daryl否认这是因为不够多的大众传播媒体系学生来报名当DJ,所有才开放给别的系的学生。

他说道:“没有这回事,我们现在的节目表是排的满满的,唯一比较缺少广播员的,是以马来语与及谈迷尔为主的节目。”

卢迪,二年级工程系的学生,受访时被问到是否会考虑参加这项比赛时,说道:“不会

啊,就算开放给别的学院,我也不会参加的。就是没那个兴趣。”

另一位受访者,罗云铃,三年级快计系却兴奋说道:“不是每个人都能有这个控制音乐,做DJ,以前只有大众传播媒体系的学生有这个�会,所以我一定会去参加的!”

从二月份开始,义威电台将展开一连串的宣传活,为它们最新的DJ选拔赛打响知名度。

义威电台的宣传经理蔡玲珍说道:“我们将会在学校各个角落张贴海报,而且这次的海报设计很特别,我们将会采用不同科系的学生来做海报的焦点,像是BA(商科系)的海报,我们会用BA的学生。”

一个崭新的宣传活是义威电台成员将驾着一辆张贴着海报的货车,沿着校园内行驶,以便引起同学的注意。

Daryl笑着说:“这会有点儿像是在选举一样。虽然我们还没有得到学校的批准,但是我们一定会照原定计划进行的。我们也会有一项活动,那就是送丰厚的奖品给那些记下货车车牌的学生。”

偶像争霸赛2005

陈心喻报道
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刚创办半年的多媒体纪律工程协会(Multidiscipline Engineering Society),在1月12日举办偶像争霸赛(MDE Idol 2005)的总决赛。

四位评审从38名参赛者当中,挑选10名学生在总决赛龙争虎,争夺多媒体纪律工程系的偶像荣誉。冠军得主将能获得现金\$200,奖杯以及证书。

从筹划到宣传,协会的四名主要成员只用了短短一个月的假期来完成。协会主席司徒志伟是来自后勤管理系(Logistics Management)的二年级学生。他说道:“这次会举办这项比赛,最重要就是要让学生发挥才能。”

副主席张伟良也提到,其实他们预计至少会有80名学生参赛,但是反应不是很热烈,前来报名的只有38名学生。

20岁的三年级学生陈亮元,反应说:“没去参加,一方面是因为对自己没信心,另一方面是觉得宣传做的不够好,多数是朋友把讯息传来传去,才知道有这项比赛。只有那一两张海报,很难让人家注意到。”

对于成立只有一学期的多媒体纪律工程系(MDE),张伟良说道:“其实有这样的成绩还算不错了,我们也希望能用这次的比赛来打响我们(MDE)的知名度。”

在第一回合的选拔赛中,学生们都发挥了非常高的歌唱水准,让四名评审都伤透了脑筋,不知如何做选择。

评审团包括两名讲师与以及协会主席司徒志伟和张伟良。

其中一名评审黄俊昌讲师说道:“我觉得他们反应很热烈,很值得鼓舞!虽然很多的参赛者都非常紧张,但是他们有那份勇气来参加比赛,那是非常好的。”

至于参赛者有什么能改进,黄俊昌讲师说道:“他们大多数都没有舞台经验,表演时动作都有点生硬。如果能加强肢体动作,那会更好。”



评审们正在聚精会神地聆听参赛者的歌声。(照片: 陈心喻)

17岁的一年级学生潘泳任,在初赛时演唱了周杰伦的《安静》。

在伟慈歌唱学校学习了七个月的他,也凭着清亮的嗓音而入围了。

有没有信心唱的比新加坡偶像决赛者沈祥龙还要出色?

他谦虚的说道:“希望可以,但能入围就已经很高兴了!”

另一名二年级的女参赛者叶淑贞在知道自己入围的那一刻,兴奋的蹦蹦跳跳起来。她非常兴奋的说道:“我真的很高兴,很高兴啊!我真的不知道我会入围!”

每个人都拥有梦想,让我们祝福这些勇敢追求理想的同学们,坚定信念,总有一天能圆梦,为自己开拓一片新的将来!■

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(Quarterly intakes in January, April, July, October)

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(Quarterly intakes in January, April, July, October)

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- **Bachelor of Commerce** (2 yrs)
- **Bachelor of Electronic Commerce** (2 yrs)
- **Bachelor of International Hotel & Tourism Management** (2 yrs)

Admission Requirements

(Quarterly intakes in January, April, July, October)

- GCE "A" level or equivalent.
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Ngee Ann's IVP 2004/2005 Season Roundup

BY ELLYAS DZULKIFLI
ellyas_tribune@yahoo.com.sg

Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) sports teams are gearing up for this season's Institute-Varsity-Polytechnic (IVP) games.

With seven out of 11 teams already completing their season, and traditionally strong clubs like the dragon boat and floorball teams crashing out of their respective IVP competitions, Mr Gopinathan Retnam, a Student Development and Alumni Relations (SDAR) Officer who, with Mr Thomas Tan, is in-charge of the Co-Curricular Activities (CCA) teams, said the 2004/2005 season "did not start off well".

However, Mr Gopinathan was confident that "things can only get better" in IVP 2004/2005. Here's a look at how the remaining three sports are expecting to do:

Basketball

2003/2004 results: Men's team top three, women sixth out of seven teams.

Expected 2004/2005 results: Mr Thomas Tan, their officer-in-charge, hopes the men will maintain their current standing and that the women will move up to fifth spot in the February competition.

Inside track: Team member Evon Wong, 19 said the women's team was spared the usual last placing in the previous season only due to a new entrant, Republic Polytechnic.

The final-year Mass Communication (MCM) student put the team's poor performance down to lack of training for the women. "Last season, a lot of the girls had projects, so many trainings were cancelled," stated Evon.

She added that the coach was so angry with the team's training attendance that she "didn't set a target for us", resulting in a dispirited performance in the competition.

Evon also believes that February's competition will be "harder" as the team will now be grouped with universities in a new competition format. "Our aim this year is probably just to beat SMU, because they're the easiest of the three," she added.

Hockey

2003/2004 results: Men's team third, overcoming powerhouses National University of Singapore (NUS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) Combined teams. The women's team was not placed.

Expected 2004/2005 results: "The four teams (NP, NTU, NUS and ITE) are all strong, so we're aiming for a top three finish for both teams," said Mr Gopinathan.

Inside track: However, Mr Gopinathan said it would now be much harder for the team to make a good showing as the competition format had changed from the round robin to a grouping format, meaning that it boils down to sheer luck to see if the team is grouped with the universities, who are formidable competitors.

Soccer

2003/2004 results: Men earned silver while the women were unplaced.

Expected 2004/2005 results: Mr Gopinathan is aiming for the men to stay within the top three.

Inside track: He acknowledged that the road ahead would not be easy, and referring to both teams, stated, "We lost a lot of top players due to graduation, so we might not be as strong as before," he added. "Hopefully we will train hard and put up a good performance."

However, women's team captain, Nithya L Krishnan, 21, a final-year Business & Estate Management (BEM) student, was confident

that the team would make a good showing. "Although we have more inexperienced players than experienced ones, it won't be a big problem for next season," she said.

However, the lack of a proper coach for the women's team may be crucial in the coming season, she added.

For the men's team, Kwek Jun Xian, 19, a second-year Film, Sound & Video (FSV) student, said, "No matter what, the team would be putting in effort and we will give a good fight. If we can get past the first two obstacles (NUS and NTU), we can probably go all the way."

He added that the combined ITE squad was also another team to beat as they purportedly have the most qualified players in the league.

Canoeing

2003/2004 results: Zero wins.

Expected 2004/2005 results: Bronze for 12 March 2004 race. So far, Vice-Captain Lee Wei Qiang, 18, won the 22km race last December.

Inside track: Tristan Loo, 21, a final-year Mechanical Engineering (ME) student and a canoe sprinter, said "a lot of hope" is being placed on Wei Qiang, a second-year Biotechnology (BIO) student, given his good showing at the December race.

These teams have completed their IVP 2004/2005 season. Here's a look at how they performed in their respective competition:

Dragon Boat

2003/2004 results: Mixed: two golds. Men: one bronze. Women: one silver.

2004/2005 results: The June 2004 competition saw the mixed team retaining their top three placings.

This time, however, it was in a different category since the win now came from the IVP event instead of the open category. The men improved their position to silver and the women stayed in the top three.

For the November, Regatta race, the men finished third, women in the open Plate final.

Inside track: The team had a formidable showing in Penang in December, where they bagged an unprecedented win for NP, with a total of four medals - a gold, a silver and two bronzes - in the international competition for both men's and women's teams.

Team captain, Derick Tan, 19, a final-year Information Technology (IT) student, said that the team "had done very well for that year".

Floorball

2003/2004 results: Men's team third, women's: nil.

2004/2005 results: Both teams did not make it past the group stage.

Inside track: "The reason for their lacklustre performance was put down to the lack of a proper training ground, as their current area, the sports hall, is also shared with the badminton team, depriving them of space for proper training," stated Mr Gopinathan.

Softball

2003/2004 results: Women were third, men got fourth place.

2004/2005 results: Both teams were third in the September 2004 matches.

Inside track: Mr Gopinathan, attributed their success to the influx of experienced players from secondary schools such as Teck Whye, claiming that their experience helped a lot in the competition.

Tennis

2003/2004 results: Men placed second, women,



THINGS CAN ONLY GET BETTER: The Dragon Boat teams may have had a poor IVP season but they made up for it with a smashing international victory in Penang. (Picture courtesy of Elyas Dzulkifli)

third.

2004/2005 results: Both teams crashed out of the tournament in September 2004.

Inside track: "This year we were unlucky," stated Mr Gopinathan. "The unis [universities] are

always strong as traditional powerhouses in IVP events and we were unlucky to be grouped with NTU and SMU."

The Track & Field competitions were ongoing at press time. ■

A More Muscular Student Body For NP

BY ELLYAS DZULKIFLI
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Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) new bodybuilding club, formed in November 2004, is aiming to turn the student body into a group of fit and shapely individuals.

The idea for the Ngee Ann Bodybuilding & Fitness Club (NBFC) was mooted by two students who got to know each other at the California Fitness gym on Orchard Road.

Ivan Quek Sze Hong, 20, a final-year Internetworking & Communications (INC) student and NBFC President, decided to form the club when Stanley Yeo Shi Xian, 18, a first-year INC student, and the club's Vice-President, entered NP in June 2004.

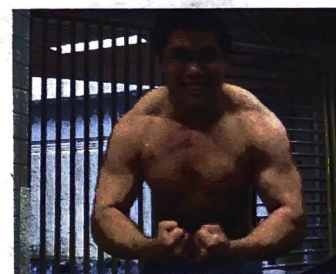
Stanley said, "We cater to anyone who has an interest, or wants to keep fit the right way." He elaborated that although students may already have a basic knowledge of certain exercises, the club helps them to fine-tune their technique.

The club now has 10 members in its ranks, including two women. NBFC hopes to increase its total membership to 30 after the NP Open House 2005, held from 19 to 22 January.

Lin Siu Wen, 19, a final-year INC student and one of the pioneer female members of the club, said that women joined NBFC to become more toned. However, many women have the wrong impression about the club.

"Girls think that when they work out they'll become big like the guys," she said. As a result, out of the original four women who joined only two remain.

Stanley debunked that myth, saying that because of a woman's genetic make-up, "they will not gain muscle mass as quickly as men".



FLEX APPEAL: Stanley Yeo needs all his strength to face the challenges ahead for NBFC. (Picture: Elyas Dzulkifli)

With no trainer at the helm because of budget constraints, Stanley and Ivan now run the club and double up as instructors.

Hazril Luthfi, 19, a final-year Electronic Computer Engineering (ECE) student and NBFC member, felt that Ivan and Stanley were experienced enough to help members. "Most of the members already know some basics, so Ivan and Stanley are just watching out for any mistakes and giving tips here and there."

As NBFC members are new to the sport, only Stanley and Ivan will compete this year, Ivan on 30 January and 5 February, and bantamweight Stanley, who trained under national bodybuilder Jackson Quek, in June.

Budget constraints and a small membership aside, NBFC also has to tackle the misconceptions that students have of them. Mostly, people view them as "vain" or "self-absorbed", such as Jessica Goh Cher Siu, 18, a second-year Business Studies (BS) student, who said that the NBFC are probably "nuts about themselves".

Stanley felt that such criticisms can't be helped. "They can say [what] they like, but we know we aren't like that." ■