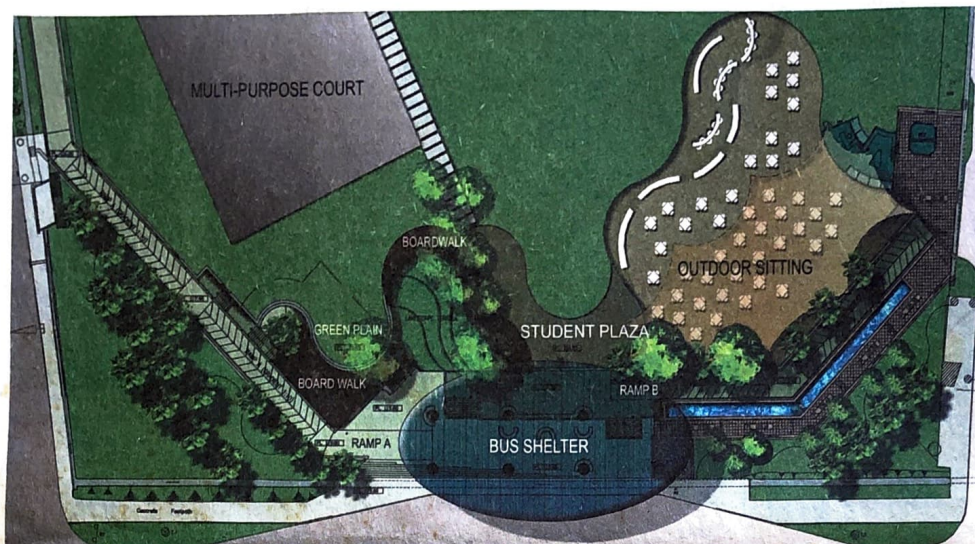


New Student Plaza Come April 2006

A new \$1.5 million project will provide Ngee Ann Polytechnic students with more study, interaction and entertainment space. **SABRINA CHEW** reports.



NEW HUBBING SPOT: Students and staff can look forward to new features like the outdoor seating area and the hard court at the new Student Plaza. (Picture: Courtesy of Estate Management Office)

By April/May 2006, the Atrium will no longer be the only major hangout for Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students, thanks to a new student area fronting the campus, which aims to provide a vibrant environment for students to work and socialise in.

Costing \$1.5 million, the Student Plaza @ The Bus Stop, as it is called, will refresh the NP façade and provide a livelier and more comfortable environment.

Mr Mui Cheng Hock, director of the Estate Management Office (EM), said, "We believe this is money well-spent. Whatever we do, we try to ensure value for money. [It] is part of getting a vibrant physical environment for the students to want to stay in."

He added that many students spend much of their time in school and for most of them, NP is like a second home. Hence, the need for a new student hub.

Soh Ying Shan, 20, a final-year Building Services Engineering (BSE) student, said she is "really looking forward" to the new hub.

Anticipating its completion, she added, "I want to see what the inside is all about because they're developing things we've never seen before. It'll be a new experience."

Students can look forward to the fact that there will be no specific restrictions on the type of activities at the Student Plaza as long as they are "within reason". For example, concerts and performances can be allowed, Mr Mui confirmed.

Renovations began in early October but planning started one to two years ago as part of the "master plan to turn the school into a green lung" for "conductive teaching and learning", Mr Mui revealed.

The plaza will be completed in two phases, with the first phase, the bus stop and walkways, due for completion in January.

Mr Michael Rebaczonok-Padulo, a

lecturer from the School of Interdisciplinary Studies (IS) was excited about the development as he found the Atrium "too small" and "crowded".

"We've actually been saying for years [that] we want a hub. I look forward to seeing it and I'm sure I'll be using that as a meeting place for students."

Bigger, more sheltered bus stop

The main NP bus stop is being renovated and will be about 10 percent bigger than the old one. The rooftop will boast a unique shape similar to the Convention Centre.

In addition, students will no longer have to dash to the bus in the rain. Mr Mui said that "when the bus comes, [one] will be able to alight under shelter".

Mr Teo Hin Chuan, manager of development in EM, added that the new bus stop will also create "a better frontage for the campus".

From the bus stop, there will be an open space, offering a macro view of the NP campus. "[The structure will be such that] people sitting inside the bus can see inside NP," Mr Mui explained.

He added, "The design will be very distinctive and will become like a landmark which identifies NP."

However, Mr Mui asserted that the bus stop is just "one small component of the project". The key changes will take place beyond the bus stop.

Open area for hubbing

In an effort to keep the NP frontage open and not so "claustrophobic", the space behind the bus stop will open up into the Student Plaza where there will be seats for students, much like the Atrium.

Half of the 200 new seats will be sheltered and the rest will be in the open to keep with EM's aim for an "open" feel.

Food, glorious food

In addition to more seats and space, students can look forward to a better selection of food from some kiosks in the plaza.

According to Mr Mui, these kiosks will be run by NP students for them to practice their entrepreneurial skills. Rental details have yet to be confirmed but Mr Mui said that students will be guided by professionals in the running of their businesses.

Unlike the typical bazaar stalls set up around the Atrium and the Convention Centre basement, these kiosks must be "proper business setups", Mr Mui stressed. He indicated that the sale of products such as cosmetics would be discouraged.

Jason Guan Yong Seng, 19, a final-year Business Studies (BS) student and the stall owner of Bocados Nachos in the Library, expressed his anticipation for the kiosks soon to come at the Student Plaza.

"It'll provide more convenience for students and make it easier for them to buy on the way out from school."

He commented that since the kiosks are at a better location, "people coming in can grab something to eat and people waiting for the buses will also have something to do".

Jason also added that in terms of profits, "it'll be much, much better".

New hard court for games

Besides the kiosks, a new hard court is also being built. It will be used for activities like basketball and street soccer.

There will also be a changing room next to the court with full shower and washroom facilities. This will enable students to conduct their sports activities without having to run to the shower rooms at Block 18.

Leong Xiu Han, 18, a second-year Business Information Technology (BIT)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



MILITARY JET IN NGE ANN

Page 5



DEVICE WINS AWARD

Page 6



FRIEND OR ENEMY?

Page 7



ARCHERY AIMING HIGH

Page 12

I Don't Want To Be Perfect



BY JESSY CHUA
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Someone I interviewed, a budding but driven undergraduate photographer, once told me that the backdoor to perfection is fear. I couldn't agree more.

For as long as I've been in Mass Communication in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP), I've worked hard because I was afraid that I would never be accomplished or successful if I didn't do well in school.

This stemmed from my disbelief that NP actually wanted me.

I was a business student at Temasek Polytechnic (TP) and cutting classes so much that, suffice it to say, I made only

four friends and attended just six months of school in the one year I was there.

Afraid that I would repeat these shenanigans in my new environment, I put myself under constant pressure to perform well as I wanted so badly to excel.

I decided that I had had enough of being a failure. Now, I wanted to shine.

But I used up all my motivation in my first year. I was so insanely pushing myself that I remember crying over an assignment because it wasn't perfect. I mulled over it as if my life depended on it.

However, the pressure took its toll this semester, in final year. I realised that in my stay at NP, I have felt periodically accomplished but never truly happy.

Somewhere amid the fatigue, it dawned on me that there has to be more to life than this. I decided then that I had had enough of a life of constant fear and trembling. I didn't want to be perfect anymore.

This semester, I learnt after trying to juggle my massive workload that there will always be work that needs to be done but one needs to find a balance between being a

lazy bum and a mad workhorse.

My interviewee, whom I remained in contact with after our initial meeting, later told me he too, felt that he needed to be perfect lest he missed out on something.

I've realised also, on hindsight, that it's not worth fussing over the little things in life. And these little things could well refer to your insurmountable workload in school.

Now, I just want to take a back seat from all my projects and enjoy whatever is left of my time at NP. Because while there is still a lot of work to be done, there's nothing more important than spending time with the friends whom I have chucked aside in the madness of all my projects.

At the end of the day, life isn't just about grades and achievements. It's about making mistakes, learning from those mistakes and embracing the moments which you might never have experienced if not for those mistakes, be they silly or severe.

I'm still in the process of coming to terms with my shortcomings. But what the hell, I'm perfectly happy with not being perfect. Now. **E**

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

TRIBUNE
Ngee Ann Polytechnic's campus newspaper

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Tribune, Oct to Dec 2005

EM: Eco Pond Safe From Dengue



DENGUE FEVER FEARS: Unfounded fears according to the Estate Management Office, but not all students agree. (Illustration: Courtesy of Shaun He)

BY SIMREN KAUR PANOO
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Singapore's dengue fever outbreak may be over but some Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students are still worried about contracting the disease on campus, especially around the eco pond at Block 56.

Seeing mosquitoes there and being bitten, have added to fears that the eco pond may be a breeding ground for the Aedes mosquito.

Ye Huiqi, 17, a first-year Mass Communication (MCM) student, said, "The water is quite stagnant. On [some] days, there's even a certain smell. I don't think it's cleaned every day."

Mr Mui Cheng Hock, director of the Estate Management Office (EM), explained that the eco pond is a natural feature and should be without artificial maintenance. "We do what is necessary to maintain the natural state of the pond."

The eco pond, he asserted "is not a koi pond or an aquarium with water filters" so it should "contain natural water" as "this is what all proper eco ponds look like".

Mr Mui also explained that the pond does not need to be cleaned except for litter on the surface, which is collected regularly to allow the aquatic life to live and grow.

He reassured students that the pond, built to enhance NP's campus environment, is safe. In fact, the pond's fish eat up the larvae and keeps mosquitoes from breeding.

As for students contracting dengue fever

while in NP, Mr Mui stated they were at little risk. "Estates also employ professional pest control officers to do regular checks not just at the pond but around the school. These routine checks are done twice a week," added Mr Mui.

While students like Joshua Sim, 17, a first-year Mobile Computing (MBC) student, agreed with Mr Mui, pointing out that the water fountain also helps to circulate the water and prevent water stagnation, others were not convinced.

Nurul Nisha binte Johari, 19, a final-year Electronic & Telecommunications Engineering (ETE) student, who used to study there, said, "When I sit around there for long, I get lots of mosquito bites so I have completely stopped going there."

Some students are put off by others' experiences. Tan Xin Yu, 19, a second-year Business Studies (BS) student told *Tribune* her course mates' bad experiences have discouraged her from using the area.

Another second-year BS student, Chay Gah Wei, 18, who was bothered by seeing mosquitoes there, has not made a formal complaint or given feedback to EM.

Mr Mui confirmed that EM had not received any complaints of this nature yet. He urged students to "come forward if they encounter any such cases in the future".

He further appealed to students to "not litter or release any marine life into the pond as this would affect the current marine life in the pond". **E**

ICT Heads For Greener Pastures

BY NUR HIDAYAH
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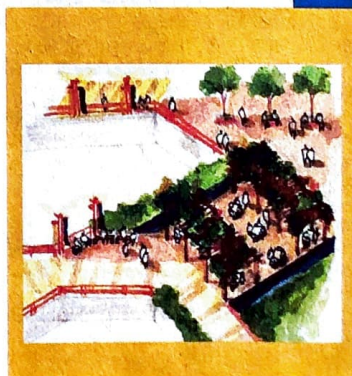
The bare deck in between Blocks 27 and 31 of the School of InfoComm Technology (ICT) will be renovated to provide Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students with additional space for study and recreation come February 2006.

The revamped area will be called The Green Mall @ Open Deck, and will feature a Student Hub, a mini outdoor performance stage and an alfresco dining area.

The new Green Mall will boast a resort-like environment and Mr Mui Cheng Hock, director of the Estate Management Office (EM), predicted that it will become a popular hangout when completed. "We want to turn the barren deck into a hub for activities, some place cool, green and vibrant," he explained.

Students who have noticed the construction are excited about the new developments. "I have lunch at Canteen Three quite regularly. The new facilities seem like a nice change from the current deck," Hanisha Zakiya Binte Abdul Rahman, 19, a final-year Internetworking and Communications (INC) student, commented.

- AL FRESCO DINING ADJACENT TO CANTEN 3.
- PERGOLAS, POOL & PLANTING
- PUSHCARTS AT EVENTS



WIDE OPEN VISTAS: A resort-like environment planned for the space near the School of InfoComm Technology. (Picture Courtesy of Estate Management Office)

The first phase, expected to be completed in February, will include one of the two study pavilions of the Student Hub and a mini-amphitheatre between Blocks 23 and 27.

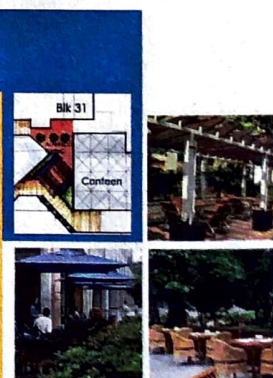
The two study pavilions will be built on timber decking, sheltered by an angled roof with thick foliage while the mini-amphitheatre near the first pavilion will be a raised platform where students can enjoy outdoor band and drama performances.

The second phase involves landscaping work to give Canteen Three an additional alfresco dining area, as well as construction of another study pavilion nearby, with greenery and water pools.

Mr Mui also revealed that timber-decked linkages would also be built from the Green Mall to the eco pond to allow students easy access to these facilities.

Presently, construction works are blocking access points to places such as the Teaching & Learning Centre (TLC). This prompted Ms Shirley Williams, the educational staff development manager of TLC, to describe the journey to her office as "exciting".

She added from 12 December, "We are trying to fix the problem by opening the main door to the office through the ICT lift lobby." **E**



Student Apathy To Blame For Thefts

BY LOW YUJIN
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Laptop thefts are on the rise on campus and student negligence and indifference might be to blame.

To curb this growing problem, the Student Services Office (SS) has embarked on their "Don't Be A Victim" campaign, which it launched at the start of this semester, in November.

SS manager, Mr Vickneshwaran Thangavelu, who would not reveal the number of thefts or the increase, explained that the basis for the campaign was a noticeable trend that began in September.

He said, "There was an increase in the number of reports of lost laptops... which is sort of why we went into this campaign, to remind students to be more careful with their belongings. It appears to be a situation where there's this culture [among NP students] to leave things behind and walk away."

A **Tribune** survey of 60 students on the theft situation in NP corroborated Mr Vickneshwaran's view - almost 59 percent said they were not worried about theft.

Staff Sergeant Mohjufri Sulaiman, 32, an officer from Clementi Police Station, echoed Mr Vickneshwaran's thoughts on students' general indifference towards theft. "The mentality of the individual is that once it's lost... that's it, I can purchase a new one."

Mr Vickneshwaran felt that it was a result of such nonchalant attitudes that thefts occurred because "most of the time people think they won't be the victim" and they leave their laptop on the table to "buy food and when they come back, it's not there".

He added that most laptops were reported to have been lost in Canteens One, Two and Three, generally as a result of students leaving their bags - with their laptops - on the table to reserve it during peak periods. "Would you leave \$3,000 cash on a table and walk away?" was the rhetorical question he posed.

While he felt that students had a long way to go in building the "social responsibility" of being accountable for their own possessions, Mr Vickneshwaran revealed that apart from the awareness campaign, SS was taking other pro-active measures to stem the loss of laptops.

However, he was unable to elaborate on what these measures were, saying that they were meant to aid in the identification of the culprits.

Nevertheless, Mr Vickneshwaran disclosed that the police would be dropping by NP randomly on patrol to make their presence felt. In fact, on SS's request, the Singapore Police Force set up a crime prevention and road safety booth at the Atrium from 10 to 11 November.

However, students were still indifferent. They were unaware of both the booth and the fact that there was a theft awareness campaign in the first place.

Some 67 percent of students surveyed claimed they had not noticed the exhibition at all. Those who did know about it were uninterested in what the booth had to offer while 74 percent said they were unaware of the "Don't Be A Victim" campaign.

Mr Vickneshwaran said that it was "beyond comprehension" that students did not know about the campaign when there are "stickers [on] every single table in the Canteen and the Atrium... three banners and various posters around the campus".

He said, "I don't think anything can be more visible than this... I mean you're sitting in the Canteen and this is staring right at you when you sit down."

Students who have noticed the campaign, while appreciative of SS's efforts to improve student awareness, also felt that the campaign was not all that effective.

Nurul Huda, 18, a first-year Building & Real Estate Business (BEM) student, commented, "[The campaign] is half effective, half not, because students can



ABANDON ME NOT: Stickers such as the one above are meant to remind students not to leave their valuables unattended. (Picture: Low Yujin)

always choose to ignore it."

Another student, Lee Kheh Yip, 20, a second-year Electronic & Computer Engineering (ECE) student, felt that the campaign only targeted students around the Atrium and the canteens because these are the only areas he sees the stickers.

Kheh Yip felt that SS could place their awareness posters and stickers around other parts of the campus. "They should place it in parts of the school like the classrooms and the lecture halls as well," he said.

While SS has considered suggestions from students who commented in the survey that security could be improved with more surveillance cameras and security guards, Mr Vickneshwaran said that these were not cost effective.

"If we increase the number of security guards... [it] may lead students to think that it's okay to leave... [valuables unattended]

because the security guard is around." That is precisely the situation Mr Vickneshwaran said SS wants to avoid.

Secondly, surveillance equipment have proven to be an insufficient deterrent to theft. Mr Vickneshwaran added, "Based on our experiences with cameras, we had students take school property right in front of a security camera."

Also, the design of the campus makes it impractical to have more security cameras. "We don't think it's going to help very much because there are so many points of entry. Where do you put the surveillance camera?"

"There's only so much that we can do, short of monitoring every single person in the campus."

Ultimately, the most cost effective form of security, Mr Vickneshwaran emphasised, is this: "It's your valuables, it's your belongings, you have to take care of your things."

Part-Time Diploma Gets NUS Recognition

BY FONG JUN LOONG BENJAMIN
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Students taking the part-time Diploma in Technology (DipTech) majoring in the Mechatronics, Mechanical, Electronics and Electrical courses can look forward to more educational opportunities upon graduation as their diploma is now recognised by the National University of Singapore (NUS).

Previously, most DipTech students would go back to working full-time after graduation. However, with accreditation, they now have the option of furthering their diploma under one of the Engineering degrees offered by NUS. The diploma was already recognised by SIM University in July, according to the Centre for Professional Development (CPD) website.

Ong Kok Hwee, a final-year DipTech student in his early 30s, commented, "It's good that we now have the option of applying for an engineering degree at NUS... I will definitely want to further my studies at NUS once I graduate."

According to Ms Aileen Chua, manager of marketing communications at CPD, the universities' recognition of the diploma is good news for Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) 1,000-odd DipTech students, most of whom work full-time, as the accreditation will help



A DEGREE BECKONS: NUS is now an option for DipTech students. (Digitally Modified Picture: S.Meenakshi)

add value to their diploma.

Ms Chua explained that in October, NP's Academic Affairs Office (AA) sent the DipTech course syllabus to NUS, which then began determining if the modules that were taught to DipTech students in NP were relevant to the degrees they offered.

This led to the university's accreditation of DipTech, with the exception of students majoring in either Building Services or Marine & Offshore Technology (MOT). These students will not be able to apply for a degree at NUS because "the university does not offer any relevant degrees to these

students", said Ms Chua.

She reasoned that currently, they are not seeking accreditation for Building Services as there are no relevant companies or universities to approach for accreditation, while MOT students have the alternative option of taking an Advanced Diploma in Ship & Marine Technology. However, DipTech students intending to go for a degree at NUS will still have to meet the requirements stated on the CPD website.

The DipTech course had its first intake in January 2003. Come April 2006, it will be offering an additional major in Logistics.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

student and the men's team captain of NP's Basketball Club, felt that the new hard court would facilitate training by reducing time spent on travelling to the court.

"It is quite inconvenient now as we have to cross the bridge to get our equipment every time."

He added that the new location would hopefully attract more people to join the club and was also thankful for the new shower facilities at the hard court.

Inconveniences expected

While students can look forward to new facilities within two months, there have also been some complaints about terrible overcrowding at the bus stop, half of which is off-limits because of the necessary construction work.

Jasmine Chew, 19, a final-year student from Accountancy (ACC), said, "Before the renovation, that bus stop is the place I wait for my friends but not anymore, since it's really getting crowded and noisy."

Addressing the issue, Mr Mui said, "Like in any major work, there are bound to be inconveniences. That cannot be avoided."

Many other students, like Yeo Jie Long Alvin, 19, a final-year BIT student, felt this was expected.

"It does [cause] a level of inconvenience but as the school is doing this renovation for a good cause, I can understand this inconvenience," he said.

Creating A Reading Culture In NP

BY SABRINA CHEW
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A series of Library initiatives to promote reading has resulted in 3,577 more books borrowed among Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students, according to findings by the NP Library.

Mrs Leo-Lim Bee Ang, manager of the Library's Reference department, said in an e-mail interview, "The loan [rate] for lifestyle books increased by three percent for the period between April to October 2005 as compared to the same period last year."

She added that students preferred popular titles in the life skills, hobbies and creativity and innovation categories.

This increase came after a round of measures to promote reading in NP beginning nearly a year ago.

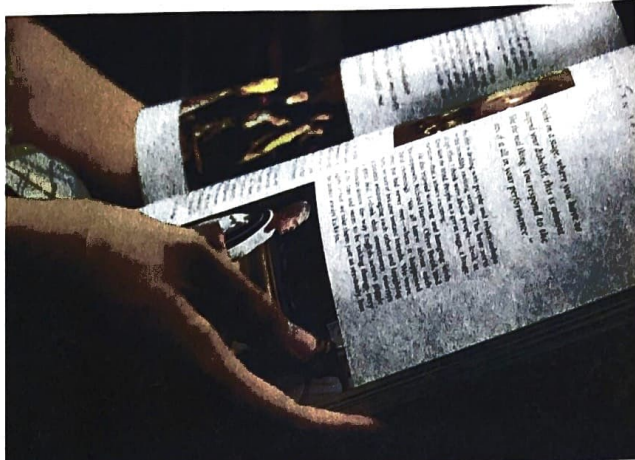
Mrs Leo-Lim explained that these efforts were made as the Library's goal to "ensure that every student is a borrower" has not been met.

The initiatives aimed "to increase students' awareness of the wide array of resources in the Library so that they will use them for their study, research and personal needs," she added.

Different approaches were used to "reach out to students".

Some of these activities included the month-long "Box-of-Loans" promotion that ended in August. Book loan slips were dropped into a box for prizes.

Rewards such as printers and thumb drives [were] given as incentives and students [needed] to fulfill some requirements such



BOOK READERSHIP INCREASES: More students are reading books from the NP library after a series of promotions and contests. (Picture: Low Yeejin)

as borrowing a certain number of books or submitting a book review before they [were] awarded the incentives."

Cheong Ming Hui, 18, second-year student from Business Studies (BS), enjoyed the activity. "I borrow[ed] more from the Library when this contest was launched and realised that our Library actually has a wide range of books. The school Library is now one of my usual hangout[s]."

According to Mrs Leo-Lim, the Book Fair at NP Orchard in August was the most successful activity. She stated that in the past, selections for new titles were done by Library and NP staff.

In the case of the Book Fair, however, the Library decided to give students a chance to help determine the purchases.

At the Fair, vendors were invited to showcase their books and students could "browse, select and borrow titles of their interest on the spot". These books were then "purchased and added to the Library".

Tan Yi Da, 17, a first-year BS student, agreed that the Book Fair was "a great success". He said, "I would like to convey this kind of promotion to my secondary school's library."

Other than the increased loan rate, the Library has also successfully "helped

to inspire students to explore, discover, [expand] their horizons, [broaden] their outlook and [improve] their communication skills" through its activities, she said.

She believed that through reading, "students can improve their general knowledge... stimulate their creative minds... [and] books about life skills will provide inspirational stories and theories that will help motivate students to do better in their studies or personal lives".

Lye Rong Fang, 23, a final-year Banking & Financial Services (BFS) student, felt that his horizons had been broadened through the Library's initiatives.

"My knowledge on the Library's range of books has certainly improved tremendously after participating in the initiatives organised by the Library."

Despite generally positive responses, there were still students who remained unaware of the Library's promotional activities.

Tan Ze Rong, 19, a second-year student from Electronic & Computer Engineering (ECE), confessed that he would not be interested in participating even if there was the lure of prizes to be won. He said that he seldom read and does not like to read.

Students who have missed previous Library activities can look forward to a slew of new ones, such as displays at the Internet Cafe in the Library, focusing on bestsellers and award-winning fiction.

Mrs Leo-Lim explained that the displays were aimed at "stimulating students' interest, thereby encouraging loan".

And come January 2006, the Library will be inviting authors and industry professionals to speak on lifestyle topics. ■

2 ICT Welfare Groups Merge

BY MOHAMAD FARHAN BIN MOHD SHAH
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After more than five years of competing to organise better events, student groups from the School of InfoComm Technology (ICT) have merged to form the ICT Student Council this semester.

The means the ICT Student Society and the e-Garage society no longer exist.

"The [rationale] of the merger is to help the student groups consolidate and focus their energies," said ICT lecturer Mr Brendon Lam, who brokered the merger, in an e-mail response to *Tribune*.

Observing the unproductive rivalry, he asked them to merge.

Some students like Suelastria Md Bashir, 19, a final-year Multimedia Computing (MMC) student, were pleased, saying, "It's better, at least we're not confused about which event is hosted by which group because now, there's only one group."

MMC lecturer Mr Rahardja Agus, commented, "From a management point of view, it's better because it streamlines the process and the unified council can work more effectively."

However, the groups were unpleasantly surprised. Siti Suhana, 19, a final-year Information Technology (IT) student and former president of the ICT Student Society, said, "The merger was very shocking news for both groups."

"[There] was a lot of miscommunication. The worse... was the election period [for the new council where] many members of the society did not agree to the merger and tried to stop it from happening."

Although the two groups have since

merged, members of the previous two societies are still divided over how things should be run.

"The problem is not critical...it's just [that] support is not fully given to the new leaders," Siti said.

Sangar Annadorai, 19, a final-year IT student and former president of the e-Garage society agreed. "There are still rifts left behind from the previous two groups."

The ICT Student Society and e-Garage society originally started out with distinct goals and objectives.

It was to organise welfare activities like camps, variety shows and entertainment while the e-Garage society was involved in academic and information technology-related events such as road shows and workshops.

Over the years, the objectives of both groups converged as they began organising more recreational activities for students.

The rivalry resulted in at least 10 events scheduled per semester, compared to the handful other schools in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) had.

The merger will not reduce the number of activities ICT students can participate in. According to Mr Lam, the new ICT Student Council is planning more events in the coming semester to raise their profile and "some of these are first-time initiatives".

These include an ICT Sports Challenge in early December, an IT Community Service project to help underprivileged children and a Pulau Ubin cycling trip slated for late December.

Benjamin Lim Wen Bing, 19, a final-year MMC student, said, "I don't really care which group organises the event. It's just good to have so many choices." ■

New SSIC Annex At The Atrium

BY SIMREN KAUR PANOO
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In a move to better cater to students' needs as well as provide better accessibility and convenience, the Student Services Office (SS) has opened a new branch at the Atrium, the Student Services & Information Centre Annex (SSIC Annex), to add on to their existing offices.

The decision to open the SSIC Annex this semester was taken following feedback from students about the inaccessibility of the current Student Services Office and the International Students Centre (ISC), both located at Block 18.

The SSIC Annex at the Atrium will offer some of the more commonly used services, and some foreign student-related services, to make it more convenient for students, who now don't have to travel to the main office.

These include the extension of EZ-Link passes, rental of lockers, reporting of lost personal belongings, as well as the application of work permits and student passes for foreign students.

SS manager Mr Vickneshwaran Thangavelu, explained that the SSIC Annex aimed to provide, "over the counter services where students can come to fill out or submit forms, make enquiries for information or collect belongings they lost".

Before the opening of the SSIC Annex, students often mistakenly went to the SSIC at the Atrium to apply for their EZ-link cards and claim lost belongings. However, the SS at Block 18, and not the SSIC, was the place to go for such services.

Ms Niko Wong, a student services administrator, said "Students who need to

re-apply for their EZ-link cards or report their lost items usually go to the Student Service & Information Centre (SSIC) [at the Atrium] to make an enquiry first. From there, they are directed to the SS at Block 18."

She added, "We get a lot of feedback that the students don't know about this [SS] office, so we decided to create a small extension [SSIC Annex] and this is now located beside the SSIC at the Atrium."

However, when *Tribune* did a survey to find out if students were aware of the SSIC Annex, only three out of the 30 students polled said they were. Even then, they appeared uncertain as to what kinds of services the SSIC Annex provided.

Nurul Ezza binte Jamaludin, 19, a final-year Accountancy (ACC) student, said, "I know there's [an] SSIC, but I don't know what services they provide."

Huang Qing Ping, 20, a second-year Building & Real Estate Management (BEM) student was still uncertain about the new SSIC Annex as well as the foreign student-related services the centre provides. She said, "If I ever lose my student pass, I will go to the [ISC] at Block 18."

Yet, students were delighted with the SSIC Annex's more convenient location. Sri Syafiqah binte Safi, 18, a first-year Real Estate Business (REB) student, said, "It's much more convenient for students, especially me. Block 18 is really far away."

ISC and SS will remain in operations at their current premises and will continue to offer services pertaining to bursary endorsements, student disciplinary cases and student financial assistance. International students who require aid for lodging or other matters can also approach the ISC. ■

Quake Cause Receives Bad Support

BY TAN LI LING
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A collection drive for the South Asian earthquake victims organised by five Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students met with much poorer response compared to last year's tsunami relief efforts.

Then, NP contributed 300 to 400 boxes of items while the recent quake drive yielded only six to seven boxes, which were sent off on the last day of the collection.

Students were less responsive to the drive from 7 to 9 November at the Atrium, according to one of the student planning committee members, Rico Chan Rui Jie, 19, a final-year Marine Offshore Technology

(MOT) student, who was involved in last year's tsunami collection drive.

The items from the drive, such as "blankets, tents, winter clothing, first-aid supplies... and groundsheets", Rico said, were vital to help victims in Pakistan keep warm in the upcoming winter months, when temperatures can drop to as low as minus five degrees Celsius.

He blamed the response on the month-long lag before the drive started, as the quake struck in the October school holidays.

By the time the semester started at the end of October, the sense of urgency to help had waned somewhat. In contrast, the tsunami collection drive was an almost immediate response to the disaster on 26

December 2004, which helped its success.

Rico also suggested that the NKF saga led some potential donors to express concerns over where the donated items would go to.

Lim Hoi Sun, 20, a first-year Business Studies (BS) student, was one such student. "It depends if I have heard of the incident or not because if I have not heard of it, I won't help [as] I won't know how the money will be used."

Hoi Sun also admitted finding it a hassle having to lug all of those items to school.

Rico said planning committees conduct thorough checks on beneficiaries, all of which do "proper auditing", to ensure collected items go to the right place.

In addition to charity fatigue, Rico also

felt the lack of publicity was a factor as only posters, flyers and e-mails were sent out.

Final-year Accountancy (ACC) student, Yao Wei Zhong, 19, agreed with the theory, saying he would have made a donation if he had only known about the collection drive for the South Asian earthquake victims in the first place.

According to first-year ACC student, Christina Lian Meizhu, 17, more than 75 percent of items collected were contributed by lecturers and staff.

Rico himself is not fazed by the poor response, saying that while the collection drive was "discouraging" he and his team would still help out if there were to be "another crisis".

Attack Aircraft Arrives At NP



FIGHTER JET HERE: This A4 Super Skyhawk has been loaned to the School of Engineering by the Republic of Singapore Air Force. (Picture: Low Youjin)

BY NUR HIDAYAH SALAMAT
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Aerospace Technology (AT) students now have hands-on knowledge of the aircraft structure and operating systems of a real fighter jet since the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) loaned an A4 Super Skyhawk (A4-SU Skyhawk) to the School of Engineering (SoE).

The aircraft arrived on 17 October, later than the original date it was expected.

"The Skyhawk was due to come when we were still in our first year. We heard there was a problem with the transfer because the US Air Force did not approve of the loan. They were afraid that their technology would be copied," said Thirumaaran S/O Arivazhagan, 20, a final-year AT student.

The RSAF decommissioned its A4-SU Skyhawks this year and has since loaned the aircraft to institutions such as Singapore Polytechnic (SP), Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP) and Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP).

"NP is allowed utility of the aircraft for learning purposes for as long as we need it," explained Mr Lee Yong Him, workshop manager at the Aerospace Hub where the aircraft is parked, together with two other aircraft, the Cessna 152 and the X-113.

The A4 SU Skyhawk will aid students' understanding of their curriculum. He said, "The students can better familiarise themselves with the airframe structure and sub-systems involved, such as the hydraulics and propulsion systems. Having practical lessons with a real aircraft educates the students on the space restrictions, allowing them to get the feel of it."

Not only has the RSAF provided students with a valuable teaching aid, it is also collaborating with NP to offer an ongoing programme that allows AT students to visit the Air Force School, where RSAF personnel currently train.

Having practical lessons with a real aircraft educates the students on the space restrictions, allowing them to get the feel of it.

Mr Lee Yong Him, Workshop Manager
Aerospace Hub

There, students get to witness the actual operation of an aircraft, which includes the workings of the landing gear and triggering devices. This is something the AT students cannot because the aircraft in NP is not really a working model now that various parts have been removed.

"We don't have the whole plane. Some parts aren't there and wires have been cut. But the important parts that are required for learning are there so students can have a visual understanding of what's going on," explained Thirumaaran.

The A4-SU Skyhawk was originally designed by Douglas Aircraft Corporation to operate from United States Navy aircraft carriers. Later, it was modernised by the RSAF to produce the A4-SU Skyhawk, one of the world's most advanced A4 variants. RSAF pilots prided themselves on having the aircraft as it was tough, agile and easy to maintain.

NP Adopts River In Clementi

BY LOW YOUJIN
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Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) showed its commitment to providing Singaporeans with at least one source of safe drinking water with the adoption of part of Sungei Ulu Pandan.

On 3 December, NP's Building & Environment Green Volunteers (BEGV) held an adoption ceremony for a 2km stretch of Sungei Ulu Pandan, a tributary of Pandan Reservoir that flows between Clementi Road and Clementi Avenue West.

Mr Alfred Tan, the advisor for the BEGV and a lecturer at the Building & Environment Division (BE Division) of the School of Engineering (SoE), explained the rationale for the adoption of the river, "We must all play a role to safeguard [Singapore's] limited water resources." The BEGV will be working with grassroots leaders to carry out river cleaning, patrol and "other meaningful river activities".

Among some of these activities are water quality control checks which will be conducted by the volunteers.

BEGV chairwoman, Jamie Yeo, 19, a final-year BE Division student, said, "[We'll be] taking water samples to check the pH value and if there's anything wrong, we'll alert [the] relevant authorities and they will send [their] specialists down to check."

Jamie added that they hoped to educate residents around the river's vicinity about water-related issues, such as the importance of keeping water clean and how they can conserve it.

Dr Wang Kai Yuen, Member of Parliament (MP) for Bukit Timah, who graced the event,

reminded those present at the ceremony not to take water for granted. "Water is basic to life, but we tend to forget this because our taps never run dry."

We must all play a role to safeguard [Singapore's] limited water resources.

Mr Alfred Tan, Advisor for BEGV
Building & Environment Division Lecturer

He added that Singaporeans all have a part to "ensure our waterways like Sungei Ulu Pandan continue to provide us with clean drinking water".

Dr Wang also praised NP for "taking ownership of the Ulu Pandan River and keeping it clean with this adoption".

The BEGV will work closely with the Public Utilities Board (PUB) - NP's supporter in the river adoption. At press time, they were still discussing other ways of working together.

Maj (NS) William Ng Han Tong, deputy director for PUB, felt that the partnership was particularly beneficial for student volunteers. He said, "[It's a] great idea [that] Ngee Ann is coming forward to value our water resources... students can learn more about water."

NP principal Mr Chia Mia Chiang was also pleased with the BEGV adoption. "It's a nice anchor [for students] to have a main project to work on... This will broaden their learning and the students will feel more for the project."



WANT A SAMPLE? BEGV students demonstrate to Dr Wang Kai Yuen the procedures for testing a sample of water's pH value. (Picture: Low Youjin)

ICT Students Help The Deaf Communicate

BY TAN LILING
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The hearing-impaired may soon be able to communicate effortlessly with the outside world, and vice versa, through an electronic communication aid developed by a pair of final-year InfoComm Technology (ICT) students.

The aid, which the students named Glovology, was so innovative it beat 300 regional entries to win an \$18,000 grant and the top prize in the Samsung DigitAll Hope Awards Ceremony 2005 on 4 November.

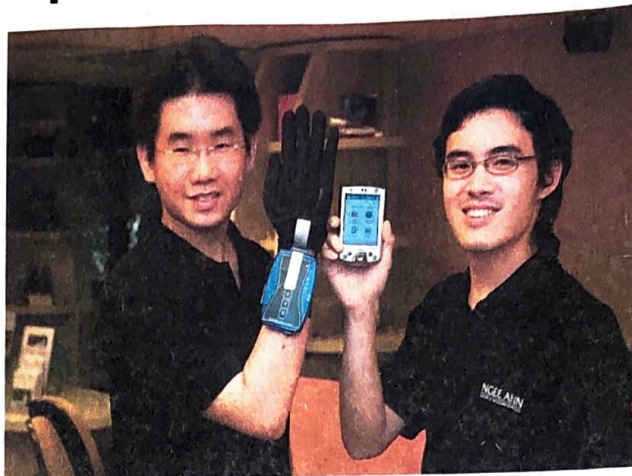
The award focuses on the use of technology to benefit lives.

Project member Wong Fu Yau, 20, an Information Technology (Mobile Computing) (MBC) student, was elated with the win. "I am very happy and very honoured to actually win this thing. And, of course, we feel grateful to school, our tutors and people around us, like [our families] who really gave us moral support during the process."

Glovology uses a pocket PC phone and a data glove worn by the hearing-impaired person to capture what he is saying in sign language. The hand signs are then translated into speech for the receiving party.

For a conversation to take place, the hearing party's speech will be digitally captured and translated into text on the pocket PC phone so the hearing-impaired person can read it. The ICT lecturer who helped the pair on the project, Mr Koh Kwan Chin, said they hoped to make the whole conversation instantaneous, almost like a real-time conversation.

According to project member Aloysius Goh Kun Yi, 19, also an MBC student, the team was inspired by their hearing-impaired ICT friend as they had observed that more time was taken during project discussions to get their points across as the conversation had to be written.



COMMUNICATE WITH ME: ICT students Aloysius Goh and Wong Fu Yau lend a helping hand to the hearing-impaired. (Picture Courtesy of Aloysius Goh)

Fu Yau explained that there were many limitations in communicating as "sign language is limited to 2,700 words".

While the aid is still in its pilot phases, Aloysius told *Tribune* that his hearing-impaired friends are very excited about trying out the device when it is completed.

Glovology started out as the brainchild of four final-year MBC students. Aloysius and Fu Yau decided to pursue the project full-time for the Samsung competition.

The team spent three to four days a week on their project, assisted by Mr Koh, and international fellow Ms Amy Seng.

According to Mr Koh, about \$2,000 has been invested in the project since work started in January. This was used to purchase the pocket PC phone and the data glove. He added that the Samsung grant will be used to develop the device further.

Citing great potential in the device, Aloysius said, "Although the production cost

of the device is high, mass production will help bring the cost down when it is out in the market for sale."

According to the Singapore Association for the Deaf website, there are about 246,000 hearing-impaired people in Singapore who can stand to benefit from the device.

Aloysius added that from the onset, the team hoped their efforts would eventually benefit the families of the hearing-impaired as "everyone [has a] need to communicate".

Despite the win, Aloysius foresees that they will experience some "technology-based problems" in the 10 months needed to complete the project. For example, he revealed that getting the glove posed a problem, as it was difficult to find and had to be imported from Italy.

He said, "[We'll also face] a lot of problems as... a pocket PC phone cannot support a lot of applications... [The] capabilities of the pocket PC phone are very limited."

Hot NTU Degrees Open To All

BY LOW YOUNJIN
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Final-year Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students will have a wider choice in applying to the local universities next year, when Nanyang Technological University (NTU) opens up two of its courses to all polytechnic students.

The Bachelor of Accountancy and Bachelor of Business degrees will no longer be offered only to students with business-related diplomas or non-business diplomas with a Certificate of Merit, after NTU changed its admission criteria from November.

Associate Professor Choo Teck Min, NTU's vice dean of the Nanyang Business School (Accountancy), said in an e-mail response, "During our past recruitment talks, we received many queries from polytechnic students reading non-business courses who were very keen to pursue our Accountancy and Business programmes."

"Many were outstanding students and we were impressed with their strong motivation to switch to a new discipline and also their ability to articulate their case. That gave us the impetus to make the change and a decision was made to open our programmes to all polytechnic students this year."

This is good news for NP's non-Business & Accountancy (BA) students who want to heed the call of the potential entrepreneur within them.

Zhang Junjie, 19, a final-year Biomedical Science (BMS) student, said, "That means I have more choices now and it also gives me a higher chance of getting into a local university, which is definitely cheaper than going overseas."

Terrence Kam, 20, a final-year Civil & Environmental Engineering (CEE) student, agreed. "This piece of news will be a bonus for our students... NUS has already opened their business courses to polytechnic students [but they have to be] either an entrepreneur or have an active CCA background before they can meet the admission standards."

Terrence was referring to the "10 percent of vacancies" NUS reserves for discretionary admission for outstanding applicants.

He added that he felt NTU had made the "right decision" by opening its doors to all polytechnic students interested in a business-related degree, regardless of their field of specialisation.

For entry into academic year 2006/2007, NTU will take 75 percent of a polytechnic student's results and 20 percent of his 'O' Level results. An extra 5 percent is based on the applicant's CCA records.

There will be no more 10 percent cap on admissions for polytechnic students.

Not all students were thrilled with the news though. Sammy Chan, 19, a final-year Accountancy (ACC) student, expressed concerns that the move meant more competition for him.

"It's not fair that vacancies meant for BA students are being taken up by non-BA students. [It's] not like I can do an engineering or life sciences degree in university."

"In life sciences or engineering, you must have some experience in science or math. For business, it's possible for anyone to take it."

However, Ms Tay Gek Huan, a BA lecturer in NP who also handles enquiries on university admissions for BA, said her students do not have to feel threatened.

She added that they are "well-trained" not just for the workplace but academically as well, as evidenced by the fact that many BA students further their studies.

NP's Academic Affairs Office (AA) was not available for comment at press time.

RoboCup Competition Grooms Engineering Talents



GET READY, GET SET: A secondary school participant prepares to unleash havoc on his opponent with his robotic football star. (Picture: Low Youjin)

BY MELISSA CHANG MEI YOKE
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Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) School of Engineering (SoE) helped groom potential engineering talents by hosting the first Singapore RoboCup Junior 2x2 League Championship.

The aim of the competition, held from 8 to 10 November at the Convention Centre, was to promote problem-based learning and shortlist a team to represent Singapore in the world championship finals.

This was done by getting the 22 teams from 14 secondary schools to put together

two robots using starter Soccer Robot kits purchased from Inspiron Pte Ltd, NP's co-organiser for this event.

The students had four months to build the robots, culminating in a robot soccer game, over three elimination rounds. The robots have a sensor to track the ball and a mechanism to kick the ball to the goal.

Participants could either build and test their robots in their schools, or in NP.

Those who chose to use NP facilities had additional advice given by four helpful SoE student mentors.

These mentors helped participants by

teaching them how to use the tools and advising them on strategy.

Hong Qirong, 18, a first-year student helper from Mechanical Engineering (ME), said, "As the students are not familiar with the software, I was basically there to help them. I am very proud of each and every team [who] has participated and I felt glad to be there to help them with their problems."

Mr Hui Tin Fat, ME's Alpha Centre manager, said that NP offered help to all the participating schools.

Addressing the possible disparity in the quality of robots for schools that did not take up the offer, he commented, "If the school thinks that they are able to do it themselves, it does not matter."

Bukit Panjang Government High School found SoE's guidance helpful.

Penelope Wong, 15, a secondary three student from the school, said, "Sometimes, when... we ask for help, like when we have missing parts... we would be able to get help from the students here."

Her school emerged tops, beating schools like Woodlands Ring Secondary and St Gabriel's Secondary School, winning the chance to represent Singapore in the World RoboCup Junior 2x2 League Championship in Germany next June against students in the same age group.

Mr Hui said that Inspiron asked NP to host the competition due to its "good track record in the World RoboCup Small League Tournament", another robotics competition which was held earlier this year.

National StrITwise Challenge

BY TAN LILING
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A secondary school outreach event by the School of InfoComm Technology (ICT) on 26 November aimed to change perceptions of ICT through the enterprising nature of the competition where students had to create a virtual robot.

Unlike previous ICT competitions which focused on just one diploma course, the inaugural National StrITwise Challenge 2005 highlighted the different aspects of ICT, such as Multimedia, Information Technology (IT) Mobile Computing and IT.

The main aim, according to Mr Fabian Ng Yaw Tong, senior lecturer and publicity outreach manager of ICT, was to publicise the courses ICT offers and project the school as a fun and stimulating place. "People always associate IT as a technical subject," Mr Ng added, but "IT is all about creating 'animations, pictures and sounds'."

About 30 secondary schools were invited to participate and 45 teams signed up.

Mr Ng described the event as a "unique competition" where students were tested on "technical programming skills, strategic skills, planning skills, creativity skills, innovation

skills, as well as knowledge skills".

Students programmed a virtual robot, created a life-size character with Robocode programming and took an IT quiz related to daily life. For example, competitors had to identify the famous blogger, Mr Brown.

Mr Ng said he was initially afraid that schools might not be open to the competition as it was a fresh concept which required students to create their own character using "Java programming to strategise and animate" but feedback was positive.

He felt that his own ICT students also benefited through the workshops they conducted for participants as it was enriching for them to guide the secondary school students along.

These were done in October to train students in programming, creative, strategic and IT knowledge skills in preparation for the competition. In all, 50 ICT students helped in running the event.

Tan Shu Ren, 19, a final-year Information Technology (IT) student helper was amazed at how "creative" participants were. "Some of them have very impressive robots."

On future plans, Mr Ng said he hoped to bring animation into future competitions to make the challenge more interesting. ■



REACHING OUT WITH ROBOTS: Secondary school students learn more about the School of InfoComm Technology by building robots in the National StrITwise Challenge. (Picture: Low Youjin)

Racial Bonding Through CCAs

BY NAZURAH MOHD MAJEED
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Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) is promoting racial integration through Co-Curricular Activities (CCA) to break racial stereotypes in CCAs.

At the HarmonyWorks! Conference, held at Jurong Junior College on 22 November, Minister for Education Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam suggested CCAs be used to provide "more opportunities for students of different races to mix with each other".

Mr Siow Chow Sid, admin manager at the Student Development & Alumni Relations Office (SDAR), commented, "We encourage all students to participate in various CCAs, regardless of their race."

However, some CCAs in NP seem to be more popular with a particular ethnic group. For example, Sepak Takraw and Floorball are made up mostly of Malays whereas a large majority of dragon boaters are Chinese, while Indians dominate the Cricket Club.

Muhd Yazid Abdul Rahim, 20, a Horticulture & Landscape Management (HLM) student and captain of the men's floorball team, said, "For floorball, the men's team has a balance of all races, while the women's team are made up of Malays."

He acknowledged the need to have a balance of ethnic groups in his sport, saying, "We are hoping to get better response from other races as well, to break the stereotype that floorball is a Malay sport in NP."

Yazid offered a reason why certain sports tend to attract specific races. "Maybe the perception... of certain CCAs is that the majority are not of their race, so they would have lesser chances of being able to join."

But a student development officer from SDAR, Mr Abdul Jalal Mohd Tahir, disagreed, "In NP, I don't think there are racial problems. Students don't join a certain sport because they don't have the skills."

Muhd Shukri Ahmad Basha, 19, a final-year Electronic & Computer Engineering (ECE) student and the president of the Sepak Takraw Club, agreed. He said, "To me, it is a challenge for other races to be able to play a sport that is usually dominated by a particular race. In fact, I have a lot of Chinese and Indian friends who play better sepak



BOOSTING RACIAL BONDS: NP is strengthening racial ties through Co-Curricular Activities. (Picture: Benjamin Fong)

takraw than the Malays."

But not all students feel race is a barrier. Fatehah Mohd Ishak, 19, a final-year Mass Communication (MCM) student, is the only Malay girl in the Dragon Boat Club.

"I joined dragon boat because I wanted to be involved in a team sport. I don't mind being the only Malay girl in the team," Fatehah related. "Over the years, I've picked up a bit of the language. I also understand their culture better."

Mr Jalal agreed, saying, "Games or sports is something where you build up teamwork despite your racial differences. When other races work together in a game or sport, they understand each other's culture more."

However, students like Fatehah are rare. Cheong Wen Cheng, 21, a final-year Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering (CBE) student, said, "I feel that I can relate more easily to someone of the same race."

NP is proving to be serious about racial integration through CCAs.

Mr Siow revealed, "We encourage the CCA groups to take turns and plan get-togethers, to promote interaction between the different CCAs."

For example, he added that the Malay silat and Chinese wushu martial arts groups recently had a joint gathering. ■

Industry IS Connecting With Students

BY SABRINA CHEW
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In the first of a series of activities for IS Connects! Networking, the School of Interdisciplinary Studies (IS) invited radio personalities and staff from radio station Power98FM to share their experiences in events organisation with Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students.

In IS Connects! Networking, industry professionals from various fields are invited to interact with students as well as provide them with insights from their experiences in their particular field.

According to Ms Sharon Ismail, an IS lecturer involved in this year's project, "The aims of this year's IS Connects! Networking series [are] to expose our students to practising professionals in various industries and to create a stronger link between IS modules and the real world."

Activities under IS Connects! Networking largely involve "a variety of professionals and industries" sharing their knowledge with students and staff, revealed Ms Sharon. Students can look out for these events, which occur bi-monthly during the semester.

During the activities, students are encouraged to mingle with the invited guests to network and seek advice.

By encouraging students "to speak up and engage in a dialogue with industry experts", IS Connects! Networking endeavours to help students to become "more confident and articulate at presenting themselves", Ms Sharon said.

The event involving Power98FM guests was part of this year's IS Connects! Networking programme which is also part of the whole IS Connects! project started by IS.

As a station whose target audience includes young people, Power98FM organises a healthy number of activities every year for listeners in a variety of roadshows, contests and so on.

In light of their organisational experience, IS deemed that Power98FM was in a good position to share with students what they knew about event organisation.

In an hour's session, radio personalities Joe Augustine and Margaret Lim, along with two other Power98FM staff, shared tips on events management with 30 second-year students

taking the IS module, Innovation and Enterprise in Action (I & E in Action).

The discussion was largely informal with Augustine and Lim humouring the audience with their quirky and entertaining antics, on many occasions causing the room to erupt into laughter.

Augustine would punctuate his words with dramatic movements and Lim would remind the audience of just how frank Augustine could be. Snippets of their morning show were also played in between their slide presentation.

In the short question-and-answer session following the speakers' presentations, the first issue that students brought up was how to deal with event crises. Lim said, "You can never prepare for it." But she also added that the organiser should stay calm and collected and make it seem to the client that it was just meant to be.

Augustine, on the other hand, had a relatively straightforward view. "[You should say] oh *** and then get over it."

But he also had practical advice, adding that acting quickly would also be helpful. He cited an example where an on-air contest

went wrong but he salvaged the situation quickly and received praise from his boss for it.

Students told *Tribune* that the talk had been useful for their module and that they had enjoyed it.

Munirah Bte Musa, 19, a second-year Internetworking & Communications (INC) student, felt that the event was better than expected. "They actually [gave us pointers] for our event management and I think it will greatly help us."

Brendan Wong, 18, also a second-year INC student, believed that the interaction with industry professionals in the event management field would ultimately benefit him after graduation. "[It will help you to] have a better knowledge of how you go about organising [and] what are some of the pointers that you must take in order to perfect your skills in organising."

The next event for IS Connects! Networking will take place in January 2006. However details have yet to be confirmed. Interested students can check the IS website (<http://www.np.edu.sg/is/>) for more information at a later date. ■

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总 共有80位中文系同学有机会在浙江大学城市学院，张卫中教授的指导下，上为期一学期的中华文学与文化课程。

教学经验丰富的张教授在中文系所教的科目虽和在浙江大学所教的相同，但张教授(38岁)表示：“课程名称虽一样但讲的内容不一样，在这里讲的比较浅很多，我们在这里讲的很多内容在国内中学都已经学过了，所以有很多内容肯定是要进行调整，我到这里都要重新备课。”

一位修读中文系的陈蔚蕾同学(17岁)表示：“开始时会觉得他(张教授)教书会比较深奥，但是这几个星期来他已教得比较浅了。”

从中国的大学讲堂来到义安理工学院讲课的张教授表示：“国内的学生相比起来(上课)可能会比较专心一点儿，本地的学生比较活泼一点儿，课堂上的参与比较多。”

张教授讲课时喜欢让学生们围在一起进行讨论。在浙江大学习惯上大课堂的张教授表示：“如果是按照座位的排行方式大家没办法讨论，和后面的人讨论要转过头去很不方便，这样围在一起就方便讨论而且气氛比较融洽。”

陈蔚蕾也说道：“有时候他(张教授)说到中国的一些地方、习俗，我们会不太了解，但如果真的不明白他会慢慢的解释给我们听，我觉得他特别关心我们对他说东西了不了解，怕他说的太深奥。”

与张教授一同从浙江大学来到义安交流的有14名年龄介于20岁到24岁的学生。他们将在义安理工学院逗留一个学期。

这项交流活动不单只让中文系的学生有所收获，修读传媒系、电信系、会计系、工商系以及工程学的同学也可以从交流生身上学到东西。

工商系交流学生的联系人，李玉莲讲师



张教授与交流生到海滩游玩。(照片：杨忆康摄)

以英语表示：中国学生有很多方面是值得让新加坡学生学习的，譬如，中国学生的上进心和专注学习的态度，尤其现在，中国已是带动全球经济的国家之一。希望学生们在交流当中，他们能正视与关注中国的崛起，而不只是把注意力放在西方国家和日本上。另外，也希望新加坡学生也能从中学学习如何更好地掌握华语。

新加坡与中国的教育最大的分别在于新加坡是以英语作为教学媒介，由于在中国上课主要都是用华语，现在来到另一个教与学都以英语为主的地方，这些交流生的确是需要时间来适应的。

交流生之一，杨忆(20岁)对此说道：“由于语言的问题，我们必须在课外花时间来准备，预习，课上才能跟得上老师的节奏。”

一位工程系讲师，唐志振(45岁)用英语表示：这些交流生到现在为止还不是很能适应我们用英语讲课所以必须为他们多解释一番，不过本地的同学都有给予他们帮助，所以问题不大。他们与本地学生比起来比较认真，有什么不明白的一定会问清楚。

交流生之一，杨忆用了一个英文字“wonderful(棒)”来形容到目前为止的体验。她表示：“我得到新加坡以后，眼界开阔了很多。(因为)新加坡是一个多民族、多种文化相结合的国度。”

“这里有来自各国的学生，而不同的国家有自己不同的生活习惯，宗教习惯，不同的风俗，对一个问题看法也大不相同。在这样的文化氛围下，我觉得过得很开心。”

家庭拜访日

周丽美报道
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义 安理工学院国际学生中心，每年都为外籍学生举办家庭拜访活动，今年也不例外。据了解，参与这项活动的学生并不多但尽管如此，国际学生中心还是会为有兴趣的外籍学生举办这项有意义的拜访活动。

对于今年的活动，国际学生中心经理，Mr. Vickneshwaran Thangavelu (36岁)用英语说道：国际学生中心原本希望同时举行开斋节的家庭拜访；可惜的是，因为无法安排让学生到马来家庭拜访，结果只到一位工程系印度族讲师，Dr. Kannappa Iynkaran，的家去拜访。

Mr. Vickneshwaran 表示：活动的意义是要让学生们有机会互相切磋以及认识其他种族的习俗与传统文化，这种交流是双向的——它不仅可以让外籍学生认识新加坡的文化，也可以让受拜访的家庭认识他国的文化，习俗以及庆祝佳节的习惯。

屠妖节当天，学生们9点钟就抵达Dr. Iynkaran的家，Dr. Iynkaran一早为大家准备了一些图片，让学生们从中了解屠妖节的由来。Dr. Iynkaran与家人也准备了一道道的传统佳肴让这些外籍同学品尝一番。学生们后来到了主人家供奉神灵的地方参观。之后，学生们也就聚集在客厅聊天以及观赏屠妖节由来有关的影片，里面还播放Dr. Iynkaran的妻子所编的精彩舞蹈。

在进一步了解了印度族的文化后，来自中国的杨黎丽(21岁)说道：“我很惊奇的是这天他们额头上要涂上一小点，Dr.说这个先人的膏灰，代表要生不带来死不带去，也要学会珍惜。”

虽然从这一次的拜访中获益不浅，但黎丽仍然认为活动可以有所改善，她表示：“如果(能够)再有一次，我希望可以和主人他们玩游戏——(尤其是)他们的风俗游戏。”

另一位来自马来西亚的学生，李美媛(18岁)表示对这项活动感到非常满意，但两个半小时的活动时间似乎太短了，美媛认为活动时间应延长一些，最好能有机会留在屋主家过夜更深入地了解他们的平常生活习惯也可以和大家聚在一起玩。

屋主Dr. Iynkaran(不愿透露年龄)用英语表示：虽然这是第一次跟国际学生中心合作，我一直以来都有在特别日子时邀请学生到我家做客。从这次的拜访中，我觉得我们双方(学生和主人)的互动相当好。我成功地让学生们多了解了屠妖节的事物，而我的家人也感受到了学生们的热情。

Mr. Vickneshwaran 也指出：参加人数多或少并不重要，因为国际学生中心坚持认为家庭拜访是对学生们很有意义的一项活动。

有史以来，家庭拜访活动从未在同学的家里举行。以往，都是由义安理工学院的员工或讲师招待这些外籍学生。

对这点，Mr. Vickneshwaran 说道：我们考虑要请到学生的家里拜访，但费用将是由学生的父母承担，所以我们有所顾虑。当然，我们并不排除本地学生招待外籍同学的可能性。

义安中文系首次联办“圆梦DJ”

陈宁曦报道
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本 校新创办的人文学院中文系将首次与《早报·爆米花》以及《星期五周报》联办全国性的“圆梦DJ”赛。“圆梦DJ”吸引的主要是年龄介于13到18岁的青少年，这里头包括义安理工学院的学生。参赛者将分为两个组别：13至15岁的参赛者将被列为周报组，16至18岁的参赛者将被列为爆米花组。参赛者能以小队或个人的身份参加比赛。每队成员能多达三人。

负责这次比赛的中文系讲师——陈颖，谈到义安与两报联办“圆梦DJ”的原因，她表示：“因为我们是中文系，所以我们要推广中文，让大家都有兴趣来参加这样一个活动。我们借助早报这样一个媒体，跟他们一起合作，一起举办活动，可以提升知名度。另外，我们的同学也可以去参加，其他没有参赛的同学也可以参加一些幕后的工作，可以了解到整个活动的过程。”

义安在这项活动中主要是负责主办工作坊，教导学生有关广播的节目策划，与制作技巧。工作坊已在12月3日(星期六)举行。目前，已有120名参赛者报名。参与工作坊的中文系讲师包括从事广播行业多年的杨君伟和郭晋凌讲师。

上过工作坊后，参赛者必须制作一个广播节目。参赛者可自由发挥，但节目内容，必须是与青少年有关，且内容真实。参赛者须把节目的形式写成文案，然后



一名学生正在体验当DJ的滋味。(虚传照片)【照片：刘有源】

照着文案制作节目。每个节目须3至5分钟长。参赛者把节目收录进光碟后，就可连同文案寄到《星期五周报》。前三名脱颖而出的优胜者将会得到300元、200元和100元的奖金。另外，还有三份50元的安慰奖。

大决赛日定在义安理工学院Open House的最后一天，2006年2月4日举行。

对于参赛者，杨君伟的忠告是：“我觉得他们首先语言掌握能力要强，然后对幕

后制作工作要感兴趣，而不只是光想当个报歌名的机器。如果他们真的要突出自己的话，我觉得他们要有个性跟特色，还有勇气。”

对于“圆梦DJ”与“Wannabe DJ Idol”(义安理工义成电台每年主办的DJ选拔赛)是否一样，杨君伟也表示：“蛮不一样的，Wannabe DJ是以英文为主，且Wannabe DJ比较注重在台上的呈献；但是“圆梦DJ”却很注重制作。”



FSV Alumnus Bags Four Awards In One Month

BY JESSY CHUA
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Less than a year after graduating from Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP), Film, Sound & Video (FSV) alumnus and film-maker Anthony Chen has garnered four international film accolades for his graduation film, *G-23*, all within a month.

Three of these awards were won within the span of a week, between 6 and 14 November, from film festivals in Korea, France and Belgium.

Anthony collected five million Korean won (\$8,000) and a return ticket to Korea for taking the New Film-maker Award at the

3rd Asiana International Short Film Festival held in Seoul, Korea, on 7 November.

Most recently on 3 December, *G-23* was awarded the Gold Award for Best ASEAN Short Film in Malaysia at the 10th Malaysian Video Awards Festival.

The 21-year-old, who is currently in National Service, majored in the Advanced Film Production module at NP last year.

Anthony's debut film took a year to complete. He directed and wrote the 20-minute short film with five other final-year FSV students.

The team received partial funding of \$4,000 from the Singapore Film Commission (SFC), a government body set up to nurture

and support film-making talents.

Anthony said, "In a short film where you are given only 20 minutes to express your entire story, it is a challenge to create complex personalities and a multi-dimensional, multi-layered plot. [Hence], I decided to weave three different stories into one story."

G-23 is about emotional repression in Singapore, depicted by three characters. Said Anthony, "It is about a young Indian girl who has problems coming to terms with her culture, an elderly man who has lost all purpose in life and a middle-aged lady who is deprived of sex and love."

The lives of the three are intertwined through a cinema usher who develops an interest in them.

Anthony revealed that the title was inspired by a seat number in the Indian cinema where filming took place.

The theme, on the other hand, came about due to Anthony's own sense of repression. He said, "I feel trapped in Singapore. We live in an environment where we suppress a lot of things within ourselves, that's why I decided to address this emotional suppression by magnifying it in the very little and mundane things that happen in our daily lives."

When Mrs Choo Cheh Hoon, the former deputy director of the School of Film & Media Studies (FMS) and FSV Specialist Project (SP) coordinator, first reviewed the team's proposal and script, she revealed that some lecturers thought it "looked rather ambitious" and was worried that "the team might not be able to deliver it".

However, they decided to give it a chance. She said, "When *G-23* was finally completed, it was clear to many of us that it was a cut above the other graduating projects."

The film has since been screened at more than 15 international film festivals, including the 18th Singapore International Film Festival, the 38th Asian American International Film Festival in New York and the 6th San Diego Asian Film Festival.

As part of the Noise Singapore Festival initiated by the National Arts Council (NAC) to promote all genres of artistic works, *G-23* also went on national television on Arts Central, in October.

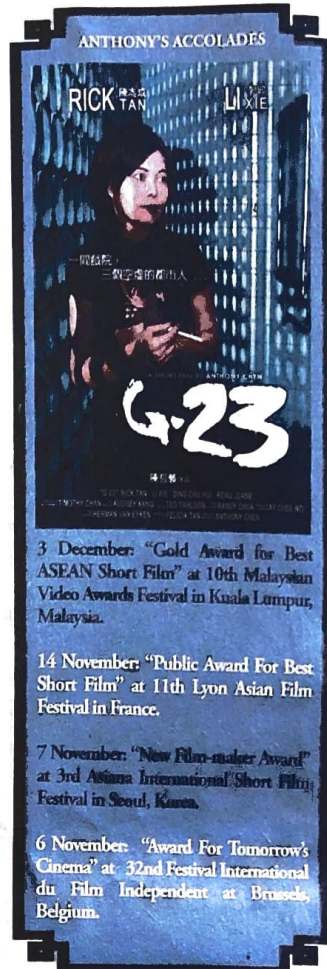
Anthony explained that film festivals play a very important role in helping to launch aspiring film-makers' careers as these provide a platform for them to showcase their works to the world.

"One needs accolades to get started in terms of funding. The more accolades a film-maker gets, the easier it is to get funding," he added.

With four international awards under his belt, Anthony acknowledged that it might now be "easier" for him to get a grant from the SFC for his next film, about death, which he plans to start filming in April next year.



ON A ROLL: Anthony Chen accepts his third film award, "The New Film-maker Award", at the 3rd Asiana International Short Film Festival in Seoul, Korea. (Picture Courtesy of Anthony Chen)



3 December: "Gold Award for Best ASEAN Short Film" at 10th Malaysian Video Awards Festival in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

14 November: "Public Award For Best Short Film" at 11th Lyon Asian Film Festival in France.

7 November: "New Film-maker Award" at 3rd Asiana International Short Film Festival in Seoul, Korea.

6 November: "Award For Tomorrow's Cinema" at 32nd Festival International du Film Independent de Bruxelles, Belgium.

Grateful to NP for helping him to strengthen his foundation in film-making, Anthony paid tribute to the school, "I feel that I am a film-maker who has to go through the system of education. Unlike Royston Tan, I don't think I'm naturally-talented. I evolved through education."

"Through [FSV] modules like storytelling and scriptwriting, I have sharpened my technical skills in film-making."

"[Moreover], interactions with lecturers have also helped to inspire a lot of my creative works."

He said, "I'm relieved that my team's efforts paid off. Because when you're a film student, all you have is a graduation film after three years at school."

"Your graduation film really makes or breaks you. Fortunately, our efforts were recognised and this will make it easier for us to move on to our next film." ■

Raising AIDS Awareness Through Fashion

BY NATALIA SNG
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A campus fashion show organised by two Chemical Engineering (CE) students raised funds for the Staying Alive (SA) campaign and promoted AIDS awareness among Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students.

The fashion show, titled "Cautious Coition - Treasure Life, Do It Right for That One Night", was held on 16 December at the Convention Centre.

Proceeds from the \$5 tickets went towards the SA campaign, which was established in 1998 to raise awareness of AIDS and prevent discrimination against those suffering it. It is a joint partnership with more than nine organisations, including MTV, The World Bank and UNAIDS.

Apart from raising funds, the organisers hoped to educate Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students about the disease. At the event, short films sponsored by SA co-partner MTV were aired for this purpose. The station's representatives also addressed the

misconceptions surrounding AIDS.

Organiser Akash Raj Devasar, 18, a second-year CE student, commented, "We feel that sex is such a taboo topic and the risk and dangers involved in casual sex [are] hardly mentioned."

MTV also sponsored door gifts such as pens and temporary tattoos while German condom maker, Condomi, gave out condoms as door gifts. Co-organiser Lai Ming Wei Jerome, also a second-year CE student, explained, "[In] this day and age, it is hard to stop teenagers from having casual sex so we

believe the best approach is to educate them about the safe way of doing it."

Akash explained the rationale for the fashion show, "We're doing it to show that engineering students are not as boring as people think they are and to show that we have the potential to do things in other fields such as design and events management."

Mr Lek Pheow Hwa, the Mechanical Engineering (ME) lecturer in-charge of their project said, "Usually students just have an exhibition. It is a meaningful event because of the recent rise of AIDS." ■

NP Concert Band Pays Tribute To Alfred Reed

BY MELISSA CHANG MEI YOKE
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The death of famous American wind band composer Alfred Reed in September inspired the Ngee Ann Polytechnic Concert Band (NP Concert Band) to showcase his pieces in their 20th concert celebrations.

The two-and-a-half hour concert, *Rondeau XX - Memories*, featured the NP Concert Band and the Alumni band. It saw nearly 500 people in the audience at the Victoria Concert Hall on 26 November.

The highlight was an ensemble of nine pieces composed by Reed. It was performed by the main band in tribute to him.

Reed's interest in music saw him develop from a young performer playing the trumpet to a composer of some of the finest band pieces in the world. According to the Wind Band website, Reed composed more than 100 pieces of music in his lifetime. The NP Concert Band has been playing them on a regular basis.

The emotional attachment of the band to his pieces led the main band to decide on playing only his pieces in *Rondeau*.

Band conductor Mr Tan Aik Kee, commented, "His use of different music compositional techniques of the past and present is admirable."

"His combination of colour and drama was creative and this shows that he gives careful thought to his music. This inspires me, that we should not confine our music to just a particular style but to use all means to paint the picture that we want to portray."



REMEMBERING COMPOSER ALFRED REED: The NP Concert Band paid tribute to the late composer by playing his music at *Rondeau XX - Memories*. (Picture: Courtesy of Amanda Lim)

Amanda Lim, 19, final-year Mass Communication (MCM) student and NP Concert Band secretary, said, "Pieces [composed by Reed] are usually very grand, they require a big sound and require a lot of endurance. Somehow, there's this special element in his music whereby when you listen, you just know the music is by him."

Mr Tan also had high praise for his band, saying that members were now "more exposed to current music technologies" in the world of symphonic bands.

He added, "The musical standard in Singapore has improved compared to a decade ago, so have our students."

Rondeau, which means "coming around",

has been the name of the NP Concert Band's series of off-campus concerts for the past 20 years.

The NP Concert Band was formed by NP's fourth principal, Mr Chen Hung in 1983. Starting off with only 20 members, it has grown to become a recognised 55-member band. **B**

hype bite into it.

coming 02/2006.



PSF Brings Theatre To The Needy

BY TAN LI LING
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Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) Poly Stage Factor (PSF) is staging a free mini production of its two plays for low-income families in a bid to bring the arts to them.

The PSF has invited more than 100 families to attend the production, through self-help groups like the Singapore Indian Development Association (SINDA), MENDAKI and the People's Association Youth Movement (PAYM).

These groups have liaised with and arranged for the low-income families to watch the plays. Their aim is to assist needy families with students and middle-aged workers by tutoring them and providing job opportunities. These families typically live on a monthly income of less than \$1,500.

The PSF hopes that in staging their mini production, they will be able to bring the arts to less affluent families. In Singapore, plays are normally costly and many low-income families cannot afford the expense. Through this gesture, the PSF also hopes to break the misconception that the arts is only for well-to-do families.

The mini production takes place on 16 December at Lecture Theatre (LT) 26, which has a seating capacity of 356 people. It will feature the plays *Que Sera Sera* and *The Office*.

PSF production manager Muhammad Mahadi Bin Jamaludin, 23, a final-year Mass Communication (MCM) student, said that *Que Sera Sera* focuses on women's rights and "depicts the life of a girl who is trapped in [a] stereotypical, traditional family".

It "explores the ups and downs of [her] journey in life to prove her self-worth". In the end, the girl's conservative father pushes her



CARE AND SHARE: In this season of giving, NP's Poly Stage Factor makes the arts accessible to low-income families through their mini production. (Picture: Low Youjun)

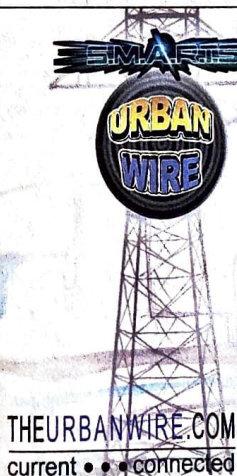
to become a more independent individual.

Conversely, *The Office* is a comedy which explores "[the] pros and cons of working in the office". It gives the audience an idea of what workers do in a typical day and will portray life in one particular office located in a bomb shelter.

The play was co-produced by the PSF team and a theatre professional, employed as an advisor by them. Unlike *Que Sera Sera*, *The Office* is also a prelude to an inaugural drama festival which will be held in January next year.

Final-year Electronic & Computer Engineering (ECE) student Mohamed Salleh Bin Abu Bakar, 23, who acted in and directed the production, said, "I hope that, at the end of the day, we can entertain the audience and humour them with our acting."

Besides the low-income families, PSF will also invite NP student leaders to watch the plays at LT 26. **B**



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Slamming The Competition

BY LOW YUJIN
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Undeterred by last year's fifth placing, Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) women's and men's tennis teams managed to serve up a scorcher as overall champions in this year's Institute-Varsity-Polytechnic Games (IVP).

Confidence was evident among the players as they entered the finals held at Nanyang Polytechnic from 14 to 24 November. The matches ended in a final showdown with Singapore Polytechnic (SP).

While NP breezed through most of the competition, one match stood out from the rest – the men's second doubles in the finals against SP.

Men's team captain, David Maung, 19, a final-year student in Building & Real Estate Management (BEM) and his partner, Robyn Koh, 18, a second-year Banking & Financial Services (BFS) student, were up against equally skilled opponents. "Our doubles match was down to the wire," said David.

The two pairs were trading shots for a good part of the bout and it would have almost ended with a deadlock score of 6-6 if they had not broken SP's serve.

David commented, "It was pretty close, SP players have not lost any of the matches against other schools."

Speaking with pride, he added, "From there, we never looked back and held our serve to win that tie." The final score: NP 9 - SP 6.

Rita Tan, 19, the women's team captain, said, "We're delighted to win both [the] men's and the women's [gold title]."

The final-year Accountancy (ACC) student added, "We didn't even think we would have a [women's] team [initially], and now we've won both titles."

The tennis club was almost unable to field a women's team due to a dearth of players but managed to deliver one eventually.

David cited a combination of the team's own sheer grit and intense training by the team coach, Mr Stanley Sanger, who also coaches the national and junior squads, as a reason for their win. "We had a lot of physical and mental training during the holiday... and it helped that everybody in the team wanted to win... no one wanted to lose."

David kept mum about what kind of training they underwent, saying it was a "secret formula" and evidently, an efficient one as well.

Team solidarity was obvious in the finals, with supporters from both NP and SP shouting words of encouragement like "come on" and "focus".

While the support was spirited, it lacked the electric atmosphere so commonly found in crucial matches when throngs of supporters would troop down to the competition grounds to root for their teams.

Only a handful of friends and people in the know were at the courts, cheering the teams on and giving the match a semblance of a friendly engagement.

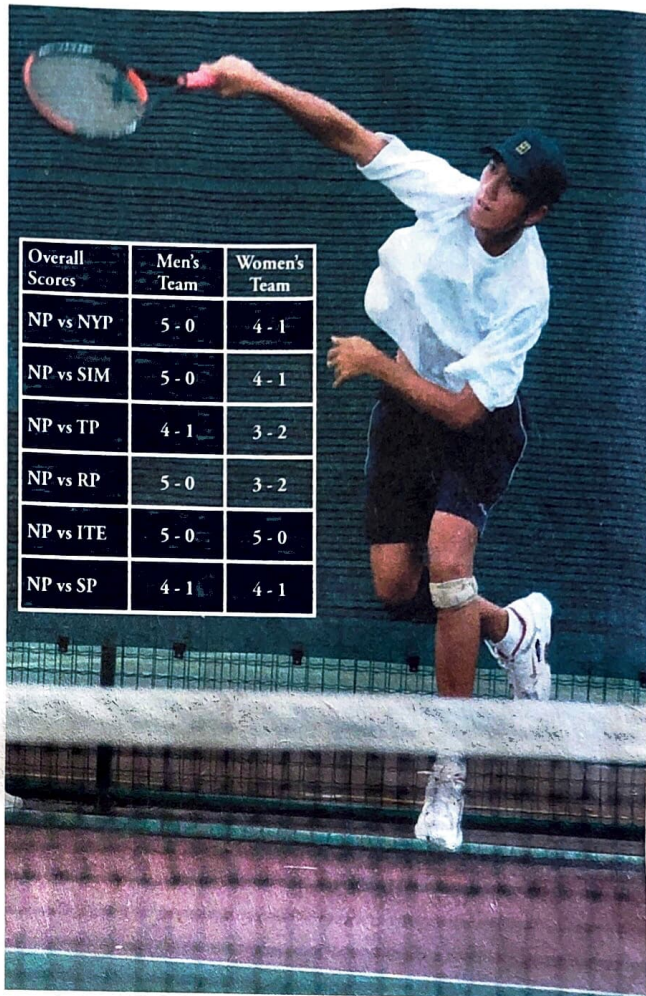
The men's captain was also full of praise for the team's star singles player, Rudy Ng, 18, a second-year Engineering Informatics (EI) student.

According to David, Rudy helped to keep the pressure off the team and boosted morale with his constant wins over the 10-day competition.

However, Rudy was modest about his role, saying, "Instead of fighting for the self, fight for the team [because it will give] you more drive."

Still, not everything went smoothly. Robyn had broken his racquet just before his finals match with SP and murmurs of "it's an omen" could be heard.

Thankfully, superstition did not get the better of the BFS student and he fought back with a vengeance, adding a notch to the team's belt and securing the last win the team needed. ■



TAKE THAT: NP tennis captain David Maung faced off with his SP opponents and together with his team, successfully came up tops. (Picture: Low Yujin)

Overall Scores	Men's Team	Women's Team
NP vs NYP	5 - 0	4 - 1
NP vs SIM	5 - 0	4 - 1
NP vs TP	4 - 1	3 - 2
NP vs RP	5 - 0	3 - 2
NP vs ITE	5 - 0	5 - 0
NP vs SP	4 - 1	4 - 1

NP Archery Club Ready To Hit The Mark



HITTING THE BULL'S EYE: The NP Archery team is all prepared to unleash their shooting power at the Telok Blangah Archery Competition. (Picture: Low Yujin)

BY FONG JUN LOONG BENJAMIN
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Morale is high at the Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) Archery Club as it targets the Telok Blangah Archery Competition (TBAC) from 9 to 11 December, after firing its way to two third place winnings in two months.

Having nailed three bronze medals at the National University of Singapore (NUS) Shoot in July and grabbed third place at the Archery Association of Singapore's (AAS) National Open 2005 in August, the bows will be drawn again as the men's and women's teams attempt to do even better at the TBAC.

NP Archery Club president Lua Chee Haw disclosed, "We will be expecting to [win] more medals this time as we are sending in a larger team of archers. Also, the results of our rigorous training should show at the TBAC."

The club's competitive teams have been practising four times a week for almost three months, before ramping it up to six times a week in the last seven days before TBAC to prepare for it.

"Right after the last competition [AAS National Open], we rested for two weeks before training again for the next one," said Chee Haw, 25, a final-year Electrical Engineering (EE) student.

Women's team member Shanthi D/O Thirunakarasu, 19, a second-year Mechatronic Engineering (MTE) student, said, "After making it to the top three at the past two competitions, our expectations are definitely higher."

However, she acknowledged that teams from Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and NUS will also be entering the TBAC and that they were no pushovers.

Shanthi described them as "tough, steely and driven to win".

NP Archery coach, Mr Lim Chee Wee, felt that his team – which was re-formed in late 2004 – has what it takes to stand up to

these strong competitors.

"[Our current team of archers] have beaten powerhouses like NUS and NTU at separate competitions."

"With enough practice and dedication, there is no reason why we will not get into the top three again."

Mr Lim explained that for competitive team events, teams are randomly selected to compete with one another.

The NP team had been lucky enough to compete with several lesser-skilled teams, before narrowly losing to one of the superior teams at the NUS Shoot.

However, the NP team will not be banking on luck this time.

Shanthi said, "Our lucky streak will eventually run out. That is why we have been training really hard for the TBAC to prove to the other teams that we can do even better."

Mr Lim also expressed confidence in the men's team, which has a pool of 20 archers, saying that they will be able to clinch even better positions at the TBAC.

According to him, the strength of NP's Archery teams lies in their teamwork.

"We do well in team events although individually, we are not as good as the teams from Temasek Polytechnic and Nanyang Technological University." ■