



## SPECIAL

**WHAT IF  
DEMENTIA  
STRIKES  
SOMEONE  
YOU LOVE?**

P8

**NOT YOUR  
NORMAL  
FRIES**



P7

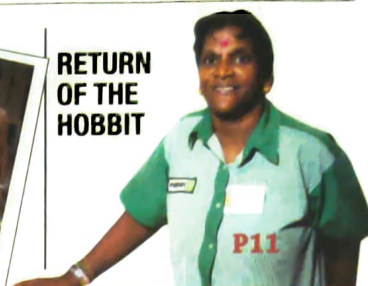
**HER  
LAST  
RAY OF  
HOPE**

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**RETURN  
OF THE  
HOBBIT**

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# npTribune

The Student Voice of  
Ngee Ann Polytechnic  
[theurbanwire.com/nptribune](http://theurbanwire.com/nptribune)

MAY - JULY 2011

More students are juggling school with part-time work for a myriad of reasons. But are the wages really worth the drawbacks? **Jenny Ganeshrays** and **Samuel Ow** find out.

It is 1 am on a Tuesday morning. He Wei Liang, 21, finally calls it a day as he leaves Marina Bay Sands' Sky on 57 bar. By the time he reaches home, it is 2 am and class begins at 9 am.

The final-year Business Information Technology student is just one of the many NP students who hold down part-time jobs while attending school. An npTribune poll of 75 students reveals that more than half of them have part-time jobs. Most work from one to three times a week, for up to eight hours each time.

Wei Liang spends most of his weekday evenings working there as a part-time bartender, starting from 6 pm. This means rushing to the workplace immediately after his classes end at 4 pm.

There are many reasons for students taking up a job. In Wei Liang's case, the extra income from work helps reduce the financial burden on his parents.

Similarly, money weighs heavily in 18-year-old Randal Tan's decision to work as a food and beverage assistant at OverEasy Bar & Diner. The second-year Business Studies student says, "My parents only sponsor half of my school fees every semester, so it is necessary for me to... pay the other half."

He adds, "If I was born in a slightly more well-off family, I wouldn't want to work at all."

In addition, the unfavourable effects of the potentially gruelling work-study schedule can also take their toll on students who do not manage their time well.

For Cindy Eldina, 20, a student helper at the Student Services Centre (SSC), working part-time affected her academic performance. Last semester, her Grade Point Average (GPA) took a dip of 0.3 points. "My results would have probably been better if I did not work," the second-year International Business student lamented.

## JUGGLER'S ACT



Though it may get tough, working part-time definitely has its benefits.

"I really enjoy my time at work. It's fun for me. I can learn a lot of things, which I can't learn from school," says Wei Liang.

Adds Mr Leow Teck Sim, academic manager for International Business, "It gives them a taste of the real world... I've noticed that students who work and study tend to be more street-smart."

According to Student Services officer Ms Choong Swee Li, while there are no official records, a spike in the number of cases of students seeking part-time jobs from the Student Services Office (SSO) usually occurs in difficult economic climates.

With all the potential rewards and pitfalls of working part-time, Ms Choong says, "We do not advise students to work for many hours at a stretch, unless they can manage their time well and feel fit to do so. Working for nine to twelve hours at one go is not healthy and can adversely affect their studies."

Despite the challenges of working thrice a week, Brevian Tan, 18, a first-year Business Studies student, manages to pull off the balancing act. The part-time office administrator says, "When I need more time for studying, I'll work [less] for that period of time so that I focus more on my studies, which are still the [most] important."

**WIN!**  
Royston Tan  
DVDs & other  
premiums!  
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## In His Father's Shoes

Lourence Steven talks about failure and how working as a security guard has helped him empathise with his dad.

Jenny Ganeshrays

Empathy takes on a whole new meaning as Mechanical Engineering (ME) graduate Lourence Steven, 25, steps into his father's shoes, working as a security guard during the holidays to help offset his school expenses.

"I flipped open the Classifieds and it was full of positions for security guards. I thought it would be easy, but I was clearly mistaken," he recounts.

Lourence's father is an Auxiliary Police Minister Guard with 36 years experience now working with Certis CISCO, while his mother takes on the role as a catering assistant with Singapore Airport Terminal Services (SATS). Both jobs demand shifts that stretch late into the night.

Lourence worked as a security guard and a tutor during the holidays to cope with school expenses. Of the former, he says, "There were 12-hour shifts where I hardly sat down. Realising how tough this job was, I could better understand how my father felt as a security guard."

Lourence is no stranger to hard work or failure. From failing to qualify for university after his GCE A Level Examination to gruelling stints as a security guard, he emerges a stronger person.

"The password for my laptop was 'hard work', so each time I logged in, it reminded me



While his parents, Mr Steven Rayappan (left) and Mrs Elizabeth John, work shift duties, Lourence studies into the wee hours of the morning.

to do my best," says Lourence. With "hard work" in mind, he managed to clinch both the Lee Kuan Yew Award and the Ngee Ann Polytechnic Outstanding Achievement Award.



Lourence travelled to the US for the prestigious California Challenge programme, a pleasant reward for his hard work.

Thinking about the grueling study nights, he says, "Seeing my parents work around the clock, I couldn't bear to go to bed and sleep... regardless of how tired I was, I would continue studying."

When the former Serangoon Junior College student's grades failed to meet local university requirements, he went on to complete his National Service (NS), using it as a "buffer period"

His mother, Mrs Elizabeth John, 55, remembers how Lourence would study until 3 am, getting only a few hours' worth of shut-eye before heading to school at 6.30 am.

She says, "Seeing him work like that made me feel happy to go to work."

His secret weapon to pulling off this balancing act, "I drink a lot of coffee and Red Bull to keep myself going."

Lourence has accepted an offer of a Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Scholarship, but is still undecided on the degree programme.

Though the journey was tedious, every time he looks back, he has no regrets about the way his life turned out.

"Even if there's a failure in your life, you shouldn't fear failing again. Failure makes you appreciate what you have. Success becomes more meaningful, and you'll work even harder."

**“ Failure makes you appreciate what you have. Success becomes more meaningful, and you'll work even harder.”**

Lourence Steven

to decide what to do next.

"Coming to NP took a leap of faith. My brother (Williams Steven, also an ME graduate) used to talk about his experience here, so I decided to enrol."

## It's Not The End

Michelle Marie

In spite of what many believe about studying in an Institute of Technical Education (ITE), Diana Cheong Huilin, 22, is living proof that going to an ITE is not the end of the road.

In the Express Stream from CHIJ St Joseph's Convent, Diana scored 33 points in the GCE O Level Examination, and failed her Mathematics examination. ITE was her only option.

"I thought that as an Express student, [enrolling in an] ITE was embarrassing," she admits.

She put education on hold and worked for a year. The customers she met while working at a café in Punggol convinced her to return to school.

Diana decided to enter ITE College Central (Bishan Campus) where she did well enough to enrol into NP's Diploma in Accountancy.

However, the transition from ITE to NP was not an easy one for her.

"There is a huge culture shock... [the] poly curriculum is very hectic," she says.

Through determination, hard work, and her parents' support, Diana overcame the challenge, graduating as the top student.



Going to an ITE was a wise choice for Diana, who made her way to NP's Accountancy and graduated at the top of her batch.

## Top Graduates 2011

**Merissa Jane Lee Hui Yi**

Diploma in Mass Communication  
Ngee Ann Kongsi Gold Medal  
Lien Ying Chow Gold Medal

**Cheong Huilin Diana**

Diploma in Accountancy  
Tay Eng Soon Gold Medal

**Tee Mei Yi**

Diploma in Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering  
Lee Kuan Yew Award  
Ngee Ann Polytechnic Outstanding Achievement Award

**Maledeine Lai Yuying**

Diploma in Chinese Studies  
Ngee Ann Polytechnic Outstanding Achievement Award

**Chai Pei Zhi Edna**

Diploma in Biomedical Laboratory Technology  
Lee Kuan Yew Award  
Ngee Ann Polytechnic Outstanding Achievement Award

**Glenn Ong Ke Xian**

Diploma in Banking & Financial Services  
Ngee Ann Polytechnic Outstanding Achievement Award

**Lourence Steven**

Diploma in Mechanical Engineering  
Lee Kuan Yew Award  
Ngee Ann Polytechnic Outstanding Achievement Award

**Chan Si Hui**

Diploma in Financial Information Systems  
Ngee Ann Polytechnic Outstanding Achievement Award

Log on to <http://ctv.sg> for more coverage of the graduates.



# SPOTLIGHT

Any upcoming events that you want us to feature? Email us: nptribune@fmsnmedia.com

## Makeover for IS Framework

Jenny Ganeshrajs

The School of Interdisciplinary Studies (IS) has unveiled a new framework for IS modules in the Academic Year 2011/2012. This will affect all current first and second-year students.

The Enhanced Ngee Ann Learning Model (ENLM) regroups all elective modules into four cross-disciplinary categories (CDCs), namely Arts & Humanities, Design, Business and Science & Technology. For example, some entrepreneurial modules now come under the Business CDC.

Students' reactions to the revisions have been mixed. npTribune found that 25 out of 40 students called the changes "restrictive".

However, IS lecturer Ms Lim E Lin suggests that ENLM is more liberating for students, as choosing modules that they have a limited grasp of helps them "expand their knowledge across many diverse categories".

For Mohammad Hariz Bin Imran, 17, a second-year Business Studies student, planning ahead is the key. "Just do your research, and see if you're more interested in the modules on offer," he says.



Final-year Banking & Financial Services students created games to promote financial literacy among youths.

## Financial Literacy Made Fun

Shana Siow

On Mar 26 and 27, second-year Banking & Financial Services (BFS) students were challenged to make financial literacy enjoyable for the public through fun and exciting board games.

"Through this project, there was the motivation to do our very best because

ultimately, our works and ideas are going to be seen and recognised by the general public," says Melvin Lee, 19, a final year BFS student who participated.

The "general public", which comprised representatives from banks and businessmen, were invited to try out the board games.

"The visitors [to 'SCAPE'] were impressed with the work... it is an opportunity to profile the students from our school and their abilities," says Mrs Choo Jin Yi, 55, the academic manager of BFS.

Besides the goal of bringing financial

literacy to a comprehensible and fun level, the students had to flex their creative muscles to embody corporate financing concepts into games.

"When the students show the banks the projects, it is like showing them to a potential customer," Mrs Choo adds.

Alexus Goh, 19, a final-year BFS student, says, "The public provided interesting ideas in terms of integrating financial literacy... with engineering as well as film and media," when asked about how the public's feedback aided the development of their games.

## TOTE BOARD AIDS NP IN RESEARCH WORK

NP is the first beneficiary of the Social Innovation Research Fund (SIRF), acquiring \$600,000 for five staff research and development projects.

Provided by the Tote Board (Singapore Totalisator Board), this new initiative aims to help polytechnics with their social and environmental undertakings.

This grant helps purchase resources, and aids in talent recruitment for MAE, an integrated mobile social networking application for the elderly and their caregivers.

For more information, visit <http://app.toteboard.gov.sg>

- RACHEL OOI

## NP GOES GREEN

NP's technology has taken a huge step in the green. The Green Data Centre (GDC), which took six months to construct, makes web surfing in NP eco-friendly by improving cooling systems that prevent 10 servers in the school's network system from overheating.

Cooling systems for the average data centre blow throughout a room wastefully, but the GDC circulates cool air in small surface of a cold aisle containment,

raising the efficiency of air circulated, saving electricity. This marvel is expected to curtail NP's electrical bills.

Email [dora.itcare@np.edu.sg](mailto:dora.itcare@np.edu.sg) or call 6460 6969 for GDC tours.

- IEVAN DARWIN

## GOODBYE NPCONNECT

Students can bid NPConnect's infamous login page farewell as the school's new wireless router, NPConnectX, takes its place.

Amos Yong, 18, a second-year School of Electrical Computer Engineering student, says, "It's irritating to log in constantly [via NPConnect] with our username and password."

Expected around May 2011, NPConnectX will have a single sign in feature. Students no longer need to sign in multiple times when moving around in the campus. However, it is only accessible on newer computers purchased in the campus last year.

- SHANA SIOW

## TWO NEW AWARDS FOR ENGINEERING AND ARTS

The NP Engineering Scholarship (NPES) and the NP Arts Award (NPAA) are two new scholarships offered by NP.

NPES recognises freshmen

from the School of Engineering who have outstanding GCE O Level Examination results, Co-Curricular Activity (CCA) records, leadership qualities and a passion for engineering. The NPAA selects students who participate in arts related CCAs and contribute to the international arts scene.

The new scholarships include subsidies on school expenses, and chances to apply for the sought after The Christeara Programme (TCP) that boasts opportunities for personal growth.

- COLLETTE CLAIRE MILES

## NEWLY LAUNCHED DIPLOMA IN TECHNOLOGY

The CET (Continuing Education Training) Academy has newly launched the Diploma in Technology (Building Services & Fire Safety) in April for students to further their knowledge in fire engineering.

Having collaborated with the Singapore Civil Defence Force in creating this course, this part-time diploma targets working adults interested in entering the fire engineering industry.

Applicants must either have three required GCE O Level Examination passes or go through a three-stage entrance test before

being accepted to the Diploma in Building Services & Fire Safety.

- TESSA MENDEZ

## STUDIO 27 REMAINS A STRONGHOLD

Despite being in operation for slightly over a year, Studio 27 has managed to retain the popularity that it enjoyed since its establishment in Oct 2009, receiving mostly positive responses from NP's staff and students alike.

Studio 27 serves to promote interactive and digital media, and a it functions as a space for students to have fun and learn with facilities being used by various dance and drama groups, and serves as a photography studio from time to time.

- TON XIN ZHE

## OPENING OF CLIP

On Apr 8, the School of Business & Accountancy's (BA) newest Centre for Logistics Innovation and Productivity (CLIP) welcomed industry insiders from the Singapore Logistics Association (SLA), Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA), and Singapore Productivity Association (SPA) at a seminar to discuss trends and in Singapore's logistics landscape.

## HOT STUFF

npTribune recommends titles we think you will enjoy from the Lien Ying Chow Library. For the full list of new titles, visit <http://www.np.edu.sg/library/spotlight/newtitles/Pages/default.aspx>

**FICTION**  
**The Well And The Mine**  
by Gin Phillips



**And This Is True**  
by Emily Mackie



**NON-FICTION**  
**Vision & Transformation**  
by Sangharakshita



**The Glass Castle**  
by Jeanette Walls



**Small Wonder: The Amazing Story of the Volkswagen Beetle**  
by Walter Dill Grant  
Nielson



## Dollops of Generosity

Toh Xin Zhe

The NP Student Aid Fund was served a portion of generosity during Ideawerkz's first anniversary with donations from this celebratory event.

Coined Generation G(enerous), the two-week affair was peppered with events that boasted dollar-for-dollar donations by the Ministry of Education and generous handouts by NP towards this unique fund.

"The primary aim of the NP Student Aid Fund is to help needy students... to cope with the rising cost of living," says Ms Jacinth Wong, a 26-year-old Ideawerkz officer.

The fun helps disadvantaged students, mostly those with less than \$850 in monthly income per household member.

According to Ms Wong, "more than 1,700 students have received a total of \$950,000 in bursaries and grants" from the Fund since 2008, with Generation G(enerous) contributing \$12,832 to the pile after its two-week run.

Students running the event, Ideawerkz Advocates, shared the spirit of generosity, too. Muhammad Zulkarnain Bin Borhan, 19, a final-year Mobile Business Solutions student and Ideawerkz Advocate, says, "I was quite happy to help out the

“

*The primary aim of the NP Student Aid Fund is to help the needy students... to cope with the rising cost of living."*

Ms Jacinth Wong

students in one way or another."

However, students like Victoria Zhang Qianshi, 17, a second-year Electronic & Computer Engineering student were not informed. She says, "Many of my friends are unaware [of the fund], so I hope that they can do more [to raise awareness]... on a bigger scale."

Want to know more about Ideawerkz? Just visit <http://np.edu.sg/ideawerkz>



NP's Student Aid Fund was dished a portion of handouts during Ideawerkz's Generation G(enerous) event.

## Unique Start to School

It was not lessons as usual as freshmen spent their first week not in class but bonding with their new friends at various activities under Orientation Week.



Orientation Week also saw the unveiling of the Dance4Fun 2011 champions, HMS (in black), and the runners-up, FMS.

Foo Min Valerie

Freshmen received a warm welcome into on Apr 18 in a unique way: Orientation Week.

In place of lessons, special activities were organised for freshmen to familiarise themselves not only with their course mates, but with the campus grounds as well.

Mr Wilson Ang, deputy director of the Student Development & Alumni Relations Office (SDAR), says that the aim of Orientation Week is to "bridge the gap" between secondary school and polytechnic life for freshmen.

He adds, "We want to ensure

that students have a positive experience when they first arrive, because it will translate into a good three years in the polytechnic."

The various academic schools played fun and exciting games to break the ice. "We organised Photo Hunt to let them manoeuvre around campus," says Goh Guo Hao, 20, a final-year Business & Social Enterprise student.

The freshmen also gained more than what they expected when they explored the school.

"I think that Orientation Week has helped me in getting around the campus, and familiarising with the places. I also talked [to] more people and got to know

them," says Erin Pang Weixin, 17. The first-year Business Information Technology student says, "I feel that it's good to replace lessons, so that we don't have to... study immediately."

The new programme also had popular activities such as Dance4Fun, Movie Under The Stars, as well as Glam Night.

Dance4Fun, which fell on Apr 20, had students engaging in a friendly dance battle, representing their faculties to showcase original choreography.

Jerry Lim, 20, a final-year Multimedia & Animation student, says, "Regardless of whether they're dancing or there to support their schools,

“

*Orientation Week bonds our class well. Because of the games, we are quite close."*

Terence Aw, 17

Electrical Engineering student

“

*It was fun, exciting, but very tiring."*

Devi d/o Sidambaram Dewar, 18

Early Childhood Education student

“

*It's fun getting to know your classmates before classes begin."*

Samuel Wong, 17

Digital Visual Effects student

Dance4Fun gives freshmen equal opportunities to bond."

The following night, Movie Under The Stars brought freshmen together during the screening of two action-packed movies, Red and Unstoppable.

"I really bonded with my friends, laughing at the same parts of the movie together," says Sheryl Lim, 17, a first-year Early Childhood Education student.

On the same night, the Ngee Ann Polytechnic Students' Union's Glam Night, was in full swing at the convention centre. Students started their first week of school by letting their hair down and partying to DJ KZee's energetic dance mixes.



# VIEWS

Email your letters (no longer than 300 words) to nptribune@fmsmidea.com

## [editorial]

**Y**ouths should care about dementia because it will affect them in the future. It may be the thing that kills them, be it being inflicted with dementia or having to take care of a loved one with dementia.

By the time 2020 arrives, the number of dementia patients in Singapore will surge to 53,000 from its current number of 30,000 in 2010. How many grandparents and parents will be inflicted with this neurological disease by then?

While one can try to prevent the onset of such diseases, practical steps must be taken and it starts with the word, education.

Learning what dementia is and what happens when one or a loved one has dementia, are measures we can take to enlighten the myths surrounding the disease.

According to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS), dementia is "[A] word for a group of symptoms caused by disorders that affect the brain. People with dementia may not be able

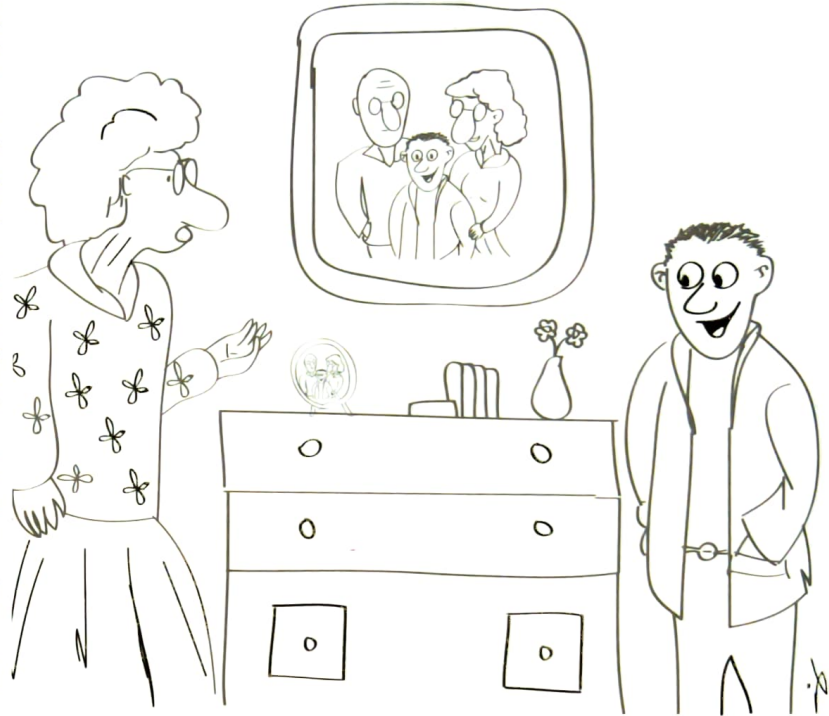
to think well enough to do normal activities, such as getting dressed or eating. Their personalities may change. They may lose their ability to solve problems or control their emotions."

Contrary to old wives' tales, the symptoms that occur do not indicate that the person is crazy or possessed and Singaporeans need to be taught that. Additionally, bubbles of untruths are floating around and they need to be burst with youths needing to know that dementia cannot be passed on through physical contact or sharing a drink.

Eradicating these myths are key to facilitating open discussion about the issue and dissipating the fear about it.

More importantly, opening discussion will allow patients and caregivers to feel, "I am not alone," in their seemingly dim world where they need to find the joy in dementia.

So speak up about dementia and get the facts right because as the physicist Marie Curie once said, "Nothing in life is to be feared. It is only to be understood."



"Hey grandma, I'm home!"  
"Why are you calling me grandma?"

## npTribune

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## Speak Up!

### Are our shuttle bus services sufficient?

Student Services increased the number of shuttle services and implemented stricter measures, such as bypassing the SIM bus stop and conducting ID checks, to ensure that NP students get a spot on shuttle buses. What do students think?

“ Maybe on days that are extremely crowded, take note, then send more buses.”

See Tow Wei Hao, 17  
First-year Environmental  
& Water Technology

“ More convenient for students. Good.”

Igon Tan, 19,  
Second-year Business Studies

“ The ID card makes sense, because it is only for the NP students - students will have their cards with them anyway, so it helps in freeing up space.”

Julianne Cheek, 19,  
Final-year Child Psychology  
& Early Education



“ Even when [the buses] come they will park at one side and wait until the queue is very long then they'll let people in. I don't understand the point of that.”

Raj Kairrea, 17  
First-year Environmental  
& Water Technology

“ The additional services are really convenient. It helps us avoid the jam-packed buses and the morning rush hour to get to school in a comfortable way.”

Liang Jiarong Jeremy, 19,  
Final-year Aerospace Technology

“ It's very crowded but the person who is in-charge [at Woodlands] maintains it very well. He doesn't let students cut the queue.”



Ros Elmilla Dto Marian, 17  
First-year Electronics  
& Computer Engineering



# Real Fries At Last!

Creativity has raised the familiar french fry to a gourmet status.

**Joseph Murray**

If your idea of delicious french fries are those made from frostbitten sticks of processed potatoes, flash fried in vats of fatigued and over-reused partially hydrogenated oil in fast-food joints, you are missing out on the delicious treat.

## Best Fries Forever

**How much?** \$3.50 - \$4.20  
**Where:** Orchard Cineleisure  
**When:** Sun to Fri: 12.30 - 10.30 pm, 11 pm on Sat  
**Rating:** ★★★★★

Do not let their playful name fool you. BFF is dead serious when it comes to the quality of their french fries.

Bite into a BFF fry and forget how their fast food cousins taste. Underneath the crispy exterior is a warm, fluffy inside, triple-fried to perfection.

BFF offers seven dips, with Wasabi Mayo and Friendly Fire (tear-inducingly spicy), are the customers' hot favourites.

## Rock & Ash

**How much?** \$3.90 for a regular serving  
**Where:** Marina Link  
**When:** Daily: 10 am - 11 pm  
**Rating:** ★★★★★

Each and every is one of their fries is of the same length and comes full of crispy goodness. But of course, the winning point

here is the dips.

Apart from the crowd-pleasing Mayo & Chilli, Rock & Ash also offers a myriad of sauces to cater to those with different tastes, dishing out the outrageous Chocolate and the tangy and tart Lemon Curd dips!

## Everything With Fries

**How much?** \$3.90 (regular serving)  
**Where:** Holland Village  
**When:** Sun to Thurs: 11 am - 11 pm, 1 am on Fri and Sat  
**Rating:** ★★★★★

Order a serving of fries and get ready to be amazed by their generosity. Get a burger and a mountainous pile of yummy shoestring fries comes along to surprise (or straight-cuts, if you prefer thicker fries).

You can also decide how you want your fries to taste with a selection of six dry seasonings that EWF tweaked meticulously to absolute perfection (Curry and Sweet & Sour Onion flavours being standouts).

## Bistro Du Vin

**How much?** \$3.00 for a side order of fries  
**Where:** Shaw Centre  
**When:** Daily: 11.30 am - 2.30 pm, 6.30 - 10 pm  
**Rating:** ★★★★★

French fries here are as French as they come, lovingly prepared by a chef who has tasted



Clockwise from top: Best Fries Forever, Rock & Ash, Everything With Fries, Bistro Du Vin and last but not least, Smith's Authentic British Fish & Chips.

authentic French cuisine.

Straight-cut, as thick as your thumb and cooked to a light golden brown, each bite of a fry here delivers crisp, lightly salted skin and moist potato mush.

Though only seasoned lightly with salt, these sticks of heaven are good enough on their own.

Fans of potatoes should give their equally ambrosial Mashed Potatoes (\$4) a shot as well.

## Smith's Authentic British Fish & Chips

**How much?** \$3.50 for a regular serving  
**Where:** 230 Tanjong Katong  
**When:** Daily: 12 - 11 pm  
**Rating:** ★★★★★

A serving of chips comes wrapped in parchment paper and presented with malt vinegar and salt on the side: how the English eat them.

Unlike french fries, Smith's chips are slightly lacking in crunch and firmness, often breaking into two once put through a fork, but are nonetheless sky-high on the scrumptiousness!

Not only are they extremely tasty but they come in humongous portions - music to the ears of those who value quantity as much as quality.

Go for the large portion (\$6.00) and share it with a bunch of friends for a celebratory end to a smashing Fry-day.

## Music Reviews



**When Ronan Met Burt**  
 Ronan Keating

The album is a 10-track tribute to the likes of great musicians such as Dionne Warwick and Elvis Costello, their hits, "Walk On By" and "The Look of Love", respectively. Put this CD in and be struck by the rich tones of the orchestra and spot-on arrangements of the music scores that fit well with the Irish balladeer's voice, and yet, stayed true to the roots of the classics.

- TIFFANY SANDRASAGERAN



**Charlie Lim (EP)**  
 Charlie Lim

This self-titled EP with four tracks begins with "Pedestal", an upbeat funk jazz number that will have listeners swaying with its contagious rhythm. Influences from John Mayer and Corinne Bailey Rae can be heard as the mood changes from jazz to a mellow rock ballad, serenading listeners with "Rust". Easy on the ears, this EP is an interesting break from the usual beats on the radio.

- CARISSA ABIDIN

# Get Sleek with Chic Stationery

**Carissa Abidin**



**Deli Binder Clips**  
 10 pieces  
 \$1.80



**Pilot BeGreen CHOOSE**  
 0.7 mm  
 \$1.50



**Pentel Slim White**  
 4.2 ml  
 \$2.90



**Deli DORIS STUDENT SCISSORS**  
 \$0.80



**Staple Bullets**  
 5 colours, 10 sets  
 \$0.60

All items can be found in NP Co-op.



**Tales From New York, The Very Best of Simon & Garfunkel**  
 Simon & Garfunkel

Containing 40 of their timeless hits, from the catchy and fast-paced "I Am A Rock" to their slow, emotional and Billboard-topping "Bridge Over Troubled Water", fans will smile as they take a road trip down memory lane. Overall, a good listen, recommended for everyone.

- TOH XIN ZHE



# SPECIAL



PHOTO COURTESY OF BEFORE WE FORGET

Dr Irene Giam, a dementia patient, will also be appearing in a documentary that chronicles the lives of dementia patients.

## Speaking Up and Reaching Out

Michelle Marie

Dementia takes the front seat in a youth-led campaign that hopes to drive home the point on speaking up about issues on dementia.

Termed *Before We Forget* (BWF), 22-year-olds, Jeremy Boo and Lee Xian Jie's campaign aims to build greater awareness and understanding of the disease.

Organised in conjunction with the Lien Foundation, BWF has produced a few short videos and a documentary about the disease.

The documentary, which will be released this September, will follow the lives of three individuals, in differing stages of dementia. With it, Jeremy and Xian Jie, both graduates of NP, hope that people will better relate to an actual dementia patient, and dispel the stigma of a loved one having dementia.

"People will better understand why they should talk about dementia," Xian Jie explains, "When they see other people talking about it, they will talk about it."

Jeremy also stresses the importance of end-of-life counselling for patients.

"And where do we stop [with regards life-sustaining treatment]," Jeremy asks, "The family needs to discuss [these] way beforehand."

This became a point of concern for them following an incident experienced by Ms Celine Fernandez, one of the interviewees in their



Daughter and caregiver, Joyce Fernandez taking care of her mother Celine Fernandez.

documentary. She had suffered a stroke and before she could decide if she wanted a feeding tube inserted, the hospital had already done so.

As to how their campaign on a stereotypically "old-aged" disease relates to youth, Xian Jie says, "I think a lot of young people will step in if we show something they can see, and they might feel like they have something to contribute."

PHOTO COURTESY OF BEFORE WE FORGET

# FORGET

Youths tell npTribune about their personal encounters with dementia and the difference they hope to make in the lives of their loved ones suffering from this irreversible disease.

Tiffany Sandrasageran

### Knowing your patients inside out

Leslie Mejares, 24, who works as a nursing aid in a nursing home, has encounters with dementia patients on a different level.

An 80-year-old patient at the home takes fancy to keeping bananas and cups in her pocket for long periods. "Sometimes, the banana would even rot in her pocket, but she would insist on leaving it there," says Leslie.

Another patient, also 80, often keeps spoons in her pocket. "When regular counts of utensils have to be done, the nurses and I always find a number of spoons missing," says Leslie.

According to the nursing aid, it is important to empathise, not just sympathise.

"The key is to get to know your patients inside out. That is how they can feel at ease with you, and improve their quality of living," says Leslie.

Dementia in Singapore has been on the rise in recent years. In nine years, the number of dementia patients is expected to increase twofold from the current number of 22,000 in Singapore.



Jasmine helps her grandmother, Mdm Tan, with her daily insulin jabs.

### Living with dementia one memory at a time

For Tan Shi Min Jasmine, "kar" is an affectionate name her grandmother calls her.

Perceptive from young, she admits sensing that something was not right even before her paternal grandmother was diagnosed with dementia.

Says the 19-year-old, "She was shouting [at people], which was a bit weird." The grandmother she knows is usually even-tempered. The filial granddaughter helps in her grandmother's daily treatment for diabetes.

"It is my duty to give the [insulin]

jab to my grandma. I have been doing this since I was in Secondary Two," says Jasmine.

The final-year Molecular Biotechnology student's second and third encounters with dementia was last year, when she realised that her maternal grandparents, both in their 70s, had developed dementia as well.

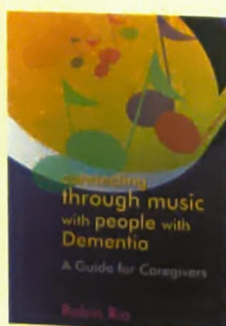
Knowing that her grandma's dementia would deteriorate, Jasmine is bracing herself for that eventuality. However, it is easier said than done.

"My biggest fear is that my grandma will completely forget me. I don't think I can ever be prepared for that."



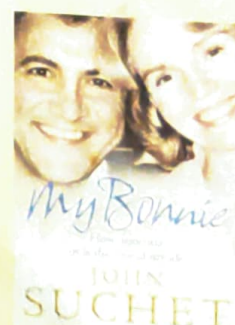
### The Bird House Kelly Simmons

A diary of 80-year-old Ann Biddle reveals her present, where she grapples with early signs of dementia and her past from 40 years ago when she played up her roles as a wife and a mother. It also tells of her life in the 1960s where she survived breast cancer.



### Connecting Through Music with People with Dementia: A Guide for Caregivers Robin Rio

This book explains how melody and rhythm help people with dementia battle their condition and how to utilise music, and tunes which are most effective.



### My Bonnie: How Dementia Stole the Heart of My Life John Suchet

John and Bonnie were madly in love years. At 67, Bonnie diagnosed with dementia. In this recount, reveals the sacrifice made and the loneliness a caregiver.



# ME *not*



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALVIN CHEW

For Alvin, the Hokkien language is a communication barrier for him and his grandmother, Mdm Chua (above).

## Home is where the heart is

"Take me home" were the words Alvin Chew would hear repeated by his grandmother, who was diagnosed with dementia in her 70s.

The phrase is one of the few things she is able to vocalise as her memory slips away.

"She doesn't know where her home is. She can be at home, but she keeps asking us to take her home," says the final-year Biomedical Science student.

His grandmother, Mdm Chua Choo Neo, 81, does not live with the 19-year-old, but that is not the only stumbling block that plagues their relationship.

The language barrier has also been one of the obstacles that has prevented Alvin's relationship with Mdm Chua from flourishing.

"Given a chance, I would want to learn Hokkien, so that I can interact with her and build a better relationship with her," he admits.

## Finding Their Way Back Home

Tiffany Sandrasageran

Families of dementia patients can let their loved ones take occasional strolls with ease, thanks to a new tracking device being invented by NP students.

Tok Kheng Leng and Lim Jia-Min, both 19, final-year Biomedical Engineering (BME) students, decided to develop a tracking device for dementia patients as part of their Final Year Project (FYP).

"We decided to undertake this project as we wanted our engineering skills to benefit society," says Jia-Min.

This device would give dementia patients the freedom to enjoy longer strolls in the park, without having their loved ones worry about them going



NP / TIFFANY SANDRASAGERAN

**Biomedical Engineering students, Kheng Leng and Jia-Min, hope to make a difference with their invention.**

missing. "With the tracking device, a caretaker can now look after several patients at once," says Kheng Leng.

A part-time teacher at Lakeside Primary School, Ms Shoon Li Ling, 20, feels that the device would come a long way in helping. She has been taking care of her 78-year-old grandmother, who suffers from dementia, for five years. Ms Shoon takes her on daily walks near their home, "She would forget how she reached the park, and she loses

her way when she's alone. Once, my family searched the neighbourhood for her. It was scary," says Ms Shoon.

"This device would really help me keep track of my grandmother whenever she's out of the house. I wouldn't have to be distraught, looking for her," says Ms Shoon.

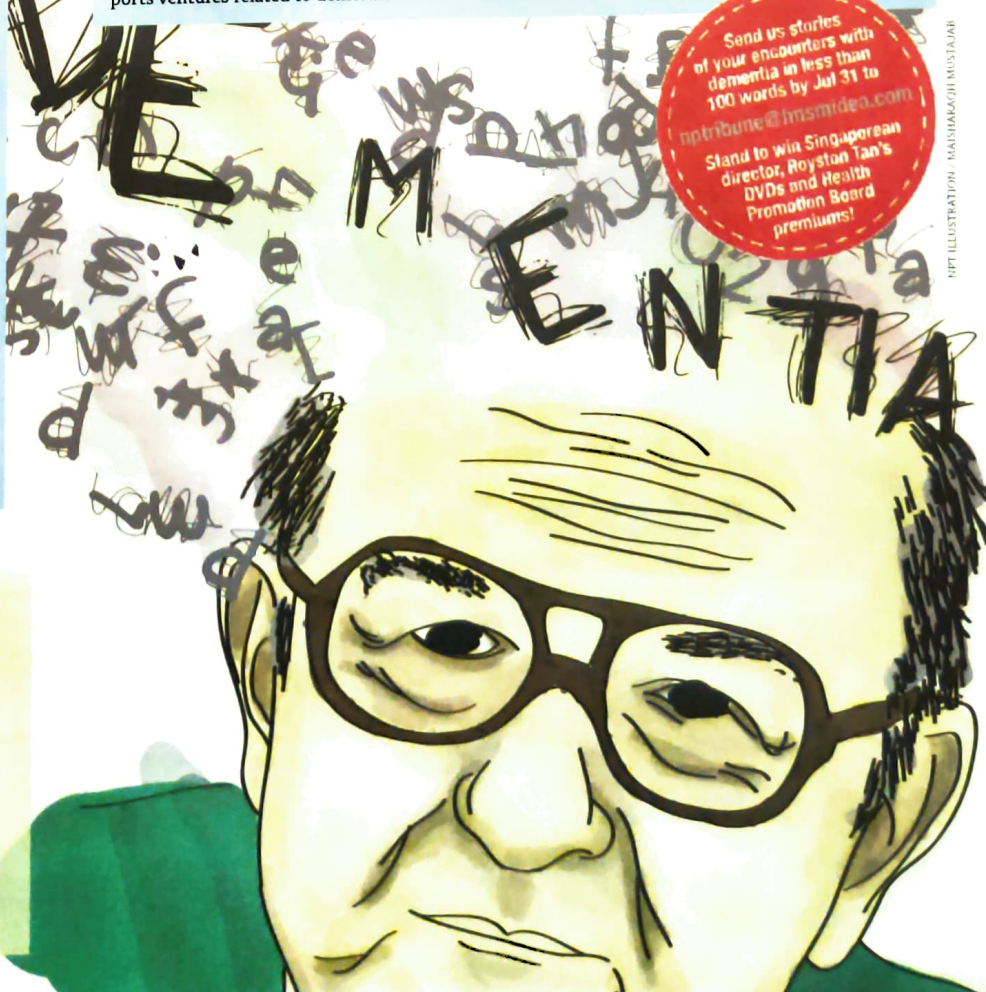
Upon the completion of the device, Kheng Leng and Jia-Min plan to do pilot tests with dementia patients in community homes.

## About the feature

The number of dementia patients in Singapore, aged 65 and above, is expected to increase by 8.5 times over the next four decades. It is also the focus of the Lien Foundation-Ngee Ann Polytechnic Social, Environmental & Educational Development (LF-NP SEED) Capital programme, which supports ventures related to dementia.



NP ILLUSTRATION: MAUWACHOH MUSTAFA



## Keeping Mum: Caring for Someone with Dementia

Marianne shares thoughts from years of taking care of her mother with dementia. This book provides tips on caring for a dementia person, and gives an insight to the intense feelings of sadness and love involved.

- RACHEL OOI



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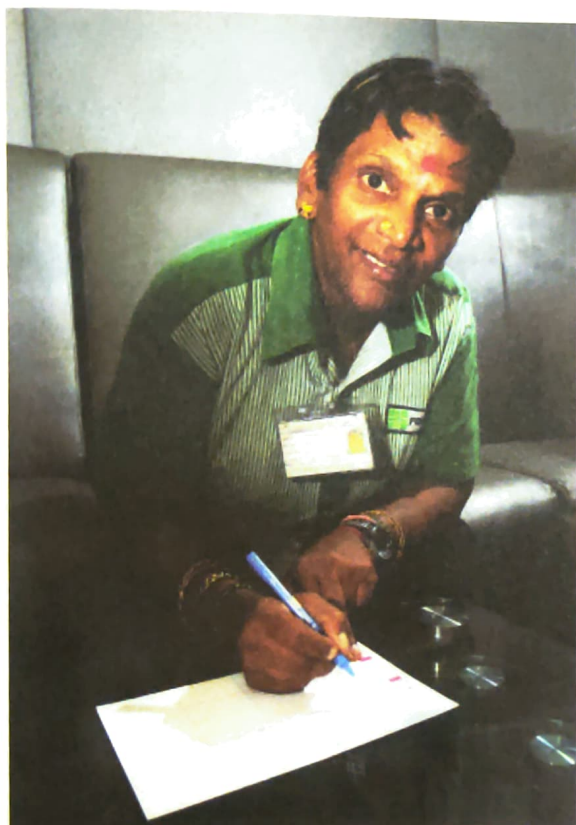
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Ms Pathmavalli looks forward to her second knee surgery when both her knees will finally be healed.

## The 'Hobbit' Returns

For many, cleaning toilets and mopping floors may just be a job but for Ms Pathmavalli, it is her passion and pride.

### Amanda Lim

Ms Pathmavalli D/O S R mops the floors of the Convention Centre with such strength and vigour, no one would think she just had major surgery.

The 62-year-old cleaner of the Convention Centre has returned after a three-month recuperation from her knee surgery. She still bears her battle wound, a six-inch scar that runs down her left knee.

Initially, the thought of being cut up unnerved her, but she mustered up the courage for her children.

"My son told me it's better to go for the operation... So I go and not let my children worry," she recounts while picking at a scab on her left knee.

In a month, she could climb the stairs and felt ready to be back at work.

Once again, Ms Pathmavalli's

family convinced her to rest at home. After all, her three children were capable of supporting her, and she was still being paid while on medical leave.

"This place was so dirty when I came back," she says, clicking her tongue and shaking her head in disapproval. She explains that the toilet bowls and sinks turned a yellow hue in her absence, a detail that not many would notice.

Ms Pathmavalli looks forward to her next knee operation, when both her knees will no longer cause her any hindrance.

Retiring, however, is seen as the beginning of the end to her, "If I stop working, who will clean the toilet when it smells of smoke? Yes! Students are still smoking in the toilet!"

She scowls at the thought of her pet peeve, and continues picking on the scabs on her left knee while her sharp eyes scan her building.

### ABOUT MS PATHMAVALLI

Ms Pathmavalli D/O S R, the wildly misunderstood cleaner of the Convention Centre, was documented in the pages of Volume 40, Issue 2 of npTribune.

Even two years after it was first published, 'The 'Hobbit' with a Heart of Gold' still remains as one of the most remembered articles in the campus newspaper.

The absence of Ms Pathmavalli this semester sparked off curious questions on her whereabouts thus inspiring this timely update.

## Breaking the Age Boundary

### Ievan Darwin

Mr Lim Cherk Foong is a firm believer that age is nothing but a number when it comes to gaining knowledge and learning. The 37-year-old is the Business Director for his family's business in the logistics industry.

"Learning is never-ending," says Mr Lim, who graduated from NP's Continuing Education Training (CET) Academy in 2009 and topped his cohort in the Diploma of Technology (Logistics), where he won the CET Logistics Award.

CET Academy, which trains more than 6,000 adults annually, has programmes that range from short courses to formal diplomas, targeted at learners from a multitude of industries.

So when the logistics industry hit a crisis, Mr Lim decided to

help run his family business, leaving his job in the customer service line.

When he first started out, Mr Lim found that he did not have enough time to study as he had work in the day and classes in the evening.

"My method of studying also helped me cope with my studies a lot, as I do not do a lot of memorising but rather understand what I am studying,"

"My weekends are always sacrificed for my studies, so I do not really have much free time," says Mr Lim, who is married to, Jane Lee, 36.

His wife, family and colleagues were very supportive when they found out that Mr Lim wanted to go back to school to study and learn. On how going back to school has helped him, he says, "Experience and qualification

must come hand in hand. Experience is the practical part, and qualification, the theory part," citing that employers are looking for workers with both traits.

"You will only start to embrace competition [in the workforce] when you go through the path of learning."

Currently, Mr Lim does not see himself getting a degree in the near future, as he cannot find the time to do so with his hectic schedule.

After graduating from the CET Academy, he learnt that if you refuse to learn, you will be afraid of competition in the workforce. He says you will only start to embrace competition when you go through the path of learning.

Despite his stoic perspective on education and life, it is not all work and no play for Mr Lim. He enjoys a good cup of coffee to relax, and goes for jogs to keep fit and relieve stress, and always has his running shoes in the boot of his car.

As for people who do not get the same support as him after choosing to further their studies, he feels that they should, "Prove to them wrong, show them that you made the right choice and believe in yourself!"



Mr Lim in Boston, US for a business trip. The CET Academy graduate quit his job to run the family business during a logistics industry crisis.

“ Learning is never ending.”

Mr Lim Cherk Foong



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# NPEOPLE

## Her Last Ray of Hope His First Sight of Light

A curious visit to Pulau Ubin saw a touching story about an old woman's desire to improve the living conditions of her mentally challenged son, and a lecturer's determination to help.

**Amanda Lim**

Mr Yang Kian Giap, 50, course manager of Clean Energy Management (CEM), had heard of an eccentric lady residing in Pulau Ubin from friends, and he decided to pay her a visit.

There, he met Auntie Siew Eng, a gutsy woman in her 80s, living with her mentally challenged son, Ah Kok, who is in his mid-40s.

She expressed her desire to replace her old, rundown diesel generator as the financial burden of maintaining the generator was hard on her.

Mr Yang felt that this was a great experience for the CEM students, so he brought his team to Pulau Ubin to help build a solar lighting system.

Excited to have this wish come true, Auntie Siew Eng had her signature wide, toothy grin on her face as she said goodbye to him.

Mr Yang hopped on the ferry back to the mainland, unaware of the tragedy that would soon unfold.

That very evening, Auntie Siew Eng fell into a well while fetching water.

Gary Yen, 21, a final-year CEM student, and his friends set out



Mr Yang's team who made their way to Pulau Ubin, posing with residents.

to investigate when he heard someone screaming for help. By the time they arrived at the well, Auntie Siew Eng had breathed her last.

"We administered CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) on her so many times that her ribs broke... we all heard a crack

and we knew there was nothing we could do anymore," says Gary.

The incident was so traumatising for some students that the trip was cut short and the students returned home.

"It was the first time I administered first aid. It was a real shock to me," says Justin

“

*I couldn't believe we failed to save her.”*

**Justin Poh**



Auntie Siew Eng and her mentally-challenged son, Ah Kok, getting some sunlight outside of their house.

Poh, 20, a final-year CEM student, "I couldn't believe we failed to save her."

Back in Singapore, Mr Yang heard the horrible news. "It was so sudden... I just spoke to her in the afternoon and she's gone by the evening."

The promise he made her stayed at the back of his mind.

"After her death, I knew I had to help Ah Kok, who's now living alone."

Auntie Siew Eng's never-say-die attitude was one of the driving forces that helped the team of students overcome the difficulties that came with

building the solar lighting system.

"[Building the system] sounds easy but it wasn't! There was a lot of theory involved," says Gary. "However, knowing that we were doing this for her made us put in more effort, and added a whole lot of meaning to this project."

The solar lighting system has been serving Ah Kok well. It now acts as a reminder to the residents that all we need is a little faith and tenacity to overcome obstacles, just like Auntie Siew Eng had.

## International Fellow Gets a Taste of Singapore in NP

**Foo Min Valerie**

Despite hearing through the grapevine about Singapore's presumably rigid education system, Ms Megan Schoendorf, an Electrical Engineering (EE) lecturer in NP, is finding it highly enjoyable to be teaching here as an international fellow.

The Princeton graduate, who has been in Singapore since August 2010, is working in NP under the International Fellowship Scheme (IFS), which creates opportunities for fresh graduates from highly regarded overseas universities to work as international fellows for a year.

"I just graduated from university [with] an EE degree. I wanted to continue to study, but I wasn't ready to start right away. I didn't want to get a job in the States because I wanted to travel, so I looked for a place in Asia," says Ms Schoendorf.

According to the affable American,



Ms Schoendorf says engineering is a "prestigious thing to study" in the US.

despite her initial impression that Singapore was "a small island with very strict rules", she chose to be an engineering lecturer in Singapore because it was one of the few places in Asia she

could teach in English.

Adjusting to life in Singapore may not pose as a problem for Ms Schoendorf, but there are several challenges she faced as a lecturer abroad.

She points out that the way in which engineering is viewed here differs greatly from that of the United States.

"In the States, engineering is a very prestigious thing to study"

She believes that studying in Singapore is very different because there is more emphasis on memorising [and] also a lot more lectures involved.

She has also observed that there are more discussions [and] a lot of hands-on activities in the modules she teaches.

Apart from that, communication with several students is also a challenge.

"I asked to talk to a student, and he asked his friend to stay behind and translate, because he's an international student from China," says Ms Schoendorf.

Although she did pick up Mandarin when she went to China alone at the age of 18, she finds it "difficult to communicate about engineering in Chinese" as it is not her first language.

"I was in Yunnan, and the places I travelled to had very little English. Every time I learnt a new Chinese phrase I would memorise it because it was really important. It's definitely challenging," she says.

In addition, an event that was a novelty to her during the course of her work was the Joint Admission Exercise (JAE).

"JAE was quite interesting to me because the system is just so different. The whole production of it blew my mind. I've never seen a school try so hard to get students to enrol before," she says.

"In the States... if you go to a public school, you can just go because it's in your district. If it's a private school, the school is quite picky about who they let in."



# Tourism Management & International Business at JCU Singapore

## Monica Tan's views on continuing study at JCU Singapore

It was exciting to speak to Monica Tan. This 22-year-old graduate of the Hospitality and Management program at Temasek Polytechnic is friendly and focused.

"I chose to continue my study here because JCU Singapore is a direct campus of James Cook University Australia. This guarantees the quality of education and I know that the program being offered is the same as that offered at the Australian campuses. So I get the same education but at a much cheaper cost because I can complete the course right here in Singapore."

"I am doing the Bachelor of Business course with a double major in International Business and Tourism Management. Besides furthering study in a course I am familiar with (tourism), I wanted to expose myself to a broader business perspective. That's why I chose international business."

JCU Singapore is able to fast track their program by offering three trimesters during the year. This means that students can complete their degree in 2 years, without any watering down of the course. And the outcome is that students can return to the workforce, fully qualified in a much shorter time.

Being from local polytechnic with a related course, Monica was able to apply for advanced standing.

"JCU Singapore also allows students to transfer credit to any of their Australian campuses during the course of study as long they meet the immigration requirements," add Monica. This gives the opportunity to students to go to Australia if they wish too.

Asked about her experience so far, Monica said, "Intensive research is needed for almost all the modules. Fortunately, there is an online library where students can search for all the journals and materials from the vast database. This helps me a lot in my assignments and projects."

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*\*The Academic Ranking of World Universities, Shanghai Jiao Tong University 2010.*



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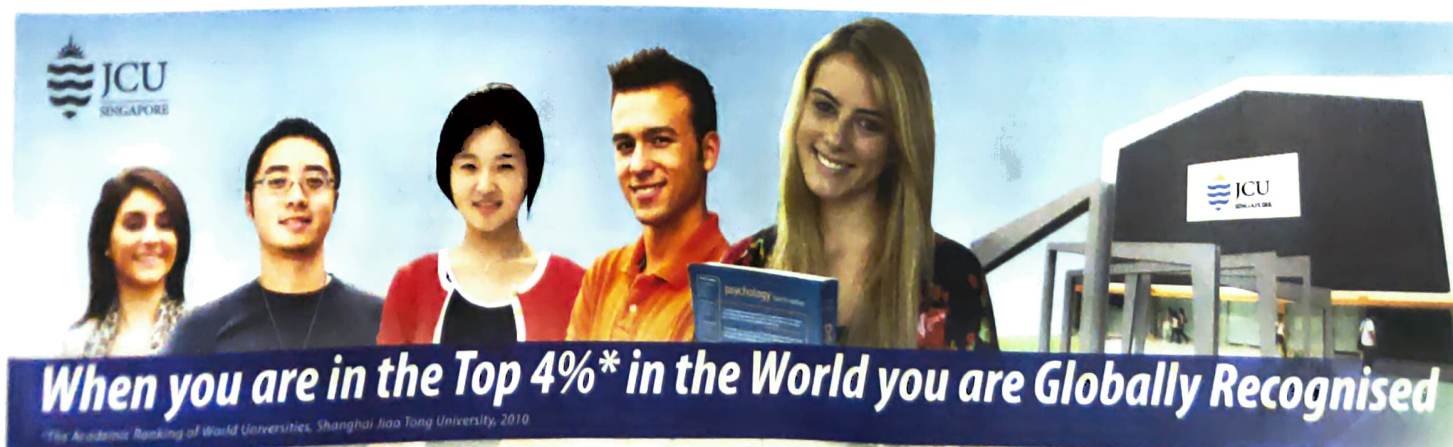
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The Academic Ranking of World Universities, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, 2010



## GLOBAL

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# Seeing With A Heart



HMS students extend a helping hand to show that life is worth living for the disabled in Phnom Penh.

**Toh Xin Zhe**

For many people in Cambodia, disabilities signal a life of pain and difficulty, but this darkness was broken in the form of a Youth Expedition Programme (YEP) trip by 27 NP students from Psychology & Community Services (PCS) to the Baray District in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

As a whole, what struck the group were the needs of the people there. "We saw poverty, we saw simplicity, but we also saw great needs for people with dis-

abilities," says Ms Janice Liow, a 39-year-old lecturer-in-charge for the trip at the School of Humanities (HMS).

On the contrary, the disabled patients needed more than just physical help.

Ms Goh Li Li, 30, the HMS lecturer-in-charge of the YEP expedition, says, "Psycho-social needs were also present."

These needs were apparent in every moment of the trip. Natalie Sophia Law, 17, a first-year PCS student, recalls one incident. They had visited two sisters, and when asked whether they had any happy moments in their lives, they replied that they could only remember the sad.

She recounts an incident when she heard of a family of three

sharing just one egg.

"When I went there, I saw that the poverty was very real, and it is things like these that makes me cherish what I have, and makes me ashamed of my wants when they don't even have their basic needs," she says.



Unforgettable experiences were what HMS students' gained from this trip.

## Other Trips

**School of Film & Media Studies**  
Siem Reap, Cambodia  
September 2011

**School of Life Sciences & Chemical Technology**  
Inner Mongolia, China  
June 2011

**School of Engineering: Electrical & Computer Engineering Division**  
Wuhan, China  
September 2011

**"I learnt to see with my heart and not with my eyes."**

**Vincent Tan Wei Jun**

For Ms Liow, one boy stood out. "One of the Cambodian youth volunteers we worked with suffered from a physical disability, so we invited him to talk about his life and the chal-

lenges he faced," she says. She recalls the boy's school-mates listening closely to every word of his story of pain between him and his family, and his hopes for a better future. It was not smooth sailing all the way for the YEP team when 19 of

In the end, though, it was a learning experience for all and very much so in learning about contingency planning in the event of mishaps during events.

Vincent Tan Wei Jun, 17, a first-year PCS student likened it to the act of carrying five umbrellas out whenever one leaves the house. "This way, even if one or two breaks, you will still have three more," he says.

For him, the experience brought a different set of lessons to his life and how he will apply them in the future. "I learnt to see with my heart and not with my eyes," he says. He added that other than the immediate needs of people, their emotional needs also commanded equal, if not more, attention.

## Sleepless in Seattle

**Jeanette Tan**

Working in Seattle, Washington may be a dream come true for some but the humanistic side to this rainy city keeps Vanessa Heng awake at night.

Currently interning in the United States (US) at the National Film Festival for Talented Youth (NFFTY or "nifty"), Vanessa, a final-year Mass Communication student, describes her work as "a once in a lifetime experience".

Everyday, Vanessa steps out of her rented apartment in the States, and is greeted by the beautiful scenery of Seattle. She spends her working hours watching short films and designing posters.

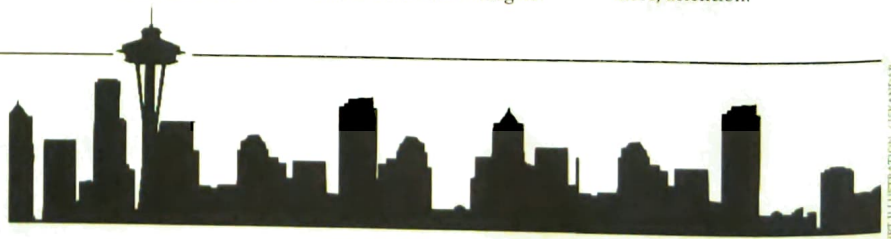
"Some of these films are

so professionally made that you can't even tell they were produced by youths! If not for this film fest, you may not even witness how resourceful the youth of today are," says Vanessa.

Even with its exciting location, Vanessa admitted that there were some things she faced in the US which she would have otherwise had taken for granted in Singapore. One of which was the issue of poverty and destitution.

"When I first arrived here, I was shocked at the number of homeless people roaming the streets and park benches."

"The other day, a homeless woman came up to me begging for money. I took out my wallet and wanted to give her US\$5 (S\$6.16)," Vanessa says, "but my landlord got so worked up and



pushed the woman away."

"Apparently you aren't supposed to give them money - they have food and shelter.

homes set up to house the destitute in Seattle, and that their social welfare is being well taken care of.

**"The other day a homeless woman came up to me begging for money... my landlord got so worked up and pushed the woman away."**

**Vanessa Heng**

They're just going to use the money to get drugs."

What Vanessa's landlord meant was that there are many

In a supposed first-world country like America, the rich-poor divide seems to be even more glaringly obvious, judging

from the number of homeless people roaming the streets.

During the weeks that she has been there, Vanessa shares that she had been harassed four times in the light of day.

Staying out late in Seattle is not an option as her neighbourhood is considered "shady", with clubs and pubs dotting the vicinity.

For a quiet town, Seattle certainly paints a different story at night.

"In the day, I always wonder where are the people, and 'where did everyone go to?' But at night, the police sirens tell a different story."



## SPORTS



NP's Handball Club started out to allow students to try out this fact-paced and unique sport.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NP HANDBALL CLUB

## Hand Me the Ball!

**Foo Min Valerie**

It was at the inaugural Youth Olympic Games (YOG) last year that two students first came into contact with handball.

They were hooked and the idea to set up NP's very own Handball Club was born and the second-year International Business students have received 106 sign-ups since April.

The Club's president Yvonne Loh, 17, and Timotheus Yong, 18, aim to create awareness of the sport and push this interest group towards a competitive nature.

"It's very different from soccer, basketball and the normal ball games. There are contact elements, whereby legal fouls are allowed," says Timotheus.

The NP Handball Club currently holds training sessions at Sentosa every Saturday.

Says Yvonne, "We train with RP (Republic Polytechnic) students over there by doing basic warm ups and running, and some basic drills. At the end of the training, we have games with them and other students from NUS (National University of Singapore) and MI (Millennia Institute)."

Handball is a sport that is easy to pick up, hence making it a popular invasion game taught in various schools during Physical Education lessons.

Says Jet Han, 18, a second-year International Business student, "I played handball once or twice [in] secondary school. Now that I'm in the handball club, I'll be playing it more often, I hope."

## Running with Heels

A shorter stint in their National Service may be what motivates the boys to do well in the NAPFA test, but what entices some girls to strive for the gold award?

**Amanda Lim**

While many girls may pout when they hear about the National Physical Fitness Assessment (NAPFA) test, there are a few who relish the chance to prove their athletic ability.

Child Psychology & Early Education graduate Isadora Soh, 20, is one of them.

As the former vice-captain of NP's Touch Rugby team, Isadora is no stranger to drills and vigorous training. The five stations and 2.4 km run were "no biggy" to her.

"My aim was a gold and I got it," she says with pride.

Like Isadora, some girls see the NAPFA test as an important testimony to the hard work they have invested in keeping their bodies fit.

For Julia Bose, 18, a final-year Accountancy student and triathlete, the test is yet another feather in the cap that helps her maintain a near perfect graduation record that characterises her as an all-rounder, which takes a high importance.

"Who would want to see a 'fail' anywhere amongst their academic transcript? Even if it is just NAPFA, it is still a black mark. It would look so ugly,"

she says. It is no surprise she is aiming for a gold in her NAPFA test this year.

Brandon Koo, a final-year Real Estate Business student, sees the ambition of these girls as a strong encouragement.

"It's impressive that they put so much effort into something they don't have to do. It's a reminder that we guys need to pull up our socks so that we won't embarrass ourselves," he says.

Many students will testify to the fact that exercise and sports become less important once they get into the polytechnic.

Business Studies graduate Cheryl Ee, 21, knows there is no way she would participate in the NAPFA test if it coincides with her academic activities. Sure enough, Cheryl ended up giving the NAPFA test a miss when her heavy workload left no time for training.

"I have no qualms about skipping NAPFA because it does not have any impact on me or my studies at all," she says.

The NAPFA test has been an issue of concern for the school as participation is not strong.

Mr Noel Koh, Student Development and Alumni Relations (SDAR) staff advisor for NAPFA testing in Ngee Ann Polytechnic, estimates that only 31 per cent of the pre-enlistees,

consisting only of male students who are required to go for National Service (NS), passed the NAPFA test the previous academic year.

"We will SMS the students and get their lecturers to chase them and basically nag until they show up," says Mr Koh.

In attempt to encourage students to aim for at least a silver award, SDAR has put in place a programme that automatically enters every student who achieves a silver award of higher into a lucky draw with prizes such as iPods and cameras.

"I believe any external motivation will help encourage students to rethink about participating in the NAPFA test," Mr Koh says.

Adding to the matter of external motivation, Brandon encourages all girls to attend the NAPFA test. "Nothing will motivate us more to get gold than the presence of the ladies."





## SPORTS

Enjoy running marathons? Tell us about it: nptribune.theurbanwire.com

## GOING THE DISTANCE

Not many of us will think about running a marathon, yet one 62-year-old sets his mind on completing 100 km every week.

Gillian Shen

To some, Mr Tan Kim Pong may just be the jovial director of the Centre of Innovation for Marine & Offshore Technology, but those who know will tell you that outside school, he wears a different pair of shoes.

Since being introduced to marathon running in NP's Staff Union Mobile Marathon in 1987, the veteran has participated in an astounding 24 full marathons.

"During my first race, my timing was good for a beginner, so I thought if I worked harder, maybe my timing would improve," says Mr Tan, about his first and fastest marathon run, which took him three hours and 30 minutes to complete.

At the Standard Chartered Marathon Singapore 2010, the 62-year-old managed to emerge as the fastest runner within his age group of 60 to 65.

His timing of three hours and 56 minutes may not be record-breaking, but it still qualified him for the world-renowned annual Boston Marathon, "a Mecca for marathon runners", as Mr Tan described.

Preparing for a marathon is certainly no mean feat.

About two months before the event, Mr Tan starts his training

regimen. For three days a week, he abandons his car and runs a good 20 km from his home in Seletar Hills to school.

He says, "When I run through the forest, I can hear the crickets and smell the leaves. It's really quite peaceful."

In 2008, Mr Tan had also participated in the gruelling Adidas Sundown Ultra Marathon where he spent more than 10 hours running a gut-wrenching 84 km. Out of the 192 participants, he ranked a commendable 46th position. "It's just a matter of training and support," he says.

According to the latest National Sports Participation Survey carried out by Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports in 2005, only slightly more than a third (36.5 per cent) of senior citizens aged 60 and above were said to be active in sports at least once a week.

"Age is but a number. It doesn't stop me from doing anything that I'm determined to do."

For this reason, Mr Tan can definitely be seen as a role model to everyone.

"I've never seen him angry or biased towards any students. When some lazy students slept in class, he'd actually tell them to take up running," says Wai Phyto



Mr Tan surges forward during his regular 16-lap jogs in the morning.



Mr Tan (left) and his colleagues gathering together after running his first marathon in 1987 during the Campus Run for NP's Staff Union.

Hlaing, 27, a student of Mr Tan's class in 2005.

Despite his fervour for marathons and all things that involve his running shoes, Mr Tan's wife and children never really followed in his footsteps.

He says that when his son and daughter, Tan Zu Binn, 32

and Tan Li Sha, 27, were much younger, they were too busy attending tuition and piano classes.

"I guess I'm the odd ball in the family," he teases.

While victory may be the goal, it is just icing on the cake for Mr Tan, "The main thing is not

## BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO MARATHONS

A half marathon is about 21.1km, and a full marathon is about 42.2km, according to the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS).

EVENT	DATE	DISTANCE
SUNDOWN ULTRA MARATHON 2011	25 JUNE 2011	100 KM
MARINA 21K	23 JULY 2011	10 KM, 21 KM

about winning, but to participate and have a good time."

For that reason, one should perhaps start to use that pair of track shoes that has so often been neglected.

As Mr Tan says, "Just run as fast as your legs can carry you for as long as you wish."



Shawn, will not stop till he reaches the top in the field of archery, a sport he picked up five years ago.

## Shooting Arrows of Passion

Foo Min Valerie

Biomedical Science student Shawn Tay, 18, represented Singapore under the Singapore Archery Team, and won the Gold Medal at the Asian Grand Prix 2011 in Laos.

The second-year student decided to pick up archery five years ago. His inspiration: "Legolas" from the movie Lord Of The Rings.

"Legolas looks really cool when shooting arrows, and he never misses his target," says Shawn.

Legolas, an elf who belongs in the Fellowship of The Ring in the movie, swears by his bow and arrow to defeat enemies during

arduous battles.

Shawn aims to be like his sole inspiration, Legolas, in terms of archery. Being the only one in his circle of friends to be involved in the sport, the second-year student sees it as a "personal challenge to be the best".

"It's [also] an honour to represent my own country," says Shawn.

It is evident that Shawn has big dreams for himself, stating his goal of winning medals at a regional level before moving on to an international stage.

"I'll only stop when I cannot continue physically or if I become world champ," he adds, citing archery as a form of relaxation for him.