

APR-JUN
2018

THE GRADUATE

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE SOCIETY SINCE 1962

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear fellow members

The first quarter of the year could not have started off on a better note, with a series of exciting celebrations and activities. I am delighted to have had the opportunity to meet many of you at our Guild Houses over the past few months.

Forging lasting connections with members and our alma mater, the National University of Singapore (NUS), remains a key commitment of the Society, and we were delighted to catch up with the new NUS President, Professor Tan Eng Chye, and his team at a *lo hei* dinner hosted by the Society in February 2018. Beyond casual networking, NUSS presented a \$250,000 cheque to NUS at the event. The donation is part of our annual pledge to help financially challenged students complete their studies through the NUS Alumni Bursary Fund (ABF). I am heartened that with the recent donation, our total contribution towards the ABF through the annual pledge has reached \$1.25 million, and I hope this amount will be able to help more needy students over time.

Besides supporting our alma mater, the Society also reviews our programmes and initiatives regularly to ensure we continue to engage our members and cater to their varied interests. Over the past months, we have organised several events such as the Commentary Dialogue and Economic Forum, NUSS Ang Pow Golf Challenge, and New Members' Night. These events have been very well received and I am grateful for your warm support. Together with my Management Committee and Secretariat staff, we are looking into a series of more exciting events over the next few months, and we hope you will continue to join us.

Another focus for the Society this year is to explore a new Guild House. The Management Committee has shortlisted a potential property at 2 Mandalay Road, and we hope to seek members' support to proceed with our proposed option at the upcoming Annual General Meeting come April 2018.

With plans for a new prospective Guild House as well as additional membership offerings, I am optimistic that members will enjoy a more holistic and satisfying experience at NUSS in the coming months! I thank you for your gracious support and confidence in the Society over the years and look forward to welcoming you again at NUSS.

Yours sincerely



*Eddie Lee
President*



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This initiative is brought to you by NUSS Alumni Development and University Relations Sub-Committee, in collaboration with NUS.

Please visit www.nuss.org.sg to find out more about the Programme and to register.

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APR-JUN
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NUSS
The Graduate Club

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In The Graduate Jan-Mar 2018 issue, in the article "Healthcare: A 'Cost' for Concern", we wrongly stated that local healthcare start-up Jaga-Me has four nurses. The start-up currently has more than 300 nurses.



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MAKING SENSE OF THE EN BLOC FEVER

At the inaugural NUSS Economic Forum, three industry experts gave their take on the day's buzzword: en bloc.



The residential developments of Pearl Bank Apartments, Amber Park and Tampines Court have something in common – they were all sold en bloc. A collective sale is no easy feat. At least 80 per cent of homeowners have to agree to put their units on the market, if their development is 10 years or older. Newer developments have to meet stricter criteria of at least 90 per cent agreement from homeowners.

Still, the market saw a string of successful en bloc sales last year. In early 2018, several other developments were sold en bloc. This formed the theme of the first NUSS Economic Forum, which was organised by the Intellectual Pursuit Sub-Committee.

Held on 23 January at Kent Ridge Guild House, the forum,

titled “Real Estate En Bloc Fever – How Much Hotter Can The Fever Get And Will It Last?” had three prominent speakers taking the stage. They were Mr Song Seng Wun, Director and Economist at CIMB Private Banking; Mr Francis Tan, Economist at United Overseas Bank; and Mr Tan Hong Boon, Regional Director for Capital Markets at Jones Lang LaSalle Property Consultants.

One of the main things that the speakers agreed on was the rosy economic forecasts for the next two to three years. This bodes well for developers, property owners and investors.

“We haven’t seen this kind of stability in prices and growth in a very long time,” Mr Song said. “If we were to hit an unexpected bump, wherever the risks come from, the balance sheets of the region’s companies are strong enough to take the shock,” he added.

Confidence in continued growth makes businesses less risk adverse, Mr Song explained. More jobs will be created across industries, and the demand for property will rise.

This explains the unmet demand of 4,000 to 5,000 residential units in recent years, shared Mr Tan Hong Boon. Some property cooling measures have also been eased, he said. For instance, homeowners only have to wait three years (down from the previous four) to sell their properties without paying the seller’s stamp duty tax.

All these factors have fuelled the resurgent en bloc fever. Developers are eager to buy and refurbish old sites, while buyers are willing to sell – as long as the price is right.

If both parties find the middle ground, Mr Tan believes that more deals will be made in 2018. These would likely involve smaller developments in the prime district.





FACING PAGE: MR TAN HONG BOON, REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR CAPITAL MARKETS AT JONES LANG LASALLE PROPERTY CONSULTANTS, SHARED HIS OBSERVATIONS ON THE PROPERTY MARKET WITH MEMBERS

THIS PAGE, FROM TOP: ATTENDEES GAINED VALUABLE INSIGHTS ON THE EN BLOC FEVER

SPEAKERS ENJOYED ENGAGING MEMBERS THROUGH AN INTERACTIVE Q&A SESSION



However, he also struck a cautionary note: “We are also going to see many potential failures in en bloc sites, simply because the latecomers, taking the previous benchmarks set by developers, will be asking for higher and higher prices for residential units.”

“This is probably not sustainable because we do not see end unit prices going up at that kind of speed,” he added.

Keeping an eye on other market trends, Mr Francis Tan highlighted his recent findings. In a published report, he found that Singapore will have the same proportion of residents younger than 15, as those aged 65 and over, in 2018. The latter is expected to make up 27 per cent of the population in 2030.

“When that happens, we are in a very different shape. What size of homes will the above 65s live in? Will it be smaller or bigger?” he asked rhetorically. The demand

for shoebox apartments would soar, Mr Tan said. Pundits have to pay close attention to annual Budget statements, and changes in the fertility rate or immigration numbers, he concluded.

Speaking at NUSS was a special experience for Mr Francis Tan as he completed his undergraduate and postgraduate studies at NUS. As a student, Mr Tan had to find contributors for the university’s economics journal. He recalled reaching out to Mr Song, who wrote a piece on the Indonesian economy after the 1997 Asian financial crisis.

“I can’t believe I’m on the same stage as you today,” Mr Tan said to Mr Song. “Since graduation, I’ve been to NUSS a couple of times to attend yearly alumni dinners. This time, I get to talk about what I do on a daily basis, and give back on a slightly intellectual front.”

NUSS member Madam Chan May Ping, who sits on the board of the Kidney Dialysis Foundation, found the forum useful. “It was very interesting for me, even though I don’t have (a property being put up for) en bloc,” she said. “They told us how the global economy and local market conditions would affect en bloc sales. That is a very real picture, painted by speakers who are in touch with the ground.” ■

WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS TO NUSS

Thanks to the Rights Issue campaign and other outreach efforts, more than 1,200 members have joined the Society – and received a warm reception at the New Members' Night.

She had fond memories of NUSS as a child. Today, Ms Claire Phee is one of the Society's newest members. "Before the (Kent Ridge) clubhouse was renovated, my parents, who are members, would take my brother and me to the pool. We ended up studying at NUS," she recalled.

Last October, Ms Phee, an account manager, was introduced into the Society at a special rate. This was offered through her parents under the Rights Issue campaign, which granted each member the privilege to introduce a friend or family member to become an NUSS member at special rates. Her fiancé joined too. The couple attended the New Members' Night, held on 31 January

at Kent Ridge Guild House. New members and their referees enjoyed a Chinese set dinner and memorable night filled with good conversation, networking and entertainment. Attendees mingled with members of the NUSS Management Committee and Sub-Committees as well as management staff.

NUSS President Mr Eddie Lee took the stage to welcome new members and introduce the Management Committee. "NUSS is a unique club. Beyond providing club facilities for members, our Society is driven by our mission to foster a lifelong relationship with our alma mater NUS, and promote the interests of our members and the wider graduate community."

Another priority is sustaining the Society's growth and relevance through attracting younger members. Mr Roy Higgs, CEO of NUSS, noted that various outreach efforts have resulted in an increase in the number of members aged 21 to 40 who are joining the Society.

"We are making progress. That's very important for our long-term viability," he said, to loud applause. "This Society offers you a wide range of activities and opportunities to build friendships. Continue to have a relationship with us over the years. If you do that, you will enjoy the full breadth of the Society."

NUSS members enjoy benefits both within and beyond Singapore's shores. They can access dnata premium lounges at Changi Airport Terminals 1 and 3, as well as several True Fitness gyms, and get a 25 per cent discount at selected attractions in Sentosa. What's more, NUSS offers members access to various reciprocal clubs around the world.

Mr Higgs also gave members an exciting update on a prospective third Guild House. The Society bade farewell to the Bukit Timah Guild House last year. After exploring several possible options, NUSS has shortlisted a property in Novena, a 13-minute walk or a three-minute bus ride from Novena MRT station.

"We are working very hard to get this finalised. It's a beautiful government property of over 7,600 square feet, sitting on a land area of 50,000 square feet," Mr Higgs said. "We will be seeking members' approval at our Annual General Meeting in April for expenditure to establish this Guild House. We hope to receive your warm support then!"

Evening entertainment was provided by NUSS Choir, who performed a medley of songs, while NUSS DramaWorks gave a lively rendition of "Seasons of Love" from the Broadway musical, *Rent*.

For architect Raymond Tan, the NUSS community will always be the Society's main draw. "Over 22 years, I've gotten to know many nice people," he said.

He even managed to convince his client and golf buddy, Mr Ivan Liew, to join. Mr Liew, who became a member last October, is already involved in the NUSS Golf Section.

"As an NUS graduate, I felt I should get in touch with the community and network. The people I've met are fantastic, and I can't wait to get to know them better," Mr Liew said. ■



FACING PAGE, NUSS
DRAMAWORKS PERFORMED
A NUMBER FROM THE
BROADWAY MUSICAL, *RENT*

THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE
FROM TOP: ATTENDEES GOT
TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER
OVER DINNER AND DRINKS

IN HIS SPEECH, NUSS
PRESIDENT MR EDDIE
LEE INTRODUCED NEW
MEMBERS TO THE
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

NUSS CHOIR ENTERTAINED
WITH A MEDLEY OF SONGS



FOR THE LOVE OF GOLF

NUSS member and keen golfer Benjamin Tan shares how being part of the NUSS Golf Section has enriched him over the years. By MELISSA DE SILVA.

THE CHALLENGE OF PLAYING EACH GAME BETTER HOOKED HIM.

"I have always enjoyed playing sports, and I picked up golf in my early 30s. Golf can be relaxing or competitive, depending on your frame of mind. The game is unique in that you can play and enjoy it with people of different aptitudes and levels of ability. Golf is also easy to understand and not too difficult to pick up. The challenge to play better at my next game is what keeps me going back to the course."

GOLF BRINGS MENTAL AND PHYSICAL BENEFITS.

"Golf can be mentally and physically demanding – you make judgement calls on everything you do, and at the end of the round, you can ache all over if you are not physically fit. I think playing golf helps improve mental and physical stamina, and if you play competitive golf, it builds patience and grit."

GOLF BUILDS CAMARADERIE.

"Golf is a great enabler of trust and understanding. A few hours playing together on the course allow people to size each other up. Eventually when we sit down for drinks at the end of the game, the bonhomie would often foster a new friendship."

HE HAS BEEN IN THE NUSS GOLF SECTION FOR 25 YEARS.

"The (Golf) Section is made up of a dozen people from different

backgrounds and professions, with a common interest and attachment to the game. We enjoy golfing together, we make friends here and from other countries through the Section's activities, and we try to share and expand the love for this wonderful game with others in NUSS."

HIS MOST MEMORABLE TRIPS WITH THE NUSS GOLF SECTION.

"We had a golf professional join us in one of our earliest Section overseas trips to Chiang Mai in the 1990s. He would play with a group for a few holes and then move on to join the next group. I think a lot of us learnt from that unique experience. Over the years, we made many trips within Asia and Australia. The most memorable ones were with smaller groups from the Section – visiting and playing in world-renowned courses in Japan, Europe, Scotland and most recently, South Africa."

OTHER UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS THAT MAKE IT ALL WORTHWHILE.

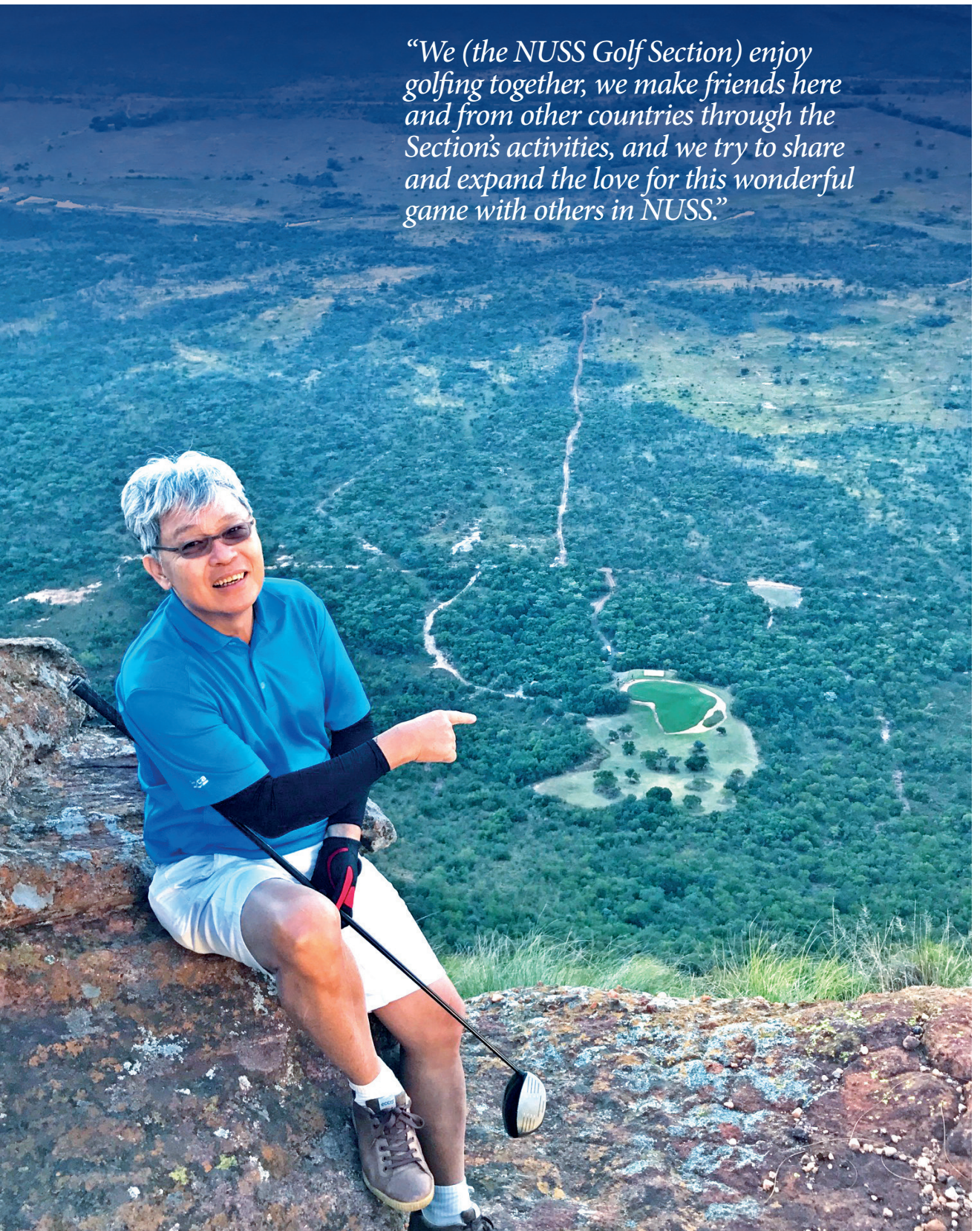
One that comes to mind was when we represented NUSS in our bi-annual and tri-annual games with Persatuan Alumni Universiti Malaya (PAUM), and PAUM and Chulalongkorn University Alumni Association (CUAA), respectively. It was inspiring to be there to represent NUSS, and it did not matter much whether we won or lost in the competition."

WHAT KEEPS HIM IN THE NUSS GOLF SECTION.

"Many of my closest friends are from the golf fraternity – especially the NUSS Golf Section. The joy of interacting with such good friends during and at the end of each round enriches my life, and motivates me to improve my game. That's why I want to continue playing this sport that I love with the NUSS Golf Section." ■

Interested to join the NUSS Golf Section?
Visit nuss.org.sg/sports-n-recreation/102/71 today!

“We (the NUSS Golf Section) enjoy golfing together, we make friends here and from other countries through the Section’s activities, and we try to share and expand the love for this wonderful game with others in NUSS.”



MAN ON A MISSION

NUSS Youth Guild member Dr Kelvin Chua talks about the newly formed Working Committee, and what's in store for younger members.

HE'S A PIONEER MEMBER OF THE NUSS YOUTH GUILD WORKING COMMITTEE.

"As the Youth Guild hopes to create a vibrant and engaging environment, NUSS felt the need to draw younger members into the Society. That's why the Working Committee was formed in 2017 – to get our younger members to attract other younger members. Now we have quite a number of new members in their 20s to early 30s."

THE CHALLENGE OF KEEPING YOUNG MEMBERS ENGAGED.

"Young members (35 and below) typically start out excited about joining a new club. However, for some of them, that excitement eventually dies down once they don't feel engaged or can't find suitable activities or reasons to visit the clubhouses."

The Working Committee aims to solve this through organising events that cater to different profile groups – for instance, those who are studying, working, single, and married with and without children. We hope these events will give members in the same age group the opportunities to interact with one another and see the Society as a place for meeting like-minded people."

WHAT THE WORKING COMMITTEE HAS ACHIEVED SO FAR.

"We have started a Facebook group, where we hope to foster a closer link between our Youth Guild members and NUSS. We have also been busy planning a Youth Fiesta for members. Our long-term goal is for our members to have an active participation in, and be relevant to, NUSS."

In terms of feedback, our younger members have told us that they prefer activities and events that are catered for them and attended

by members in the same age group. Some mentioned that they prefer casual social events, while others want to see more talks on issues like parenting, career choice and options, and marriage."

AN EXCITING YEAR TO LOOK FORWARD TO.

"To start things off, we will have a Youth Fiesta from 30 April to 1 June 2018, which will include a ladies forum on 9 May; movie screening on 18 May; bowling night on 22 May; and pool party on 1 June. Do join us for a social networking session at the launch of the Youth Fiesta on 30 April at Suntec City Guild House too!"

We also hope to engage with young members differently and on a deeper level, through giving back to the community. This will resonate well with members like me who are passionate about making a difference."

WHY HE'S PASSIONATE ABOUT GIVING BACK TO SOCIETY.

"Contributing to society and growth are two important pillars in my life, and they go hand in hand. I believe that voluntary and outreach work allow me to grow as a person. It also helps me be a better parent to my three kids."

HOW HE JUGGLES RUNNING A BUSY DENTAL PRACTICE WITH SPENDING TIME WITH FAMILY.

"I have quite a lot of 'homework' to do as my practice requires me to manage complex cases or patients with high aesthetic demands. I also attend a lot of continuing dental education courses, and I have started giving lectures. In the midst of juggling work and study, I still find time to spend with my family. I am fortunate to have a wife who truly understands me, and we make it a point to have a date night every one to two weeks. As a family, we go for a swim once a week, occasionally at Kent Ridge Guild House, and visit one of the national libraries as our kids enjoy reading. Juggling these many activities may seem impossible to some, but all of us have the same 24 hours a day. What we do with that time is entirely up to us." ■

Find out more about the Youth Fiesta and the NUSS Youth Guild programmes via facebook.com/groups/NUSSYG or nuss.org.sg

People is a new section featuring our inspiring members. If you have an interesting story to share or know any members who do, drop us an email at thegraduate@nuss.org.sg



“Our (NUSS Youth Guild Working Committee) long-term goal is for our members to have an active participation in, and be relevant to, NUSS.”



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NUSS
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04

EVENTS

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P

R

27 APR

Breakfast Dialogues

In this inaugural event organised by NUSS and the NUS Office of Alumni Relations, prepare to be motivated by Ms Lyn Lee – founder of Awfully Chocolate – as she shares her experience on how she turned a hobby into a successful business franchise. Come and be inspired!



NUSS
The Graduate Club

05

EVENTS

M

A

Y



10 – 14 MAY

Golf Trip to Cambodia

Looking for a holiday where you can play golf as well as sightsee? In this 5D4N trip, tee off in golf clubs around Siem Reap such as Angkor Golf Resort and Siem Reap Booyoung Country Club, and visit the city's biggest draws, Angkor Wat and Tonle Sap.



19 MAY

NUSS Badminton Closed Team Tournament 2018

Calling badminton players of all skill levels! Join us for a friendly game and meet other members from the NUSS Badminton Section. This year, the competition focuses on doubles events.



26 MAY
Merrymaking
May

Form social ties and deeper bonds with one another through the exchange of fancy footwork at this dinner and dance!

27 MAY – 4 JUNE

Nine-day Mongolia
Adventure – Land
of Genghis Khan

Go on horse and camel rides, stay in gers to experience the traditional Mongolian nomadic lifestyle, and explore the Gobi desert – one of the world's greatest deserts – in this tour. Take this chance to bask in the rich history of the land of Genghis Khan, as well as its breathtaking scenery.



NUSS
The Graduate Club

06

EVENTS

J

U

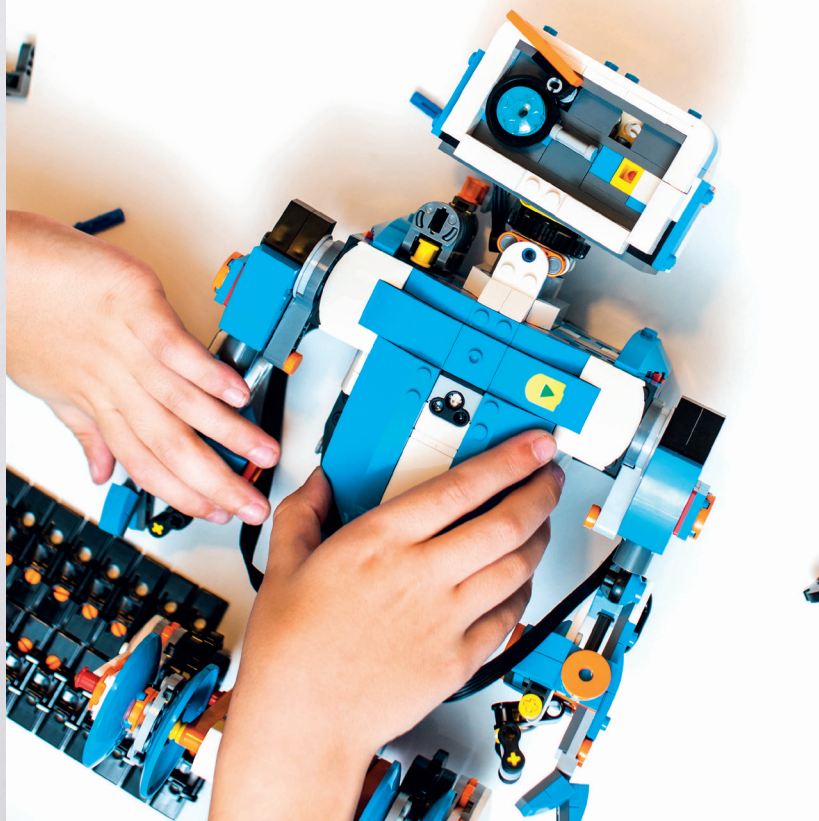
N



1 – 30 JUNE

*June Holidays
Kids Workshops*

The school holidays are the perfect time for your little ones to learn something new. Sign them up for a variety of workshops, including robotics and chess, for a fun learning experience!



All information stated in this section is correct at time of printing. For updates, please visit nuss.org.sg.

NUSS

The Graduate Club



KENT RIDGE GUILD HOUSE



SUNTEC CITY GUILD HOUSE

As an NUSS member, you can enjoy premium privileges from a variety of recreational activities, intellectual and networking events, as well as gastronomical delights!

For more information and enquiries, visit www.nuss.org.sg, call 6586 3704 or email marketing@nuss.org.sg!



PRESIDENT'S TROPHY CHALLENGE
12 JANUARY 2018,
RAFFLES COUNTRY CLUB &
KENT RIDGE GUILD HOUSE

Swinging into the New Year

It was at this much-anticipated annual event that 127 avid golfers, including 10 new members, teed off at the start of the new year. After the friendly game, which was graced by NUSS President Mr Eddie Lee, golfers enjoyed a lavish buffet dinner and drinks.

During the course of the evening, guests were treated to a rousing performance by K-Spin, a band made up of NUSS members. Many of them were also delighted to win lucky draw prizes. NUSS would like to thank these generous sponsors: Mr Tan Hang Meng who donated \$10,000 for the hole-in-one; Danish Breweries Pte Ltd for the beer; and Old Chang Kee for the curry puffs.

RESULTS OF THE PRESIDENT'S TROPHY CHALLENGE 2018

CATEGORY	NAME	HI	POINTS
OVERALL CHAMPION	April Tan	27	40
'A' DIVISION			
CHAMPION	Khoo Boo Aik	11.7	36 OCB
1ST RUNNER-UP	Soh Kam Giap	12.4	36 OCB
2ND RUNNER-UP	Sunny Kang	17.4	35 OCB
'B' DIVISION			
CHAMPION	Jeremy Poon	21.4	35
1ST RUNNER-UP	Anton Chan	19.4	34 OCB
2ND RUNNER-UP	Tan Hang Meng	20.9	34 OCB
LADIES DIVISION			
CHAMPION	Cynthia Tin	25	34
1ST RUNNER-UP	Alice Choo	22.3	32
2ND RUNNER-UP	Susan Leong	19.7	29
SENIOR DIVISION			
CHAMPION	Richard Tan Kiat	15.4	36
1ST RUNNER-UP	Winston Woh	15	34
2ND RUNNER-UP	Phee Thian Chye	20.3	33
GUEST DIVISION			
CHAMPION	Tan Chuan Sien	24	41
1ST RUNNER-UP	Ang Feng Zhi	24	24
Nearest to Pin			
HOLE 2	T C Phua	1.3m	
HOLE 8	Su Chin Hee	4m	
HOLE 14	Richard Low	1.3m	
HOLE 16	Simon Er	4.8m	

INDUCTION TO MINI GUILDS 12 JANUARY 2018, KENT RIDGE GUILD HOUSE

Leading the welcome

The Induction to Mini Guilds initiative was recently launched by the Membership Experience Sub-Committee, and 24 members have signed up as Guild Leaders so far. The Society's inaugural batch of Guild Leaders attended their first briefing session, where they were tasked to induct new members into the Society. On 12 February, the leaders and their mini guild members got together for a Chinese New Year Mini Guild gathering to usher in the Year of the Dog and bond over good conversation, food and drinks. At the session, Guild Leaders shared about NUSS' facilities and events, as well as their membership experiences with the new members.



DISCOVER THE ENTHRALLING GARDENS AT HORTPARK 20 JANUARY 2018, HORTPARK

Oasis of green

Visitors got to experience the wonder and beauty of plant and animal life at the second instalment of the Nature Appreciation Series, this time at HortPark. Organised by the Alumni Development and University Relations Sub-Committee, the tour saw 92 participants being led through the different gardens at HortPark, including the Edible Garden, Therapeutic Garden and Butterfly Garden. The walk was led by Ms Maria Boey, President of the Institute of Parks and Recreation Singapore (IPRS), Mr Frederick Koh, a horticulturist at IPRS, and three experienced guides from the National Parks Board. The passionate and knowledgeable guides pointed out a myriad of plant, vegetable and fruit varieties along the walk, and even provided tips on how to grow some of them. Participants also learnt more about vertical green walls and the plants that thrive best on them.



PREDICTIONS 2018

30 JANUARY 2018, DELLA & SENG GEE
GUILD HALL, KENT RIDGE GUILD HOUSE

The Fengshui Queen of Singapore, Ms Lynn Yap, unveiled what the stars held for the 12 Chinese zodiac signs in terms of career, finances and romance at this eagerly anticipated annual event. Her top tip? Carry a golden bell for good fortune and protection in 2018! The *feng shui* master from 3P Fengshui Consultancy also gave 18 predictions on the overall business outlook for professionals, industries that would flourish, and shared tips on how students could shine academically.



FELLOWSHIP LUNCH – MAKING HEALTH & CARE EASIER WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE

30 JANUARY 2018, DELLA & SENG GEE
GUILD HALL, KENT RIDGE GUILD HOUSE

Keeping health notes, booking transportation, and making your next clinic appointment — 29 members and guests learnt how to do these and more using smartphone apps. Health technology specialist Mr Julian Koo introduced participants to handy healthcare apps, and guided them step by step on how to use them to take better care of themselves and their family members. The CEO and co-founder of social enterprise Jaga-Me makes healthcare and eldercare services more accessible to people via an on-demand technology platform.



DIY YOUR POP-UP CARDS WORKSHOP

3 FEBRUARY 2018, ACTIVITY ROOM,
KENT RIDGE GUILD HOUSE

Ever wished you could make handmade pop-up cards for your family and friends for special occasions? That's exactly what participants learnt to do at this workshop. Instructor Ms Queenie Kou, who holds a Certificate of Western Art from the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, led the group in making a range of creative and charming creations, including flower and waterfall pop-up cards, and a pop-up box, which they could then bring home as a gift for their loved ones.



WHISKY TRAIL

7 FEBRUARY 2018, SINGAPORE CRICKET CLUB,
SINGAPORE RECREATION CLUB &
SUNTEC CITY GUILD HOUSE

Rajan Menon, Pernod Ricard Singapore's brand ambassador, took 90 members from the Singapore Cricket Club, Singapore Recreation Club, and NUSS on a whisky trail, where he shared the tasting notes and profiles of labels such as Chivas, Aberlour, Glenlivet, and Royal Salute. Members made three stops during the evening. The first was the Singapore Cricket Club, where whisky was served with delicious canapés. Participants then walked to the Singapore Recreation Club for the second tasting, paired with North Indian food. Finally, they hopped on a bus to Suntec City Guild House. There, whisky was paired with desserts, proving that the golden liquid goes perfectly with a variety of foods.



ARTS CONNECTIONS: WHAT IS 1 PLUS 2? 18 DECEMBER 2017 – 9 FEBRUARY 2018, NUSS ART GALLERY, KENT RIDGE GUILD HOUSE

This exhibition, which explored how people connect, showcased works from the Young Printmakers League's two generations of apprentices. The Young Printmakers League is a local mentorship programme to nurture those keen to learn printmaking as an art. At the exhibition, artists worked in pairs to create prints that expressed how conversations are a starting point for collaboration. Some covered profound topics like life and death, while others examined the nature of conversation itself.



DRAMAWORKS & FRIENDS AT CARE CLUB FEBRUARY – MAY 2018, PRISON FELLOWSHIP SINGAPORE

Last year, DramaWorks ran two successful workshops on basic drama and reading for the children at the Prison Fellowship Singapore's Care Club. The sessions were very well-received, and DramaWorks was invited to conduct eight more sessions from February to May. The drama activities are led by an experienced theatre studies teacher while DramaWorks members run the reading segment. Through this project, the Care Club kids become more confident in their reading and verbal skills while making new friends.



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CHINESE NEW YEAR SLAM!
22 FEBRUARY 2018, THE CHILL-LAB, KENT RIDGE GUILD HOUSE

Winning performance

NUSS DramaWorks is known to many for its Broadway Slam! events, which include original musicals, variety shows, skits, flash mob dances, and *Glee*-style Christmas carols. To welcome the Year of the Dog, the group added a twist to its famous Broadway Slam!, transforming it into a festive Chinese New Year Slam! The high-energy performance was well received, drawing laughs, cheers and applause from the crowd. The event came to a close with the audience singing along to festive Chinese New Year tunes in rousing form.

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NUSS LO HEI DINNER

21 FEBRUARY 2018, FUNCTION ROOMS,
SUNTEC CITY GUILD HOUSE

Welcoming prosperity

To celebrate the close relationship between NUS and NUSS, this annual event kicked off with a cocktail reception to get everyone mingling. This year's dinner was made more special by the presence of guest of honour Professor Tan Eng Chye, who attended the event for the first time in his capacity as NUS President. Other esteemed guests included Mr Hsieh Fu Hua, NUS Board of Trustees Chairman, and Dr Chan Sek Keong, NUS Pro-Chancellor.

The dinner started with a speech by NUSS President Mr Eddie Lee, followed by a \$250,000 cheque presentation from the Society in support of the NUS Alumni Bursary Fund. Since 2013, NUSS has raised \$1.25 million through a pledge of \$250,000 annually, which is used to assist underprivileged students.

Ocarina House, a group of youths and adults who share a passion for music, entertained with a series of local favourites and created harmonies with the ocarina (an ancient wind musical instrument) and *guzheng* (Chinese zither).



ANG POW GOLF CHALLENGE 2018

23 FEBRUARY 2018, WARREN GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB & KENT RIDGE GUILD HOUSE

A “hole” lot of fun despite the thunder and lightning

More than 100 golfers were looking forward to an enjoyable afternoon playing a shotgun game at Warren Golf & Country Club... but were thwarted by foul weather. The game was cut short after the fifth hole due to thunder and lightning, but free beers during the unscheduled break provided solace for some golfers. More boisterous fun followed at a *lo hei* dinner at Kent Ridge Guild House. Over dinner, members were treated to an entertaining performance by The Silverstones, resident band of the NUSS Music Section, while new members received memento golf balls. NUSS wishes to thank Asahi for generously sponsoring five cartons of Asahi beer for the event.



DANCESPORT CHINESE NEW YEAR DINNER & DANCE

24 FEBRUARY 2018, DELLA & SENG GEE GUILD HALL, KENT RIDGE GUILD HOUSE

Dancing for joy

A sea of festive colours filled this event, as members came dressed to this year's theme of "The Joy of Celebrating Spring". They were greeted by a luminous lion dance performance by Y Performing Arts Troupe, and later enjoyed a sumptuous dinner spread. The dinner was punctuated by lucky draws and entertaining games, with some guests claiming enviable prizes. After a delicious dinner, members and guests let their hair down as they danced to upbeat tunes and soaked in the festive cheer.



LION & DRAGON DANCE SPECTACULAR 2018 25 FEBRUARY 2018, LOBBY, KENT RIDGE GUILD HOUSE

A spectacular surprise

Those who were at the lobby of Kent Ridge Guild House on 25 February were pleasantly surprised by the appearance of Wushu acrobats and a dragon dance. This was followed by a “lion” thrilling the crowd with a freestyle, high pole performance, and dancers from the award-winning Wen Yang Lion Dance Troupe performing *cai qing*, or “picking the greens” ritual. Towards the end of the event, the dance troupe mascots mingled and took photos with spectators. Members also walked away with festive goodie bags.



CHINESE NEW YEAR LUNCHEON WITH ELDERLY 25 FEBRUARY 2018, DELLA & SENG GEE GUILD HALL, KENT RIDGE GUILD HOUSE

Bringing festive cheer to the elderly

There is no better time than the festive season to give back to the community. This annual gathering – organised by the Community Care (ComCare) Sub-Committee – brought together 150 underprivileged elderly from Lions Befrienders (Ghim Moh), Sunlove Home Chai Chee, Nee Soon East Community Club, Nee Soon South Community Club and West Coast CDC, to enjoy some festive fun.

A colourful lion dance performance kicked off the afternoon, followed by a welcome speech by ComCare Chairperson, Mr Archie Ong, and a delicious lunch for guests and volunteers. Providing lively entertainment were the Anglo-Chinese Junior College (ACJC) Chinese Orchestra and Dance Society, and NUSS Music Section resident band, The Silverstones.

The afternoon ended on an auspicious note, with oranges and red packets distributed to the delighted guests.



GRAD JAM NIGHT JANUARY – MARCH 2018, THE CHILL-LAB, KENT RIDGE GUILD HOUSE

Get ready to jam

The NUSS Music Section hit all the right notes with this free event, which is hosted on the first and last Fridays of each month. Members who wanted to jam brought their instruments to The Chill-Lab, while others made use of the band's guitars, drum sets and piano. Some overcame their stage fright to sing with the band at the open mike session. Everyone agreed that the adrenaline rush of live performance, plus picking up new musical skills and forging friendships, was well worth it.



TOUR PRESENTATION: MONGOLIA & BHUTAN 22 MARCH 2018, KENT RIDGE GUILD HOUSE

Fuelling travel dreams

Eighty members and guests attended a talk about Mongolia and Bhutan, two destinations that are high on many travellers' wish lists. A light dinner was served, and guest speakers from Aveson Travel captivated the audience with their presentation on the two countries, as well as available tour packages. They learnt that Mongolia is known as the "Land of Blue Sky", while Bhutan – also called the "Land of the Thunder Dragon" – is known for its pristine landscapes and fascinating culture.





LEARNING JOURNEY: SINGAPORE CABLE CAR BACK-OF-HOUSE TOUR 10 MARCH 2018, FABER PEAK SINGAPORE

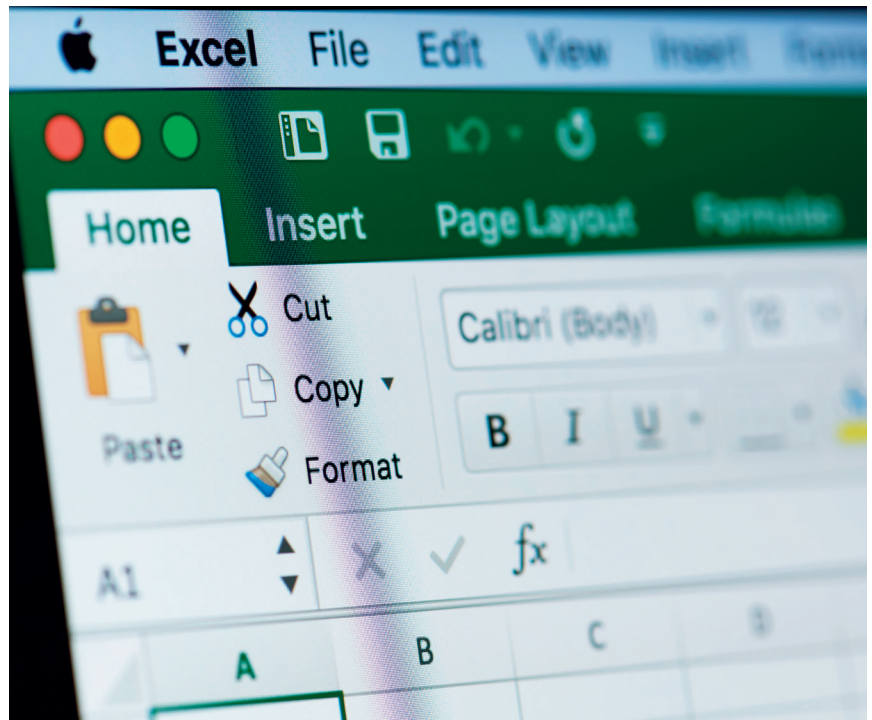
A lesson in history

As a March holiday special, NUSS partnered with Mount Faber Leisure Group to organise a learning journey for members and their families. The objective? To learn about Singapore's first and only cableway linking the mainland at Mount Faber to Sentosa island, across Keppel Harbour. The tour guide led guests along the stations of the cable car ride, and explained its history as a unique form of transport when it opened 44 years ago. It was also a time of family bonding for more than 30 participants and their kids, who attended the fun and interesting tour. Now who says learning history can't be fun?

VISUAL BASIC FOR APPLICATIONS FOR BUSY EXECUTIVES WORKSHOP 10 MARCH 2018, KENT RIDGE GUILD HOUSE

Learning the basics

Did you know that learning how to program in Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) could help you get more out of Excel? Eric Hong, lead course lecturer in software programming at Temasek Polytechnic's School of Engineering, led this workshop to equip participants with key concepts of and essential skills for VBA programming. By the end of the workshop, participants were able to write a simple Excel macro to automate mundane tasks, as well as create customised and sophisticated Excel applications.





MEMBER EXPERIENCE AT NUSS RECIPROCAL CLUB HONG KONG UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION CLUB

Travel perks

The perks of a membership with NUSS extend beyond Singapore's shores – and that is what makes it unique and exclusive. For instance, NUSS members enjoy the privilege of reciprocity with other graduate associations around the world. One benefit of this reciprocity is lower accommodation and dining rates compared to other hotels and restaurants in the same area. NUSS member Mr C.K. Ho took advantage of this privilege during his recent trip to Hong Kong. "The reciprocal arrangement with Hong Kong University Alumni Association Club is great, given its location in the heart of Hong Kong," he said. "Although it's in an old building and can be quite crowded at lunch time, it serves inexpensive and nice Cantonese food. Overall, a good experience. Well done, NUSS!"

NUSS
The Graduate Club

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A Singaporean take on the classic American favourite, this dish features soft-shell crab dusted in cayenne pepper, dipped in light and fluffy batter, and deep fried to bring out the natural juices of this tasty crustacean. Topped with garlic mayo, the crispy soft-shell crab is then served on a soft charcoal bun, with a side of homemade sweet potato chips.

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A ROAD MAP FOR THE



As Singapore braces for headwinds ahead, Budget 2018 attempts to address near-term issues while laying the foundation to overcome longer-term challenges. By Amy Tan.



FUTURE



In February, Finance Minister Mr Heng Swee Keat delivered a wide-ranging Budget 2018, which sought to address short-term business concerns, as well as longer-term challenges brought about by broader shifts in the global economic order, emergence of new technologies and Singapore's ageing population.

While the planned rise in the goods and services tax (GST) hogged the headlines, analysts believe that Budget 2018 has struck the right note in balancing present and future needs.

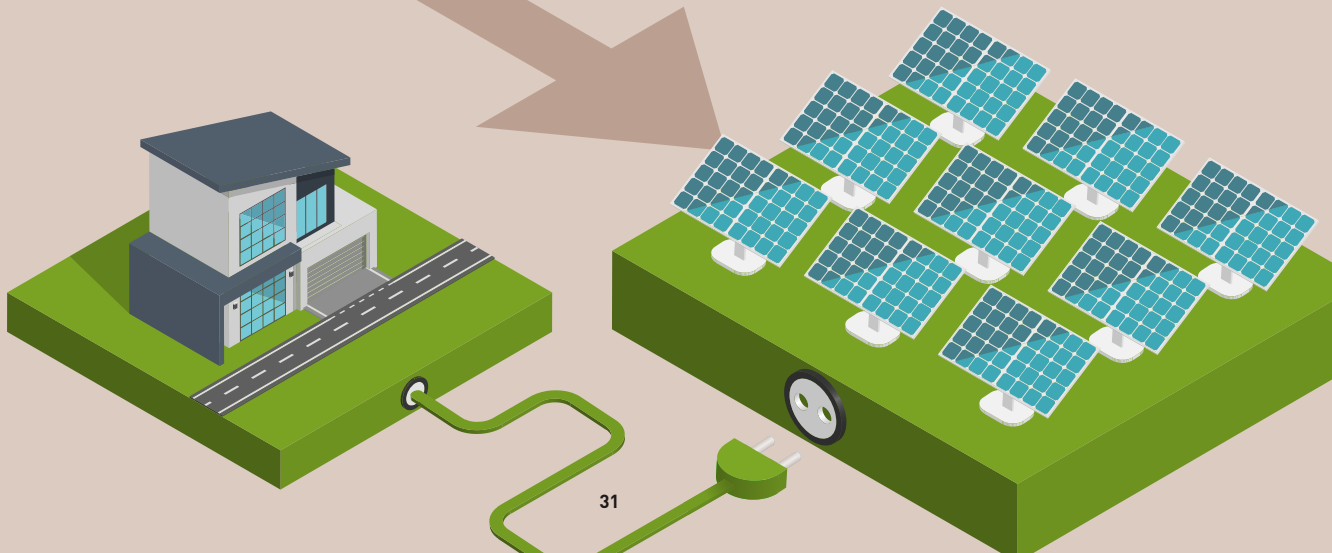
"This is a 'give and take' Budget, with some 'goodies' for most,

coupled with a few near- and longer-term costs," said DBS Economist Irvin Seah in a report.

Specifically, the emphasis of this year's Budget was on medium-term economic transformation, building a liveable and sustainable city, fostering a caring society and fiscal rebalancing.

HELPING BUSINESSES TRANSFORM

Budget 2018 featured a streamlining and enhancement of various schemes to help companies here transform over the medium term. Specifically, there was a shift away



“This is a ‘give and take’ Budget, with some ‘goodies’ for most, coupled with a few near- and longer-term costs.”

Mr Irvin Seah
DBS Economist

from broad-based programmes towards more targeted measures that focused on innovation. The introduction of the Productivity Solutions Grant – which supports the adoption of off-the-shelf technologies – is one such example.

“For small companies like us, we rely on off-the-shelf solutions because we don’t have the resources to innovate our own solutions. When our business scales, then this is something we could look at,” said Chua Boon Gim, co-founder of local printing business, Kooxa.

The measures’ focus on innovation is also aligned with Singapore’s efforts to remain competitive and innovative in

an increasingly digital economy. “Enhanced R&D tax incentive and deductions for intellectual property registration and licensing coupled with measures like the Industry Transformation Maps (ITMs) and the \$19 billion Research, Innovation and Enterprise 2020 Plan, will position Singapore as a global innovation hub,” said Harvey Koenig, KPMG’s Head of ASEAN, Incentive Advisory, in the company’s report on Budget 2018.

Meanwhile, Mr Seah believes that efforts to help companies restructure through the ITMs must



now focus on implementation. He noted that facilitation and coordination between the authorities with trade associations to ensure that companies can utilise the ITMs to deepen their own capabilities will help ensure success of the programme.

“Although details of the implementation process were lacking in the Budget, we reckon that this is best examined at the micro/industry level rather than in the context of a macro-budget setting,” he added.

While not a Budget filled with “goodies”, there were some short-term relief measures to help tide businesses over as they adjust to a rapidly changing global economy. The extension of the Wage Credit Scheme and Corporate Income Tax rebates were some of the key measures announced.

BALANCING THE BOOKS FOR THE FUTURE

Budget 2018 also emphasised the need for long-term fiscal prudence to ensure that the Government can finance the country’s needs, which include higher healthcare costs as our population ages, as well as more infrastructure spending.

In the same report, Mr Seah commented that while Singapore has enjoyed years of overall fiscal surplus, largely due to robust investment returns, the country’s primary balance has been in deficit for the past few years and projected to deepen further in FY2018.

The various tax hikes announced – including the GST and increase in stamp duty for property purchases – are designed to make up the shortfall.

Beyond taxes, some key infrastructure projects will be financed through savings and borrowings. For example,

\$5 billion has been set aside in the Rail Infrastructure Fund to pay for the new rail lines that Singapore has planned.

LOOKING BEYOND THE BOTTOM LINE

The Budget also displayed a responsibility that went beyond fiscal matters. Measures were also announced to protect the environment and foster a more caring society. For instance, a new Carbon Tax, which will be imposed from 2019, is seen as necessary to promote sustainability, although it may affect the bottom lines of some sectors in the longer term.

Melissa Low, a research fellow at National University of Singapore (NUS)’ Energy Studies Institute, observed that starting the tax at \$5 a tonne for five years from 2018 will help companies adjust.

“This timeframe [of five years] is given to ensure certainty for companies, and to allow them to think of their next trench of investments, retrofits or improvements. The Government will need to then assess the progress of emissions reductions, international developments and review Singapore’s economic competitiveness and find an appropriate carbon tax level up from 2023 to 2030,” she said.

Alan Lau, Tax Partner at KPMG Singapore, is of the opinion that the tax will also help diversify the source of revenue collection for Singapore, and build a more robust taxpayer base for the future. “This augurs well against the backdrop of rising healthcare and social spending needs for a greying local population, and also achieves the twin benefit of controlling greenhouse gas emissions,” he said in a *Singapore Business Review* article.

Meanwhile, the Budget also strengthens support for individuals and families, with the Proximity Housing Grant.

“The Government has covered the grounds, addressing ageing issues relating to healthcare facilities, medical insurance, housing, employment, or, seen in another way, that of the financial, emotional, psychological, physical and social well-being of seniors,” said Associate Professor Tan Ern Ser from the Department of Sociology at NUS’ Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. “It [the Government] has been doing more in terms of quality and quantity, including healthcare infrastructures and technology, but it is hard to say if this is sufficient to address the demographic changes in Singapore.”

Much depends on whether the economy and Singapore’s revenue remain buoyant and seniors can stay healthy and employed longer, he noted.

LOOKING AHEAD

While there has been debate over whether these measures will achieve its desired goals, Budget 2018 has put in place a road map that will help Singapore address the challenges ahead and transform into a vibrant and innovative economy.

“Riding off the back of unexpected higher growth and productivity outcomes, the Government’s budget is expansive yet targeted to transform the economy through encouraging technology and innovation,” Peter Le Huray, Global Tax Markets Leader, PwC, told the *Singapore Business Review*. “This capitalises on Asia’s expanding economic influence and Singapore’s position as a key business hub.” ■

SMART

HOW ARE WE TRACKING?

Three years after Singapore's Smart Nation vision was launched, the progress report is a mixed one.
By Francis Kan.

It has been over three years since Prime Minister (PM) Lee Hsien Loong launched Singapore's push to become a Smart Nation with the aim of harnessing technology to improve the lives of its citizens and businesses.

As PM Lee put it then: "Therefore our vision is for Singapore to be a Smart Nation – a nation where people live meaningful and fulfilled lives, enabled seamlessly by technology, offering exciting opportunities for all."

Since then, a series of initiatives have been launched to realise this ambitious vision, including smart sensors for lighting and rubbish bins, new e-payment systems and trials of driverless vehicles. More recently, a new healthcare service was launched last year that would allow patients to consult healthcare professionals remotely.

Unlike other top-down, government led-initiatives, Smart Nation is billed as "a whole-of-nation movement" that would involve the participation of businesses and citizens. "As opposed to e-government, where the responsibility rests on the Government to roll out technology-enabled e-services, smart city solutions fundamentally require companies, individual citizens and the Government to work hand-in-hand," said NUS alumnus Dr Calvin Chan, Associate Professor of IT Management at the Singapore University of Social Science, who is also an e-government expert.

RECOGNITION ABROAD, INDIFFERENCE AT HOME?

Singapore's efforts to harness technology have been getting attention globally. Last year, the



ON THE RED DOT

NATION



International Telecommunications Union (ITU) – the United Nations’ agency for information and communication technologies – released a case study that evaluated Singapore’s progress in meeting its Smart Nation objectives.

In a press release accompanying the report, ITU Secretary-General Houlin Zhao said that Singapore is a leading example of a country with strong institutional support for smart city innovation.

“Singapore’s ability to act as a test bed for smart city innovation, and its willingness to share the results, continues to make a key contribution to international efforts to promote the transition to Smart Sustainable Cities,” he said.

Yet, some observers have said that the country’s Smart Nation schemes have so far not achieved the same kind of buzz among Singaporeans on the ground. Some feel that the strategy is not progressing as quickly as it should, and that the Republic trails some other countries in developing a smart nation.

HOW WE COMPARE

PM Lee acknowledged in his National Day Rally speech last year that China led the way when it comes to e-payments. He noted that most consumers in major Chinese cities are using mobile apps such as WeChat Pay or AliPay to buy snacks from roadside stalls or tip waiters at restaurants.

Estonia is another country often cited for its smart nation success. All citizens in the European nation are issued a digital identity by the state, which can be used as a legal travel ID to travel within the European Union, log into bank accounts or even vote electronically.

Singaporean teacher Chow Ying Hoon, who has travelled to Iceland and South Korea, said the

benefits of smart city solutions in those countries are more tangible compared to those in Singapore. “I spent a few weeks in Iceland and not once did I have to use paper currency or coins. And in Korea I was at the top of a mountain and could still get strong WiFi coverage,” she said.

CLOSING THE GAP

In view of the situation, Singapore is working to bridge the technology gap. In the e-payment space, the Association of Banks in Singapore (ABS) last year unveiled PayNow, a service that allows the customers of seven banks here to send and receive money using just their mobile or NRIC numbers. There are plans to make QR codes available for PayNow, and to make it available at hawker centres.

These official efforts seem to be gaining traction among consumers here. “Besides bank-backed payment initiatives like PayLah and PayNow, I haven’t gotten used to the idea of using ApplePay, AliPay or SamsungPay because I don’t feel secure that my payment will actually go through, or that someone can’t hack my phone and credit card details,” said Marissa Liliana, a childcare teacher. She noted that she feels safer using PayNow as she is prompted for a one-time pin, and uses her bank’s security token to complete payments.

Meanwhile, to speed up implementation of the Smart Nation strategy, the Government recently re-organised some of its agencies.

In 2017, the Smart Nation

and Digital Government Office (SNDGO) was formed under the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) comprising staff from the Digital Government Directorate of the Ministry of Finance, the Government Technology Policy department in the Ministry of Communications and Information (MCI), and the Smart Nation Programme Office in the PMO.

Meanwhile, the Government

Technology Agency (GovTech), a statutory board under MCI, was placed under the PMO as the implementing agency of SNDGO.

SUCCESS WILL TAKE TIME

Despite moves to produce more results, observers pointed out that any smart nation project will take time to bear fruit. “Much of it will be gradual, not an instantaneous improvement in a citizen’s everyday life. This makes success hard to measure,” said technology expert Alfred Siew on his

website, Techgoondu.com.

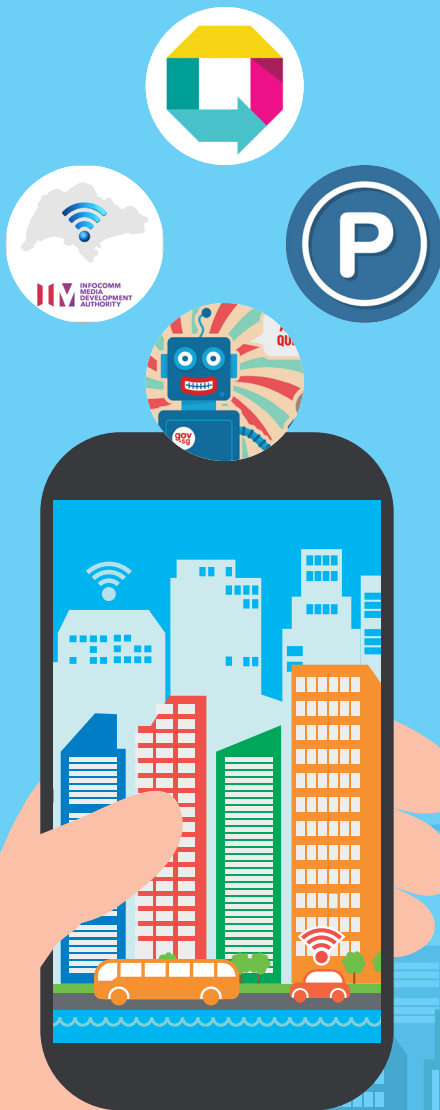
For the Republic’s Smart Nation vision to take off, he argued for getting more buy-in from Singaporeans. “It is time for a ground-up approach, rather than a top-down one where the Government looks for problems for a technology to solve. Involve citizens early instead.”

He added: “A smart nation has to be first about the people, not the technology. It needs problem solving, listening to feedback and a change in direction when things don’t work.” ■

“A smart nation has to be first about the people, not technology. It needs problem solving, listening to feedback and change in direction when things don’t work.”

Mr Alfred Siew,
Editor/Co-Founder,
Techgoondu.com

A LOOK AT SOME OF SINGAPORE'S SMART NATION MILESTONES



2015

OCTOBER

The Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (now known as the Info-communications Media Development Authority of Singapore) launches Wireless@SG, a free public WiFi network, in over 30 MRT stations.

APRIL

Setting up of the Cyber Security Agency Singapore in the Prime Minister's Office as the national body overseeing cybersecurity strategy, education and outreach, and industry development.

JANUARY

The Municipal Services Office launches the OneService mobile application to give the public a convenient way to send feedback on municipal issues.

2016

OCTOBER

The National Research Foundation, NUS and Singtel jointly launch a cybersecurity laboratory to develop innovative solutions for a smarter and safer Singapore.

SEPTEMBER

The Government Digital Services team at GovTech unveils govBuy, a micro-purchase site that allows people in the community – such as small-time developers and students – to bid for coding projects, to encourage co-creation between citizens and the Government.

APRIL

Launch of My Smart HDB Home @ Yuhua to extend smart home solutions to more residents at the HDB estate. Yuhua is the first HDB estate to go smart, following a pilot project launched in 2015.

2017

NOVEMBER

Nanyang Technological University, the Land Transport Authority, and JTC open Singapore's first autonomous vehicle test centre in the Jurong Innovation District.

OCTOBER

HDB announces that from 1 October, 2017, motorists can use the Parking.sg mobile app (available on App Store and Google Play Store) to pay for parking at 1,100 public car parks.

MARCH

Gov.sg bot – the first government Facebook chatbot that uses machine learning and is fully automated – goes live.

See more milestones at: smartnation.sg/happenings/milestones#sthash.KgOzYdSV.dpu



RISE OF THE GI

Employment in the gig economy is growing fast, helping to cushion the impact of a weak job market. But what are the implications? By Janice Lin.

After spending eight years holding down a full-time job in the publishing industry, Ms Sam David decided it was time for her to strike out on her own. Armed with just experience and sheer willpower, she left her full-time job and began working as a freelance writer.

“It was a case of ‘If not now,



G

ECONOMY

then when?,” she explained. “I’ve always wanted to be my own boss and see how far I can go with what I have in terms of not just work skills, but also money-saving skills and self-discipline.”

Almost two years on, the 28-year-old has carved out a career for herself as a professional freelancer, working on a wide variety of projects

that call on her to edit or write on a variety of topics for both print and digital publications, as well as take on public relations work and social media management.

BEATING THEIR OWN PATHS

Ms David is one among a growing number of workers, both in Singapore and globally, who are participating in the burgeoning gig economy, eschewing full-time employment for the relative freedom and flexibility of freelancing. This type of work used to be seen as a temporary solution when one is between jobs, but many are now opting for the path a little less taken and choosing freelancing or contract work as a long-term work arrangement.

In the United States, a 2016 report by Harvard University economist Lawrence Katz and Princeton University economist Alan Krueger showed the number of workers engaged in alternative work arrangements – which included contract workers,

freelancers and independent contractors – rose to 15.8 per cent in 2015 from 10.1 per cent in 2005, an increase of 9.4 million.

Meanwhile, in Singapore, a Ministry of Manpower (MOM) study showed that in 2016, there were about 167,000 career freelancers here, making up between 8 and 10 per cent of the workforce. Among these freelancers, 83 per cent indicated they had chosen this career path for themselves, much like Ms David had.

And while gig jobs used to be done by creative types such as musicians and photographers, as well as odd-job labourers like electricians and plumbers, the MOM study showed that a growing number of highly educated workers and older workers are joining the gig economy. Additionally, the rise of online platforms of ride-sharing company Grab and food delivery service Foodpanda has seen such arrangements spreading to related and other sectors, most notably transport and food delivery.

IS IT GOOD OR BAD?

But the jury is still out on whether these changes are favourable to the economy. On one hand, the gig economy has helped cushion the negative impact of a weak labour market. A Maybank Kim Eng report in October 2017 noted: “Retrenched or unemployed workers are able to turn to gigs for some income while looking for a permanent job.”

Businesses say freelancers help fill positions for work that comes only on an ad-hoc basis. “These are usually roles that aren’t required for the whole duration of a project, so short-term gigs make more sense,” said Mr Ian Gregory, co-founder and creative director of video-gaming company Witching Hour Studios.

However, Singapore University of Social Sciences labour economist Dr Walter Theseira said it is not yet clear if there is a net positive or negative impact on the economy. In particular, he sounded caution on the “online gig economy” fuelled by the rising influence of mobile applications.

While apps like Grab enable better matching of demand and supply of services and allow workers to sell their services more easily, it has also allowed for some everyday tasks to become formalised. An example Dr Theseira gave was that of paying grocery shopping companies for their services. “Money does change hands for the service rendered, but is there real growth created? If you didn’t use this service and your spouse does the shopping instead, you wouldn’t pay him or her for it. It is still unclear whether such services contribute to the economy in the same way that setting up a firm would.”

Additionally, much of this gig economy may not be sustainable. This is primarily because the start-ups that dominate this space are by and large financed by venture

capitalists. As such, they prioritise breakneck growth, paying workers higher wages not seen elsewhere in the traditional economy, and lowering prices to customers.

For example, drivers for start-ups like Grab are often highly paid to incentivise them to drive. The result of this is that these firms are booking losses year after year. In 2016, Uber posted a loss of \$2.8 billion.

“The business model is all about aggressive growth because these start-ups have investors to answer to. It is not clear that they will be profitable enough to survive when it comes to the point when they have to lower wages and increase prices,” said Dr Theseira.

BETTER WORKER PROTECTIONS NEEDED

For freelancers, having the freedom to work whenever they want and the ability to pick projects of interest is definitely a huge draw.

“One of the main reasons I do this is that I get to work whenever I want, and I get to choose the projects that interest me,” said Ms Diana R. Schmeidler, a freelance documentary director and producer.

There are, however, drawbacks to this type of work arrangements. For one, it is harder for gig workers to pick up soft skills like learning to work in teams and getting along with co-workers. Said Ms David: “For one gig, it took me over six months to get to know my colleagues. You’re always in this awkward position of working for a company but not being close to anyone or fully in the know of

“One of the main reasons I do this is that I get to work whenever I want, and I get to choose the projects that interest me.”

Ms Diana R. Schmeidler, freelance documentary director and producer

how things work.”

What’s more, self-employed and freelance workers do not benefit from social protection systems like CPF and employment policies that protect them from being exploited. Getting paid on time is a common issue, said both Ms Schmeidler and Ms David. “One of the biggest pains doing what I do is having to constantly chase companies for payment,” Ms Schmeidler revealed.

It is hard to get paid on time because rarely, if ever, are workers

given a proper contract spelling out terms of employment for the jobs they do. “I’ve only received one contract in the two years I’ve been freelancing in Singapore,” Ms Schmeidler said.

There is also no clear path for how workers can seek redress for employment or payment-related issues. With no law stipulating that freelancers must get a contract that outlines payment terms, in industries where competition among workers is keen, a company can simply offer the job to someone who doesn’t demand a contract, Ms Schmeidler added.

WHAT SINGAPORE IS DOING

In response to the growing prevalence of gig work, authorities in countries around the world have been looking at ways to better protect workers.

In Singapore, the Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices (TAFEP) is part of the Government’s efforts to address related employment issues.

Its Tripartite Standards for Procurement of Services from Media Freelancers, for example,

TALKING POINT

help workers like Ms David and Ms Schmeidler by setting out industry best practices for media companies to follow when hiring freelancers, including, among others, providing a written contract that clearly stipulates payment deadlines, and offering insurance coverage for work-related accidents and production equipment.

More recently, the Government backed a range of proposals by a workgroup that studies the common challenges that freelancers face. Among the recommendations include offering insurance that provides income during prolonged illness or injury, and looking into launching the contribute-as-you-earn model for Medisave.

Some companies are also taking the lead in offering better protection to their workers. Grocery delivery service honestbee Singapore, for example, purchases accident insurance for their contract staff.

“We want to give our ‘bees’ the assurance that they will be covered. Such benefits also help retain staff and thus minimise the need to constantly retrain new employees,” said Country General Manager, Mr Chris Urban.

But freelancers say there is still room for more to be done. “There needs to be an implementation system and checks and balances to ensure compliance,” said Ms Schmeidler.

Ms David agreed: “I think freelancers can’t ever truly be

protected if the rules aren’t strict for those who don’t pay us.”

KEEPING THE CONVERSATION GOING

As the gig economy continues to grow, it may provide an answer to one of society’s hardest challenges – unemployment. But the long-term implications for workers and the economy remain a grey area.

“At the governmental level, support for the companies that implement (protections for their workers) is a good start. All said though, I think the biggest factor that will affect the outcome of this is making sure we keep talking about it and letting time do its thing,” said Witching Hour Studios’ Mr Gregory. ■



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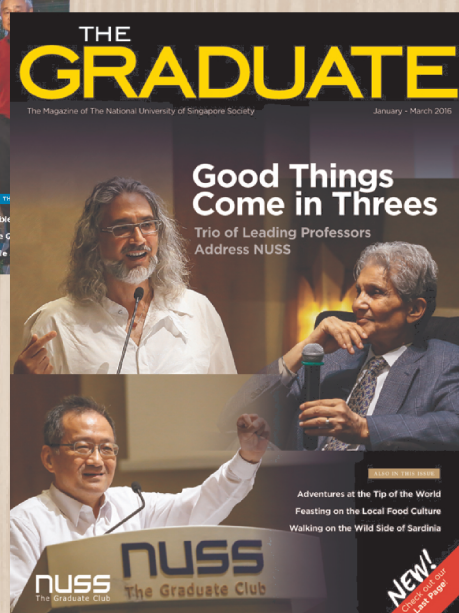
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UNCONVENTIONAL VOCATIONS



Your natural aptitude and skills might be better suited to a less standard career that can, ultimately, be more satisfying, says Melissa De Silva.

If you're feeling unfulfilled or unchallenged in your corporate job, perhaps a complete change of career is in order. Your unique traits, gifts and inclinations may equip you for something different.

One way to explore what might suit you better is to read up on different industries and job scopes. It's also worthwhile to take a look at books aimed at helping people identify their passions and plan how to switch careers.

Once you know the area of work you'd like to enter, the next step is to acquire the skills that will set you up for success in your new chosen vocation.

Here are four less conventional careers to consider, and how to get started.

SUCCESSING AS A BLOGGER

Anyone with internet access can, technically, become a blogger. But whether you succeed (success being defined as having a strong following, earning income from your blog through advertisers, or both) will depend on how good a writer you are, how savvy you are at marketing yourself, and whether you have an instinct for interesting content.

Blog writing needs to be crisp and succinct. To improve your writing skills, check out the heaps of books on writing available at our public libraries, or sign up for a writing course.

Successful bloggers also get invited to events and launches, so be sure to get yourself on the mailing list of every public relations firm in town. As for knowing what makes good content, when brainstorming, ask yourself: Would you be interested in reading that?

BECOMING AN ENTREPRENEUR

Everyone knows the upsides of being an entrepreneur – a flexible schedule, the power to make all your own decisions as a business owner rather than as an employee, and the possibility of financial freedom in the future.

Those comfortable taking risks, unfazed by round-the-clock hours, and the challenge of constant problem-solving, likely have what it takes to be an entrepreneur.

The most successful have been creative thinkers such as Steve Jobs and Oprah Winfrey; their imaginations were too large to be contained by existing structures, and they also had the gumption to run with their dreams.

If you're a creative problem-solver with an idea you think the world needs, but lack the skills, enroll for relevant business courses and consider partnering someone with complementary skills.

TIONAL



WORKING FOR A GOOD CAUSE

How would you like to work for a cause you care about – whether it's alleviating poverty, promoting compassionate treatment of animals or protecting the environment?

Many people in the non-profit sector express deep job satisfaction as they get to do work that directly contributes to a cause they personally believe in. They also enjoy close relationships with co-workers because such jobs tend to attract people with similar values and a shared desire to do something meaningful with their lives. Roles in non-profits also tend to be more fluid as smaller teams mean staff have the opportunity to take on various responsibilities.

For many people, these benefits outweigh the drawbacks of working for a non-profit such as lower pay. To get a feel of working in this sector, volunteer at a local charity that is close to your heart.

PROVIDING CORPORATE TRAINING

Corporate trainers are experts who impart knowledge and skills to employees in a company. Some may be hired on full-time contracts to help with migrations to new business systems. They can also be independent consultants who work short-term contracts, training employees in diverse subjects ranging from marketing and communications, people management, to organisational alignment, finance and legal and customer service.

There is no fixed education or career background, though relevant qualifications and professional experience are vital. To deliver any training in Singapore, it is advisable to get the Advanced Certificate in Training and Assessment, which equips learners with the essential skills to provide training and assessments across different industries. ■

Once you know the area of work you'd like to enter, the next step is to acquire the skills that will set you up for success in your new chosen vocation.

NUSS offers courses that may give you a taste of a new line of work, or be a practical bridge to a new field. Sign up for a course today at nuss.org.sg!

AMAZING PARKS

Feeling ready to conquer great wide-open spaces, lush forests or biodiverse waters? Take your pick from Jonathan Meur's shortlist of four outstanding national parks.

INLE LAKE WETLAND SANCTUARY, MYANMAR

As an ASEAN Heritage Park since 2003, this sanctuary aims to protect the area's natural vegetation and geological features, make ecotourism possible, and help the wildlife on the wetlands prosper. It is believed to be a nesting spot for the globally endangered sarus crane.

The lake is home to a floating market and several floating gardens. Majestic bejewelled pagodas and shrines of stone surround it, along with the wooden Nga Phe Kyaung monastery. A unique group of fishermen from the Intha tribe roam its waters, steering their boats with one leg around the oar while they use both hands to fish.

Best time to visit: During the Phaung Daw Oo Festival in September and October, which features rowing competitions between imposing, colourful vessels. Pilgrims from all over the country come to pay homage to the four Buddha images, gain merit and soak up the festival atmosphere.



MU KOH CHANG NATIONAL PARK, THAILAND

Located in the Gulf of Thailand near the Cambodian border, Koh Chang island enjoys a rugged, multifaceted character, thanks to mountainous jungles, broad bays and impressive waterfalls. It is the biggest of 52 islands interspersed throughout the marine park rich in coral reefs and crystal-clear waters. Besides chasing outstanding scuba diving experiences, visitors flock White Sand Beach and Lonely Beach on its western coast for kayaking, jungle trekking and snorkelling opportunities. The eastern, less developed side of the island is ideal to escape the tourists and enjoy some peace and quiet.

Best time to visit: The most festive time of the year is during Songkran, the Thai New Year that occurs in April. The best time to travel to Koh Chang is from November to May, when the sea is calm with good visibility and there is more guaranteed sunshine.



DANUBE-DRAVÁ NATIONAL PARK, HUNGARY

Along the Danube River in the southwest of Hungary, the 490-square-kilometre park is a refuge for many protected bird species, like aigrettes, spoonbills and black storks. It is also home to a stag population famous for its impressive antlers, and endemic species like the black hawthorn and the Drava caddis fly. Within the park, the Gemenc nature reserve boasts willow and poplar forests, large oak-ash-elm forests, and foks, an ancient system of floodplain management. Between the narrow-gauge train, walking trails, cycling routes and boat trips, sightseeing options are aplenty.

Best time to visit: In June for the Danube Carnival, a colourful showcase of traditional dances, or in October for the Café Budapest Contemporary Arts Festival, a multidisciplinary event featuring both local and international artists.



YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK, USA

Yellowstone National Park abounds with some of Mother Nature's most astounding works: the terracotta-hued cliff walls, river of the Grand Canyon, rainbow waters of Midway Geyser Basin's Grand Prismatic Spring, and Old Faithful, possibly the world's most renowned geyser, to name a few. Pristine lakes, ferocious waterfalls, dramatic peaks, and bright green forests and meadows complete the picture of the colossal park – almost 9,000km² – from the

northwesternmost corner of Wyoming into the edges of Idaho and Montana. Wildlife-watching is abundant, with innumerable hiking trails alive with buffalos, elk and sometimes, even grizzlies. Beyond the most popular spots are lesser-known attractions like the hot springs of the West Thumb Geyser Basin, the Lewis River Channel and the Dogshead Loop.

Best time to visit: July is chock-full of events in and around Yellowstone. From the Cody Stampede Rodeo show to the Targhee Fest and the Yellowstone Beer Fest competition, there's something for everyone. In August, the Shoshone-Bannock Indian Festival showcases Native American culture.

TECH



Too much to do and not enough time? Hack your productivity, and work better and faster with these mobile apps (for Android and iOS).
By Janice Lin.



EVERNOTE

The best thing about Evernote is that it enables you to quickly make notes on the go, and its beauty lies in its simplicity and ease of use. Just fire up the app on your mobile, tap the “add” button and jot your thoughts down. To further enhance your note, clip a recording, add a sketch or photo. Everything can be kept neatly organised in ‘notebooks’ that you can create for different projects, and the app’s sync function ensures easy access on multiple devices. If you’re working with a team on a project, its collaborative feature enables everyone to create and share their notes.



TODOIST

Never drop the ball again with Todoist. This app allows you to create to-do lists – fast. For instance, you can quickly assign dates to complete tasks by just keying in “tomorrow, at 4pm”, instead of the date itself. And if you have difficulty setting a realistic schedule for yourself, its artificial-intelligence-powered Smart Schedule feature recommends the best possible dates for you to complete your tasks, based on your habits, other projects due for the week, priority of projects, and your daily and weekly goals.

SMART



FOREST

Grow your concentration skills with Forest, an app that turns the act of focusing on your work into a game. The concept is simple: this is a game you win by not playing. You grow a virtual cartoon tree for each set period of time (usually 25 minutes) that you ignore your phone to focus on your work. If you leave the app to chat on WhatsApp or check your Instagram feed, the tree dies. With time, each completed session will add a tree to your virtual, customisable forest, which acts as a visual representation of your success, to motivate you to keep “planting” and improving your concentration.



TRELLO

Have a huge project to tackle but find the idea of getting started daunting? Trello helps you break down the process and visualise your workflow with its boards. Simply create a new board for each project, then within a board, set up separate lists, such as “To Do” and “In Progress”. Under each list, create “cards” for each individual task. You can add comments and attachments, set due dates, and tag team members to a card. These cards can be shuffled from one list to another – from “In Progress” to “Done” once it’s finished. The idea behind this is that we are more likely to accomplish large projects if we break them down into smaller, more manageable tasks.

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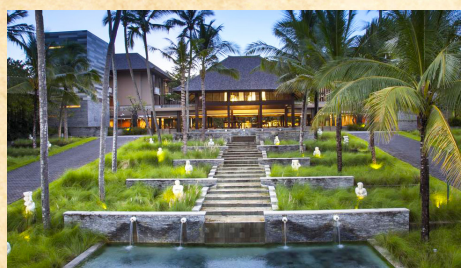
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- Leave your answers in the comment box, and we will pick three winners with the most creative answers.
- "Like" and "Share" the post with your friends, so they can take part and stand a chance to win as well!

The contest runs from 23 April to 7 May 2018, 11.59pm, and is open to NUSS members only. The top three winners will be chosen and notified via email. Winners will each win a Peking Duck dish from The Scholar. Terms and conditions apply.



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**I can't live
without
NUSS
because**

LAST ISSUE'S WINNERS

In The Graduate Jan-Mar 2018, we asked members to guess the number of oranges the lion was giving out in our Facebook post, and tell us why they cherish family gatherings at NUSS Guild Houses.

"Eight oranges. I cherish gatherings at NUSS Guild Houses as my husband and I met at NUS. Going back is like retracing our footsteps as carefree young adults and, at the same time, it lets us build new memories with our three young girls. We are at NUSS every Sunday for swimming classes and dinner at Café on the Ridge. The warm service of the staff also keeps us coming back. Please keep up the excellent F&B service – we always feel welcome at the KRGH and SCGH outlets!"

Quah Mui Fong Gynn, winner of \$100 worth of dining vouchers and two complimentary tubs of Charcoal Pineapple Tarts.

"Eight oranges! I dated and fell in love with my wife at a fantastic restaurant and bar at the now-defunct Adam Park Guild House. The Scholar at KRGH is where we had our last reunion dinner with my grandma before she passed away, and also where we had the first reunion dinner with our first-born. Both these Guild Houses have a special place in my family's hearts."

Fong Jek Howe, winner of \$100 worth of dining vouchers and two complimentary tubs of Charcoal Pineapple Tarts.



**WE WELCOME
YOUR FEEDBACK**

Give us your feedback and suggestions on The Graduate. Please include your full name and membership number and email your feedback to secretariat@nuss.org.sg



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For enquiries, please contact Kelly Koh at kellykoh@nuss.org.sg or 6586 3741.

NUSS
The Graduate Club

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