

ROUND-UP
OF VIEWSHOW TO MAKE BOTANIC
GARDENS WORLD SHOWPIECE

I AM a regular visitor to the Singapore Botanic Gardens. Singaporeans are lucky to have such a wonderful spot of nature right on the edge of the Central Business District.

However, more can be done to improve the use of and increase appreciation for this national icon.

Firstly, a "Green Speakers' Corner" could be set up. Members of the public could air their views on environmental or related issues. A wall could also be erected so that visitors could pen their thoughts.

Secondly, screenings of films or documentaries with an environmental theme could be organised and discounted rates offered to students.

Thirdly, schools could adopt a tree and encourage their students to carry out research on the tree's history. They could then reproduce their work on slides for visitors' benefit.

Lastly, the Botanic Gardens could be used for recreational activities, such as street football.

The gardens should be seen as more than a tourist attraction. It should strive to be a global showpiece for countries that want to go green.

MR COLIN ONG TAU SHIEN

WHAT MAKES A BOOK
A BESTSELLER?

THERE are many advertisements for talks and presentations by people who claim to be authors of "bestsellers".

However, what are the criteria for ranking a book as a best-seller?

I was under the impression that a book can be ranked a bestseller only if a high number of copies are sold, weekly or annually.

I have also heard of authors who ask their friends and family to buy up all their books from bookshops.

This bumps up the numbers and gets attention from bookshops and the public.

Booksellers then push the book, while readers take notice and are more likely to buy it.

How do public speakers in Singapore justify their "best-selling author" status?

MR LAURENCE PANG

RIS LOW NOT SUITABLE TO
BE SAFE-SEX AMBASSADOR

I REFER to the news that former Miss Singapore World Ris Low is a safe-sex ambassador.

In her capacity as ambassador, Miss Low showed her poor command of English in a television interview.

Beauty and brains should be the criteria for communicating educational messages to society.

MR PAUL ANTONY
FERNANDEZ

Promote arts diversity in school

I WAS intrigued by entertainment and lifestyle editor Jill Alphonso's commentary, "How Singapore can be world-class concert venue" (*my paper*, Jan 15).

In Singapore, there has been a gradual proliferation of alternative genres of music, art and other forms of culture and entertainment.

The growth and promotion of alternative acts complement an increase in the number of performance venues across the island.

It is of little doubt that Singaporeans will be exposed to a greater variety of performances in the years to come.

However, it also means that concertgoers must be prepared

to develop an appreciation for diversity in the arts.

Over the years, with an increasing focus on the importance of culture and the arts – be it music, visual art, dance or theatre – schools and families have recognised that appreciation for these art forms must be cultivated from a young age.

Through field trips and school events, students have raised their level of awareness and appreciation for the arts.

Globalisation has also given them greater access to a wide range of entertainment and cultural products.

With regard to music, exposing youths to music genres such as grunge, punk or indie could be a part of the education curriculum.

Lessons could include interactive sections on the backgrounds of the genres and performers.

Teachers could also encourage their students to reflect on the audio-visual experiences in class.

Going one step further, performers could go on school tours for meet-and-greet sessions, with question-and-answer opportunities for students and educators alike.

Of course, entertainment is not limited to the music industry.

As we move on, we should expand our horizons and explore alternative forms of the arts to discover more perspectives.

MR KWAN JIN YAO

HELPDESK 我的字典

Intrigued: 感兴趣 gǎn xìng qù

Alternative: 另类 lìng lèi

Cultivated: 培养 péi yǎng

Globalisation: 全球化 quán qiú huà

Curriculum: 课程 kè chéng

Perspectives: 看法 kàn fǎ

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Please include your full name, address and a telephone contact number. We reserve the right to edit letters for clarity and length.

Have tray racks at
fast-food restaurants

I REFER to the report, "New drive to get fast-food diners to clear trays" (*my paper*, Jan 15).

Singapore should have started this initiative long ago, but it is not too late to pick up the habit.

In some countries, restaurant patrons are encouraged to clear their tables after they are done.

Germany, for example, has adopted a school cafeteria-style tray-collection point in places such as foodcourts and fast-food restaurants.

After their meals, customers leave their dirty crockery on their trays and slide them into tray racks. Staff are stationed at these collection points to clear the racks and sort out waste.

To ensure that cleaners still have

work, Singapore could adopt such a system.

More retirees could also be hired for these jobs since the work does not require strenuous physical effort.

It may take some time for Singaporeans to get used to the "menial" task of clearing their trays, but it is time we realised that it is our responsibility to clean up after ourselves.

The campaign gives us a good opportunity to do so. I hope this habit will spread to foodcourt and hawker-centre patrons.

We should not clear our trays simply because of the campaign and not do so after it is over.

We should make clearing our tables a part of our daily lives.

MISS STEPHANIE YEO XIN YING

Junction sensors should
respond to traffic conditions

I OBSERVED that many traffic junctions have embedded sensors. Most of the traffic lights change according to a preset timing.

However, traffic conditions are dynamic throughout the day and from one day to another.

To stick to a preset timing would mean time wasted waiting at an empty traffic junction in the middle of the night.

When there are two junctions within 200m to 300m of each other, right-turning vehicles at the first junction would need to stop at the second

junction, regardless of whether there is traffic at the second junction or not.

This scenario happens because the timings for the traffic lights at both junctions are set in favour of vehicles travelling straight.

Examples can be seen in North Buona Vista Road and its junctions with Commonwealth Avenue West and Biopolis Way.

The sensors at each junction should be set to respond to actual traffic conditions. With this, travelling times could be reduced.

MR REUBEN CHEANG HON THENG

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