

## Rough ride on the Man Code Expressway

**H**APPY New Year. Forgive the belated greeting, but after navigating the MCE to get to the ECP in the hope of exiting at the AYR to enter the CBD, I found myself hopelessly lost on the KPE, with fading hopes of ever finding the PIE again. In other words, I am not home yet.

Do not mock me. Advocates of gender differences – and probably the guy who designed the MCE in the first place – will no doubt chalk this up to a case of mad drivers good, women drivers oxymoron. But it does add fuel to my theory that urban street planning is a totally sexist endeavour designed to perpetuate this stereotype.

Of course, it was mostly men who rallied against the MCE when it first opened to massive traffic jams (don't blame me – I was al-

ready somewhere in Tuas). Going by the on-line rants, it wasn't so much their inability to make sense of the new routes, mind you, but a big government conspiracy to squander \$4.3 billion of taxpayer money to build a fancy expressway with the diabolical intention of increasing ERP ganttries and ultimately forcing people to stop buying cars altogether.

That said, it is possible that the complaint about spending so much money to dig an undersea tunnel without observation windows on the side to look at passing sea creatures might have been made by a woman.

But the real evidence that the expressway design is male-oriented can be found in the newspapers. Specifically, this full page ad that has been running almost every day under the sexy headline, "Traffic Advisory for



Motorists Using The Marina Coastal Expressway (MCE)". If you understand what's written in those little boxes and on that map, please tell me. But not if you're a woman because that would crush me. In fact, I fully believe that the contents of this ad were written by a man who knows exactly what he is talking about but does not have a girlfriend. Nor does he have male friends who are hairdressers or in touch with their feminine side.

I think he doesn't drive either as I sense a lingering resentment towards car owners in the tone of language used. As in, if you really don't understand that if you are using Ophir Road to get to Sheares Avenue you first have to enter the CBD before you can get to the MCE, and don't appreciate his efforts to add little dots to help you cut out the "motorists' handy guide", then you can jolly well take a bus.

That's why he's written the ad in "man-code" – because I cannot think of any reason anyone would read it willingly. Apparently, if you hold up the guide to your rear-view mirror, turn it upside down and match every second letter to the numbers on your smartphone, you will get the co-ordinates to a secret location that serves free beer and chicken wings. AND – if you can decipher the clues meticulously scattered in the accompanying map, you will find the URL address for the complete library of never-before-released, uncensored footage created by the Malaysian sex-blogging couple.

So if you see a guy studying the ad intently, he may not really need to get to the CBD via the MCE all that quickly.

Think I'm kidding? "C'mon, I'm a woman. I may not be able to drive but I know a male conspiracy when I read one..."

## QUIRKY BUSINESS

Creative entrepreneurship takes on new meaning as several individuals show how unconventional ideas can make solid business sense

### Get a surfer bod without going near the sea

By GEOFFREY EUJ

#### SURFSET

**SURF'S** up in Singapore – and you don't even have to get wet. Today marks the local launch of Surfset, a new exercise programme from – where else? – California that involves balancing on a two-metre-long surfboard-like contraption called the RipSurfer X.

Essentially, it's an unstable platform perched above the floor on three rubber balls. The idea is to simulate the exercise you get from surfing without actually having to go anywhere near the sea.

Melissa Goh, a Pilates instructor who discovered Surfset while researching fitness trends in the United States, says exercising on the RipSurfer X mimics the physical motions associated with surfing. It was invented about two years ago by a professional ice hockey player and off-season surfing nut who realised that surfing was a good way to develop his physique.

"Once I saw it, I ordered a board and was convinced that it works," says Ms Goh, who ran her own fitness studio in Jakarta ([www.benefit-pilates.com](http://www.benefit-pilates.com)) before returning here to start Surfset Singapore.

While a typical Pilates class is made up of about six people working on a Reformer machine, a Surfset class can accommodate up to 10 people.

Ms Goh says she charges between \$25 and \$35 per person for a session but during the initial stages it's really more about building a



brand than profit margins. She's confident that commercial success will come in time, especially since she's a pioneer in indoor surfing, so to speak.

"It's an exciting new trend, and Singaporeans love trends – plus they are very health-conscious," she says. "You get the same kind of workout that you can get in the ocean – it forces your core muscles to work evenly, otherwise you'll fall off."

The first of several planned studios is located in the East Coast "near the sea", she says.

A typical session lasts 45 minutes and mimics the actions associated with surfing, such as paddling. Other exercises include Carving (standing on the board and shifting your weight), Pop-Up (pushing up to a standing po-



**New trend for the health conscious:** Ms Goh (left) says exercising on the RipSurfer X board mimics the physical motions associated with surfing and while you may end up with the well-toned body of a surfer, it won't mean you'll know how to surf for real

sition from a flat position on the board) and the Duck Dive Push-Up (going under an imaginary wave and pushing to the surface). "It's like a fun exercise for people with a sense of adventure," says Ms Goh.

Surfset classes take place in a group setting and are not recommended for people who are injured, elderly or pregnant, she adds. "It's quite different from Pilates, which is accessible to almost everyone. The classes are more intense than Pilates and the exercise is more like Spinning (high-energy indoor cycling)."

You may end up with a well-toned surfer bod but it won't mean you'll know how to surf for real, of course.

"You don't learn how to catch a wave – you just use the same muscles and movements," says Ms. Goh. "People won't feel like they're working out – they just have to want to get fit."

Surfset Singapore is located at 454B Joo Chiat Road. For more information, visit [www.surfset.sg](http://www.surfset.sg) or contact Melissa Goh at 9751-0793 or [me@surfset.sg](mailto:me@surfset.sg)

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### Keeping an eye on film education

By DYLAN TAN  
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#### www.filmiceye.com

**WHETHER** it's an all-action summer blockbuster or a slow-moving arthouse flick, what's on the big screen is always more than just a series of moving images to Eternally Tan.

The avid movie buff, who has reviewed over 1,000 films on his blog @Filmmonoman since 2007, believes cinema can also be transformed into a higher learning educational tool.

That led him to start The Filmic Eye – which pioneers film education programmes in schools – after he graduated from the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication & Information at Nanyang Technological University last year.

"I did my final-year honours

thesis – an applied research paper on Film Literacy & Education in Singapore – and realised that Film Education is something very new and tantalising to explore in the Singapore education scene," he says. "Thus, I decided to start The Filmic Eye with a few partners, including David Lee, the vice-chairman of the Singapore Film Society, whom I co-run the educational initiative with."

The 25-year-old stresses he's not running a film school per se, but that its courses encourage participants to view movies in a whole new light while gaining an understanding of the film business. Lower secondary students at their last talk, for instance, learnt about the Hollywood system through its star-making and franchise models.

"The Ministry of Education has been trying to place more emphasis on the arts and a more

well-rounded education for students in recent years; we hope (to) give schools the opportunity to explore Film Education as an accessible and exciting way to get students to engage with the Arts and learn something different from what they might normally do," says Mr Tan.

"The Filmic Eye also champions the use of film in the classroom by exploring innovative ways to integrate Film Education into subjects such as English, Chinese, the Humanities and even Civics & Character education."

The courses can last anywhere from a day to eight weeks and the curriculum is developed in-house. While the core target market is made up of teenagers at secondary and junior college level, Mr Tan says that they are not limiting themselves to that demographic.

They are also eyeing "the pub-

lic and working professionals who see cinema as a potentially liberating, informative and insightful medium to explore either leisurely or relevant to their personal, cultural or organisational growth."

Response so far has been "excellent" even though the initiative is only a couple of months old.

"The Filmic Eye aims to provide (participants) with the tools and knowledge to see movies as more than just entertainment," Mr Tan says. "Films can be an art form and are cultural artifacts; they offer excellent opportunities for critical thinking... even the ubiquitous Hollywood blockbuster can be seen through different 'eyes' (so) we hope to sow the seeds for a new generation of cinema-lovers who are not only sensitive and critical consumers of visual media, but also contribute to the Singapore cinema landscape in various ways."



**The reel deal:** Mr Tan (right) started The Filmic Eye with a few partners, including Mr Lee, the vice-chairman of the Singapore Film Society. PHOTO: YEN MENG JIN