

REPORT OF PROGRAMME ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR ENGLISH TELEVISION AND RADIO PROGRAMMES (2003/2004)

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Annual Report by the Programme Advisory Committee for English programmes (PACE) covers the period 15 July 2003 to 31 July 2004. The Chairperson and members of the PACE were appointed by the Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts for a term of 2 years beginning 15 July 2003.

Terms of Reference

1.2 The terms of reference of the PACE are:

- Feedback on the range and quality of English TV and Radio programmes and give suggestions for their improvement;
- Feedback and advice on the standards of TV/Radio programmes and commercials;
- Advise the MDA on its Programme, Advertisement and Sponsorship Codes; and
- Support the MDA in its public education efforts and the gathering of programme feedback.

Members

1.3 The PACE comprises members from a wide range of background and fields of expertise, with an age range from the 20s to the 50s representing the major racial demographics of Singapore. Annex A provides the background of members.

The Ethos of PACE

1.4 In its discussions, the PACE is mindful that there are a range and variety of views from different segments of society and various stakeholders in the media industry on issues of range, quality and content. Its role is to assess the various viewpoints and achieve a balance between (i) the needs of the more prudent with those wanting greater room for experimentation; and (ii) commercial viability and social responsibility of broadcasters.

1.5 While seeking an optimum balance is a challenge, the PACE firmly believes that a responsible broadcast media is an essential partner in ensuring social cohesion.

Specialisation & Communication

1.6 With more than 18 local Free-To-Air (FTA) analogue TV and radio stations, the PACE has had a challenging task of assessing the innumerable programmes available. To focus members on specific areas of interests, the PACE formed various sub-committees or Interest Groups for Programmes (IGPs) to monitor and assess the different genres of programmes. Members could choose to specialise in areas such as programmes for children or the elderly, entertainment, sports, cultural and info-educational content.

1.7 Beyond the 8 physical meetings by the PACE and several ad hoc IGP meetings, members communicated through emails for a continuous exchange of ideas.

1.8 For a better understanding of the broadcast industry, the PACE also met with selected broadcasters. This enabled members to seek clarifications firsthand as well as provide more pertinent recommendations to the industry directly. It will continue to meet other broadcasters in the coming months.

1.9 To obtain a better sensing of public sentiments on television and radio programmes, the PACE also initiated focus group meetings chaired by members. For the year under review, 4 focus groups were conducted with general members of public, senior citizens and students for an exchange of views. Preparations are under way to carry out similar feedback sessions with other interest groups.

SECTION 2: RANGE & QUALITY OF BROADCAST PROGRAMMES AND PACE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 In the current broadcast environment in Singapore, TV viewers have a total of 7 FTA TV channels to choose from. The incumbent Media Corporation of Singapore has five channels, namely Channel 5 (Ch 5), Channel 8 (Ch 8), Channel News Asia (CNA), Central (with three distinct programme belts--Kids, Arts, and Vasantham), and Suria. The relatively new broadcaster, SPH MediaWorks, has Channel U (Ch U) and Channel i (Ch i).

2.2 In addition, Starhub Cable Vision has added several new subscription channels to its existing line-up, bringing the total number of channels available on cable TV to more than 50, including channels offered on the digital platform.

2.3 The range of content available on FTA TV has generally remained unchanged in the past year with broadcasters sticking to tried and tested programme formulas such as Reality shows like the relationship based *The Bachelor*, *For Love Or Money* and *Joe Millionaire*. Viewers are therefore given more of the same types of programming, especially in the case of entertainment genres.

2.4 On the issue of content standards, the PACE also notes that on a few occasions, broadcasters' judgement of content suitable on Free-To-Air media has been questionable such as espousing illegal betting on national television and conducting sexually explicit conversation on radio. It urges that broadcasters be mindful of the impact of FTA media on viewers, especially the young.

2.5 This section contains the PACE's observations on range and quality of broadcast programmes by genre.

General Issues

2.6 The PACE raised the following issues on programming by broadcasters:

- (i) Scheduling of Programmes - Broadcasters have a tendency at times to schedule programmes and movies with adult or horror themes, and violent content during prime time before 10pm. While edits have been made to the programmes, these may not sufficiently address the main concern of the impact on children watching TV during the family viewing hours. Broadcasters should schedule such programmes appropriately after 10pm. This would

ensure that children are protected while adults may view the programmes, with less edits at a later hour.

- (ii) Trailers Shown During Family Viewing Time – Some trailers broadcast during family viewing hours (6am to 10pm) tend to be exploitative of sex and violence and are unsuitable for children. For example, some trailers for the docu-drama *True Files* which were shown before 10pm were graphic. Hence, broadcasters are advised to be conscious not only of programme content during family viewing hours, but of advertisement and trailer content as well.
- (iii) Reality TV - Careful selection is needed with programmes that deal with realism. Reality TV, which continues to be a programming trend, at times deals with issues which capitalise on and celebrate the human race's 'worst qualities', e.g. greed, selfishness and voyeurism etc. Such real life programmes that involves the ordinary people will leave a deeper impression on viewers as compared to dramas. Hence, where such programmes are broadcast, they should be scheduled appropriately.
- (iv) Responsible Advertising and Sponsorship - There is an increasing number of TV advertisements that promote bust enhancement services and slimming formula, which may send out wrong messages to viewers about their body image. Broadcasters should give due consideration to the treatment, frequency as well as the scheduling of such advertisements.

Children's Programmes

2.7 Over the past year, the broadcasters have shown a wide variety of programmes, both educational and purely entertaining. The PACE is pleased to note efforts of the media to provide advisories for parents and children in order to help distinguish programming suitable for older children from those for younger children. The Straits Times and Today programme listings page now labels children's programmes on Central as either for preschool children or schoolgoing children. Programmes listed on Kids Central's website are also colour-coded to differentiate between the two target age groups. The PACE applauds these efforts and encourages the rest of the media to consider doing the same.

2.8 On programmes for children, the PACE recommends the following:

- (i) Children's Movie Festival - Programmes for children largely tend to be in series form to attract children who tune in 'by appointment viewing'. Broadcasters can consider having a children's movie festival to showcase good films suitable for the young. The festival can also be used as a platform to air specially commissioned productions targeted at children which will in turn, nurture our local creative talent.
- (ii) Violence in Cartoons – There are some cartoons on FTA TV where violence, however mild, is a main staple. Examples range from superhero cartoons like *The Justice League* and *X-men* to Japanese anime such as *Yu-Gi-Oh*. An excess of such programmes may lead to violence being seen by children as the means to resolve conflict. Broadcasters should source for more wholesome cartoons where adversarial conflict does not form the main focus (e.g. *Hamtaro*).
- (iii) Higher Quality Children's Programming - It is encouraging that MediaCorp TV12 is doing its part to acquire good and quality children's programmes. Of

the children's programmes short-listed on www.parents-choice.org, a website by parents which recommends quality children's programmes, a majority of the titles have been or will be shown on Kids Central.

- (iv) Programming Gap – Currently, there is a lack of programmes for youths aged between 12 to 14 years old. As such, broadcasters need to identify and acquire programmes that cater to the needs of this segment of youths.
- (v) Trailers During Kids Programme Belts - There have been concerns from PACE and members of the public that trailers for programmes targeted at older viewers e.g. *Charmed* are shown during kids programme belts. Broadcasters should be cautious when scheduling such trailers especially in the case of cross channel promotions.
- (vi) More Sensitivity in Game Formats for Children - There have been conflicting sentiments towards game-show formats such as *Singapore's Brainiest Kid* which has children as contestants in a quiz show. While some think that such shows are educational and fun, others find that these formats may subject the children to unnecessary stress and public scrutiny, which may have a negative psychological impact on them. Broadcasters are therefore advised to consider the possible negative impact on young contestants and be sensitive when adopting game formats involving children.
- (vii) Merchandising and Children's Programmes - Some cartoons, though entertaining with cute characters, are highly commercialised and come across as a long form advertisement for the range of merchandise from the programme e.g. *Pokemon*, *Beyblade*. Broadcasters are therefore advised to weigh the quality and benefits of the content of a programme against the commercial elements displayed as children are more credulous.

Entertainment Programmes

2.9 During the period under review, the entertainment channels have continued to source for and acquire good or award-winning dramas such as *Band of Brothers* on Ch 5 and *Higher Ground* on Ch i. The recommendations on entertainment programmes are:

- (i) Upkeep Programme Standards and Quality - The standard and quality of programmes on Channel 5 and Channel i are generally satisfactory. However, broadcasters could strive to broaden the range of programmes made available, with a good mix of commercially viable and award winning shows to meet diverse viewing needs.
- (ii) Smoother Edits - At times, edits to programmes and transitions to commercial breaks are abrupt. Local broadcasters should attempt to make their edits smoother and more seamless such that they do not disrupt the flow of programmes and affect the audience's viewing pleasure.
- (iii) Raise the Standard of Local Programming - Local English programming needs further improvement, especially in the area of sitcoms where scripts are often contrived, plots shallow, and attempts at comedy are usually slapstick rather than a more pleasing brand of wit and subtle humour. To improve standards, broadcasters could engage more freelance scriptwriting talents to add variety and inject fresh ideas. In addition, the MDA and broadcasters could also co-organise/co-fund more scriptwriting competitions

with prizes that include scriptwriting job contracts and also to open the competitions to participants from the region.

- (iv) Improve Quality of Primetime Viewing - It was felt that entertainment programmes at primetime concentrated on either local productions, which may not be well produced, or 'mindless' variety shows. Broadcasters are advised to think of creative ways to break the current programming formula and schedule more quality programmes during primetime.
- (v) Increase Local Drama Series on School & Family - Local drama series that revolve around school and family life would be refreshing. It was felt that family-oriented themes and those that exhibit true-to-life scenarios would generally be more engaging and would be more suitable for family viewing. Some examples of these good programmes that have been produced are *Light Years* and *No Place Like Home* (Ch 5).
- (vi) Prioritise Programme Schedules - Broadcasters could air quality dramas with solid content and high production values like *West Wing* at more accessible time slots, so that a larger number of viewers can have the opportunity to watch these quality dramas.
- (vii) Acquire Better Variety Programmes - The plethora of variety programmes over the year continues to be dominated by reality shows, mostly with inane premises and content. However, some reality series are commendable such as *Can You Live Without...?* (Arts Central) and *American Idol* (Ch 5). Broadcasters are encouraged to source for more quality reality series for broadcast instead of trashy ones with questionable values.
- (viii) Predominant Use of Singlish - Broadcasters are advised to be mindful of the excessive usage of Singlish in local productions, as school children have been observed to emulate bad grammar and pick up Singlish phrases uttered in programmes like *Phua Chu Kang*, as well as *Makansutra*.

Arts and Cultural Programmes

2.10 For arts and cultural programming, *Arts Central* has continued to impress with a good line-up of programmes over the past year. It has selected and scheduled a good mix of serious arts programmes for the arts connoisseur, and more accessible, commercial offerings for those who are less well versed in the arts. In addition to these efforts, the PACE recommends:

- (i) Re-schedule Good Movies at Primetime - Good movies such as *Mary Poppins* and *Alice In Wonderland* were scheduled at too late a time belt, hence rendering them inaccessible to children who may find them enjoyable. Such movies could be shown on mass channels like Ch 5 for a wider reach.
- (ii) Increase Cultural Programmes for Children – To address the lack of arts and cultural elements in children's programmes which is important in cultivating an appreciation for the arts among the young, broadcasters are encouraged to produce such programmes.
- (iii) Highlight Local Artists - More programmes on local artists who have made good in the international scene could be produced. An example of such a programme is *Self Portraits*, which featured prominent local artists well known

within and outside Singapore. Arts Central, which aired the programme previously, is encouraged to produce more of such programmes. Another suggestion is to feature the performances of internationally renowned local artists like Lynnette Seah, as their acclaim and fame would generate more interest in such programmes.

News, Current Affairs and Info-Educational Programmes

2.11 On the whole, most info-educational and current affairs programmes were well-produced, and thus deserve credit. There was also an overall improvement in the quality and standard of news programmes, particularly in the case of *Ch i News*, where complex issues were clearly illustrated with interesting graphics. The PACE also applauds CNA's efforts in consistently producing good and engaging local documentaries from an Asian perspective. CNA is encouraged to continue producing quality documentaries that are relevant and appealing to local audiences.

2.12 CNA provided timely coverage of the Iraq war and sought to explain and examine the issues and implications of the war in the forum discussion programme, *Battleground Iraq*, as well as through specials investigating the factors leading up to the situation in the Middle East, presenting perspectives from around Asia.

2.13 Equally commendable was CNA's efforts in producing a number of timely and quality info-educational and current affairs programmes which provided different perspectives on problems in the region and helped to inform viewers on the related issues, facts and myths. These include: *SARS: Myth & Facts*, *SARS: Playing It Safe*, *SARS: A Courage Within*, *In the Shadow of the Virus*, and *Asia Fights Back*. In addition, the channel paid tribute to the health care workers and SARS victims in *SARS: The Show Goes On*, *The Assignment on SARS* and *A Nation's Tribute*.

2.14 During the SARS crisis, competing free-to-air channels working with Starhub Cable Vision, had collaborated to provide programming for the SARS channel for better dissemination of messages on the virus. It is hoped that local channels will continue to work closely, even in the absence of a national crisis. .

2.15 The PACE notes an increase in the local programming on Ch i, especially information programmes and encourages Ch i to produce more quality local info-ed and current affairs programmes, such as *Site and Sound* and *i-Contact*, which are informative and engaging.

2.16 The PACE encourages programmes based on true-life stories of people with family, emotional, or psychological problems that mix re-enactment with useful counselling advice from qualified social workers (e.g. *True Courage* on Ch 5). These programmes provide useful advice and highlight avenues where people with similar problems can turn to for help.

2.17 The PACE recommends the following:

- (i) More Quality Current Affairs Programmes – Broadcasters had produced a number of good current affairs magazine programmes such as *The Agenda* and *Insight* which provided in-depth analysis of various social, business and technological issues. But these are pitched at niche audiences. The PACE hopes that there could be more current affairs programmes, such as *What Matters*, which explain and analyse issues for the man-in-the-street in an interesting manner.

- (ii) More Quality Info-educational Programmes on Mass Channels – As there is a general lack of interesting and quality local info-educational programmes on mass channels, broadcasters could produce more info-ed programmes which educate and entertain.
- (iii) Prime Time Slots for Info-educational and Current Affairs Programmes – Broadcasters are reluctant to schedule info-ed and current affairs programming at prime time due to anticipated lower ratings and the lack of sponsorship. Nonetheless, when possible, broadcasters should consider making the programmes more accessible to viewers by giving them prime time slots.

Sports Programmes

2.18 Although the PACE observes more acquired sports programmes like Euro 2004 matches on Channel 5 and US PGA Tour 2004 on Channel i, the Committee reiterates the observation made by the 2002-2003 Committee that there is still an insufficient range of sports programmes on FTA TV beyond soccer and golf. Broadcasters must adopt, with the help of sports consultants, a more conscious and concerted effort to push a wider range of sports programming to the public.

2.19 In addition, broadcasters should consider the following:

- (i) Increase Media Coverage of Local Sports Events - There is generally insufficient media coverage of local sporting events, especially those organised at the grassroots level by community centres and institutions of learning. Broadcasters need to endeavour to cover these activities in their news and news magazine programmes in addition to covering popular sports events like the English Premiere League and National Basketball Association.
- (ii) Highlight Grassroots Sports Programmes - Due to low visibility, many quality sporting programmes organised by grassroots and school groups suffer from poor response. Broadcasters should try to support these activities wherever possible.
- (iii) Support Media Promotion of Local Sporting Icons - Local sporting talents do not seem to receive sufficient promotion by the media. In order to attract more Singaporeans to give sports a chance, there is a need to promote our own local sporting heroes, and the local media have a part to play here.

Programmes for the Elderly

2.20 The PACE unanimously agrees that the media could do more for elderly viewers in terms of providing programming which caters to their needs and interests. This was also the view espoused by the two focus group discussion sessions chaired by the PACE. The elderly are not well-represented in programmes across genres and when they are represented, they are often portrayed in a negative light.

2.21 There could be more programmes such as *The Good Life* that are informative and useful to the elderly as well as programmes that provide inspirational stories and role models for the elderly. Broadcasters should also explore more programmes which provide a platform for elderly viewers to air their views and to address their concerns. More programmes looking at issues relevant to the elderly could be produced for retirees so that they can be

better prepared for retirement. Local producers could refer to programmes for elderly in other countries for ideas.

2.22 Recommendations on programmes for the elderly are:

- (i) Improve Visibility of the Elderly in Programmes - There is a lack of representation of the elderly in programmes ranging from news to dramas. For entertainment programmes, older personalities could be used instead of younger actors to portray older characters.
- (ii) Encourage Positive Portrayal of the Elderly - Frequent stereotypical portrayal of the elderly as fragile and weak should be avoided. The elderly can be portrayed as self-sufficient and enjoying their retirement.
- (iii) Identify More Cultural Programmes - Cultural programmes for the elderly on local television need to be increased, and broadcasters should try to source for more of such programmes. A good example of such programmes appreciated by the elderly is *The Empire of Kang Xi* (currently showing on Ch 8, Fridays, 11pm – 1am), which gives deep insight into Chinese history.
- (iv) Better Scheduling of Programmes for the Elderly - More programmes catering to the needs of the elderly should be shown during the early morning time slot and from late morning to afternoon where senior citizens are likely to tune in to local television. In addition, more feel-good movies, such as those shown on Hallmark, which are likely to appeal to the elderly, could be scheduled during these time slots.
- (v) Look to Cable Channels for Appealing Programmes - Noting that the elderly turned to cable channels for programmes, it is recommended that broadcasters look to Cable TV for programmes which appeal to the elderly and produce similar programmes for local free-to-air channels, particularly in the area of info-educational, cultural and entertainment programmes, which tend to be better produced on cable.

Radio Programmes

2.23 In the case of radio, the programme range and quality has largely remained the same in the past year but with one major change. Passion 99.5FM, an arts radio station managed by the National Arts Council (NAC) ceased operations on 31 Dec 03. One of the reasons cited for Passion's closure was that Passion's niche listeners were too few to attract and sustain continuous sponsorship and advertising revenue to cover operating costs of the station.

2.24 In light of the closure of the dedicated arts radio station which has been a source of arts information to listeners, other mainstream radio stations could carry the mantle left by Passion, by adding some regular arts content/information in its programming schedule. This would help to introduce and cultivate interest in the arts amongst the masses. The PACE acknowledges that it may be difficult for the mainstream radio stations to do so, in view of their own branding and specific interests. Nonetheless, the mainstream radio stations are encouraged to work towards the idea conceptually.

2.25 The PACE is also encouraged that a new station, GROOVES will occupy the frequency vacated by Passion 99.5FM and this station will be showcasing arts programming,

local music, new age contemporary music such as jazz and radio programmes by tertiary students. This will help to serve the interests of the arts and music community.

2.26 The PACE is pleased to observe that NewsRadio has been producing quality informational and current affairs programmes that give insights into topical issues.

2.27 Radio stations are advised to continue to avoid the reliance on sexually suggestive and sensationalistic content to attract listeners, particularly on programmes targeted at youths. Radio DJs should recognise that they have a considerable influence on impressionable youth listeners and hence need to be more socially responsible when hosting programmes.

SECTION 3: RECOMMENDATIONS WITH A SPECIFIC FOCUS ON THE FAMILY

3.1 Since 2004 has been designated as "International Year Of The Family", the PACE recommends that the broadcast media adopt the family theme as an over-arching and integrated theme for their programmes throughout the year. Under this umbrella theme of the 'Family', broadcasters could purchase and produce programmes that explore sub-themes concerning the role of children, youths, young adults and the elderly as part of the family unit.

Theme of the Year - The Family

3.2 On the integrated theme of the family, some possible programme areas to explore for production or acquisition are:

- (i) Achieving Work and Family Life Balance - It is timely to show how many families strike this balance. Programmes can showcase the simple yet effective ways to celebrate a healthy and happy family life without sacrificing pursuits at work.
- (ii) Promoting School and Family Partnership - Programmes could examine this partnership that benefits children and families, and how parents and teachers can complement each other in educating the young especially with regard to issues such as sex education and media literacy.
- (iii) Exploring Parental Education - Programmes can explore how to become more effective parents and how to communicate with the youth of the millennium generation.
- (iv) Coping with Difficult Times - Topics such as divorce, retrenchment, death and illness in a family could be explored in a sensitive manner to reach out to viewers from an appropriate perspective. Through such topics, the contributions of the social service sector can also be profiled.
- (v) Profiling Support Network - Programmes could examine tough issues such as divorce and single parenthood, highlight support networks and resources for single parents.
- (vi) Achieving Family Harmony - The roles of spouses, parents, in-laws and children play for a harmonious family life. These programmes could be in

tele-movie format and presented in a light-hearted with humour woven in. Family life from the perspectives of children, youths and elderly can also lend a fresh perspective.

3.3 Local radio and TV programmes could take on an 'in-conversation', talkshow style such as James Dobson's 'Focus on the Family' on NewsRadio 93.8FM where issues families face today are discussed and resources and ideas for support are shared.

Sub-Theme: Children

3.4 On the theme of children, some programme and production ideas for further consideration are:

- (i) Weekly News Programme - There should be programmes to keep children, particularly those in the upper Primary and above interested in current affairs and world events. Such programmes could take on an info-tainment format.
- (ii) Joint Productions - Local broadcasters can consider partnerships with regional media companies to produce children's drama and/or info-educational programmes relating to arts, culture, science and technology etc.
- (iii) Presenting a Child's Perspective - Programmes could explore issues from a child's perspective with the focus being on the reflections. On the lighter side, for example, children's perspectives on an ideal city, planning a perfect family dinner, of a good family vacation are topics which could be featured. On a more serious tone, a child's perspective on coping with parents' divorce or abusive parents could be discussed, sensitively and with professional guidance, for valuable insights into troubled childhood.

3.5 Other general recommendations by the PACE are:

- (i) Set up a Parent-Cum-Educators Voluntary Group - This group's role could be to accredit quality children's programmes; develop a rating system; raise public awareness; plan and organise public education campaigns.
- (ii) Produce Resource Guidebook – The MDA together with MOE/MCDS (now MCYS) could jointly produce a resource guidebook for teachers in kindergartens and primary school to offer suggestions on how teachers can discuss TV programmes and cartoons with their students.

Sub-Theme: Youths

3.6 To prepare our young people for the challenges ahead, some TV and Radio programmes featuring real life examples of ordinary youth who have made good in life can be featured as an inspiration to others. Success should not be merely based on academic results but passion and enthusiasm for helping others and making the community a better place for all. Such stories would be inspirational to the many young people still looking for their calling and trying to find a purpose in their lives. A possibility is to seek assistance from relevant organisations to nominate young persons (16 to 35 years old).

3.7 MediaCorp last year produced a well rated series called "Champs". It featured true stories about younger teens aged 7 to 17 from the National winners of the "champions" of the NKF Award. The series is a dramatisation of 20 outstanding young individuals' inspiring

acts of compassion, courage, filial piety, determination and mental strength. Each episode traces the development of an exceptional young person to uncover the sources of his/her inspirations and motivations, and includes interviews with the champions of the NKF Award winners, their families and their role models.

3.8 To produce similar programmes, inspirational youths from the heartland with "success stories" to tell can be sourced from:

- (i) Youth Excellence Awards in the Heartlands (YEAH!) Programme - The Youth and Sports Functional Committee at South-West CDC (SWCDC) launched this award on 22 Oct 2003. It is an integrated framework (and virtual community) which brings together youths (13 to 25 yrs) from the neighbourhood schools/tertiary institutions and corporate partners/voluntary welfare organisations in a collaboration where youths will be given opportunities to make contributions back to the community via a spectrum of projects/ activities offered by the various programme partners. As they sign up for different levels of awards, they will be accorded the recognition and rewards when they fulfil the criteria for the relevant level signed up.
- (ii) High Five Youth Awards - Offered by the Central Singapore CDC, the Hi Five Award is into its 5th year running. It is presented to youths (15 to 17 yrs) who have proven to be effective in 5 areas namely Community Spiritedness, Moral Character, Personal Enrichment, Endeavours and Self Improvement, Co-Curricula Activity and Academic results. The CDC develops these youths by offering them a platform to spearhead community events, lead focus group discussions and represent the CDC in various forums.
- (iii) The National Youth Achievement Awards - This also provides a good pool of likely candidates.
- (iv) National Youth Council's (NYC) award schemes - Older youth (between 20 to 35) who, beyond having excellent achievements, are also active in contributing to the community, could also be featured. One source of such youth could be through the NYC award schemes whose objectives are to recognise and reward outstanding youth. Each year, the NYC administers these award schemes, to confer national honour upon youths whose excellence and contributions to society are inspirational to others. The two award schemes are - (a) Singapore Youth Award; and (b) Outstanding Youth in Education Award.
- (v) Beyond these, there are also youth organisations and many individual youths working independently, including those who give their time to lesser known cause such as animal rights. Broadcasters could tap this wide circle (e.g. Habitat For Humanity groups, polytechnics, schools, sports organisations, Disabled communities, SIF, civil society groups, overseas youths etc.) so that there is diversity in activities that they could recommend via programmes to the wider population of youths in general.

3.9 However, in order to prevent this concept of dramatised inspirational stories from being over-done, broadcasters would need to find creative ways to renew such a format so as to remain appealing to viewers.

Sub-Theme: Young Adults

3.10 Aside from community, family and youth, focus should also be given to the perspective of young adults, especially those from local universities and polytechnics who have just stepped into a work environment and need to shoulder an increasingly greying population. Pertinent issues to tackle could include:

- (i) Employment Frustrations - Advice and solutions on how to cope with frustrations of not landing any job or a good job;
- (ii) Employment Expectations - Readiness or otherwise to try out totally different jobs from those they are trained for in school, or things that may seem to be lowering one's or family's expectations;
- (iii) Prospect/Readiness to Work Overseas - Willingness to accept overseas posting, as well as experiences of those young adults already working overseas;
- (iv) Becoming an Entrepreneur - Starting a business, what it entails, the sacrifices and rewards of being one's own boss;
- (v) Upgrading Oneself - Taking up courses to upgrade oneself or studying something totally different to broaden one's scope of employability.

Sub-Theme: Elderly

3.11 Based on the PACE's focus group discussions and its internal deliberations, the following are proposed:

- (i) More Philosophical and Wellness Programmes - Broadcasters could include and schedule more philosophical programmes for the elderly, to help them lead a more meaningful life. Programmes which contribute to the overall wellness of the elderly could explore topics and issues of concern to them, such as adapting to change, coping with loneliness, hobbies for the elderly, life lines for the elderly and high suicidal rates among the elderly. However, producers should be sensitive in the treatment of the more controversial issues like suicide.

There could be more uplifting programmes which contain positive messages and role models for the elderly. One inspirational story highlighted was that of 59-year old Ranulph Fiennes who ran the Singapore Heart Foundation marathon and endeavoured to complete 7 marathons in 7 continents over 7 days shortly after recovering from a near fatal heart attack. Other inspirational characters could be found in groups such as the SAF Veterans League (military retiree association).

- (ii) More Evergreen Programmes - To cater especially to those aged 60 and above, there could be more evergreen movies and music programmes.
- (iii) More Chat Shows - There is a need for more chat shows and call-in programmes for the elderly to express their views and discuss issues of concern to them.

- (iv) Dialect Programming for the Elderly - More dialect programming in areas where it would not pose a threat to the Ministry's Speak Mandarin Campaign, e.g. Cable TV.
- (v) Reviving Story-telling on Radio - Programmes which allow the elderly to share stories and experiences could make a come back. Radio, being more personal in nature, would be a good medium through which the elderly could share their life experiences.

Sub-Theme: Bringing the Family Together – Sports for the Family

3.12 In line with the main theme of the family, the PACE recommends that programmes which encourage family members to do sports together, or feature those already doing it, like the marathon family, would be a good way to bond families in a healthy way.

3.13 Given the high cost producing sports programmes and the lack of interest from sponsors, the PACE proposes that broadcasters produce sports interstitials instead, as they are a means of transmitting bite-sized information about sports, health tips and sporting facilities to the public. These can be produced at a lower cost and easily scheduled across time-belts for greater reach compared to whole programmes.

SECTION 4: PACE'S CHOICE OF PROGRAMMES

4.1 The PACE would like to highlight some quality programmes on TV which it has observed, and to encourage and recommend to broadcasters to produce and acquire more of such good programmes for telecast on their channels. Titles illustrative of the PACE's choice of quality programmes are given in Annex B of this report.

SECTION 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 Whilst observing the need for Singapore to redefine its local content standards somewhat, the PACE is compelled to address the conflicting perspectives between various stakeholders in society and the media industry. Over the past 12 months, the Committee discussed the many different sentiments expressed over what should be considered quality programmes, as well as the threshold for content standards for broadcast programmes.

5.2 There have been suggestions for a cross advisory committee discussion amongst the various language based Programme Advisory Committees (English, Chinese, Malay and Indian) for greater synergy among the committees and to enable a sharing of ideas. Through such exchanges, the various committees would be better placed to reflect on the role of the media, to examine what viewers want, and to identify programming that the market lacks. The PACE will also continue to dialogue with the various special interest groups of viewers to gauge public sentiments.

5.3 For the year in review, the Committee has furnished some concrete ideas to broadcasters, such as providing suggestions on additional source of funding to produce quality programmes and titles of quality children's programmes that could be obtained.

5.4 Going forward, the PACE sees the following as crucial in the development of the media industry:

- (i) Balancing ratings with good quality and responsible programming;
- (ii) Fulfilling the educating role of the media; and
- (iii) Profiling the media as an entertainment vehicle, through encouraging the use of more quality and high-level humour.

MEMBERS' PROFILE

Chairperson: Mdm Claire Chiang

Mdm Claire Chiang is the Executive Director of Banyan Tree Gallery (S) Pte Ltd. Besides being a successful business woman, Claire is also well known for her leadership in community services.

In 1999, she was awarded the Women of the Year Award. As a community leader, Claire has served as a Nominated Member of Parliament for 2 terms (between 1997-2001), where she raised many policy issues related to the social service sector, women, family, education and the disadvantaged. She is also actively involved in a number of social service agencies such as Help Every Lone Parent (HELP), Society Against Family Violence (SAFV) and Singapore Disability Sports Council. She also served as co-chair for Romancing Singapore festivals in 2003 and 2004.

In the business world, Claire is one of the first two women to be elected to serve on the Board of the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry - after 89 years of being a male dominated domain.

Key interest: Programmes for the Elderly

Members

2. Mr John Ang

Mr John Ang is currently a Senior Lecturer of the Department of Social Work and Psychology at the National University of Singapore (NUS). Prior to that, he was teaching at Cornell University, United States and his doctorate was obtained from the University of Hawaii. Mr Ang also has an extensive social service record, having served in positions like the Director and Council Member of Singapore Red Cross Society, President of Fei Yue Family Service Centre and Counselling Centre, Vice Chairman of Family Resource and Training Centre at the Singapore Association of Social Workers, Chairman of the Professional Practices Committee of the Movement for the Intellectually Disabled of Singapore.

Key interest: Children's Programmes

3. Mr Ang Peng Siong

Mr Ang is the Managing Director of APS Swim School, after bringing glory to the nation with the achievements such as World Masters Champion (2000), Fastest swimmer in the world in 1982, two-time Olympian (1984 & 1988), NCAA Division One champion (1983), three-time US Open champion, Asian Games Gold Medallist (1982), Multiple SEA Games gold medallist and three-time Sportsman of the Year recipient (1982, 1983 & 1984). His dream is to build a vibrant aquatic industry and fuel the pursuit of Olympic success in the sport of swimming, and feels that the media has a lot to contribute in this area. He is a University of Houston graduate, with a Bachelor of Science in Recreation.

Key interest: Sports Programmes

4. Mr Bala Reddy

Mr Bala Reddy is a Senior State Counsel with the Attorney-General's Chambers. After his law training in NUS, he went ahead to obtain a Master of Philosophy at Cambridge University. He also has extensive experience in the media industry, having served as a sub-editor of a Tamil newspaper as well as part time artiste with the then Radio Television Singapore and later Singapore Broadcasting Corporation, participating in radio and TV programmes. He has also scripted and acted in several Tamil TV dramas.

Key interest: News/Current Affairs

5. Ms Caroline Balhetchet

Ms Balhetchet is the Director of the Youth Development Centre at the Singapore Children's Society. She obtained her training in psychology and counselling in Australia, where she graduated with a Masters of Social Science. Thereafter, she accumulated extensive counselling experience in organisations such as AWARE (family violence and family issues), Outram Secondary School and Kampong Kapor Family Service Centre. She also has experience in public relations, advertising and event management.

Key interest: Children's Programmes

6. Mrs Choo Cheh Hoon

Mrs Choo is the Deputy Director of the School of Film & Media Studies at Ngee Ann Polytechnic. She holds a Masters in Mass Communication and has over 20 years of experience in tertiary education, industry training/consultancy, management and project supervision. Besides teaching, she is in charge of the School's outreach and industry-related activities. Believing strongly in the importance of media awareness education for the community, she is actively involved in community work. She is currently serving as a resident judge of MOE's annual Schools Video Awards, a member of MDA's Film Consultative Panel, a member of SAFRA Radio's Executive Council, and is a member of the Advisory Council Member of World Vision, an international relief organisation.

Key interest: Entertainment programmes (Dramas/Movies)

7. Mrs Chan Lin-Ho

Mrs Chan Lin Ho is the Director at the Regional Training and Resource Centre in Early Childhood Care & Education for Asia (RTRC Asia). She holds a BA in Social Work & Psychology and Masters of Science in Child Development and Early Childhood. She is interested in the media and the impact it can have on children, hence her desire to serve on advisory committees such as the PACE.

Key interest: Children's Programmes

8. Mr Chan Keen Len

Mr Chan is a Business Development Manager at Alpha Pioneer Technologies Pte Ltd. Prior to that, he was Manager of Systems Development at SBS Transit Ltd. He obtained a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Communication Studies from Murdoch University, Australia.

Actively involved in the community, he is a member of the Youth & Sports Functional Committee of the South-west Community Development Council and holds the appointment of Chairman of the Youth Excellence Awards in the Heartlands (YEAH!) Infrastructure Subcommittee. As a father of three children, building media-wise families is his passion (and he is an advocate of a content-based approach to censorship). He has previously served on the PAC sub-committee for entertainment programmes for two terms.

Key interest: Entertainment programmes

9. Ms Peggie Chua

Ms Peggie Chua is active in community service, and is currently the Secretary of the Yew Tee Community Club Management Committee and Assistant Secretary of the Yew Tee Citizens' Consultative Committee, and was awarded the Public Service Medal in 1996. She is also the President of the Teochew Drama Association. Her educational and work background include degrees in Psychology, Commerce (Administrative Studies) and MBA from the University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada, and service as Senior Public Relations Officer with the Housing & Development Board.

Key interest: Arts/Cultural Programmes

10. Mr Louis Chui Kian Hong

Mr Chui works as a Manager in charge of Lifelong Learning at Central Singapore Community Development Council (CDC), where he organises learning activities and courses for many people living in Central Singapore. Although his educational background is in business administration, he has a deep interest in films and the media.

Key interest: Sports Programmes

11. Mr Chia Ti Yu

Mr Chia is the Financial Controller of Mactus International Pte Ltd. He is a Certified Public Accountant and he put his professional practice to good use in the community by serving as Assistant Treasurer at Pasir Ris East CCC, Treasurer of Pasir Ris - Punggol GRC Community Relations Committee, Honorary Treasurer of Viriya Community Services and Honorary Treasurer of Whispering Hearts Family Service Centre.

Key interest: News/Current Affairs

12. Ms Sita Devi

Ms Sita Devi is currently the Principal of River Valley Primary School. A BA Hons graduate from NUS, Ms Devi also holds a Masters in Counselling and Human Development from the University of Iowa, USA. Her previous work assignments included Guidance Officer of Pupil Services Branch, MOE; Asst Director of Pastoral Care and Career Guidance Branch, MOE; Asst Director of Psychological and Guidance Services Branch, MOE; and Vice- Principal of Woodgrove Primary School.

Key interest: Children's Programmes

13. Ms Pearly Gan

Ms Pearly Gan's background is in Mass Communication (Master's Degree), Arts (BA/Hons) and Linguistics (Diploma). She works currently as Alumni Manager of Student Affairs at the Singapore Polytechnic. Previously, Ms Gan was in the corporate communications line. She is a keen TV viewer with an active interest in the broadcast medium.

Key interest: Entertainment programmes (Dramas/Movies)

14. Ms Zalina Bte Mohd Gazali

Ms Zalina is a Senior Assistant Director, overseeing Organisational Learning & Systems as well as Corporate Communications in the National Youth Council (NYC). Through the NYC, she is involved in many programmes targeted at the youth sector and contributes actively in developing youth development ideas, strategies and directions. She has also been serving as an Associate Trainer with the National Community and Leadership Institute. Previously, Ms Zalina served on the PAC Subcommittee for entertainment programmes and currently also serves on the MDA's Publications Consultative Panel. She obtained a Bachelor of Social Sciences (Hon) in Sociology from NUS and she has a deep interest in writing and TV programming (both of which have helped fuel her desire to serve in advisory committees such as the PACE).

Key interest: Entertainment programmes (Dramas/Movies)

15. Ms Anna Leong

Ms Leong put her career on hold 2 years ago to devote her time and energy to her child. Nonetheless, she continues to co-own and co-manage a private language school for children. She has 14 years of varied work experience in banking, petroleum trading, education and social service. She obtained her Bachelor of Business Administration from NUS and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (Distinction) from the Nanyang Technological University (NTU)/National Institute of Education (NIE). Ms Leong hopes to continue working towards raising the standards of children programming in Singapore.

Key interest: Children's Programmes

16. Mrs Doris Lim

Ms Doris Lim is currently the Principal of Yusok Ishak Secondary School, as well as a member of the Inter Racial Confidence Circle (IRCC). Equipped with a Bachelor of Arts degree, she is interested in getting the media to help forge closer ties between various races in Singapore, thereby promoting inter-racial harmony. Her knowledge of students' interests and thinking brings to the committee a wider understanding of concerns involving youths.

Key interest: Entertainment programmes (Dramas/Movies)

17 Mr Raphael Lim

Mr Raphael Lim currently is the Deputy Director of Family Education at the Ministry of Community Development, Sports and Youth. He was previously the Executive Director of the Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association (SANA). He graduated with a Masters in Social Work

(Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand) and has 13 years of varied work experiences. These include family policy development, public education and social marketing of family life issues, community partnerships, media and broadcasting, social work and counselling.

Key interest: Entertainment programmes (Dramas/Movies)

18. Ms Sharen Liu Min Kune

Ms. Sharon Liu is an Associate Professor and Division Head at NTU's School of Information and Communication. She leads the Electronic & Broadcast Media Division at the School of Communication & Information. Before joining NTU, Sharen has had 16 years of professional work in the broadcast industry, working as a TV producer, director and instructor for the Singapore Broadcasting Corporation (SBC) and Television Corporation of Singapore (TCS). Initially trained by the BBC, Sharen has produced and directed film documentaries, stage productions, TV dramas, music variety shows and children's programmes. Between 2001- 2002, she conducted TV directing workshops for producers and directors from TV MediaWorks (SPH).

Key interest: Entertainment programmes

19. Ms Lock Lai Yee

Putting her Chemical Engineering training to good use, Ms Lock is now the General Manager of Metma Petrochemicals (Far East) Pte Ltd. Besides her service to PACE, Ms Lock also serves actively on MDA's Films Consultative Panel. Her community sensitivities and eye for details has enabled her to give valuable feedback to both advisory committees.

Key interest: Info-educational programmes

20. Dr Kenneth Lyen

Dr Kenneth Lyen runs his own paediatrics consultancy at Lyen's Children's Clinic Pte Ltd. Dr Lyen has very strong interest in the arts especially for music and staged productions. He composes music and his musical career went public in 1995 with *Big Bang*, a musical extravaganza, where his compositions were featured. Other musicals by Dr Lyen included *Orchard Square* and *Yum Sing*. In 1997, he wrote *Catch The Rainbow*, a musical televised nationwide as part of the National Day celebrations. Prior to his appointment to PACE, Dr Lyen served actively on the PAC Subcommittees for Arts /Culture as well as Children.

Key interest: Arts/Cultural Programmes

21. Mr Raymond Lye

Mr Raymond Lye is a practising advocate and solicitor at Tay Lye & Ngaw Partnership. In the early '90s, he served as Magistrate and Deputy Registrar. He has given active service previously on the Films Advisory Panel as well as the PAC Subcommittee for Entertainment programmes. Mr Lye has a keen interest in both English and Chinese TV programmes. Mr Lye is also active in community service. He is the Chairman of the Pasir Ris West Citizens Consultative Committee and a councillor in the North East Development

Council and Pasir Ris-Punggol Town Council. He also serves with various trade and clan associations as well as on school boards.

Key interest: Entertainment programmes

22. Ms Braema Mathi

Ms Braema Mathi is a former teacher and ST journalist. She is currently a nominated Member of Parliament, and concurrently the Manager of Corporate Communications Department at Alexandra Hospital. Miss Mathi left the Straits Times on July 31, 2001 after more than 6 years covering the community and education beats. In that time, she won many awards, including *Story of the Year* in 1999 for her article on four children who cleared their Primary School Leaving Examinations against heavy odds. As a NMP, her concerns are for children and the destitute elderly. She also supports gender issues, and is also a member of Aware, the National Council of Social Services committee, The Singapore Children's Society and chairperson of The Working Committee 2.

Key interest: Programmes for the Elderly

23. Ms Pauline Mo Kit Ling

As the Assistant Director of the Family Policy Department of the Ministry of Community Development & Sports, Ms Mo has a conviction to develop strong and stable families in Singapore. She is deeply concerned with broadcast programmes that encourage undesirable lifestyles and behaviour which would erode moral values and the traditional concept of the family, thus weakening the family institution. She holds a Masters in Philosophy.

Key interest: Children's Programmes

24. Mrs Lay See Neufeld

Mrs Neufeld is the Principal of Tampines North Primary School. She is an English Honours graduate from the University of Adelaide. She also holds a post graduate certificate in Education from the University of London, UK and a Masters in Education from the University of Toronto, Canada. Mrs Neufeld taught in Raffles Junior College from 1985 to 1991. Thereafter, she worked as a Specialist Inspector, English language and Asst Director, Languages & Library, at the Languages and Library Branch (Curriculum Planning Div). She brings to the committee a wide perspective on the thinking and interests of the young.

Key interest: Children's Programmes

25. Mr Ahmad Nizam Abbas

Mr Ahmad Nizam is an advocate solicitor in M/S Muzzamil, Nizam & Partners. He served on MITA's recent Censorship Review Committee (CRC). He is an active member of the Programme Advisory Committee for Malay TV and Radio programmes. Mr Nizam's other community involvement include his earlier service as Chairman of the TRANS Centre (Temasek Reachout and Neighbourhood Scheme), the President of Mendaki Club,

Chairman of the Feedback Group on Community Development as well as being a member of the National Youth Council and Central Singapore CDC.

Key interest: News/Current Affairs

26. Mdm Nooraini Noordin

Mdm Nooraini Noordin runs her own consultant business in management and property (Nooris Consultants Pte Ltd). She has a Masters in Education and was the winner of the Malay Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Award in 2000. She is very active in the community, and her appointments include - President of the Singapore Malay Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SMCCI) for the period of 2003 to 2005, Hon. Secretary of the SAF Veterans' League and Secretary to the World Veterans Federation Standing Committee for Asia-Pacific, Working Group on Women.

Key interest: Info-educational programmes

27. Mr Andrew C. L. Ong

Mr Andrew Ong heads Drew & Napier's Info-Communication and Technology Business Group. His educational background includes an Honours degree from the London School of Economics and Barrister-at-law from Lincoln's Inn (UK). Andrew specialises in Information Technology, Telecommunication and Broadcasting Law (both regulatory and transactional). He also has an active practice in Leisure and Entertainment Law.

Key interest: Info-educational programmes

28. Ms Florence Oh

Ms Florence Oh has been the Executive Director of the Association of Accredited Advertising Agents Singapore since 1997. Graduating in Arts from the University of Western Australia, she has, in her career, been actively involved in the fields of advertising, marketing, public relations and the media. She has served as committee member of the Advertising Media Owners' Association, Director on the Media Circulation Services Board and Vice-President of the Institute of Advertising of Singapore.

Key interest: News/Current Affairs

29. Mr Adrian Quek Hock Seng

Mr Quek is now the General Manager of Fitness and Health International Pte Ltd, a company that helps organisations develop health and fitness programmes for their employees. He holds a Bachelor of Business Diploma in Physical Education degree and has expertise in the field of sports media, having worked at the former sports channel, SportsCity.

Key interest: Sports Programmes

30. Mr Casimir Rozario

Mr Rozario is a retiree who now trains part time at the Civil Service College. He has worked in various ministries, managing public relations, public education and public affairs. He was Director (Public Affairs) at the Ministry of Home Affairs when he retired from the civil service in 1999.

Key interest: Info-educational programmes, Programmes for the Elderly

31. Mr James Soh

Mr James Soh has been the Executive Director of the National Youth Achievement Award (NYAA) Council of Singapore since 1992. Under his leadership, the NYAA Council was conferred the 'Excellence of Singapore Award 96' in recognition of the Council's work both in Singapore and abroad. Mr Soh was also awarded 'The Green Leaf Award 93' (Individual) by the Ministry of Environment for outstanding contribution to environmental protection and preservation in Singapore. Mr Soh has held various positions in government ministries and non-governmental agencies and has chaired many international and national youth projects. Besides his knowledge of youths, James had previously given active service to the PAC Subcommittee for Info-Education programmes.

Key interest: Entertainment programmes

32. Mrs Yeo Chin Nam

Mrs Yeo is the Principal of Henderson Secondary School. She has participated actively at programme review sessions, with well thought and balanced viewpoints. Her knowledge of youth and enabled her to provide a good sensing of the impact which the broadcast media may have upon this age group. Mrs Yeo has a keen interest in TV and Radio programming.

Key interest: Entertainment programmes

PACE'S CHOICE OF PROGRAMMES

The PACE recognises quality programming from broadcasters, and would like to applaud good titles aired during the period from July 2003 to July 2004. Listed below are programmes of notable quality observed by the Committee, and broadcasters are recommended to produce and acquire more of such good programmes for telecast on their channels. It is to be noted that the list is not intended to be exhaustive and not arranged in any order of merit.

PACE's Choice (Children's Programmes)

Kids Central

Local Productions

Jobs for Juniors (For Primary)

This programme is realistic and interesting as it gives children the opportunity to have a hands on experience of their dream job and empowers them to believe that they can achieve what they set out to do no matter how challenging the job is.

Whizzes of the Void Deck (For Upper Primary)

This dramatised educational local series is able to cleverly weave problem solving and science into its storylines.

We are REM (For Upper Primary)

This local children's detective series which centres around the adventures of three friends is fun to watch and keeps viewers at the edge of their seats as they try their hand at mystery solving.

Block 523 Season 2 (For Primary)

This local drama series is able to portray the culture and values of each ethnic group positively. Good storylines and actors contribute to the overall entertainment value of the programme.

Acquired Productions

Barney and Friends (For Pre-school & Lower Primary)

Barney's non-stop adventures are pitched at preschool children who enjoy storytelling and song and dance. This programme teaches good values such as friendship and honesty with entertaining songs

Blues Clues (For Pre-school)

Each episode of this show encourages children to learn, discover, and explore through play. By keeping an eye on Blue's paw prints, Steve (the host), Blue, and the preschooler homeviewer view the story of the day that helps to solve everyday problems.

Bob the Builder (For Pre-school)

Bob the Builder follows the adventures of a friendly, helpful builder and his crew of fun-loving construction machines. The programme teaches the importance of cooperation and a positive attitude.

Hey Arnold! (For Primary School).

A entertaining cartoon about a kid, Arnold, who tries to do things right and is a source of advice for the people around him, this programme deals with school-age children's interest and issues they can relate to.

Hi-5 (For Pre-school)

A perennial favourite, this preschool programme is enjoyable and educational. Children can sing and dance along to the songs which are used to teach and entertain.

Katie and Orbie (For Pre-school & Lower Primary)

Katie is a five year old girl who spends her time exploring and explaining the world to her friend Orbie, from another planet. The programme has good morals and teaches values for everyday life like kindness, empathy and pro-social behaviors.

Lizzie McGuire (For Upper Primary & Pre-teens)

This entertaining programme is about the misadventures of Lizzie and her two best friends, their relationships with their family and the ups and downs of school life.

Spongebob Squarepants (For Primary School).

A funny cartoon with positive values about Spongebob Squarepants, a sea sponge who lives in the Pacific Ocean at Bikini Bottom with his side-kick Patrick and other friends. Spongebob constantly gets into trouble unwittingly but is always able to remain optimistic and cheerful.

Thomas and Friends (For Pre-school)

This programme is about a tank engine, Thomas, and his friends who live on the Island of Sodor. It is both entertaining and has good values with Thomas and his friends dealing with everyday ups and downs as they work on the railways under the supervision of Sir Topham Hatt.

Tracy Beaker (For Upper Primary)

Based on the bestselling books by Jacqueline Wilson, Tracey Beaker is a 10 year old girl who lives in a foster home and hopes that her real mother would someday appear and take her away. This programme teaches lifeskills, has good scripting and dialogue, and can be a good model for spoken English.

Channel i's Kids Tee Vee Belt

Acquired

Hamtaro (For Pre-school).

Hamtaro is the pet golden hamster of fifth grader Laura which has an insatiable curiosity. Together with its friends, a group of hamsters, Hamtaro lives each day complete with fun and excitement. This cartoon is entertaining, non-violent and looks at friendship and helping each other.

PACE's Choice (Entertainment Programmes – Dramas & Sitcoms)

Local Productions

1st Cut Series (Ch 5)

The *1st Cut series* consists of four 90-minute made-for-TV movies produced by local film-making talents. The titles are *Sweet Dreams and Turtle Soup*, *Love Poetry*, *Dirty Laundry*,

and *The New Home*. Overall, the production values of the telemovies in this series are high and the stories are riveting and memorable.

Achar! (Ch 5)

This Bollywood-inspired local sitcom is set in the aftermath of a whirlwind romance where an Indian man and a Chinese woman have to learn to not only live together as a married couple, but also to live with each other's family. The intriguing cross-cultural element is the perfect breeding ground for comedy. Although it got off to a slow start, it was one of the better local productions on TV.

Missing (Ch 5)

This docu-drama series is an engaging and well-researched production looking at various cases of missing persons in Singapore. Using a combination of re-enactments and interviews, this intriguing and fascinating series manages not only to retell the stories of these cases, but also attempts to shed new light on some of them.

Perceptions (Ch i)

This 13-part local drama is a contemporary love story about two characters from very different social and family backgrounds who fall in love under the most unlikely circumstances. The series is commendable not just for its engaging script, but also for its good mix of familiar and fresh faces.

Police and Thief (Ch 5)

This local production is interesting as it features Channel 8's Mark Lee's crossover to an English channel. Despite Mark Lee's stereotypical acting in Chinese sitcoms and dramas, his acting in the English sitcom is natural and there is good chemistry with the cast. The scripting is good and the humour is neither stiff nor prudish. Plot-wise, the idea of having to put up with one's neighbour and their quirks is one that Singaporeans can identify with.

Singapore Short Story Project (Arts Central)

Winner of the 2003 Asian Television Awards for Best Drama Series and Best Cinematography, this series is based on six short stories by acclaimed Singaporean writers. Shot in a gritty, intimate style, the stories are interwoven and revealed, offering a refreshing perspective of Singapore literature. With a good script and an excellent cast, this series is a sterling example of a quality local TV production.

Acquired Productions

Band of Brothers (Ch 5)

This excellent historically-inspired mini-series chronicles the exploits of an elite US paratrooper company during the Second World War. The series not only has heart-stopping action sequences but also thought-provoking, reflective moments where the horror of war and the dilemma of soldiers in the battlefield are explored.

Boomtown (Ch i)

This inventive and thoughtful cop drama presents a *Rashomon*-style view of a crime from a variety of angles, such as the uniformed cops, paramedics and even reporters. Through the investigation of crimes, the characters' personalities are revealed as the story unfolds. What makes this series particularly engaging is the style and structure of the show, which makes this gritty and hard-hitting series worth viewing.

CSI (Crime Scene Investigation) (Ch 5)

This intellectually stimulating forensics detective drama thrills with its riveting plot and high production values. With an excellent cast and the use of effective special effects, this series

examines the science and theories behind the investigation of crime rather than presenting firefights between cops and criminals. Even while examining macabre topics, the series handles them with care and good taste.

Everwood (Ch 5)

Everwood is an engrossing family drama exploring the visceral and often heartbreaking relationship between a father and son living in a small town in the Rocky Mountains. Throughout the series, the show tackles controversial issues like abortion and medical use of drugs without making it ponderous or preachy. The themes of family bonding and understanding also make this a wonderful family drama.

Everybody Loves Raymond (Ch i)

This humorous and endearing long running family sitcom is about a married couple in their 30s who have their parents dropping in on them all the time to interrupt their idyllic lives. With great dialogue and an excellent cast, this series is enjoyable and entertaining.

Law & Order Series (Ch i)

Law & Order is a critically acclaimed police-cum-legal drama and it has spawned spin-offs (*Law & Order: Criminal Intent* and *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*) that are equally commendable. The storylines of each of the series are engaging and intellectually intriguing. The back-to-back scheduling of the *Law & Order* series also allows viewers to have a non-stop dosage of the captivating dramas.

Monk (Ch i)

A detective drama about a former homicide detective who lost his job when he developed an obsessive-compulsive disorder, *Monk* is in a sense a modern and splendid updating of Sherlock Holmes. With an engaging cast and an unconventional approach to the standard detective genre, this is an intelligent and witty drama.

PACE's Choice (Entertainment Programmes - Variety)

Local Production

Wow Wow World (Ch 5)

This creative local travelogue is highly entertaining and is modelled after *The Lonely Planet* series. The series presents nuggets of information in an appealing manner and features a good mix of programme hosts whom engage viewers with their wit, humour and chemistry.

Singapore's Brainiest Teen

This particular instalment of the *Singapore's Brainiest* quiz show is applauded as it is one of the few entertaining and educational quality programmes available featuring teenagers and can be enjoyed by teenagers and their families alike. On the whole, other instalments of the series going in search of the 'brainiest' scholars and people from various occupations have been commendable as well.

Cross Worlds (Ch 5)

This well paced travelogue game show introduces viewers to the distinct cultures and landmarks of various destinations in an entertaining manner through the solving of crossworld puzzles and the completion of challenges by the contestants.

Acquired Productions

***Can You Live Without...?* (Arts Central)**

This reality series about urban life challenges participants to live without an item or service they have become so accustomed to e.g. make-up, supermarkets. Participants leave the experience with a better understanding of themselves and the way they live their lives. The programme is presented simply but effectively and deals with situations viewers can easily relate to, inviting us to examine the things in modern life we take for granted.

***Whose Line Is It Anyway?* (Ch 5)**

Whose Line Is It Anyway? is a highly enjoyable variety programme which serves as a platform for improvisational comedy, showcasing original ideas and talented comedians. The studio guests, who display excellent on-stage chemistry, entertain the audience with witty and spontaneous jokes and songs.

***Amazing Race* (Ch 5)**

An example of a quality reality TV series, *Amazing Race* continues to constantly intrigue and captivate with its combination of creative challenges, competition and drama. The programme is not only entertaining but informative as it offers interesting bite-sized trivia about various global destinations.

***American Idol* (Ch 5)**

American Idol manages to reinvent the traditional talent quest format and is a highly entertaining and engaging programme. It features talents from various American states and has inspiring elements demonstrating that dreams can come true for the man on the street.

***The Apprentice* (Ch 5)**

The Apprentice is an innovative and intellectually engaging reality series where 16 candidates are judged on their abilities to take on different business projects as they vie for the opportunity to work for Donald Trump. Other than the business advice offered by Trump in the programme, viewers also learn about failure and success factors, and what it takes to be a leader through the experiences of the candidates.

PACE's Choice (Sports Programmes)

Local Productions

***The Glenn And Rod Sports Show* (Ch5)**

The use of popular DJs and injecting humour into a sports magazine programme makes the programme enjoyable and accessible even to non-sports fans. The programme also features celebrities engaged in various types of sports.

***Tiger Skins Golf Event* (Ch i)**

Although the production quality of this programme is a bit raw, it has greater entertainment value compared to traditional golf programmes as it contains interviews with players and allows for interaction between the field spectators and players. Overall, it is a good attempt by MediaWorks at producing and covering a major sporting event.

***Sports Zone* (NewsRadio 93.8FM)**

A good sports magazine programme that is diverse and covers a wide range of sports, both local and international. Each week, different personalities are invited into the studio to discuss the highlighted sport.

PACE's Choice (Cultural Programmes)

Local Productions

Self Portraits 2 (Arts Central)

This second series of *Self Portraits* profiles established local artists who have excelled in their respective fields. It is a well-produced programme that gives viewers a glimpse into the background and thoughts of the artists, how they got started in their crafts, their motivation and hard work they put in for the sake of their art.

Art Nation (Arts Central)

This arts magazine programme hosted by Beatrice Chia features events and artists in the local arts community, with reviews of upcoming arts performances. Overall, it is a good effort with an interesting style of presentation.

Dance of Immortality (Arts Central)

This is a commemorative documentary about the 15th anniversary of the Singapore Dance Theatre (SDT) that traces the development of the SDT. Well-presented and engaging in the way it follows the lives of SDT's dancers, the programme highlights the sacrifices made by the dancers for the love of this art form.

In Search of a Muse (CNA)

The programme explores how Singapore is nurturing a new generation of students and practitioners who are passionate about the arts, which is viewed as the soul of a nation. Presenting many interesting points of view, the programme could however be improved if it expounded on the process of the art forms featured.

Poetry Slam (Arts Central)

This programme fuses the two traditional art forms of poetry and performance. It is an interesting exposition on performance poetry.

Fastforward, Rewind, Reloaded: Singapore Filmmakers (Arts Central)

This programme interviews up and coming Singapore filmmakers. A quality production in terms of good choice of visuals, editing work and montage sequence. Interviewees also have charismatic persona and were insightful in sharing their experiences as local filmmakers.

Rhythm Nation (Arts Central)

This production provided a good overview of the music industry in Singapore. However, the programme could have delved deeper into what constitutes "Singaporean" music, whether it is the melody, rhythm, lyrics or the way a song is sung.

Acquired Productions

Ken Burn's Jazz (Arts Central)

This is a critically acclaimed documentary series on jazz by director Ken Burns, which examines the origins and evolution of jazz music. Highly informative and enjoyable, the series manages to balance factual details of the period's history with entertaining snippets about the musicians' lives.

PACE's Choice (Info-Educational & Current Affairs Programmes)

Local Productions

Food Chain (Ch 5)

This programme takes viewers from the market to the kitchen, to restaurants and food centres and traces the entire food chain of basic food types we consume daily like eggs, rice, spices, chicken, fish and vegetables in an informative and an engaging manner.

Retro-Trek (Ch 5)

This eight-part series relives the common memories of familiar places that bind Singaporeans as a people. Each episode in this programme features a different area in Singapore and what Singaporeans remember of it from the time of the 1960s and 1970s. This programme is entertaining and appeals to both the young and old with its interesting presentation and nostalgic theme.

The Good Life (Ch 5)

One of the few info-ed programme which caters to the elderly, this series showcases seniors who are living active and fruitful lives and feature activities that seniors can participate in to lead a complete and meaningful life. Presented in an upbeat manner, the programme also provides advice on a variety of topics useful to the elderly such as financial planning, staying health and home and road safety.

i On The News (Ch i)

This forum discussion programme provides an eye on the news. The inclusion of some guests and experienced journalists enriches the programme while host Arnold Gay does a good job in focussing on the discussion on the topic.

Site and Sound (Ch i)

This programme takes a fun and tongue-in-cheek look at the historical changes and physical transformation that familiar locales in Singapore have undergone in the past century through the eyes of Englishman Julian Davison through the use of re-enactments and special effects. A well-researched programme, it presents the history of Singapore in an absorbing manner and has rated well on Ch i.

i-Contact (Ch i)

In this six-part forum discussion series, secondary school and junior college students meet Cabinet Ministers and pose questions related to the Ministers' portfolios. This is an engaging and well-produced programme which provides a good platform for young Singaporeans to engage the government leaders on issues which concern them.

Heartbeat (Ch i)

Heartbeat is a weekly prognosis of common ailments where viewers can interact "live" with a medical expert. The call-in segments and the use of animated graphics provide good and clear explanations of the ailments. The programme is a good example of how broadcasters have tapped on the synergy between the print and broadcast media to enhance a programme as questions not fielded in the programme were subsequently answered in *The Sunday Times*.

Modern Migrants (CNA)

Well directed and executed, this six-part documentary, which is about the experiences and contributions of modern-day migrants in Singapore and why they decided to make Singapore home, comes across as credible because interviewees appeared natural and were candid about how they felt about life in Singapore.

The Agenda (CNA)

Hosted by business news journalist, Melvin Yong, this current affairs magazine series tackles issues in the business and technology world and looks at how corporate leaders deal with them. While niche in appeal, the programme provides in-depth analysis of the issues at hand and covers timely issues such as the impact of the bird flu on Asia's economic outlook.

Not Just Another Flu (CNA)

This is a 'live' call-in forum programme where healthcare experts and officials discuss SARS-related issues and give advice on SARS-related queries. Informative and timely, this programme provided a good source of information for viewers during the SARS crisis.

Ode To The Past (CNA)

A series on the customs and traditions that have survived the test of time, *Ode To the Past* is not only well-researched and informative, but is an example of a programme which can help promote cross-cultural understanding.

Hi-Life (CNA)

Compared to the earlier seasons of the programme which focussed on what was stylish and the trendy in Singapore, members found the fifth season of the programme interesting and enlightening as it moved out of the country to look at the lifestyle as well as the rich history and culture of other countries.

In The Pink Of Health (CNA)

Members found this a commendable and very informative programme on common health problems of concern to women across different age groups. Not only does it bring about awareness of the common health problems and issues, the discussion and advice dispensed was well-balanced and the presentation was interesting.