

# Stink **is** everyone's business

## Great ideas flourish when toilet air smells good

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**T**HE most auspicious day in the WTO calendar was two days ago: It was World Toilet Day. Shame on you if you didn't observe the occasion. I did, swigging beer with friends into the wee hours of the morning.

Those who imbibe the golden nectar will tell you that apart from getting you piss drunk, beer has the ability to trigger your bladder's release valve.

If you drink beer the whole night and find no need to visit the toilet, I advise you to see a doctor, pronto. There is a possibility that you are either some kind of weirdo from an unknown planet or worse, that you have somehow lost your bladder.

Singapore is the headquarters of the WTO and, in case you didn't know that, WTO stands for the World Toilet Organisation.

Surprised? I have to admit that until I stumbled upon a news report on World Toilet Day, it had somehow slipped my mind that two years ago the WTO made headlines when it was launched here.

I mean, it's not as if there has been any breaking news over the last two years to remind me that it exists.

Headlines like "World toilet chief calls for freer bowel movement" or "WTO secretary-general proclaims the inalienable right of every individual, including convicted terrorists, to wee-wee" would have definitely etched the WTO into my mind. But there was none of that.

The aim of the WTO is something the ordinary person can relate to, unlike that of its acronym-sake, the World Trade Organisation, which is a little too alien to regular folk and which, in my opinion, deals with sewage of



another kind.

Talk to the heartlander on issues of free trade agreements and farm subsidies and he will probably tell you that the only trade he is familiar with is the trade-in deals for the latest mobile phones.

Subsidy? "Hospital subsidised rates, lor!"

Tell him that the WTO is advocating cleaner toilets and he will say: "It's about time, man. The toilet should always be 'stinkless' because everyone knows that it is the one place where you can be focused and think straight." Well, not necessarily doing it straight, though.

Most creative people will tell you that they get most of their brilliant ideas when they are in the toilet doing their thing. Somehow, when relieving themselves, their minds get cleared, too.

Don't believe me? The next time you are out with friends, observe the number of times someone has a suggestion, recalls something interesting or has a great idea after visiting the toilet.

The WTO issued a press release with the headline, "It's everybody's business" on World Toilet Day calling on all and sundry to help keep public toilets clean.

Among the 10 things it encouraged people to do is "Give suggestions to the toilet owner on how to make the toilet more cheerful and user-friendly".

This is a good point and our first target should be coffee shops.

We should tell the owners of these places that their toilets should not only be clean but must also have piped-in music and mini TV sets in the stalls.

And the next time you visit a public toilet, don't just pay 10 cents to the toilet owner. Get into a tête-à-tête with him and come up with ideas on how to improve his toilet.

I am serious, think of ideas to improve the local toilet environment and the WTO will take them up at the World Toilet Summit in Beijing next year.

That is when the bottoms ... I mean the heads of toilet organisations around the world will gather to discuss ways to take the stink out of loos.

For more information, log onto [www.worldtoilet.org](http://www.worldtoilet.org).

*This is a weekly column on the lighter side of life.*

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