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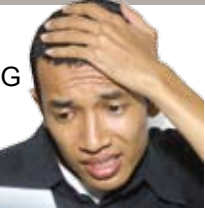
MARCH 1-15, 2009

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WHAT BECOMES OF IPOH AIRPORT?

A special report by A.Jeyaraj



Photograph by Rosli Mansor

There have been numerous proposals to revive Sultan Azlan Shah Airport but nothing has materialised so far. Proposals and counter proposals have been made regarding the future of Ipoh's iconic landmark. Ipoh Echo looks at some of these.



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MANUFACTURING



SO MANY PROPOSALS BUT NONE HAS COME THROUGH

In 2006 national carrier, MAS and budget airline, AirAsia, stopped flying into Ipoh. The national carrier's reason was poor passenger load while AirAsia cited short runway as the cause. Presently, only Riau Airlines operates a twice-weekly flight from Medan.

Ipoh Airport has a very long history. It started as a private airfield in the 1930s. The first scheduled commercial flight was introduced on May 1, 1947. The runway, which could initially take only small aircraft, was extended in the mid-1980s to accommodate larger commercial planes like the Boeing 737s.

SPACE TOURISM

In 1999 Space Tourism Consultants of Britain had proposed to the Perak Government to turn the airport into a "space-bound airport" to cater for space tourism. Former MB Dato' Seri Tajol Rosli,

announced in November 2004 that the state government had approved the airport to be developed for space tourism. Dr Collins, senior consultant of the UK-based company, said that Ipoh airport was chosen for its low traffic volume and its strategic location being at the centre of Peninsular Malaysia. Since then, there has been total silence on the subject.

In 2003, the CEO of Advance Aeronautical Training Centre, Dr Tharuma Dorai, proposed to develop four hectares of an adjacent land into an aviation hub. Facilities would include hangars for the maintenance and servicing of aircrafts and the provision of charter and domestic flights. This was disapproved by the state government.

In 2004, Tajol Rosli announced that the runway would be extended by 400 metres to accommodate AirAsia's Airbus. The cost was estimated at RM40 million. The plan was not implemented largely due

to problems relating to the relocation of houses in the vicinity.

At the opening of the Trade Exposition in Ipoh in June 2007, PM Abdullah Badawi pledged to develop the airport. This was reinforced by former Transport Minister, Datuk Seri Chan Kong Choy, in July 2007. He said the EPU, Finance Ministry and the state would come up with a proposal to upgrade the airport. The proposal would include the extending of the runway and the upgrading of the terminal and control tower. More flights, the Minister reasoned, would have a positive impact on the state's economy.

However, in December 2008, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Ong Tee Keat said that the runway could not be extended due to space constraints. Nizar Jamaluddin, the MB, disputed the claim saying that it was possible. The reason, Nizar theorised, was politics.

Nga Kor Ming,

former executive councillor for Public Transport, commented that the PM should honour his promise and the Transport Ministry should develop the airport. Alternatively, the federal government could entrust the state to undertake the task. A memorandum would be sent to the ministry on this matter. The cost estimated was RM160 million. Nothing is heard of this since.

Nga said that the non-availability of air transportation had hampered development. Since Perak lacks an efficient cargo delivery system it is having difficulty in attracting foreign businesses. Investors from India, Australia, UK and Japan are keen to come but have to put off their plans for the lack of air-travel facilities.

Gan Tak Hong, Chairman of Perak branch of Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers said there must be direct flights from Singapore to enable the state to attract investments and tourists. This would

open up Ipoh to the world. He added that instead of building a new airport the existing one should be upgraded.

Lim Si Boon, Chairman Perak Branch, Malaysian International Chamber of Commerce and Industry, declined to comment.

FIREFLY'S ENTRY

Nizar, during an executive council meeting on February 6, announced that RM2.7 million would be spent to transform the airport into a low-cost carrier terminal. Firefly would resume operations in mid May with flights from Singapore and Subang. This would help attract investors, he reckoned. However, Mr Hermen, the spokesman for Firefly, said that the company is still awaiting federal government's approval to resume the Ipoh-Singapore flight.

In mid-February Housing and Local Government Minister, Datuk Seri Ong Ka Chuan,

said that plans were afoot to build a new international airport. He added that a 1,200ha plot had been identified but declined to reveal the location. He made this announcement after attending a Chinese New Year dinner in Ipoh.

Monica Liew, Chairman MATTA Perak chapter, said that tourists bypassed Ipoh because there were no in-coming flights.

"Health tourism is a potential money spinner as medical costs in Ipoh are cheaper compared to Penang and Kuala Lumpur. As air travel is non-existent such travellers shun Ipoh", she said.

Since Tajol Rosli and Nizar are now out of office their assertions no longer hold water.

OUR HOPE

Ipohites cling on to the hope that their revered airport will be resurrected. However, with the recent political turmoil, this may just remain a pipe dream.

LETTER FROM ULU KINTA

writer's email: letterulukinta@yahoo.com

CAUSTIC CORRUPTION THAT IS CRUSHING PERAK

The public is unhappy. They can't be cowed into submission

Yes, this is serious. Never before has our state been embroiled in such a catastrophic impasse. I must admit there are few sights more depressing than the debacle outside the Ubadiyah mosque in Kuala Kangsar, with school children caught in the tragic crossfire. And I will never be able to erase the poignant sight of the lone person lying on the road, blocking the path of a royal motorcade, an act of heroic defiance, in a scene reminiscent of the struggle of Tiananmen Square 1989.

Perak is in a right pickle. There are only two victims – democracy and the electorate. At the time of writing this, we have not one, but two Menteri Besars, both of whom have no real power after the most recently elected Menteri Besar was suspended, together with six of his councillors, by the special privileges committee. Worst of all, we have a very frustrated and disil-

lusioned state.

Those who engineered this sorry saga probably did not contend with the unprecedented backlash. Maybe they expected the majority to be cowed into submission, kowtow to the powers that be (which one?) and generally accept meekly what has been dished up for them. So it must have both hurt, and shocked them, when the masses reeled with repugnance.

Amidst all this, a friend from overseas, who followed with interest and was bewildered about the happenings in our state, wrote to ask if she should continue with her travel plans to Perak, during the coming Easter holidays. "Is it safe?" she asks me. "The police, the blockades and all the protests. It looks daunting." I try and reassure her. But to no avail. "It is not too late for me to book my flight to Thailand," she continues.

It dawned on me. The age of the Internet and satellite television has

brought Perak to her sitting room. A decade ago, news like this would have trickled out and filled half an inch of column space, in the 'world news' section of the broadsheets, if lucky. Not now. We get a blow-by-blow account of all that is bad.

This was one friend and her family, who wanted to take advantage of attractive far-eastern holiday packages, and fly out from England during the school vacation in March. So, I wonder, what would potential investors to our state think right now? We all know that Perak could do with a bit of foreign investment, an injection of cash of the right calibre in the appropriate sectors, in these straitened times. Over to you, those of you who caused this diabolical mess.

It is all very disheartening. What happened to the checks and balances, rules and processes brought in to restrict political defections? Maybe there were none in the first

place, or none of any substance. And so, time and money has been squandered, and yet more time and even more money has hampered our efforts to have a free and fair political system.

The man in the street may well ask what the usurping is all about. It is sheer idiocy. Why introduce the law of unintended consequences?

One of these consequences is that we now have the police in conflict with law-abiding citizens, who are now being criminalised because they dare protest. A gulf has been opened up, which should never have been allowed to do so.

It is hardly surprising that the public are not happy. Some politicians have neglected to do their duty, the police are being politicised and public confidence in both of these, and even in the monarchy, is fragile.

Yes, we have a crisis. Yes, we are crying out in frustration but some see it

as a threat. Our system is beset with several inadequacies, incompetence and incongruity. We should be staggered by the waste, sluggish, and devil-take-the-hindmost attitude of our politicians.

What happened to discipline, duty and dedi-

cation? Not forgetting integrity, morality and self-respect.

Where are all the people who possess these qualities? And where are the front line professionals? Our lives are a misery as we are easily driven to distraction. **YMM**



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Hot and Cold

PERSPECTIVE

MARIAM MOKHTAR

MOANING IS FOR WIMPS

Don't just moan and whine. Make sure your complaint gets the right kind of attention

They say that complaining is easy, but I don't think so. What people describe as complaining is really moaning. It's just letting off steam about someone or something. All they're doing is having a bit of a grumble. That's the easy bit – MOANING.

You pick on the nearest hapless employee and subject him to your turbo charged invective. At the end of it, you think you've done well. In most probability, the person you were addressing has little or no authority to deal with your complaint legitimately, or at least to your satisfaction. The defective goods are still with you or the unacceptable service you've just received, still rankles.

Most Malaysians would rather walk away. They ought to complain and refuse to pay for the terrible meal they've just had, or the poor, inattentive service they've received. It's important to highlight the issue to the relevant

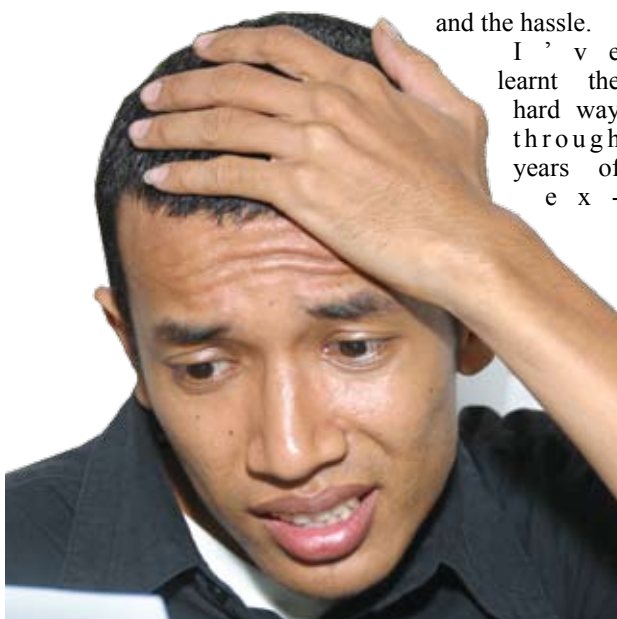
senior person in charge.

We've seen, heard and even read in the papers, about the multitude of poor services and shoddy goods. And it's not limited to the private sector either. Civil servants, from an ever increasing army of bloated pompous bureaucrats, have an infinite capacity to infuriate.

Across the spectrum, unmanned counters, rude staff, incorrect advice, delays, the way you were treated – are some of the things we come across daily. Alas, the world would be a better place if it could be rid of the thousands upon thousands of useless administrators, pen-pushers, box-tickers and busybodies who make our lives a misery.

In the past, shop assistants, restaurants, the postal service, the police, traffic wardens, hotels, airlines, doctors, banks and a school administrator have all caused me much anguish.

If you're at the receiv-



ing end of bad service or defective products, I would urge you to complain. But do it logically, decisively and incisively. It is better than moaning. It gets you what you want. If it doesn't, it's not for want of trying. You did your best. Complaining, unlike moaning, involves a bit more work. And that is what many people can't be bothered with – the time

and the hassle.

I've learnt the hard way through years of ex-

perience. There is no point in being aggressive. Assertive is the catch word. There is no point in being worked up. Staying calm, even though you are seething, is the best strategy.

Do not moan. State your point; say why you are dissatisfied to establish your complaint. Then follow up this initial phase, in writing, without delay.

The first thing you have to do is to be very clear in your mind why you are complaining. Was it defective goods? Shoddy service? The way you were treated? Then, decide what you would like to happen. Is it an apology you want? Or a replacement? Or a different decision? Make this very clear.

Direct your complaint at the relevant senior manager or customer services department, if there is one. Otherwise, contact the head office. I always go for the top man. Obtain his full name, designation and address. It reveals that you've taken the trouble to get his details right.

Clearly and courteously convey the details of your grouse, express any disappointments and explain what you want done for it to be resolved. Always stipulate a reasonable deadline. (I usually give people a fortnight to reply.) In the meantime, contact the relevant authority or consumer association (e.g., CAP – Consumers' Association Penang) for further advice and clarification. Court or arbitration may be the only solution for a few, but I am confident that if you follow the main guidelines, some form of satisfactory recourse will result.

There are some tips to consider. Keep and main-

tain a record of events – who you spoke to, when, and what was said. Also, keep all the evidence like receipts, invoices, letters, replies, emails and notes from telephone conversations. Never present originals but hang on to them for safekeeping.

I was once fined for purportedly being in the wrong lane at the traffic lights (junction of Jalan Raja Ekram and Jalan Sultan Idris Shah). I protested as I knew I had not broken the law. I took several photographs of the road lanes and presented these as evidence. I received a letter from the traffic chief acknowledging that the local council was at fault with the road markings.

But a common trait of politicians and those in authority, is that sorry does seem to be the hard-

est word for them.

I did NOT get a fine, but the closest I got to an apology, was when the police blamed the painters of the road lanes. At least I kept my money.

In another instance, an extremely rude bank employee got transferred to a town in the ulu.

The moral of the story is that you have your rights too and you should exercise them. Do not be put off if you fail at your first attempt. Try again.

The last time I complained, I was given a shopping voucher worth a few hundred ringgit as reparation, on top of having my problem solved. I would have been satisfied with just a 'sorry' but hey, who's going to turn down this unexpected present.

And who knows, you might get lucky, too.

ANNOUNCEMENT

In conjunction with International Women's Day 2009, Perak Women to Women Society will organise an awareness campaign on stopping violence against women. Date and Venue: Sunday, March 8 from 11 am to 3 pm at Concourse Ipoh Parade. Come and support a just cause. For details please call PWWS Secretary at 012-521 2480

Perak Community Specialist Hospital will be organizing a "Know Your Kidneys" event on March 7 from 8am till 12noon at their hospital parking area. Free health screening and consultation is available. For more info contact Juliet Choo at 018-5713955

In conjunction with World Consumer Rights Day on March 15 the Perak Consumers Association is organizing a 3 day exhibition with the theme "Junk Food Generation" high lighting the problem of obesity and children's health. Contact Dr Rajeswaran Paramjothy at 012-5180347 for details.

EDITORIAL

STIMULUS PACKAGES THAT DON'T STIMULATE

The primary cause of the American financial crunch was due to a subprime lending crisis which led to the collapse of the nation's banking institution. Subprime lending, or second chance lending, is the practice of giving loans to borrowers who do not qualify because of their poor credit ratings. Subprime lending is risky for both lenders and borrowers due to the combination of high interest rates, poor credit history and adverse financial situations usually associated with subprime applicants. A subprime loan is usually offered at a high interest rate for obvious reasons.

The situation is reminiscent of the late 1990s economic slump attributed to non-performing loans taken by borrowers with close links to the ruling party. Connections to the powers-that-be were considered "collaterals" as qualifications for hefty bank loans to finance some shady business deals. Many banks took the bait and went belly-up as a result. Bank Bumiputra was one major victim.

Proponents of Keynesian economics advocate increasing the disposable income of consumers to encourage spending. By them spending it will create a multiplier effect which will spur economic activities. The idea seems plausible. However, more disposable income does not necessary translate to spending. During hard times people will think twice about spending. They would rather save for a rainy day.

President Barack Obama spoke of an economic stimulus package to beef up America's declining economy. Massive government bailouts are in the offing. Businesses hardest hit by the slump stand to gain from the government's generosity. The problem in Malaysia is unlike America. It is caused mainly by a depressed export market. America and Europe are not buying our goods and our finished products. The slump affects workers in the electronic and manufacturing sectors most. The number of laid-offs increases by the day.

Najib's first stimulus package of RM7 billion announced in November 2008 did not have the desired effects as predicted. The money did not trickle down to the rakyat. Most were spent on plugging deficiencies or augmenting expenditures already projected in Budget 2009. Now that a second economic stimulus (in the guise of a mini budget) is in the pipeline, the burning question on the rakyat's lips is whether the money will indeed benefit the man in the street?

One sure way to increase consumers' disposable income is to lower electricity tariff. The government has yet to justify paying a hefty bill for unused electricity generated by independent power producers. The other is to reduce further the pump prices of petrol and diesel. Domestic tourism can contribute towards improving the economy. Get hotels to reduce their room rates. Finally, extend micro-credit financing to the unemployed. They are the ones who need the money not some cronies of the establishment.

Economic stimulus packages may not be the solution when "leakages" are almost impossible to plug.

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THINKING ALOUD

RESPECT WOMEN - FOR THEY ARE KEY TO OUR NATION'S FUTURE



Elizabeth Wong

Encouraged in this manner the culture continues. To stop this type of behaviour, all that is needed is for the public to dismiss uncouth acts like these and ignore them. This is what would be expected of right thinking members of society. Until we achieve this value en masse we are destined to be backward.

The matter goes beyond the current issue. It transcends to the culture of our

society that differentiates the sexes in expectations and makes sometimes intolerable demands of the female gender. By offering to resign, Elizabeth has done what she believes is right for her party and now it is for her party and the government to do what is right by rejecting it. Continuing to serve as a representative for her constituency and as a member of the government will undoubtedly be the best response to the evil doer and though it would be tremendously difficult it would contribute significantly to the development of our nation's social maturity.

CHALLENGES WOMEN FACE

A few days before the story hit the streets,

Soroptimist International, a worldwide organisation for women in management and professions dedicated to the advancement of the status of women chartered its club in Ipoh. Going by Elizabeth Wong's predicament, I would think Soroptimist International and other groups fighting for women rights have their work cut out for them.

Speaking at the function, Dato Dr Majumder said that whilst it is true that both men and women live in poverty, face discrimination and must overcome obstacles, throughout history - in every country in the world - women and girls face additional obstacles and discrimination solely because of their gender.

She then revealed the following:

- One in three women have been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in their lifetime.
- Out of the 600,000-800,000 people trafficked across international borders annually, 80 percent are female.
- Women work two-thirds of the world's working hours but earn only 10 percent of the world's income, and own less than 1 percent of the world's property.
- Of a total 550 million working poor, 330 million or 60 percent are women.
- Two-thirds of the 880

million illiterate adults are women.

• Of the more than 110 million children not in school, approximately 60 percent are girls.

• In some countries in sub-Saharan Africa, adolescent girls have HIV rates up to five times higher than adolescent boys.

• Pregnancies and childbirth-related health problems take the lives of nearly 146,000 teenage girls each year.

• An estimated 450 million adult women in developing countries are stunted, a direct result of malnutrition in early life.

These are disturbing facts and though we may not be able to do much to address the international situation we can do something within our shores.

WOMEN AND FUTURE SOCIETY

I am one of those who truly believe that the future of this nation lies more in the hands of women than men.

Among the three races that form the bulk of the nation's population, the Chinese are the most gender liberal. But this is not historical and the situation was quite different not too long ago. But they have progressed and are progressing.

The Indians - what can I say save that it is the

women who hold the key to this community's future.

On them rests the responsibility and burden for nurturing the young and it is they who will determine the fate of the future generation which ultimately will decide the position of the community. They, more than men, need to be empowered.

Because of demographics and the special position of the Malays in this nation, the Malay women hold the opportunity to deliver the most impact. Malaysia is part of the global village and to progress we as a nation need to be competitive. I believe that Malay women are evolving to a position to be able to meet the challenge. In the Malay community the women are generally more competitive than men. This possibly is an attribute cultivated in the family environment where they need to compete with their male siblings. This competitive culture is carried over into the school environment and the result is their dominance of the institutes of higher learning. In the work place they already constitute a substantial number and it is a matter of time before they occupy the highest positions in both the public and private sector. Hopefully this progress is not retarded for that would be most unfortunate for the people of this nation.

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MUSINGS ON FOOD by See Foon Chan-Koppen



OLD-FASHIONED HOME COOKING – 70 YEARS YOUNG

In our age of instant gratification where everything has been reduced to how quickly one's wishes and desires are satisfied, I find my thoughts drifting to matters atavistic. Especially on thoughts of food.

While not quite wishing to go into the jungle to pick leaves and berries and hunt or fish for my daily sustenance, I find myself yearning for some good old-fashioned cooking, preferably with charcoal, which always manages to impart some subtle traces of smokiness to dishes where the modern LPG gas burner fails.

INSTITUTION SINCE 1939

At the suggestion of a friend who has remained a fan of this restaurant ever since he was in short pants and used to be taken there by his parents, I had lunch at Hung Kee, a veritable institution of old style dining since 1939.

Run by two sisters, Chan Sau Ying & Chan Soo Hah, Hung Kee has not succumbed to the lure of modernization, sitting as it has always done on the corner of Jalan Raja Ekram (Cowan Street), next to what used to be the Yau Tet Shin Bazaar. A tall flowering Bougainvillea plant that threatens to engulf the entrance greets us as we enter its shady interior, un-besmirched by newfangled gadgets like air-conditioners. Fifty-year old ceiling fans, which the owner proudly boasted had never once broken down, cooled the interior as my eyes adjusted itself from the glare of the midday sun.

The furnishings are humble. But the food is worth the lack of fancy decor. Hung Kee is a restaurant that does not skimp on old-fashioned labour. Where else in, not only Ipoh but the whole of Malaysia will you get rice steamed in individual tureens? From the raw grain. And soups steamed from fresh raw ingredients for a minimum of four to five hours. No special time-saving steam microwave ovens, just your ordinary three tiered steamer pots filled to the brim with tureen upon tureen of various soups



and herbal potions. Add to this your occasional plate of fish which is stacked on top of the soups and you have a whole lot of good old-fashioned home cooking going on.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Started by the two sisters' father, Chan Hung Kee, who like many of his Chinese predecessors, came from China to make his fortune, Hung Kee is signposted as a "Rice Shop" which in the old days was the designated translation from the Chinese for restaurant. Originally begun as a stall in the market that housed the Yau Tet Shin Bazaar which came later, the current premises on the corner of Cowan Street was a mere tarpaulin-enclosed space that catered

in Hung Kee – two tables to be exact – where we proceeded to savour the "brand name" dishes for which Hung Kee made its name in the last 70 years.

SIGNATURE SOUPS

There is no menu at Hung Kee. You speak to one of the sisters who will advise you on what's available and place your order. Cheang Khai Mun, their cousin, the sole chef who has been there for 30 years, then prepares the food in their tiny kitchen towards the back of the shop. The soups of which there are five types altogether, is naturally piping hot, having been steaming for more than 4 hours, is brought to the table first. As is the rice, which comes retaining the shape of the tureen in which it was



to all and sundry when it opened in 1952. Rich and poor who fancied a good home-cooked meal patronized Hung Kee.

I was fortunate in getting together with a group of "Sek Kah" or what we now call foodies to join me

steamed. Alas, LPG gas has replaced wood stoves as of ten years ago!

The soups are some of the signature dishes for which Ipohites in the know, come for. I was struck by the poetic name of one of their most fa-

FOOD

ipohecho.sf@gmail.com

IPOH'S CHICKEN TAUGE AND SOUP KUEY TEOW (KAI SI HOR FUN)

Any respectable food court will have an 'Ipoh Chicken Kuey Teow' stall. If it doesn't, then it's either not respectable or it's not in Ipoh. As far back as some of us can remember (and some of us can go pretty far back), this has been a favourite of Ipoh. It started off as just chicken soup *kuey teow*. Then the *tauge* (bean sprouts) was introduced and served with the white chicken (*nga choy kai*), gained popularity. The basic cooking method is putting a whole chicken into boiling stock and soaking it until the meat is just cooked. It's a healthier alternative to frying (sorry Colonel Sanders!) The chicken is then strung up to drain off excess water and fat. A couple of more procedures may be performed after this initial cooking but we are not privy to that information. Oil may be brushed on to give it a nice sheen. Ideally the meat should be succulent, tender and not too oily. Some establishments boast of using free-range chickens and maintaining the tenderness. The soup is made from chicken or prawn stock and the important ingredient is the Ipoh *kuey teow* or rice noodles. Usually cut into thinner strips than the fried version, it should be smooth and soft. The original *kai si hor fun* is topped with chicken, fresh prawns, strips of chives, and served with 'chili padi' (birds-eye chilli).



RESTAURANT	LOCATION	COMMENTS	PRICE (RM)				RATING
			Soup kuey teow	Chicken (1 thigh + 1 wing)	Tauge	Soup kuey teow (plain)	
Kedai Kopi Kong Heng	75 Jln Bandar Timah (aka Leech Street), Old Town	Soup flavour is robust, chicken is tender, oily and a little under cooked – <i>kuey teow</i> not as soft and has more texture to it – fresh prawns are included with the soup & also a good helping of chives (<i>ku chai</i>)	3.50	7.00	2.50	1.30	3.5
Restoran Onn Kee (Tauge Ayam)	51 Jln Yau Tet Shin, New Town	<i>Kuey teow</i> is melting smooth, chicken lean & tender, soup not as flavourful, <i>tauge</i> not so crisp	3.20	8.00	2.00	1.20	3.0
Restoran Cowan Street Tauge Ayam & Kopitiam	44 Jln Raja Ekram (Cowan Street)	Chicken is tender but a bit oily, soup is very flavourful. May have MSG.	3.50	9.00	3.00	1.30	3.5
Restoran Lou Wong Tauge Ayam	49 Jln Yau Tet Shin, New Town	Soup has dried prawn flavour, <i>tauge</i> is crisp, chicken is a bit oily, <i>kuey teow</i> is less smooth	3.00	7.00	2.00	1.20	3.0

Our next food review will be **BANANA LEAF RICE**.
Email your favourite recommendations to: ipohecho.vw@gmail.com

mous soups. Translated from the Chinese as heavenly bliss, earthly joy, this soup is a combination of pigs brains and chicken feet and almost impossible to find these days.

Not one to cringe from unusual ingredients like offal and extremities, I tucked into this soup with gusto. It had a clean light flavour, mildly salted, the brain delectably creamy and the chicken feet tender and gelatinous, all taste sensations that many of my friends other than the Chinese food cognoscenti, would find repugnant.

Other soups in their repertoire were equally delicious, all varying in taste from the beef shin soup, the watercress soup with spare ribs, herbal soup with chicken and the salted kale soup with duck.

STRANGE NAME FOR A GREAT DISH

After tasting all the soups I was ready to tuck in to the main entrees.

Another dish for which Hung Kee is renowned has a weird name in Chinese. Known as "dead man, living man, lying down" (sounds better in Chinese); it is an attempt to graphically depict the fresh fish steamed with salted fish. The tempting aroma of the salted fish preceded the arrival of the dish and my taste buds proved what my nose had anticipated. The "living man" or live fish was market-fresh, caught-that-day and the "dead man" or salted fish was the best "rotten fragrance" variety – a type that, again, appeals primarily to the Chinese palate.

The dishes then arrived rapidly in quick succession. We had the bitter melon with spare ribs, a rich dark fermented soya bean sauce permeating the tender slices of bitter melon and ribs. This was followed by their sweet sour pork which has the reputation of being leaner than in other restaurants

and I found the sauce just right for my palate, not too sweet nor too sour. The braised fresh water fish with tofu was wolfed down with alacrity and by the time the steamed pork with salted fish arrived, we were all satiated and couldn't do justice to the dish.

VALUE WORTH SUPPORTING

As we sat there sipping on the last dregs of tea, I was told about what else to eat on my next visit there. Apparently another of their famous signature dishes is pigs brain omelette. Now I wonder if my gray matter will increase if I eat often at Hung Kee? My girth certainly will but happily my bank account will not suffer. All the dishes at Hung Kee cost between RM6-RM10 except for the steamed fish which will depend on market price of the day. Certainly value for unsurpassable home cooking which is hard to beat.

PARENTING

by WERN SZE GILL

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MY MOM, MY ROLE MODEL

Over the year, we will be highlighting stories of role model parents in Ipoh. In this issue, our writer shares how her own mom juggled a household of eight, a busy career, and brought up four children almost single-handedly...

When I was growing up, my family consisted of 8 members; my parents, my paternal grandparents, two sisters and a brother. That is, even by Malaysian standards, a large family. We only had a part-time cleaner then so everyone had to chip in with the housework.

Mom worked as a nurse in government service and opted to retire early to work in a private hospital later. The early days in government service were especially tough for her, as she had to get by with little sleep whenever she had to work night shifts, whilst still having to cook full meals and run a household with young children.

Dad worked as a geologist and was transferred to Kuala Lumpur when we were in secondary school, thus becoming a weekend commuting dad. In those days, there was no North-South Expressway and I am still awed by his commitment in making the 4-hour long journey home each weekend to spend time with us. Time with dad was short and precious as he would arrive home on Saturday evenings and leave in the wee hours of Mondays to return to KL.

Mom and dad shared a very close relationship and



mom always attributed her strengths to the support of dad. For her, behind every successful woman was a loving man. Because of their strong relationship, there was always love and security in the home. Dad always said that the culture of a family is moulded by a woman and mom was always there to nurture us and be the peacemaker.

WHEN HARD WORK PAYS

Despite their difficulties and challenges as parents, we never once heard them complain about their lot. Mom was, and still is, an extremely positive and happy person, ever willing to help anyone in need and

lend a listening ear. Our home was always open to unannounced visitors and there was always enough food for anyone who stayed till meal times. My friends enjoyed hanging out in our home and mom would always make time to connect with my friends.

My parents later made a decision to migrate to Australia in order for us to receive quality tertiary education. Mom came along with us while dad continued working in Malaysia. They would later share with us how these years became the most trying years in their relationship. To help support us, mom had to re-take a nursing course so she could work

there. She was the oldest student in her class and had to work doubly hard. But because mom was never a quitter, she succeeded and secured a flexible nursing job enabling her to give quality time to her family. With her adaptable and popular personality, she secured many choice jobs in various healthcare centres. Dad joined us after retirement later, and was able to take a load off mom's shoulders, helping with the home and family.

PERSEVERANCE IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

Mom was diagnosed with breast cancer 2 years ago and had to undergo



surgery and treatment to remove the cancer. Despite the discomforts of chemotherapy, mom would pick herself up 2 days after each cycle, put on her make-up and gorgeous hair piece, and head for the markets and shops with vigour. She continued to live life to the full despite her illness and taught us a valuable lesson that life goes on despite difficulties.

Mom has truly become my role model now that I am a mother. She taught us perseverance and hard work. She taught us that life could still be meaningful and full despite its challenges and hard knocks. Mom was very strict with us, and taught us that reward does not come to you on a silver platter but that you had to earn it.

She taught us the importance of friendships and relationships, and was the epitome of the idiom,

“a friend in need is a friend indeed’. We were always taught to walk the righteous path, though it may be strewn with thorns and setbacks. She taught us to seek guidance and wisdom from God, and to love and serve humankind.

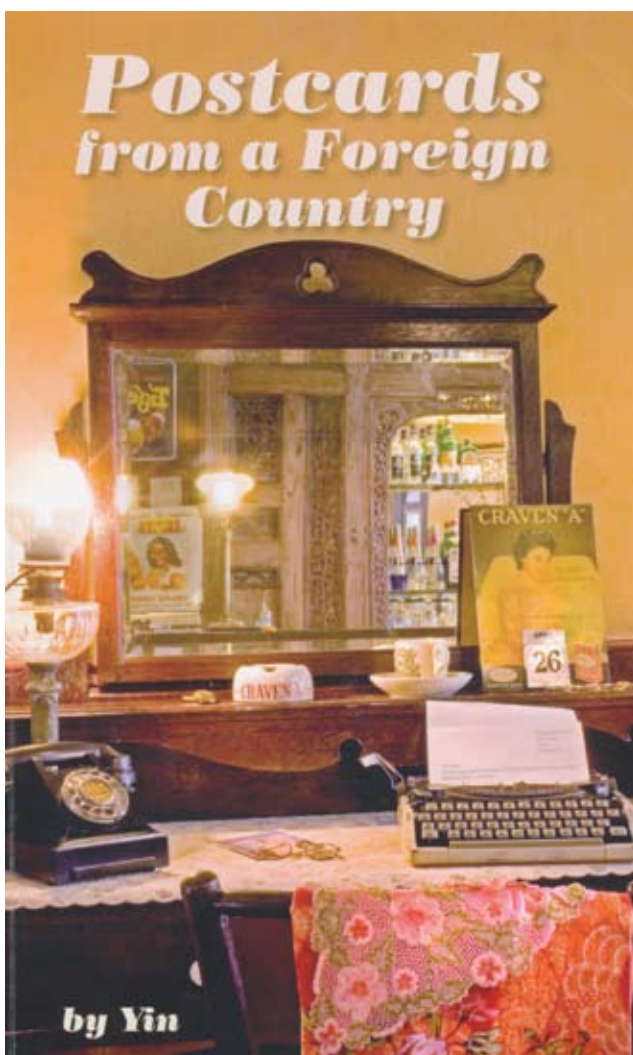
My parents now live a full and happy life in Ipoh, and enjoy visiting my sisters, brother, and grandchildren in different parts of the world. They have impacted us greatly and continue to leave a lasting legacy with their grandchildren today.

We invite you to share how your parent has been a role model to you so others may draw inspiration from him/her. Email your stories (about 700 words) to ipohecho.parenting@gmail.com, along with a scanned photograph of your parent. We will feature the best stories here!

BOOK REVIEW

by CHELVI MURUGIAH

IPOH, AS FOREIGN AS IT GETS



Postcards from a Foreign Country by Yin is uniquely Ipoh. Author Yin sees Ipoh as being a ‘foreign country’ during the period when Malaysia had just gained independence, a time when expatriates’ influence on locals was most apparent.

The book consists of ten short stories, all of which unfold in our familiar local Ipoh streets and otherwise ‘quiet’ townships like Buntong and Bercham. The dialogues created between the characters reflect the ‘harmonic blend’ of local dialects of various ethnicities which is truly Malaysian. This goes to show how strongly our cultures bind within this informal form of communication, which is evident even today.

The seemingly unassuming stories are etched with local humour that most of us can easily relate to. That makes reading this book, pleasurable.

My assurance it that you will be caught chuckling to yourself and maybe even let out a guffaw or two, as the writer craftily engages you in his local tales.

Each short story is laced with its own specific storyline. When you read **Langchia Man**, you read about Ah Bah, a trishaw peddler, who dreams of making it big. His story unfolds like an allegory; there is a silver lining in every cloud. Yet he is constantly reminded of his earlier actions. As the saying goes, what goes around comes around.

DIFFERENT TIME AND PLACE

Postcards from a Foreign Country, takes you on a journey to a different time and place, as in a travelogue, yet all of the ‘happenings’ are local, having taken place in Ipoh, Perak. Yin presents a period when people were simpler, not as race conscious, as we are

today. Everybody accepted one another, for their racial differences, as an assortment of chocolates in a box. This message is reflected in **Numbers from Hell**, a ‘scary’ story involving a group of young lads, Tiger Lok, Pauzi, and Thaya who seek the assistance of supernatural ‘dark’ powers to help them win ‘big’ money. Ironically, there is much truth to the story – there are still many who think along those lines.

I also realise that the writer has taken his right to freedom of speech and expression to a higher level of awareness, which may take readers by surprise. You would recognise the hard realities of our history, in a poignantly told tale of Eric Burton, a British expatriate and his wife Jean in **And Life Goes On**.

With so much censorship today, it's not often that we are able to get hold of a book such as **Postcards from a Foreign**

Country that exposes the early signs of segregation, with subtlety.

Overall, this book is for leisure reading. Do get comfy. Read it with your hot cup of coffee or tea, preferably, in the quietness of the afternoons. In this way, your hearty laughter can be heard right throughout your neighbourhood! I come away sensing that there is some ‘truth’ to all these ‘tales.’ Anyway, life goes on and the communities have moved on. Just pondering, is there a story worth writing about Ipoh, as it is today?

My clear favourite is **Samy the Barber**.

AVAILABILITY

Postcards from a Foreign Country is published by East West Publishing Pte Ltd, Sydney and is in soft cover. The book is priced at RM30 a piece and is available at MPH and Popular bookstores in all major cities.

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SOME SWEET MEMORIES

Forty Form One and Two students of SMK St Michael, Ipoh, visited the Public Trust Handicapped Children's Welfare Home recently. They were prefects and members of the Crime Prevention Club.

The welfare home houses disabled children and adults with serious physical and mental disa-



bilities. The founder of the home, Miss Mary and her four volunteers, help keep watch over the inmates and attend to their needs. Mary briefed the young visitors the routine they maintained at the centre.

The students were impressed with the children seeing how well-behaved they were and how clean everything was consid-

YOUNG PERAK
by PETER KHIEW
Teachers and students from schools are invited to write about their respective institutions of learning.
E-mail articles to:
ipohecho.pk@gmail.com

ering the limitations the home had. They then went about entertaining the children while a few fed them with biscuits.

Accompanying the students were teachers

Brindes Lawrence and Omar Ibrahim. Before leaving they presented Mary with rice, cereal and biscuits. It was an unforgettable experience for both visitors and the visited.

CROSS-COUNTRY RUN FOR ALL

It has been a yearly affair for teachers and students of SMK Pinji, Ipoh, to partake in the school's annual cross-country run. Teachers and students alike have long realised the benefits of staying healthy. Running and jogging provide them such benefits, thus explaining the popularity

of the competition.

On the day of the run, over a thousand students and teachers sweated out in a 30-minute warming up exercise before dashing off on the 4-km course which took them through residential areas, rough terrains and hard tarmac.

Some ran competitively while some walked

leisurely to the finishing line. They had a wonderful time interacting while competing.

Senior assistants, Zahidi Abdul Ghani, Noor Habibi Mohamad and Norehan Salbidi, were in the thick of the action never wanting to miss this once-in-a-year opportunity.



14th March, 2009
Jazz and Bitz, Mikes Place, Ipoh, brings you...

AkashA

Joget... the Bluesy Irish way!!

Into AkashA... a compilation of diverse genres of music, woven together with a magical thread of acoustic ethnic instruments from around the globe. Sitar with guitar, tabla with djembe, mridangam played to bass guitar, jazz piano, Indian Raga style, Irish Riverdance with a hint of American blues, Indian 'konnukol' or voice percussion laid on a Spanish plateau... the connection and seamless bonding of Eastern and Western instruments and world genres presents itself in this thrilling album, taking the listener deep into a sublime environment of musical bliss... deep into AkashA.

The 90 min extravaganza, excluding an interval, will begin with AkashA's opening concoction of Bourbon Lassi... Indian vocal percussions from the North and South open the doors to this lively number of Irish Riverdance on to blues, finishing with a flourish of all this artistry mixed together. Other exciting numbers from the album which will be presented are Ants in my Turban, with its hint of a Russian march, Damascus, presenting the exotic rhythms of the long ago Persian era; the bossanova, Indian style, in Bombay Bossanova, and not-so-classic American blues on the sitar, in Brickfields Blues. Also listen out for the Indian Vocal percussions taking a strange twist in Kunna Cool.

AkashA is represented by Jamie Wilson (compositions, guitar, gambus, vocals), Sivabalan Shanmuga Sundram (mridangam, ganjira, vocal percussions), Greg Henderson (bass guitar), Kumar Karthigesu (sitar, dilruba), Vick Ramakrishnan (tabla, vocal percussions), Badar Ben Taleb (world percussions, vocals), and featuring guest artist Eric Li (piano).

Audiences can look forward to the live, improvised interplay between the artists, which will vary greatly from the track recordings, with spontaneity exploding as the enthusiasm of the audience builds! AkashA will also perform a number of tracks not included in the CD, as well as cover versions of popular classics, blues and jazz numbers.

Do be there to enjoy this ONE NIGHT ONLY extravaganza in Ipoh!!!!

For more details please go to www.jazzandbits.com
or call Titus on 012 5209 411

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IPOH FACTS AND FANCIES

by HO TAK MING

In the early 1920's, there was much interest in the development of Cameron Highlands as a hill resort with surrounding farms to support a permanent local population. In 1925 the Chief Secretary to the Government, Sir George Maxwell, visited it and promised to speed up the construction of the road from Tapah.

However, there was a shorter route to Cameron Highlands from Ipoh discovered by William Kellie Smith (who built the famous Kellie's Castle). This route was shown to Kellie Smith by some Orang Asli whom he had befriended. It started from Gopeng, and was used regularly by the Orang Asli to come down to the town to buy their necessities.

In 1925 Kellie Smith applied to the Kinta Land

Office at Batu Gajah for a concession of 2,500 acres of agricultural land at Ulu Kampar situated at an altitude of between 2,500 and 3,000 feet, just below Cameron Highlands and about fourteen miles from Gopeng. An area of about 500 acres was comparatively flat and suitable for the cultivation of citrus trees and Robusta coffee - this was the fabulous "hidden valley" that many people believed existed on the lower slopes of Cameron Highlands, but was hitherto undiscovered except by the Orang Asli. Kellie Smith intended to form a company and employ a European manager to run his estates. There would be a factory to process the coffee beans.

Besides his citrus and coffee estates, Kellie Smith intended to build a semi-residential holiday resort,

which would be managed by his daughter, Helen. There were many rivers enclosed in the concession, which were suitable for sport fishing if stocked with fry.

The Chief Secretary had sanctioned \$25,000 to be put in the 1926 Estimates for a bridge path from Gopeng to Cameron Highlands. A good road would cost much more than that, and Kellie Smith was willing to build it for the Government in order to spur the development of Cameron Highlands if he were given the concession.

That such a short route to Cameron Highlands would be of immense benefit to Ipoh was self-evident. It would take only three to four hours through scenic country to get there. Kellie Smith's holiday resort would be tremendously popular for those

who preferred the amenities of 2,500 to 3,000 feet to the higher altitudes of Cameron Highlands, using Ipoh as a base to get there.

GOVERNMENT UNWILLING

However, the times had changed from the 1890's when Kellie Smith easily acquired 3,000 acres of land near Batu Gajah to plant coffee (later switched to rubber). The Government was not willing to grant such a large concession to a single individual. The District Officer Kinta recommended to the British Resident Perak that 700 acres be granted to Kellie Smith, 200 acres of flat land in two blocks of 100 acres each for planting citrus and coffee, and 500 acres of steep mountain-side. The rivers were not to be touched as they were

important for mining. Kellie Smith protested. He argued that 500 acres was an economic area for coffee and citrus under European management. 100 acres of coffee did not permit of a factory to be built to cure the beans. The resort would not be popular without game fishing.

Kellie Smith was miffed by the Government's attitude that he made a trip to Portuguese Timor (now Irian Jaya) and obtained a large concession for planting there. It was to end tragically for him. The following year he visited his family in England. On his way back to Malaya, he called at Lisbon to finalise the details of his lease. He caught pneumonia there and died in the Portuguese capital.

Kellie Smith's short route to Cameron Highlands was apparently

forgotten. In the late 1920's the well-known Ipoh tin miner, Foo Nyit Tse, was shown the route by some Orang Asli. It started from the Gopeng Consolidated Company's property, followed the giant iron pipes up until the source of the Sungei Kampar, and then via jungle tracks up hill and down dale until Tanah Rata.

The trip took two days, with an overnight stay at an Orang Asli camp. Foo Nyit Tse was so impressed with Cameron Highlands that he acquired a one-acre site overlooking the golf course and built a resort bungalow called "Bintang Falim", named after his famous 20-room Falim House.

Recently the federal government built a road to the hill resort from Simpang Pulai, a few miles north of Gopeng.

A SHORTER ROUTE TO CAMERON HIGHLANDS

Kellie Smith's proposal was overlooked



IPOH IN BRIEFMore pics at
ipohecho on line**ANDERSONIAN
CENTENNIAL PARTY**

As part of its centenary celebrations, Anderson School held an array of entertainment programmes on the evening of February 15 at its school grounds. The crowd was thrilled to the beat of several popular artistes. Amongst them was Suki ("One in a Million" fame), Diddi (Akademi Fantasia) and Azizi (Digi Celebriteen). There was also a break dance performance by Shuttle Monstarz. The night's finale was a fireworks display.

The royal centennial dinner was held the following day. Over 860 diners turned up for the event. The old boys at the dinner were among the Who's Who in Malaysia. Personalities who had contributed towards the well being of this nation. Notable amongst them were international cartoonist Dato' Mohd Nor Khalid (Lat) and Dato' Nashatar Singh, the national javelin record holder. HRH Sultan Azlah Shah was present on both occasions.

TEN PIN BOWLING

The Teachers' Club of the Kinta District National Unity and Integration Department organised a ten-pin bowling competition recently. The event, held at the Ampang Super Bowl, Ipoh Parade, pitted the teaching staff of the department against kindergarten teachers in the district. Over 50 participants took part. The game was officiated by Pn Safiah Sam, a senior official of the department. The primary objective of the completion was to foster a closer working relationship between the department's teaching staff and kindergarten teachers. It was also aimed at providing a meaningful platform to exchange ideas and views. Radziah Muhammad, Maziatul-Hana Yahaya and Norizalina Mohd Yunus emerged as winners in the individual category.

OPEN HOUSE

Tadika Kinderland Ipoh held a Chinese New Year open house on January 31 for the benefit of parents, students and former students. Over 300 guests attended the function which was held at the kindergarten's premises. The celebration began with a lion dance and later a dragon performance that got the audience into the mood. The guests tucked into the goodies and were delighted by the timely appearance of the God of Prosperity who distributed "gold coins" to the lucky ones. The purpose of the gathering, said Principal Angela Toh, was to encourage parents, teachers and children to interact for an auspicious occasion – Chinese New Year.

THINK TANK

Newly minted Mentri Besar, Dato' Dr Zambrzy Abdul Kadir, announced the formation of a think tank under the ambit of the state government. It will be in the form of a body to be known as Institute Darul Ridzuan. The primary function of the institute is to provide the state government with ideas on how to better manage the state, economically. Zambrzy also suggested the forming of a special council to coordinate activities of non-governmental organisations in the state regardless of their origins. The MB revealed that a number of business entities had shown interest to invest in the state during the press conference held after his first executive council meeting on February 18.

MALAM PUISI

Malam Puisi (Poem-Reading Night) was the climax of the literary and cultural programme sponsored by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka for National Service trainees. The event was held at the Kg Baru training camp, Ayer Tawar, on February 16 and was witnessed by trainees and their instructors. The programme is aimed at instilling interest in National Service trainees in learning the rich literary and cultural heritage of the country. Those picked to read sajak (poems) were enthralled by the richness of the Malay language. This was confirmed by the rest who were taken in by the mood of the evening.

PEACE FORUM

Entitled "World Peace and Understanding – Where has the World Gone Wrong?", this peace forum was organised by Rotary Club Greentown, Ipoh, in conjunction with Rotary's World Peace and Understanding Month. Speakers for the forum were three distinguished personalities – His Excellency T. Jasudasan, the High Commissioner of Singapore to Malaysia, His Excellency Ashok K. Kantha, the High Commissioner of India to Malaysia and Mr Youssouf Mohammad Oomar from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Attended mostly by upper secondary school students from schools around Ipoh, the forum emphasised understanding among cultures, races and nations. The speakers pointed out lingering threats to world peace such as poverty and terrorism and urged those present not only to understand but to appreciate cultural diversities, as well.

BODY BUILDING CONTEST

VS Gym Fitness Centre, Ipoh, organised a body-building contest in conjunction with its opening recently. The aim was to encourage youths to take up body-building as a sport and also to help source for fresh talents. The initiative by VS Gym Fitness Centre is a step in the right direction as exposure to this sport is lacking presently. The contest was well received by body-building enthusiasts throughout the state. Over 60 participants took part in the contest. Syed Azlan was the winner in the heavyweight category.

**ANNIVERSARY CUM
VALENTINE'S DAY**

Lioness Club of Ipoh and guests had a fun time at the Royal Ipoh Club on February 14 when they celebrated the club's 32nd anniversary which fell on Valentine's Day. The guest of honour was District Governor 308b2 Lion, Kenneth Saw Say Leong, who attended with Lady Girlie Saw. President, Juliet Putra, thanked those present for their support in realising all the club's charity projects thus far. Games and fun were held to commemorate the big day. All went home a winner. Some with more presents than the rest. The get-together was organised by Sakuntala Rajadurai.

**STAYING HEALTHY
KHATIJAH'S WAY**

MBI Sports Club organised an Aerobathon for the benefit of Ipohites at the Polo Ground recently. The organisers had anticipated a hundred participants. However, on the day of the event 160 signed up. The response was overwhelming, said Jamunarani, the club secretary.

The contest was divided into 4 age groups between 20 to above 50. Contestants were put through a series of physical exercises lasting two hours non-stop. There were four instructors to guide the contestants through the routines. Other than the contestants, the regular morning joggers joined in the fun.

Interestingly, the oldest contestant, Puan Khadijah, 71 completed the full 2-hour aerobics unscathed and, in the process, outperformed some of her more junior members. She won a consolation prize in the above 50 category. Khadijah exercises 5 days a week averaging an hour a day. She does aerobics, runs on the treadmill and does basic workouts in a gym. This is possible because Khadijah's daughter, Suzyla, manages a fitness centre at Rapat Setia. "Mum has a clean bill of health – zero problems – not even osteoporosis," said Suzyla.

LETTERS TO EDITOR



Send your letters to the Editor Ipoh Echo 1, Jalan Lasam, 30450 Ipoh or fax to 05-2552181 or email to ipohecho.fzb@gmail.com. Letters must have writer's full name, address and phone number. A pseudonym may be included.

PERAK PROBLEM

Having read the article "Perak Problem" (Ipoh Echo Issue 68) I have the following comments to make:

Foremost, my humble opinion says that the author has not given a balanced view.

Yes, I do agree some individuals in Pakatan Rakyat had been talking about party hopping and finally it worked against them. However, this cannot



be used for us to accept the current state government.

We the rakyat have been made fools.

ANSWERS REQUIRED OF PICA

Allow me to give an overview of the chess bodies that serve Perak. There are two bodies involved. One is the Perak International Chess Association (PICA) and the other is Yunit Sukan of the Perak State Education Department. Yunit Sukan is the body that runs Majlis Sukan Sekolah-Sekolah (MSS) Perak events. They receive an annual budget from Ministry of Education to organise about 25 sporting events annually. Chess is handled by a state technical chair within Yunit Sukan which oversees MSS Perak chess events. Yunit Sukan is a federal-funded body with federal mandates as well as constraints.

PICA, on the other hand, is a state affiliate of MCF (Malaysian Chess Federation) and a registered NGO with the Registrar of Societies. And since MCF is the only body authorised to run FIDE (International) events in Malaysia, PICA is offered special status and is recognised as the umbrella body of all chess associations and clubs in the state. PICA's constitution stipulates that it should work with any bodies or groupings to further the development of chess in Perak. The association receives an annual stipend from the Perak state government. So

if there is a problem with our state chess development the questions are best posed to and answered by the office bearers.

I wish to start the ball rolling, ahead of PICA's AGM on March 15 at YMCA Ipoh, by asking a few questions here.

* MCF is on a mission to produce Malaysia's first grandmaster. All state associations have increased their activities in line with this requirement. Why is PICA so completely out of the loop in this respect?

* MCF provides 8 places annually for Perak players for the National Close. Why did PICA offer only one place to Perak players last year until the Secretary of MCF had to invite Perak players to the MSSM last year? Why are Perak players not informed of national events so that they can choose to participate? Who controls the information?

* Why is it that virtually all the other states have access to the latest software and programmes for their players' development while Perak players are not even told of such existence?

* Why are most of the committee members ignorant of PICA's constitution and do not even possess one? Almost all are in the dark as to what is happening. So how are decisions

made? Are the committee members aware of their responsibilities and are, therefore, accountable for all decisions made by the association?

* Why is there not even a PICA website to disseminate information? Does Perak, a former bastion of Malaysian chess, not deserve one although PICA boasts a healthy bank balance?

* Why are there so few tournaments in Perak? MSSM is upon us and yet there has been no tournaments in Perak to date this year. How can we expect our players to do well nationally when they have zero tournament practise compared to the rest?

In short, why is our state lagging behind? Where are our national players under your development programme? What has come of all the talented players that we have seen over the past 5 years? There are many more questions that need to be answered. It will be good to hear from the committee members, first hand. Hopefully, a plan will be presented at the AGM to reverse our fortunes.

Chess is important for the development of thinking leaders. The association must acknowledge this. The ball is now in your court, PICA.

Raymond Siew, Ipoh

The author criticises the PR government, which was only 10 months old, however is silent about all the doings of the previous BN government. In a fair comment one has to give the good and the bad of both sides.

Article 16 (6) of the Perak Constitution says:

If the Mentri Besar ceases to command the confidence

of the majority of the members of the Legislative Assembly, then, unless at his request, His Highness dissolves the Legislative Assembly, he shall tender the resignation of the Executive Council.

If the Pakatan Rakyat government of Perak had lost a vote of no confidence in the state assembly and then they refused to budge they are certainly wrong. There is no need for me to repeat how the PR-led government was removed. We all saw it happen. There

is no need for the rakyat to accept what the author says "Lets face it BN means now by fair or unfair means now has the numbers".

Let the state assembly be dissolved and allow the rakyat to decide the numbers that PR and BN will have. Then the rakyat will accept and face the party with the numbers.

I certainly hope the author is not supportive of the rakyat being made fools and wanting them to be mere rubber stamps.

Rakyat Perak, Ipoh

SPORT

CHESS TOURNAMENT - MSS PERAK 2009

Zaki took over as technical chair mid-way through the tournament



The medal winners

Majlis Sukan Sekolah-Sekolah Perak (MSSP) was held from February 15 to 18. Like previous years there were many dramas. Students with beaming faces, tense looks or streaming tears. Tears of joy can be replaced by tears of anguish in a jiffy. The kids fought three games a day for two days and one game on the final day. Each game lasted for three hours. For the first two days they needed to concentrate for nine hours a day, one slip could cost them a game. And all this for the honour of representing Perak.

However, this year there is a perceptible difference. At the closing ceremony the claps were more spontaneous. There

was a sudden change of the state technical chair and Zaki Mahmood found himself in the hot seat. There had been a lot of controversies surrounding the previous state technical chair like the loss of three medals awarded to Perak for reasons unknown. Hopefully, Zaki will provide some answers soon. Although thrown in mid way through the tournament, the new technical chair has proven his worth.

For the first time this tournament was run without questions of fixed matches in the air. There were some minor hiccups but through Zaki's timely intervention the problems were resolved on the spot. It is not yet over for our young players. The top

eight of each category will slug it out in a round-robin from March 4 to 8. The top six will go for centralised training and then onwards to the national tournament in mid-March in Selangor.

MSSP medal winners.

Under 18 Boys 1. Mark Siew 2. Fong Yit Ho 3. Yeoh Choon Guan 4. Muhammad Azzam

Under 18 Girls 1. Nur Munirah 2. Wong Siew Ting 3. Ching Jia Minn 4. Lina Nair

Under 15 Boys 1. Fong Yit San 2. Ee Kong Yun 3. Mohammad Faiz 4. Chong Kar Guan

Under 15 Girls 1. Nur Afizan 2. Nurul Izzati 3. Fatin Masyitah 4. Norfaten Anisa

Under 12 Boys 1. Muhammad Syahiman 2. Muhammad Taufiq 3. Ee Kong Yu 4. Mohd Arif Fahmi

Under 12 Girls 1. Aina Najihah 2. Nuril Syl' Fanaful 3. Nur Nazira 4. W. Syarfin Fauzani

Raymond Siew

OUR CONCERN

A BRIDGE TO SAFETY



The Home for the Aged, Kg Simee, held its official opening of the overhead bridge linking Block A and Block B recently. The ceremony was officiated by the Catholic Bishop of the Penang Diocese, Antony Selvanayagam.

Present were state representative for Canning Garden, Wong Kah Woh and guests.

The home, built some 57 years ago, stands on two lots beside Jalan Kompleks Sukan and is separated by a side lane. The home un-

derwent extensive renovation six years ago. Two three-storey blocks were built, one on each lot. They come with elevators for the convenience of the inmates. While the living facilities span both buildings, the dining and exercise ar-

reas are located at separate buildings. Concerns were raised for the safety of the senior citizens when crossing the road for their meals and physical activities.

An appeal was made to the state government and well wishers for the con-

struction of an overhead bridge. The state government donated RM50,000, said Vincent Lee Weng Wah, the honorary treasurer. "The bridge cost RM200,000, the balance was given by well wishers. The project was com-



pleted in December 2008," Vincent added.

The overhead bridge is a source of pride to the old timers. Their safety is now assured.

JAG

COMMUNITY NEWS

TRAINEES HELPING OUT



Thirty seven national service trainees from the Teluk Rubiah training camp arrived at Sekolah Semangat Maju in Sitiawan recently

armed with brooms, machetes and other cleaning implements. Their mission was to clean up the school's compound as part

of their community service programme. The team, under the watchful eyes of Instructor Mustafa Mehat, went into action on arrival. Mustafa said that this was the first community service outing for this batch of trainees.

It was a learning experience for squad leader, Iffah Aqilah of Shah Alam. Trainee, P. Devendran, felt that these children were special and required tender loving care from concerned citizens. The National Service community service programme is aimed at instilling a caring attitude in young Malaysians.

SAMINATHAN

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT



Organised by the Rotary Club of Ipoh, The Japanese-Malaysian Fellowship Night, held on February 22, was to foster peace and understanding

between cultures. The night's guest of honour, His Excellency Masahiko Horie, Ambassador of Japan and Lady Yoko Horie, were entertained

with the Japanese art of flower arrangement, Ikebana and Japanese and Malaysian multicultural dances presented by students of Sekolah Menengah Raja Perempuan Ipoh. In his keynote address, His Excellency Masahiko Horie, thanked the Rotary Club for organising the event. He hoped that the night would encourage fellowship that would promote better understanding and relationship between the two cultures.

MINDY OON

COWAN STREET "GANG" REUNITE



Madam Lai sitting, 3rd from left & Wayne Ho standing, 2nd from left
Reunion Organisers: Sitting - Charlie Quah, extreme left, John Lim, extreme right
Standing 6th, 7th & 8th from left - Joseph Chee, Ronny Ho & Eugene Wong

A struggling widow with 7 children to raise in the 60's was recently feted and thanked for her generosity and kindness in allowing her Cowan Street home to be frequented and used as a hang-out for a group of St Michael's Institution boys.

In 1966/1967, a group of Fourth Formers and Fifth Formers from the St Michael's Institution, Ipoh, used to visit their friend, Wayne Ho, at his Cowan Street home. As his home was centrally located, it eventually became a daily meeting place for the boys to hang out.

Wayne's mother, Madam Lai Kwai Yoong despite her own difficulties, nevertheless put up with the noisy invasion into her home of a group of boisterous boys, quite often even inviting them to join her meagre family meals.

When these boys left

school, each went their separate ways to seek their fortune. Some went to Kuala Lumpur and Johor Bahru, while others went further afield, to England, Canada, Australia and Sweden.

All found success in their chosen paths, but although individually they kept in touch, for 40 years they never met up as a group. In 2007 when one of them was home in Malaysia for a holiday, it was mooted that a reunion should be organised.

On 28 Jan 2009, a group of 14 of these 'boys', some with their spouses, gathered at the Meru Valley home of Dato' John Lim for a reunion party attended by other St Michael schoolmates who now live in Ipoh. It was a night of reminiscence, nostalgia and laughter over shared memories of youthful pranks.

Their guest of honour was Madam Lai and her

family who had welcomed this group of riotous teenagers into her home some 40 years ago. All the boys expressed their appreciation to Madam Lai for putting up with them in those days.

The following night, another party was held and Joe Chin, who used to be the lead guitarist with Ipoh's Fabulous Falcons, entertained everyone with music from the 60's.

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Event Plus (M) Sdn Bhd, an event management organisation based in Damansara Perdana, Selangor, was founded by three young gentlemen, Alan Thoo, Marcus Loh and Simon Leong. It was the organiser for Anderson School's Fiesta 100 Tahun, held at the school grounds in conjunction with the school's centenary celebration. Ipoh Echo met up with its direc-

tor, Alan Thoo, himself an old Andersonian.

Event Plus came about when Alan organised a Leo Club charity fund-raising concert with Simon & Marcus 5 years earlier in Ipoh. The performer was KRU. The result of their efforts was very positive. This prompted Alan's mum to suggest that he turn his event management skills into a business entity

as he clearly had the knack for it.

Since then, he has gone on to bigger events such as Digi CelebriTeen held in 2006 and 2007 and TV's popular Yellow Coverage Fellows. The Event Plus team are youthful and have an energetic attitude. They are very committed and will endeavor to fulfill the objectives of the events they are tasked to organ-

ise. And they achieve this through effective costing and quality management.

Fiesta 100 Tahun featured popular artists such as Suki, Diddy, Aesar Mustafa, Dina and Azizi Zakaria, to name a few. Additionally RM2,400 was collected for the Fund for Gaza charity which will be handed to the Lions Club of Ipoh Metro which was founded by Alan and who

is still a very active Lion's Club member.

Event Plus has expanded its wings into artiste management through its subsidiary, Giant-Ants (M) Sdn Bhd. It currently manages Azizi Zakaria and Aesar Mustafa. Alan's other interests are music, video production and songwriting. Using his pen-name Ah Tu, he wrote the music and lyr-

ics for "Kamu Semua", Azizi's first single to be launched on March 5 in PJ. Another song he wrote for his school band in 1996, "Sentiasa", is now the official Andersonian 100 years Centennial theme song.

Alan's mum was right, he indeed has the knack for music and organization and Event Plus is the medium that will catapult him to greater heights.

Azizi Zakaria

More pics at ipohecho on line



Azizi 17, hails from Johor. At the Digi CelebriTeens 2007 competition he was the champion of the southern region and the first runner-up at the national finals and was automatically accepted as a member of the DiGi Superstars group of artists who offer mobile content downloads and SMS diaries (www.digisuperstars.net). Since winning the title, Azizi's life has taken on a whole new dimension. He moved to Kuala Lumpur and sat for his SPM examinations at SMK Bandar Utama Selangor. Besides attending classes he also has vocal and dance training practice. Stage performances are scheduled during weekends. Azizi has done not less than 120 live performances over the last 18 months. A hectic schedule no doubt, but Azizi dismisses it.

Azizi recently completed his mini album titled Kami Semua, which also features Dina, Aesar Mustafa and Rafikoncept. The tempo is R&B pop genre. A video clip will be out on March 5. The original scores are written by Ah Tu. Check out Azizi's blog at www.azizi91.blogspot.com

Aesar Mustafa

More pics at ipohecho on line

Aesar Mustafa, 29 is from Kuching, Sarawak. He has been singing for over 4 years. In 2007 he was a member of a 5-piece band called Equal Star, who was a finalist in TV3's reality show, Gangstarz. The band has broken up by mutual agreement. Aesar's hobby is writing and composing music. His first effort was a romantic single named, Satu Cinta. He is currently working on his first album, "Cinta 24/7" which consists of five numbers with a fast beat and an urban R&B tempo. Aesar wrote all the songs and lyrics. The album is due to be released in August. Fans can view Aesar's profile at his site www.myspace.com/aesarmustafa.







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