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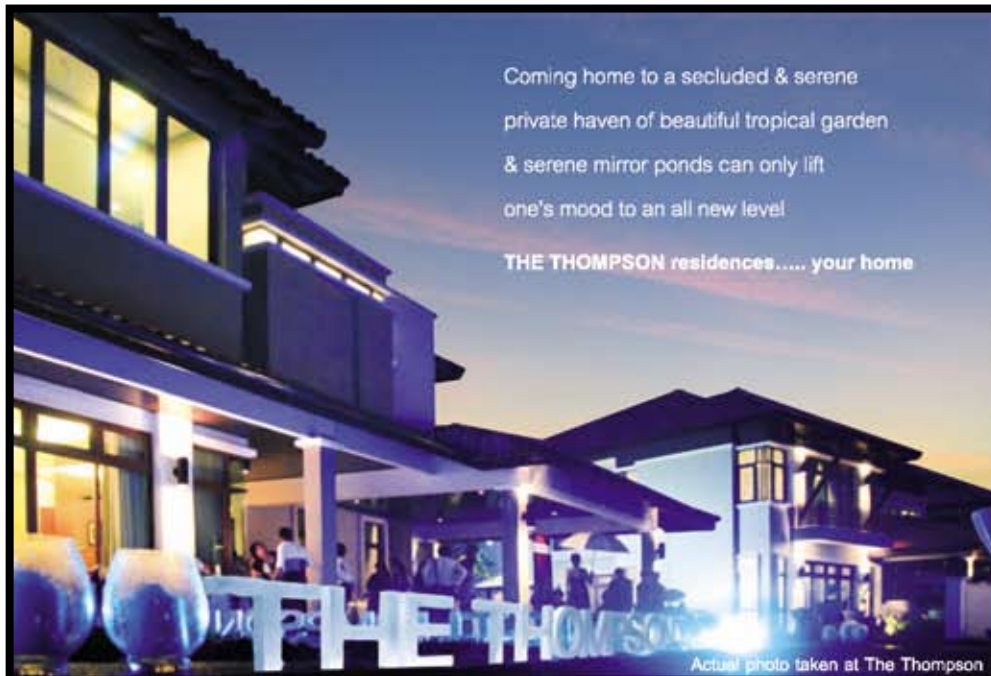
FOOD – Possibly Ipoh's Last Hurrah?

By JERRY FRANCIS



As old buildings crumble or are torn down to make way for new development, Ipoh is rapidly losing any potential appeal it may have for tourism as the 'historical city that tin built'. Only in one area does it hold its own in tourism potential and that is in its reputation for superlative food. As a foodie haven, tourists come in droves, whether it is by the bus loads from Singapore, or day trippers driving in from Kuala Lumpur and all over the Peninsula, to sample and buy back the food for which Ipoh is justifiably famous.

Continued on page 2



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Let's Protect Ipoh's Main Tourist Magnet

Visitors eagerly seek out 'Hor Fun' (noodles), 'Nga Choi Kai' (bean sprouts chicken), curry mee, Tanjung Tualang's freshwater prawns or 'Udang Gallah', Mee Rebus, 'Tau Foo Fah' (soya bean curd), 'Hiong Piah' biscuits, white coffee, pomelo, groundnuts and jostle for seats for morning Dim Sum.

As a tourist attraction, Ipoh and its surroundings have failed as the city's past glories are slowly fading away. Though Malaysia is now ranked ninth in the world for tourist arrivals, Ipoh benefits very little as it's potential as a tourist attraction is still far from being developed, and those who come are just here for the food.

How Hygienic and Safe?

Fearing that its reputation as a food haven may one day be threatened, Ipoh Echo is examining the environment under which food is being prepared and cooked by hawkers and restaurants, and the effectiveness of health enforcement. Our concern is how hygienic and safe is the food in the restaurants, coffee-shops, food courts and roadside stalls, and are we doing enough to ensure that food consumed in the city are safe from disease and food poisoning?

Loh See Fun's Mass Food Poisoning

The series of food poisoning cases experienced in

Mayor Datuk Roshidi Hashim showing thumbs-up to a A-Grade certificate given to a food outlet



the city and its outskirts in October, 1988, must be remembered by all those responsible for health and operators of food outlets.

In the incident, 13 children between the ages of two to 11 died after consuming 'Loh See Fun' (rat's tail shaped noodle) that was contaminated with boric acid and aflatoxin which came from one supplier.

The city cannot afford a similar outbreak of mass food poisoning, which will only damage its reputation as a food haven and scare away visitors. Food operators and health enforcement agencies need to stringently observe measures to ensure food prepared and consumed are hygienic and safe.

City Council's Strict Guidelines

A. Jeyaraj spoke to the city council's health department chief Mohd Alias Kamaruddin on the action taken to control leptospirosis (a

disease associated with rat droppings) in Ipoh. He reports that all food handlers must take a Typhoid injection every three years and also attend a health course before being issued a licence. The food handlers also need to abide by the council's strict guidelines which have been incorporated with directives from the Health Ministry and Ministry of Local Government.

Visual inspection of food outlets is done on a daily basis; however each hawker's stall is inspected at least twice a year. A general inspection is done to ensure that the workers wear proper attire, personal hygiene of food handlers and general cleanliness of their stalls.

During evaluation inspection, the handling and storage of raw ingredients, preparation of food, cooking method, cooked food, display of cooked food, cleaning of utensils and method

of disposal of waste are checked. Raw and cooked food samples are sent for laboratory analysis against contamination and potential source of food poisoning under the Food Act and Regulations..

Regular Inspection of Food Outlets

The enforcement officers from the Hawkers' Unit have inspected about 2,000 stalls in food courts, pasar malam and hawker centres so far this year, and 733 compounds were issued and fines amounting to RM77,400 were collected and 152 warning letters were issued against those who had failed to comply with the regulations.

The Food Unit looks after the restaurants, food manufacturers, supermarkets, grocery stores selling food, convenient stores in commercial buildings and school canteens. There are about 3,500 premises to be inspected of which 1,500 are eating shops.

Food premises are inspected quarterly and other outlets at least once a year. Up until August, 510 compounds were issued and RM86,400 in fines were collected and 203 warning notices were issued.

Grading of eateries

Apart from the stringent inspections, the council's

health department also carries out evaluation of eateries for grading purposes every three months and for this year 891 premises were evaluated. Evaluation is also carried out on toilets, kitchen, storage, refrigeration, washing area, dining area and waste disposal. The premises must have a cleaning schedule.

The Vector Unit is specifically studying the rat problem in the wet markets and food courts. The study is in its final stages.

Food Outlet Operators

James Cough and Rosli Mansor set out to interview food outlet operators to find out how sincere they are about hygiene and safe food, as well as their knowledge and practice of safe food handling procedures.

Generally, those interviewed said they were aware of the need for cleanliness in their daily operation and with the frequent surprise checks by health officials, they cannot let their guard down and therefore must maintain cleanliness all the time.

The proprietor of Family Cafe located at Taman Permai, Christine Newton-Yee said, "Handling food in a hygienic manner and keeping one's outlet clean

is to be expected at any food outlet". Christine had attended the MBI course before opening the Cafe and stated these basic requirements were impressed upon her during the briefing.

Employee at a food outlet Nor Ismawati Mat Isa said cleanliness is their top priority. "We've been told by our employer that we cannot compromise cleanliness as the health and safety of our customers are very important," she said.

To Each His Own

While every effort have been taken to ensure that food is safe and served under hygienic conditions, political constraints have resulted in street food stalls which were once located in shops and food courts being allowed back on the roadsides at unsuitable rat-infested locations, with no running water for cleaning.

It is therefore left to those planning to eat out to make their own decisions as to whether to patronise food stalls in coffee-shops and food-courts or to eat at roadside stalls? However, knowing Malaysians' eating habits, their choice is often not based on conducive environment but rather on following their taste buds at the sacrifice of hygiene factors.

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From the Editor's Desk

● by Fathol Zaman Bukhari

BUDGET DIALOGUE in Retrospect

The participants were ill-prepared for the dialogue. It would have been more meaningful had the right people been present.

The series of budget dialogues held at the State Secretariat building from September right through to October were well attended and participation was keen. Kudos to Menteri Besar, Dato' Seri Dr. Zambry Abdul Kadir, for initiating it in the first place. This is unprecedented as in the past, deliberations on state budgets were done behind drawn curtains and under tight security. It was a closed-door affair and attended by the privileged few within the MB's political and administrative circles.

News on the state's incomes and expenditures can only be gleaned from the MB's speeches and press statements or during his post-executive council meetings on Wednesdays. The information is sketchy and much is left to conjecture. Unless one is good at computing numbers, there is little to digest. So a budget speech in the state assembly by the MB becomes one boring affair that is often relegated to an obscure page in the mainstream media.

We are keen to hear what the Prime Minister has to declare in parliament. The national budget affects the public in general. Tax increases, reliefs, petrol price hike, prices of essential commodities and pay increases are some of the details we want to hear, as they affect the *rakyat* at large.

A state budget is a different kettle of fish. Since the effects are minimal we do not necessarily take it seriously unless there is something for us. Perak Budget 2010 made some provisions for the poor and the needy and the newly born. However, the ripple effect has yet to be felt. Be that as it may, the fact that the MB is prepared to share his thoughts with us is praiseworthy.

The dialogue was, in all honesty, an information brief with the state financial officer, Dato' Jamaluddin Al Amini Ahmad in the lead. He enumerated on earnings, revenues, expenditures and the expected spending for Year 2011. The state has experienced six consecutive deficit budgets since 2005 and the coming year is no better. A shortfall of RM50 million is expected. Tightening the belt will be the most convenient way out. But can this be done when the dreaded OE (Operational Expenditure) expands at an alarming RM8.5 million a year since 2001? As always, personal emoluments top the bill.

The dialogue with village heads on September 11 and NGOs on September 25 witnessed some hilarious moments. What matters most to the *ketua kampung* was money. They clamoured for a larger pay check claiming that the allowance they received presently was insufficient. The NGOs fared no better. One silat group asked for RM1 million. Another suggested that the state sell sand and water to Selangor. It was obvious that the participants were ill-prepared for the dialogue. It would have been more



meaningful had the right people been present.

There are many grey areas which the state government have failed to address. Since its revenue sources are limited to land, forest, water and tithes (*fitrah*), which are under its control, making the most out of these resources become imperative.

Ipo Echo has several times highlighted the large number of illegal activities taking place on state land. Logging, sand-mining, fish-farming, vegetable and fruit cultivation continue unabated. Some take place right under the authorities' noses. Had these illegal activities been regulated, Budget 2011 will not fall short by RM50 million. And Jamaluddin need not suggest that the government "tap into its RM600 million reserves" to make good the amount.

Behind Every Successful Business There Must Be a "Trust"

● by Peter Lee

Sirivat Voravetvuthikun was a successful multi-millionaire property developer and stock market investor. In early 1997, he borrowed RM109 million from banks to finance his property projects and to dabble in the stock market at an interest rate of 17% a year. According to him in his interviews, it was big business on hindsight. He thought he would never go bust considering his capabilities and experience. But around February 1997, he had to inform his 40 staff that he was going bust because he was unable to service his loans. His cash flow dried up when he could not sell any condominium units and after the banks seized his properties, he still owed them around RM43 million.



When depression hit him he did not commit suicide because his debt problem was not going away and the burden would be on his wife and children. Instead, he strung a 12kg yellow foam box around his neck and began selling sandwiches on the streets of Bangkok. Sirivat had to put on a brave face that first day when many people who knew him, asked him why sell sandwiches when you are a millionaire? On that day he sold 40 sandwiches and because of the media attention he received he now sells 800 sandwiches a day. Today he is well-known as Sirivat the sandwich man. In 2007, he managed to repay all his debts except for RM1.2 million to several of his friends. In 2009, he plans to list his food and beverage business on the Thai stock market.

The moral of the story is that this man is a fighter and never gave up despite the odds against him. However, the question is how many of us in business can recover in the manner he did? Even if one could follow his example, wouldn't it be nice to set aside some of your wealth to fend off your creditors just in case your business runs into financial disaster. To do this, business owners should seriously consider an "Irrevocable Living Trust" as a legal tool to protect some of their wealth. When the business owner sets up this Trust, he is called the "Settlor". He then appoints a Trustee Company like Rockwills Trustee Bhd. to be the "Trustee" which has the expertise, impartiality, professionalism and perpetual existence. Subsequently, a "Protector" must also be appointed as a watchdog on the Trustee and the Trustee would also have to consult them with regard to sensitive matters on distribution. Appointment of "Guardian" is also a must if the beneficiary of the Trust involves minors. Then the business owner will have to specify the names of the "Beneficiaries" which would likely be the spouse and children.

The condition of an "Irrevocable Trust" is that it cannot be changed or cancelled before maturity by the "Settlor" who is the business owner. This type of Trust is mainly used to protect assets from creditors or to prevent anyone from changing the terms of the Trust. However, one of the criteria for this trust to be creditor proof, is that it must be set up more than 5 years before the business owner faces bankruptcy problems. In other words, it doesn't work if after 2 years of setting up, he becomes a bankrupt. The funding for this trust can come in the form of cash or assets that generates constant income because it is important to create enough liquidity if your entire business and personal assets are wiped out.

Peter Lee is an Associate Estate Planning Practitioner (Wills & Trust) with Rockwills International Group. He is also an Islamic Estate Planner providing Wills & Trust services for Muslims. He is based in Ipoh and can be reached at: 012-5078825/05-2554853 or excels@streamyx.com.



The Right to Sight

In conjunction with World Sight Day on the October 14 2010, Ipoh Echo talked to Consultant Ophthalmologist, Dr. S. S. Gill based in Hospital Fatimah, on the importance of maintaining healthy eyes. Below is Part 2 of the interview.

"Most people do not realise this, but your quality of life is very dependant on having healthy eyes. Without good eyesight, quality of life drops," says Dr. Gill.

He offers seven out of the many tips on looking after the health of your eyes.

Tip #1: Practice disease prevention. One of the best ways to prevent disease related blindness is to prevent or control your disease. If you are hypertensive or diabetic, make sure you see your doctor regularly to ensure that the condition is under control.

Being overweight or obese increases your risk of developing diabetes and other systemic conditions, which can lead to vision loss, diabetic eye disease or glaucoma. "Diabetes is among the few diseases that can cause blindness if left untreated, mistreated or undiagnosed. Early detection and treatment is very crucial."

Tip #2: Protect your eyes from the sun. Always wear sunglasses outdoors during the day as exposure to the sun's rays can worsen some eye diseases especially cataract formation. Invest in a good pair of sunglasses and buy the ones that block out 99 to 100% of UV-A and UV-B radiation. Also, never look directly at the sun or other sources of very bright or intense light.

Tip #3: Wear protective eyewear when playing sports. Blunt trauma injury can occur when something

or someone hits your eye with force. According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology, more than 90 per cent of all eye injuries can be prevented with the use of protective eye-wear. "If you play racquet or field sports, or do outdoor chores like cutting the grass regularly, wear protective polycarbonate eyewear. Get "sports goggles" with 3-mm polycarbonate lenses from a sports specialty shop or "work-goggles" from any hardware shop", says Dr. Gill.



Dr. S.S. Gill
Resident Consultant
Ophthalmologist

Tip #4: Add carotenes and fish oil to your diet. Carotenes are nutrients which contribute significantly to eye health. Foods rich in carotenoids lutein and zeaxanthin are also important and have been associated with the reduced risk of macular degeneration and cataracts. Additionally, Vitamin A is also good for the retina. Good sources of carotenes and Vitamin A are dark green, leafy vegetables such as spinach, broccoli, zucchini, peas and turnip greens. Eating fish high in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon and tuna is also good for the eyes.

There are also vitamin supplements that can help strengthen your eyes.

Tip #5: Know your family's eye health history. As many conditions such as glaucoma or diabetic eye disease are hereditary, it is important that you talk to your family members about their eye health history. You are at higher risk for developing an eye disease or condition if someone in your family has it. Do screen for them with your eye doctor.

Tip #6: Give your eyes adequate rest. If you spend many hours focusing on one thing like the computer or TV for instance, the number of blinks per minute reduces as you concentrate and your eyes can get fatigued and strained. "Practise the 20-20-20 rule: Every 20 minutes, look away about 20 feet in front of you for 20 seconds. This can help reduce eyestrain," says Dr. Gill. Your television should also be at a distance of at least 6 times the width of the screen.

Tip #7: Get a full dilated eye exam annually. The only way to really be sure if your eyes are healthy is to get a full dilated-eye exam done which enables your ophthalmologist to conduct a full examination of the retina (back of the eyes) for any signs of damage or disease which often have no warning signs.

For more information call: 05-5455582, email: gill-leyecentre@dr.com or visit: www.fatimah.com.my.

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thinking aloud

•by Ian Anderson

Ipoh on its Knees

Will it ever stand Proud Again?

In the last issue of the Ipoh Echo, I was introduced as the man behind IpohWorld and its web-site www.ipohworld.org. Indeed, today, that is true, but the idea was not mine, but brought to me, in 2004, by a lady from a well-respected and longstanding Ipoh family. She felt that someone who cared about Ipoh should record the heritage and history before it was too late. I succumbed to her idea! Since then we have established a significant Internet-based archive on Ipoh and the Kinta Valley, an active blog, more than 6,000 individual readers a month and an ever increasing set of Facebook fans. But what has been happening to Ipoh City, its history and heritage, while we have been tied to our computers?

Continuing Deterioration

The story is sad as our city's material state continues its deterioration unabated; mysterious fires, broken pavements, abandoned and collapsing buildings and what appears to be rampant demolition of the old structures, leading to more ugly buildings and untidy tracts of land being turned into car parks, or rubbish dumps.

Lonely Planet's 'Indictment'

If you think my description is extreme then take a look at how, "The Lonely Planet", the worldwide tourist publication, describes Ipoh: "... mainly a transit town, a place where you change buses; ... chaotic traffic; ... crumbling Chinese shophouses and ugly modern blocks"; and, specifically for New Town "... generally dingy part of town, with a notorious prostitution problem and no real attractions."

The complete description may be found at <http://www.lonelyplanet.com>. Does that make you feel proud of your home town, the capital city of Perak?

Now why do you, the people of Ipoh and Perak, allow this deterioration and destruction of our city and its built heritage to continue? You are not afraid to speak out when things affect your livelihood or income; an increase in petrol prices or taxation causes a storm of protest, but when it comes to the city and its multitude of problems, very little is said. Could it be lethargy – as long as you are living

comfortably and making money you just don't care about your surroundings? Surely not! That would be a damning indictment of the Malaysian mindset!

Lack of Understanding?

So what is the problem? I wish I could be certain, but perhaps you simply do not understand the importance of heritage in education, tourism and the enhancement of property values, that heritage conservation brings. In one way or another, these three increase the value of our surroundings and the quality of our life. If this was not the case there would be no UNESCO to support heritage across the world.

hollow town with nothing to be proud of; ... a loss to Ipoh's past; ... magnificent old trees chopped down; ... hills blasted; ... natural beauty robbed from us; Ipoh is losing its history and identity; former glory and rich heritage obliterated...

Pleas from the Heart

There is much more in the same vein across the 28 comments to date, but the most heartfelt ones are the ones that appeal to the Ipoh people, past and present that are far too long to reproduce here. Using phrases like "... please stand up and be counted, be a voice that can sound out to whom it may concern",

about plans and policies being put in hand, these to bring about change for the better – but in parallel, more uncontrolled devastation takes place and the plans just fade away. I am sure that you don't need me to remind you of these, but the destruction of Jalan Chung On Siew, presumably approved by the Town Planning Department, at almost the exactly the same time as YB Dato' Hamidah Osman, Perak State Exco, announced that Ipoh City was to be proposed for UNESCO status, is a case in point.

Conflicting Messages

Rightly or wrongly, this passed the message that the



Jalan Chung On Siew before Chinese New Year 2010



...and after Wednesday September 22

Outrage over Recent Demolition

Having said all that, the recent demolition of the complete row of houses in Jalan Chung On Siew, did cause a number of local people to register their disgust. This was surprising in a way, as these buildings did not genuinely stand as heritage, being comparatively young by world standards. However, there were reasons for this outburst: this was probably the only unspoilt row of such houses in the city; they had been used in the shooting of the Shanghai movie, "Lust, Caution"; and the Director, Ang Lee, had been quoted as saying that this was probably the only place left where he could make the movie. And now they are gone!

Blog Comments

It is not possible to show all the blog comments here as space is limited but they may be seen on the above link. Some extracts include: "Heritage vandalism; ... hell bent on destroying buildings ... money and greed rule supreme; ... taxpayers, you own the place so make some noises please; ... others are busy preserving heritage, we are tearing ours down; ... Ipoh will become another

"... wherever you are now, I beseech you – stand up, take action and make your ancestors proud," these are words from the heart, from people who really care about Ipoh and its future. They deserve your support – all of you. But will they get it? If recent history is anything to go by, I very much doubt it.

For as long as I have lived in Ipoh there has been dialogue at all levels about heritage tourism and the need to do something about it. Regular statements have been made

two hands of government were not working together. Add to this the current demolition and development of Theatre Street, the infamous new toilet in Little India, and the projected replacement of "The Dramatists' Hostel" and surrounding buildings by a 7-storey glass and stainless steel hotel, in the middle of Old Town, and you can see why, apart from a few stalwarts, the people of Ipoh have given up believing in the government's claim of safeguarding heritage for

Perakeans, to follow those who have appealed for your support on our blog. Stand up and be counted. Voice your disapproval of the condition of your city, the rubbish dumps, decaying buildings, the stealing of our heritage and the consistent deterioration of our way of life. This may be your last chance to help Ipoh to stand proud again, leaving something worthwhile behind for your descendants. If you do nothing they will have to suffer the consequences of your inaction.

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Musings on Food

seefoon@ipohecho.com.my

By See Foon Chan-Koppen

SEEFOON Finds a Gem at Tesco's

I'm accustomed to discovering out-of-the-way places and little 'rough diamonds' where the ambiance leaves much to be desired but the food more than makes up for the lack of chic. I usually draw the line at what I perceive to be fast food. And to my mind, restaurants at big shopping malls and hypermarkets fall into this category.

So it was with a certain amount of disdain and a 'oh well-I'm-going-for-the-company-and-not-the-food' attitude that I accepted Chris and Christine Digiovanna's invitation for dinner to celebrate Ginla Foo's birthday at the Pang Kok Seafood Restaurant on the ground floor of Tesco Hypermarket.

Sandwiched between the Nasi Kandar and Pizza Hut with both outdoor and indoor seating, the Pang Kok has been in operation for three years. One of four restaurants in a group operating in the Kinta Valley under different names, the young and attractive Manager Stephanie Chew was on hand to greet us with the young chef Wong Wai Kit who looks more like any of the hip young men you find at a disco rather than one sweating over a hot wok; amplifying my initial disdain and doubts about the quality of food that was going to be served.

My disdain soon turned into awe when the food arrived. Not only was the quality superlative but the decoration and creativity that came with the dishes were generally better than many of the big restaurants in town. No doubt,



the chef had gone to great lengths to impress our party but to witness such talent in a small operation like Pang Kok took my breath away.

We started with two soups,



one a large tureen of *Ham Choi Yu Tao* (preserved cabbage with fish head), had tart notes provided by the cabbage and tomatoes with the right degree of sweetness, the fish head having been first deep fried. RM18 for 6-8 people. The second soup, their signature, was unusual: a steamed black chicken herbal soup with the addition of sea coconut, which is usually served sweet in desserts but in this soup it lent an added texture of chewiness in contrast to the soft chicken meat. RM8. Certainly one I shall order again. The Pang Kok boasts 10 types of steamed soups on their menu ranging from Ginseng, bitter melon, to pig's stomach and frog, from RM5.50 to RM12 per portion.

Next to arrive was the *Yong Tau Foo* (soft bean curd stuffed with fish paste) a pallid looking dish appearing bland and boring but the presentation elevated it to gourmet standards. Not only had the chef arranged the accompanying ingredients in the shape of a fish with its delicate fan tail (see pic) but the taste of the fish paste was impeccable. As was the soft tofu. RM8/16.

Next came the dry-fried large prawns, fresh with a hint of sweetness RM18/26/34; the salted-eggs-fried squid, crisp exterior with the right degree of chewy mouth



feel inside. RM12/18/24; the *Sey Dai Teen Won* or the four heavenly kings comprising *brinjal*, ladies fingers, *petai*, and long beans, fried dry with hints of *sambal belacan* and chilli – RM8/12; Singapore fried rice vermicelli, well coated without being soggy. RM 5.50; and the Fried 'Sang Meen', special wheat noodles that remain 'al dente' when cooked. RM5.50.

A special mention needs to be made here of two of the dishes that evening. The first, a pennant fish smothered in ginger paste and steamed to perfection is worthy of high praise although a word of caution is needed about the bones. The flesh is soft and sweet but requires work to manoeuvre around the tiny bones. RM5 per 100g (usual size about 900g-1 kg).

The second dish of note is the Australian venison sautéed with ginger and scallions, tender morsels coated with just enough of the sauce to lend flavour but not drowning. What was spectacular though was the presentation which came with two carved cucumber roses (pic bottom left) RM15/20/25.

Comparing these same dishes in many other restaurants in Ipoh, I have to confess to being most impressed with the culinary skills of this young chef and wish him much success for the future. And may Pang Kok Seafood continue to serve up delicious wholesome food at reasonable prices.

Pang Kok Seafood Restaurant
Lot No 16, Ground Floor Tesco Hypermarket
Tel: 05-5456086

HAWKER FOOD



There are many places in Ipoh that offer a good, delicious bowl of seafood noodles served in clear broth. It is a popular breakfast or lunch meal for many local Chinese and can be found in most coffee shop outlets around town. There are usually various types of combinations available on the menu with the more adventurous opting for variations like fish head and fish maw (air bladder of the fish).

Places To Try:

Kim Keei Seafood Noodles

64, Jalan Yau Tet Shin (New Town)
(opposite Lou Wong, the famous taukeh chicken shop)
Opens daily, from 7.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m.

The walls in this shop are peppered with newspaper clippings and reviews and it is famous for its homemade saito fishballs, large freshwater prawn noodles combined with homemade pork balls in clear, sweet broth. Prices for their noodles, depending on the ingredients, start from RM5.50.



Ngan Woh Coffee Shop

552-C Lorong 5, Kampung Bercham
(Opposite New Paradise Restaurant, big red and yellow sign) Open for breakfast only: 7.10 a.m. to 12 noon. Closed every Tuesday.

This stall adds bitter melon to the noodles, which not only gives it an interesting combination but is what makes it popular. Other dishes to try here are steamed fish head (RM13) and their famous fried turnip (sar kot, RM0.50). Price for seafood noodles: RM5 per bowl.

Seafood Noodle Soup

Restoran Fai Kee

28, Jalan Seenivasagam
Open 6.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. daily. Closed 3 days in a month.

Fai Kee has carved a name for themselves for their fish head and seafood noodles. Variations include fish head noodles (RM 5 without evaporated milk, RM5.50 with), fish fillet noodles (RM6) tomyam seafood noodles (RM5.50). Expect to queue during lunch hour.

Restoran Hoong Wan

2, Jalan Silang, Chemor
(behind East Ocean Seafood Restaurant)
Open 6.30 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. daily

Their fish head, seafood or fish meat mee-hoon served in clear broth with a tinge of Chinese wine, are priced at only RM4 per bowl. Try their delicious homemade saito fish paste (yee wat, RM0.50 per piece) and you can also add fish maws to the noodles.

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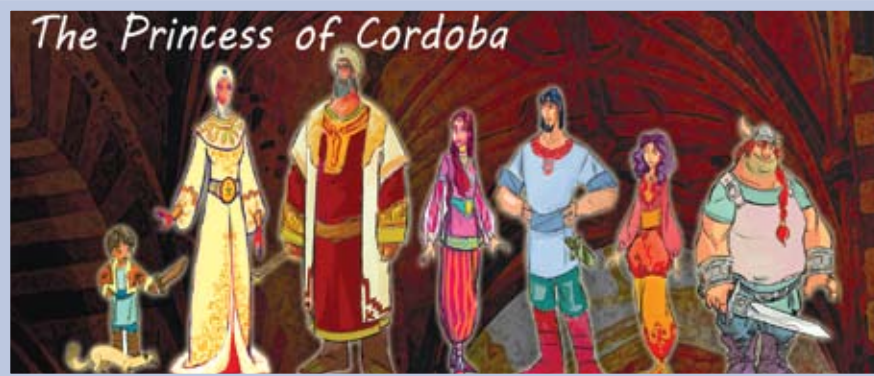
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news roundup

Spacetoon Success Augurs Well for Ipoh



Spacetoon Media Hub Sdn Bhd (SMH) secured meetings and distribution deals for local content developed by Malaysians in the MIPCOM at Cannes, France recently.

CEO, Sharifah Hendon Al-Yahya said, "Malaysia is graduating fresh workforce for the industry and it is through them that we are able to present Mantera, Maouia and Net.Works! at the biggest animation marketplace

in the world (MIPCOM).” An estimated 12,000 people will attend the event from 102 countries. This means that more local talent and work will get international exposure and prospects. As Spacetoon also represents an MSC-Status company based in Ipoh’s Cybercity, their potential success augurs well for Ipoh’s plan to become Malaysia’s northern creative hub.

Mantera is a co-production between Spacetoon Media Hub and Flare Studios Sdn. Bhd. Sharifah said, "We've given the lead role and some production opportunity to the locals."

The movie, with local and foreign investments totaling some USD5.5 million, contains a lot of locally developed CGI (Computer-Generated Imagery).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements must be sent by fax: **05-2552181**; or email: **announcements@ipohecho.com.my**, by the 9th or 23rd of every month in order to meet deadlines. Announcements by phone will not be entertained. Ipoh Echo reserves the right to verify any announcement before it is published.

The Roots Manesh's Programme for Special Needs. In October every Saturday and Sunday, 11.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. at The Roots Echo Resort, Tanjung Rambutan. Every special needs child must be accompanied by one adult for free; additional adult is RM15; non special needs child RM10. Proceeds will go into the Manesh Fund. Lunch, drinks & snacks provided. Contact: **05-5335411** or email: therootsmalaysia@gmail.com.

World Sight Day – Public Forum and Exhibition on Blinding Eye Diseases with Free Eye Screening. October 17 from 2.00-6.00 p.m. at Tropicana Grand Ballroom, No. 8, Level 6, Coliseum Square, Jalan Raja Dr. Nazrin Shah, Ipoh.

Tadika KinderJoy Graduation Concert 2010 will be held at Dewan Leong Wan Chin, SMJK Perempuan Perak on Saturday, October 23 at 8.00 p.m. Free Admission. Contact: **05-2535182** (Mdm Mak or Ms Looi).

Kinta Medical Centre “Mammogram Month” from October 1-31, 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. on weekdays and 8.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. on Saturdays at the Out Patient Department, Kinta Medical Centre. Free consultation, free tests and mammogram for RM99 only. Contact Dr. Amy at **012-5932722**.

Ipho YMCA Dance Club, free lessons for beginners for 3 months starting December 2010. Age 16 and above. Wednesdays 8.30-9.30 p.m. Call: **016-5322380/016-5993927**.

‘Ribbon of Life’ Perak Heritage Art Exhibition, October 16-26, 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. at Garden Villa, Jln Raja Dr. Nazrin Shah. Proceeds from sale to Pink Champion (Breast Cancer Welfare Association) & the underprivileged. Contact: 012-5218711

(Betty Caleb) or **012-5218956** (Harith Idris).

“Men Against Violence” organised by Wanita UMNO Perak and local NGOs. Road show at Polo Ground, Ipoh on Sunday, October 31 between 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Call: Pn Norzita **012-5033319** or Cik Zubaidah Mohd Khalid **05-5060715** or fax **05-5060112**.

Free Health Camp in conjunction with annual Khatina Celebration. Sunday, October 31 between 8.30 a.m. to 12 noon at Ipoh Dhammadipa Buddhist Centre, 44 & 45 Solok Grove, Taman Grove Ipoh. Call: Dhammadipa Centre **05-5062644** or Lillanne **012-4776613**.

Ipoh Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ISPACA) Food Fair on Sunday November 7 at St John's Ambulance HQ Ipoh, 134 Jalan Raja Aziz, Ipoh. Stall sponsorships, donations and volunteers are welcome. Coupons will be on sale. For details or enquiries please contact **016-5608905** (Doreen) or **016-5279515** (Rani).

Free Meditation Class and Healing. Twin Heart Meditation: 7.00 p.m. Wednesdays, October 20 - November 24. Guided meditation open to public. Healing with no-touch, no-drug therapy done by trained volunteers: Saturdays, 2.00-6.00 p.m., October 16 - November 27. Contact: Centre for Prana Yoga & Self Transformation, **05-2554590** or **012-5222461**.

Perak Lung Health Day Public Forums. Pantai Hospital Ipoh: ‘Coughing & Short of Breath’ & ‘Obstructive Sleep Apnea’, November 13. Contact: 54005712 or 5405725. Hospital Fatimah: ‘Stop Smoking Made Easy’, November 20. Contact: **5455777** (Susan). Ipoh Specialist Hospital: ‘Asthma’, November 27. Contact: **2408777** ext. **8111**.

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Land encumbrances: OGC Bank Mt Sdn Bhd Total units: 48 Completion date: October 2012 Land tenure: Freehold Price: Min RM277,310.00 Max: RM541,800 Approving Authority: Mohd Rendawa Isah

news roundup

Wellness Talks



In conjunction with the Ayur Centre's 10th anniversary, two wellness talks were held at the Ipoh City & Country Club (ICCC) recently. Dr. P. Shiva Prasad spoke on 'Significance of Ayurvedic Oil Therapy in Health & Illness' and Puan Sri Siew Yong Gnanalingam on 'Weight Loss and Wellness through Nutrition – the Cohen Way'.

Ayurveda, said to be 'a science of life' treats root causes and not just symptoms. Ayurveda relies on the natural restoration of health using herbs and poultices and makes adjustments in relation to lifestyle, dietary habits, all based on the constitution of a person and a balance of the *doshas*.

Dr. Prasad also dwelt on the significance of oil therapy in health and illness, the causes of degeneration in joints and how to keep joints healthy, and the benefits of oil massage.

The Cohen's weight loss programme deals with the body's hormonal imbalance because of lack of nutrients in food. By learning to eat properly and supplementing the normal diet with nutritional supplements, this imbalance can be redressed. In essence, it is a balanced eating programme where food becomes your medicine. The eating plan is unique to each person based on an individual's blood profile from a biochemical analysis of the blood. It includes a short re-feeding programme which reintroduces rich foods without upsetting the balance. This ensures that the weight should not be regained when normal eating resumes, provided management guidelines are followed.

More information may be obtained from the Ayur Centre: ayurcentreipoh@ayurcentre.com or drpsps@yahoo.co in and Cohen's Lifestyle Centre: info@lifestyle-centre.com.my.

VWSL

JAZZERCISE Comes to Ipoh



Move over Line-dancing, Jazzercise has arrived. Jazzercise, a US franchised dance-based fitness programme has arrived in Ipoh at The Fitness Junction. Led by Suraya Khan (pic), who is a certified trainer in Jazzercise, it promises a fun-filled exhilarating workout of pre-choreographed moves with elements from Hip-hop, Jazz Dance, Kickboxing and Latin using the latest upbeat music. It is suitable for all ages as evidenced by regular attendee, 70 year-old Stella (inset) who swears by its calorie burning value.

PERAK Lung Health Day

The first Perak Lung Health Day, which is aimed at creating awareness on lung health and diseases, will be held at Ipoh Parade on October 30 and 31.

The event, themed "Detecting and Controlling Lung Diseases", is being organised by the Perak Chest Society. According to its president, Dr Leong Oon Keong (pic third from left), the people need to be made aware of the symptoms and take preventive care to manage their illness.

The society will highlight four lung diseases, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), nicotine addiction and obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA). Those attending will be asked questions, have their answers scored and lung function tests performed on them which would enable the society to identify if the patient has a



lung illness.

Asthma is a common disease in children and adults and "cannot be cured". However with proper diagnosis, education and effective treatment, patients can live full and active lives and do not require hospital admissions.

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a disease that affects smokers and ex-smokers. Its symptoms include chronic cough and progressive shortness of breath. The prevalence of moderate to severe COPD is estimated to affect 4.55% of adults aged 30 years and above. However the prevalence of mild COPD is unknown because sufferers are not aware they have the illness. During the event smokers and ex-smokers will be tested using a spirometer to confirm the diagnosis of COPD.

The society has also scheduled a series of public forums on the topic to be held at Pantai Hospital Ipoh on November 13, Hospital Fatimah on November 20 and Ipoh Specialist Hospital on November 27.

The society will also sell related apparatus such as Peak Flow Meters and Spacers at "best buy" prices.

For enquiries on the event please contact the Perak Chest Society at: **05-2556302**.

JAG

Sitiawan Post Office



Senior citizens in Sitiawan are hopeful that the postal authorities will not demolish the old post office at Jalan Dato Ahmad Yunus. The post office is an iconic landmark in Sitiawan. The adjacent bus stop is being used by express bus commuters travelling to and from Sitiawan. They are familiar with the structure.

A few years ago the entrance to the 80-year old building underwent some changes. The collapsible iron gates were replaced with glass doors and the waiting area filled with cushion-lined chairs. The upgrading was necessary to make it more customer-friendly and pleasant.

Old timers who have been patronising the post office since young feel that the building should be retained, as this is the only government building of heritage value in Sitiawan. R. Ranggayah, a former postmaster, said that postal employees, past and present, have plenty of sentimental attachment to the building. It has been their work place for many years. One other advocate is Teh Char King, 70, a prominent businessman in town. He used to buy stamps and mail letters for his father when he was a boy.

SN

Ipoh Garden South Residents Oppose Location of Telco Tower



Residents living in Ipoh Garden South object to the installation of a Telco tower at 22, Tingkat Taman Ipoh.

Dr. Ng Yook Sun, President Canning Residents' Association explained that they do not oppose construction of Telco towers, but this one is too close to residential homes adding that the radiation may be harmful to senior citizens and young children who are more vulnerable.

Their meetings with the Mayor have not been fruitful and all they have received were standard replies from Malaysia Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) to their letters. YB Wong Kah Woh, Adun Canning, who was present at the press conference said that he has raised the issue of safe location for construction of Telco towers during Assembly Sittings and had discussions with the Mayor as well. There has been no positive outcome.

The residents held a peaceful march around the building to vent their frustration.

AJ

Daybreak Organises Charity Food and Fun Fair



Persatuan Daybreak (Disabled Adults and Youths Being Rewarded, Encouraged and Accepted in Kinta) organised its first Charity Food and Fun Fair at its training centre in Pengkalan recently.

Siaw Tack Chuan, Chairman of Daybreak said that the Fair was organised to provide publicity as well as obtain funds. He added that though Daybreak was launched about 18 years ago most people are not aware of its existence and activities.

Currently 60 disabled persons are being trained. During the Fair, disabled persons could be seen in the main hall of the centre, making gloves and socks for sale. During weekends students from special schools attend training.

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community

ISH's Refurbished Paediatric Ward



KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital (ISH), reputed for being a customer-focused health care provider, recently refurbished its paediatric ward.

DYTM Raja Puan Besar, Perak, Tuanku Zara Salim graciously officiated at the opening of the new ward on October 6. Also present at the opening ceremony was Datin Seri Saripah Zulkifli, wife of Menteri Besar Dato Seri Dr. Zambry Abdul Kadir.

ISH, initially formed in 1981, was one of the first specialist facilities serving the local community by providing a wide range of modern facilities and the expertise of many specialists.

Through the years it has been providing quality medical services and facilities, and has been recognised and certified with the Quality Management Excellence Award, Occupational Hazard and Safety Award, ISO2000 and thrice has been accredited MSQH (The Malaysian Society for Quality in Health MSQH).

The newly refurbished ward, measuring 6,948 square feet, has been designed like a children's nursery with whimsical murals and cartoon characters such as Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs to assist in putting the young patients and families at ease.

The goal of the design was to transform the hospital into a friendly space for kids

to calm their fears and create an environment which is less stressful for the families. Additionally the nurses' station and lobby is specially designed to complement the ward and inspire a soothing environment.

In creating a playroom atmosphere, children can play and exercise their imagination; providing distraction from pain and also increasing their cooperation during the treatment process.

The refurbishment cost the hospital RM1 million and houses a number of private and semi private rooms. There are two deluxe rooms, four single rooms, one two-bedded room and five four-bedded rooms. Included is one four-bedded nursery complete with modern state of the art features, a totally new concept in Ipoh.

The refurbishing of this ward is timely as it is ISH's quest to give more to the public and community at large as well as to position itself in the forefront of specialised medical care well into the 21st century.

JAG

Ayur Centre and Soroptimist Adoptees

Ayur Centre Sdn Bhd, the centre that practices Ayurveda, a holistic system of healing developed in India over 6,000 years ago, has just celebrated its 10th Anniversary in Malaysia.

As part of their celebrations, Ayur Centre Ipoh held a Medical Camp at the children's home of Pertubuhan Jagaan Kanak-Kanak Cacat Setia, in Silibin. The home has 44 children who are mentally and physically challenged.

Ayur Centre physicians Dr. Shiva Prasad and Dr. Mahapatra were on hand to conduct tests on the children to select two children whose condition had the potential to be improved and helped through Ayurvedic treatments. The children would subsequently be treated at their Ayur Centre in Tambun for 2-3 weeks.



In conjunction with the anniversary celebration, women's organisation Soroptimist International adopted the camp as a service project by providing lunch and entertainment for the children of the home. The entertainment was in the form of clown Au Yang whose antics were adored by the children.

Puan Sri Siew Yong Gnanalingam, Executive Director of Ayur Centre Sdn Bhd and Soroptimist International National

Rep of Malaysia, who read the welcoming address, thanked DYTM Raja Puan Besar Perak, Tuanku Zara Salim for graciously lending her presence and making the morning a memorable event. Also present was YAB Datin Seri Saripah Zulkifli, SI Ipoh President Jeyamalar Jeyaratnam and Mr Raymond Ong Kah Ghee, the vice chairman of the home.

Ayur Centre Sdn Bhd also has branches in PJ, Seremban, Butterworth and Johor Baharu.

DK

arts and culture

A Musical Delight with 'Flute and Guitar' Duo

Music aficionados in Perak were in for a rare treat when world-renowned 'flute and guitar' duo, Aisling Agnew and Matthew McAllister performed at Taman Budaya recently. The concert, organised by Perak Society of Performing Arts (PSPA) in collaboration with Classical Music Society of Selangor and Kuala Lumpur (CMS), was the first of its kind in Ipoh.

"The concert was phenomenal as they are the best flute and guitar duo. We also encouraged music lovers to join the workshops as this was an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to learn from the very best," explained Datin Rosalina Ooi, President of PSPA.

Classical guitarist



Matthew McAllister who comes from Scotland and flautist Aisling Agnew, from Ireland, are recognised as premier exponents of the new music genre. Their critically acclaimed album Recital features a wide range of virtuosic and beautiful music from around the globe. The duo's premiere recording of Greg Caffrey's Pluck, Blow II (The Return) was

recently featured on RTE Lyric FM's latest CD release Hiccup. Aisling and Matthew have taken their music around the world, giving many high profile concerts in the United Kingdom, North America, Peru and Costa Rica.

In conjunction with the concert, the duo also conducted workshops at the PSPA office.

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*For graciously officiating the opening of our new paediatric ward
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property**Eco-Nature Lifestyle at BANDAR SERI BOTANI****Eco-Park**

Bandar Seri Botani houses are artfully arranged and located amidst lush and green landscaped gardens which offer ample space for play and rest. One of the main features of this township is the ECO-Park which completes and complements Bandar Seri Botani's commitment to offer an "Eco-Nature Lifestyle" to its residents. The Eco-Park is the main recreational area and it has a viewing deck, outdoor gym, gazebo, lotus pond, children's playground and jogging path, making it a focal destination for evening and weekend activities.

Chinese School

Additionally, Taiko has also built a Chinese school to further complete this fully integrated township. SJK © Padang Gajah commenced operations at Bandar Seri Botani in January 2009.

Pinji Botanics Sdn. Bhd.
Tel: 05-3236622

Website:
www.bandarseribotani.com

Bandar Seri Botani is an ambitious property development by the Taiko Group of Companies. Sprawling over 1,200 acres of former plantation land, this fully integrated township development offers residents the combined benefits of city and country living at its very best.

House buyers can choose from a selection of over 6,000 units of bungalows, semi-detached houses, townhouses and link homes, all bearing the stamp of quality that has become synonymous with

Taiko. Currently 3,000 units have been completed with CF and 780 units are expected to be completed in the third quarter of 2011 till early 2012.

Prices range from RM148,000 for double story link houses to RM 346,000 for semi-detached homes.

Located at the southern part of the Ipoh, it is accessible from a main linkage road from Jalan Gopeng and Lahat-Simpang Pulai., a 10-minute drive from Ipoh's City Centre.

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LETTERS

We reprint some of our reader's comments from our online paper. Go to <http://www.ipohecho.com.my/> to read more. The views expressed in these letters are not necessarily shared by the Editorial Board. We reserve the right to refuse or modify the letters we publish.

SMI

St Michael's Institution or as it is popularly known, SMI, is going to be a hundred years old in 2012. SMI generally refers to three schools which are SM St Michael's, SK St Michael's 1 and SK St Michael's 2. The secondary school occupies the heritage building which is among the top most distinctive buildings in Ipoh. The two primary schools used to be housed in what was supposed to be a temporary building but which ended up being very well used for over forty years.

St Michael's primary schools operate in a way that both schools share one building but at different times. One school operates a morning session and the other an afternoon session. But then most people prefer the morning session so to make it fair to all, the two schools switch sessions mid year.

Switching between morning and afternoon sessions mid year presents many challenges to the students, their parents and the staff of the schools. Everyone's life is switched over every half year. Transportation rearranged, tuition classes rescheduled or even changed, parents' lunch breaks re-timed; all these and more are the myriad of activities that needs to be attended to every half year, every year.

Back in 2005 when the temporary building was way past its used-by date the Board of Governors of SMI decided to build a new primary school building. It was envisioned then to have a building that can house both schools. The present primary school building was completed in 2007, funded entirely by generous donors whose lives had been touched by the Lasallian Spirit.

In line with the Government's policy of having all schools turning into single session schools and also for the well being of everyone, the SMI's Board of Governors have decided that it is time to merge the two primary schools of St Michael's and create a single session school. The infrastructure in the new building is ready to house the merged schools.

The Board of Governors is now ready to bring its merger proposal to be discussed with the parents of students of both primary schools. The meeting to discuss the merger proposal will be held on October 30 at 9.00 a.m. in the primary school hall.

On behalf of SMI's Board of Governors I urge all parents to spare some time for their children by attending this discussion. For the merger proposal to carry through the parents' involvement and support is paramount. Parents, your presence and support are important. Please come to the meeting. Thank you.

Joseph Michael Lee

On behalf of the Board of Governors
St Michael's Institution

GH's Pharmacy

I wish to refer to the complaint by Daniel Prakesh in the letter column of Ipoh Echo Issue 105 (September 16-30) regarding service at the pharmacy department of Hospital Raja Permaisuri Bainun, Ipoh.

The management wishes to thank Mr Prakash for his views on the standard of service at the hospital and apologise for the inconvenience experienced while he was at the hospital.

The pharmacy opens a counter on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays between 7.30 a.m. to 1 p.m. The number of staff on duty on such days is five – two pharmacists and three assistants. Based on studies and observations made, the number is sufficient for smooth operation.

For your information, the pharmacy is equipped with the Quality Management System (QMS) to monitor service rendered. The average waiting time for each patient is 20 minutes for between 150-200 patients. On the day in question (August 28) there were 195 patients; this may be due to it being a weekend and the *aidilfitri* festive season. Eighty-five per cent were patients with chronic diseases who had an average of five prescription items each. This resulted in the staff on duty taking a longer time to prepare the prescriptions. Consequently, it had caused the backlog.

With the use of QMS, a wait of more than 30 minutes would set off an alarm call for extra hands. However, on the said day, the officer on call received the warning rather late and was unable to be of assistance.

The Hospital undertakes measures to improve its services to customers. In order to overcome the problem these remedial actions will be taken forthwith:

1. An extra pharmacist will be on duty full time on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays.
2. Additional information on pharmacy schedules during weekends and public holidays will be given to the public to avoid congestion.
3. Patients can have their follow-up medication sent to their homes via *pos laju* or they can text message and collect.

Dr. Hj. Rahimi B. Goon

Deputy Director
Hospital Raja Permaisuri Bainun

Ipoh Echo comment:

We applaud you Hospital Raja Permaisuri Bainun for your prompt response and action in this matter. This really shows us that the Ipoh Echo is being read and that we are truly the Voice OF, BY and FOR the community!

news roundup

PRANIC HEALING DINNER TALK

About 77 people attended the dinner talk on Pranic Healing at the Syuen Hotel recently. The event was sponsored by Mr & Mrs S.C. Lee. Main speaker Madam Indra Ramamoorthy (pic) of the Centre for Prana Yoga & Self Transformation said that Pranic healing utilises 'prana', a Sanskrit word meaning 'life-force' or better known in Chinese as 'Chi', to heal physical and emotional ailments. It is a 'no-touch, no-drug' therapy where blockages to the 'chakras' or energy centres in the body are cleansed or removed in order for healing to occur. The organisation was founded by Grand Master Choa Kok Sui, a Filipino Chinese, who is also the founder of modern Pranic healing. Today Pranic Healing is practiced all over the world and is achieving wide popularity in Malaysia. Attendee Tim



Woolbank who volunteered to be healed said, "I could feel the energy moving in waves up and down my upper body as she moved her hands". A medical doctor Dr. Sathia also testified to using Pranic Healing in

his practice and to its efficacy.

The Pranic Centre in Ipoh is at: Wisma Ehsan, 2-5, Jalan Sultan Yussuf, 30000 Ipoh. Call: **05-2554590** or **012-2959288**, for an appointment.

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Where Great Young Minds Meet

my say



● By Jerry Francis

Animals Need Caring Too



This is a lucky six-month-old female dog that survived a slug lodged centimetres from her heart after being shot along Jalan Kuala Kangsar in July. A shopkeeper rescued her and brought her to Noah's Ark Ipoh, where she is recovering although the slug could not be removed as it would be dangerous.

The Kelly and Jacinta story of compassion and caring for stray dogs highlighted by Ipoh Echo in issues IE92 is just one example of many such stories in the city. It appears that the women, rather than the men, are the dogs' "best friends" in these cases as they're the ones who are most active in providing care towards the homeless dogs and cats.

In my neighbourhood in Taman Tinggi, there is a mother-daughter team who would quickly come to the rescue once a stray dog littered in the housing estate. They would take both the dog and her puppies into their care by providing makeshift shelters, feeding them and looking for homes for them. They would even buy dog licenses for some of the strays to spare them from the city council's dog shooters and even hide the strays whenever the dog-shooters are around.

Similarly, there are also other women all over the city, who are taking care of strays. They include those in Taman Rishah, Ipoh Garden East, Kampung Simee, Taman Chateau, Gunung Rapat Pengkalan and the one in Tambun who takes care of 26 stray cats.

While so much compassion and love are being shown by the residents of towns and cities, very little can be said of the local authorities in Malaysia including Ipoh City Council. To them, the only solution appears to be to shoot

the strays.

Instead of having to maintain a dog shooting unit, the city council could disband it and channel the revenue derived from annual dog licenses as grants to the relevant animals' welfare NGOs, such as the Ipoh Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ISPCA) and Noah's Ark Ipoh, to deal with the problem of strays. NGOs can then round up stray dogs and cats and neuter them, while the seriously ill could be put to sleep mercifully and others put up for adoption.

I always have a phobia whenever I see dog-shooters in my neighbourhood ever since I saw a puppy, barely four months old, being shot right in front of me and some children, at the gate of a neighbour's house some years back. On one hand, we are trying to instil kindness toward animals among children, while on the other we are showing cruelty by shooting innocent strays and hurling their carcasses onto a truck.

The city council is being accused of dragging its feet in finding a solution to the problem of stray dogs and cats. Even the city councillor appointed to sit on a committee looking into the problem had stated that the problem was his lowest priority.

Noah's Ark Ipoh founder and treasurer Dr. Ranjit Kaur said they had made various suggestions and proposals to

the city council, but there had been no response. "How much can the NGOs and animal lovers do? They need assistance from the government and local authorities," added Dr. Ranjit. According to her, Noah's Ark is neutering an average of two stray dogs a day at her veterinary clinic and has given out for adoption about 1,000 dogs.

Mayor Datuk Roshidi Hashim had promised that the city council would put their guns down for good once a more humane solution to deal with the strays is found. He was aware that the city council's shooting methods had drawn flak from the public and added that he wanted to change the negative perception that the council did not care for animal welfare. "Our aim is to come up with a win-win solution to ensure that animal welfare is not compromised as we try to keep our city free of strays," he said at an Animal Awareness Day event organised by Noah's Ark in the city recently.

The solution is right there in front of him, and that is to "out-source" the problem of stray animals to any NGOs willing to undertake the responsibility. The question is: will the Mayor do it during his tenure of office or will he pass the buck to his successor to have another round of discussions?

book review By Chelvi Murugiah

I see Tin Man by Yin, as a local Malaysian story with a 'wake-up' call to fellow citizens irrespective of race, to not take lightly the racial discourse faced in the country. In what is viewed as growing intolerance amongst Malaysians, Yin, a Malaysian Chinese, makes a timely and conscious attempt in Tin Man to historically reflect upon the struggles of the early Chinese migrants and their current state of welfare.

Spanned across three generations, a typical Chinese migrant's family history unfolds alongside Malaysia's history narrated by the grandfather 'ah kong' Lee Ah Ming to his favourite grandson, Lee Kuan Sang. Ah Ming is a Chinese migrant who came to Malaya as a 'jyu jai' piglet and many upheavals later becomes a 'towkay'. While he did not forget his roots in China, his heart was set to make Malaysia his home.

As the author Yin states, not all Chinese migrants were willing participants in the great exodus; many were merely 'jyu jai', sold to settle debts or just to ensure the survival of the family. In the 19th century, tin mines in Larut, Perak were a major attraction to thousands of Chinese migrants who came to Malaya – merchants, fortune hunters, fugitives and coolies. Whilst many were sojourners yet many others like Ah Ming remained in Malaya and continued to contribute towards nation building.

Ah Ming speaks of the harsh realities of life in the tin mines where he narrowly escapes death himself during a horrific stand-off between Chinese clans. As described in

TIN MAN



(particularly the tin trade). This concerned the British who intervened to safeguard their commercial interests and ended up colonising Malaya.

Tin Man, laments that the cycles of migration seems to be reoccurring as many local Chinese born and bred in Malaysia continue to send their children away to seek 'greener pastures' as their forefathers had. These reasons aside, the underlying fact is that many today leave because they also feel unwelcomed in their homeland, and resent being labelled pendatang, immigrants even after over 50

are indeed the integral makeup of Chinese communities which identifies – place of origin, kinship and dialect which is useful as a foundation to establishing 'guanxi' (personal relationships) a concept embedded in Chinese culture.

As mentioned by the author, the Chinese migrants brought with them clan rivalry which often ended up in clan wars resulting in large numbers of deaths but also the disruption of commerce

years of independence. Why is this occurring in a country that brands itself as 1Malaysia?

Then again much has changed, life was simpler then; for the new comer, the ability to adapt to local customs and speak the language of the locals was enough to be accepted into the mainstream. As in Tin Man, Ah Ming (a Chinese migrant) befriends Ahmed (a Bugis); a genuine friendship is sealed based on hardships faced together. Indeed, there was a time in history when communities found it necessary to watch each other's backs and it was common to share their wealth with their friends irrespective of race and religion as in the case of Tin Man.

The author has as in his debut book, Postcards from a Foreign Land and now in Tin Man, brought to life stories of ordinary Malaysians, their unique cultures and norms. Local stories that are often taken for granted asks to be noticed when craftily lined in history – provides for an interesting read with learning included. Tin Man certainly has a deeper set of messages to deliver and in a nation that claims to be impartial to racial differences, the book begs to differ.

Tin Man is a recommended read, in particular, by every Malaysian Chinese Perakian – it may rekindle thoughts to hold on to the legacy left behind by your forefathers who toiled with dreams of a better life in the tin mines of the State.

The author dedicates Tin Man to those who came from near and far to make this land (Malaysia) their home.

The Tin Man by Yin (paperback) is published by East West Publications and priced at RM39.90. Available at all major book stores.

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