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JANUARY 16-31, 2011

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ISSUE **112**

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my say



Will 2011 Be A 'Clean' Year For Ipoh?

By James Gough

• Before. The visit by the Raja Muda in September 2010



It took a royal visit for a major clean-up campaign in Rapat Setia to occur, much to the delight and relief of residents there. The visit by the Raja Muda of Perak, Raja Dr. Nazrin Shah to Taman Harmony and Taman Rapat Koperasi at the beginning of last September has helped to brighten up the environment.

It needed 600 lorry-loads to remove the estimated 12,000 tons of 'mainly construction waste' in the area. The mammoth task of cleaning-up the illegal rubbish dumps was undertaken by a contractor engaged by the Ipoh City Council.

Yet, it is far from over. Despite the removal of the wastes, which took about a month, there are still a lot more scattered over a wide area close to housing estates and more money will be needed to be spent on clearing them.

• After. The same area as of December 2010



Continued on page 2

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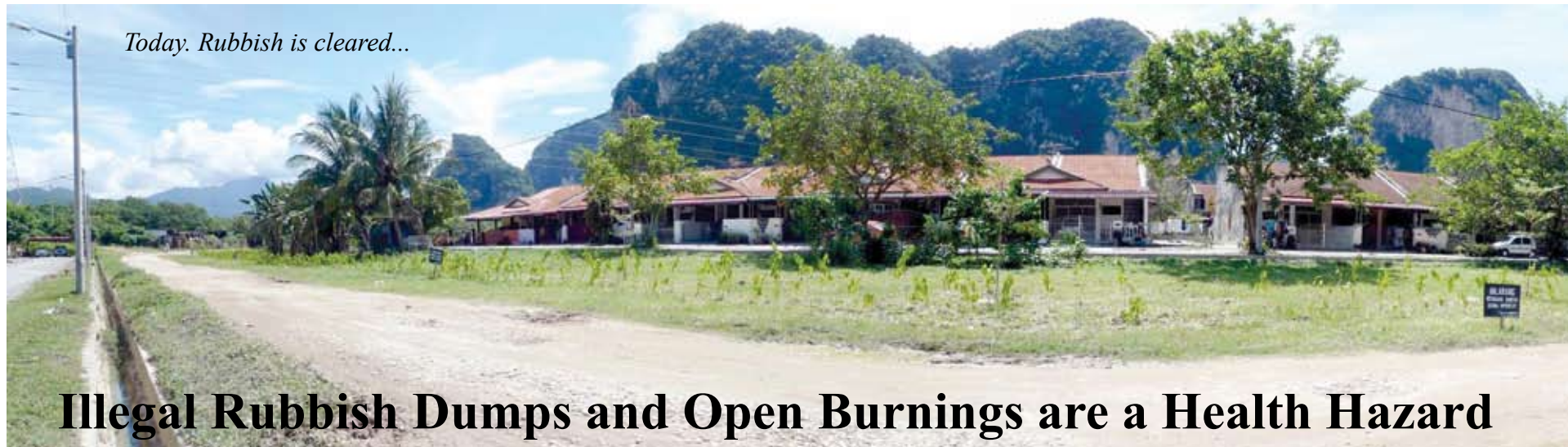
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Today. Rubbish is cleared...



Illegal Rubbish Dumps and Open Burnings are a Health Hazard

The illegal rubbish dumps and open burnings had been a problem for the residents for many years. They pose a health hazard and although several complaints had been made, no action was taken until now.

Ipoh Echo had, through its on-going "Dirt Vigilantes" campaign, urged its readers to submit photographs and details of filthy places in the city.

In response to the campaign, a "disappointed" resident in Rapat Setia wrote in. His letter was highlighted in IE 103 and received the immediate attention of the Raja Muda of Perak, Raja Dr. Nazrin Shah, who insisted on personally inspecting the affected area.

Raja Nazrin's move created a scramble at the State Government and City Council. The State Secretary Dato' Dr. Abdul Rahman and Mayor Dato' Haji Roshidi Hashim accompanied Raja Nazrin to Taman Harmony and Taman Rapat Koperasi.

The visit by Raja Nazrin has resulted in the residents now being able to breathe fresh air without inhaling particulates and suffering the noxious smells of open burning being wafted from the nearby limestone hills.

Amazing Transformation: From Dumps to Green Patches

The clean-up covers a 500-metre stretch along a track. The area has now been transformed into a green patch with young trees sprouting and resembling a scenic residential environment – the way it should be.

MBI's Director for Community Affairs Zulkifl Jaafar Sidek clarified that "clean up work was still ongoing and that only one third of the area closest to the housing area had been cleared and had cost the council RM12,000 thus far".

Regarding the balance of the area covering about two kilometres to be cleared, Zulkifl stated that notices have been sent to the current owners consisting of the State, TNB and private parties and he's



● Resident Khairul Anuar



● Zulkifl Jaafar Sidek, MBI's Director for Community Affairs

awaiting responses from them to take further action. Based on the size, Zulkifl estimated that it would take a year to completely clean up the entire area.

On complaints about open burnings still rampant in the area, the city council's enforcement officers had checked but were unable to apprehend any offenders.

Praises for Raja Nazrin

Residents in the area are jubilant and full of praise for Raja Nazrin for showing his concern of the problem. They claimed that the Royal visit has sparked off the clean up and had the Raja Muda not shown a personal interest in the problem, it would not have happened.

Saiful Nizam, an officer with the State Religious

Council, whose house is located just next to the cleaned up area is "happy" that the area is clean as "the way it should be". Another resident Khairul Anuar, who has been living there for nine years, stated that "now potential thieves cannot hide in the bushes anymore. All that is needed now is regular maintenance".

According to Khairul and Saiful, illegal burning would occur every week before the clean up began and would leave a film of ash on their cars thereafter. Currently there is still open burning taking place but not as regularly as three months ago.

Compounds Issued

At an interview during the Royal visit to the dumpsite last September, Mayor Dato' Roshidi stated that he would enforce the law for indiscriminate throwing of rubbish. Thus, over a three-month period to



● Before. Houses blocked by rubbish in the foreground

December 20, several compounds had been issued for illegal dumping in the area.

Restore Ipoh's Clean City Image

More revealing is what could be achieved if the relevant authorities took the time and effort to restore Ipoh's past image as the "cleanest city".

Meanwhile, all residents in the city need to be more civic conscious and not throw rubbish indiscriminately.

Ipoh Echo is also

thrilled by the result of its efforts and will continue with its "Dirt Vigilantes" campaign by highlighting filthy places in the city. Readers are urged to be our vigilantes in an effort to strive for a cleaner environment.

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Your Voice In The Community

From the Editor's Desk

• by Fathol Zaman Bukhari

OUR HOPES FOR 2011

Over seventy per cent of the council's revenue comes from assessment rates but collection is being hampered by a high percentage of defaulters...

Mayor Roshidi's promise to turn "vision into reality" during a New Year address at the city council's full-board meeting on Thursday, December 31, 2009 still reverberates in my mind. Details of this year-end meeting were summarised in the 89th issue of Ipoh Echo. The part that really caught my imagination was his acknowledgment that "Ipohites today are more demanding and savvy."

Roshidi did not mince his words when he admitted, rather succinctly, that "amenities such as parks, green lungs, bicycle lanes, shaded pavements, public transport, libraries and a viable rubbish disposal strategy are integral to an efficient city council; one that does not compromise on quality."

So where do we stand vis-à-vis the mayor's pledge made at the closing stages of 2009? Some noteworthy progress is noted but is that enough? What happened to parks and green lungs? Polo Ground is as intractable as ever. The festering hawker problem does not seem to diminish in spite of promises. Bicycle lanes and shaded pavements? I don't see any. Public transport? The same old buses are plying the same old routes. Although attempts at introducing newer buses are in place, the attitude of drivers and conductors does not match.

What about libraries? The condition of the two existing libraries, one managed by the state and the other by MBI, have not changed much. The same problems seem to beset both the libraries although there seems to be some effort at improving by the state-owned library.

Rubbish disposal strategy? The same old tired system is still in use. Rubbish gets collected as per schedule but overall cleanliness is still unsatisfactory. Attitude of Ipohites is largely to be blamed for this blot. Efforts by the council to reduce the number of illegal dumpsites are commendable. However, there is little the council can do unless residents change their mindset.

The single most important attribute of a well-managed city council is finance. Hence, without financial clout no council, however "clean", can operate effectively. Ipoh City Council is no exception. It works on a tight budget. The council's operational expenses escalate annually, but most of the money goes towards paying its huge workforce – 2,600 personnel. Thus, money for infrastructure development and maintenance have to be requisitioned from the state or the federal government instead.

Over seventy per cent of the council's revenue comes from assessment rates but



Photo by Ed Shahir

collection is being hampered by a high percentage of defaulters. The problem will continue to haunt the council notwithstanding measures taken to counter the growing trend. In the spirit of openness, I sincerely hope the mayor will be more transparent with his numbers. Often, the figures quoted at full-board meetings do not add up.

The council has taken action to fine tune collection procedures by employing user-friendly methods like mobile counters and extending collection hours. The drive-in counter, adjacent to the council's building, is now open to the public. These measures will come to nought if property owners continue to flout the law by defaulting on their payments.

The opening up of shopping complexes and malls in the city accentuates the parking problem. Residents' hopes for a solution are being stymied by the council's lack of viable action, one which will stand the test of time. The on-going dispute between MBI and the residents of Ipoh Garden over indiscriminate parking at *de Garden* is a case in point.

Haphazard planning results in uneven development in certain areas within the city. This is the primary cause of traffic congestion and the clogging of arterial roads. Concerted efforts are being taken by the council to address the problem, but are they visible enough?

Will 2011 be any different? I don't wish to make a prediction. Roshidi is doing his best to realise his vision before he retires in 2013. "I hope to turn Ipoh into a vibrant city based on the concept of *Bersih, Hijau dan Membangun* (Clean, Green and Progressive)," he told news bureau chiefs during breakfast at a leading hotel recently. I wish him luck.

THIS MONEY IS MINE BUT I CAN'T TOUCH IT

• by Peter Lee

Sam purchased an Endowment Insurance Policy amounting to RM15,000 for his daughter Michele when she was 2 years old. The duration of this policy was 18 years which means that Michele can receive the money when she becomes 20 years old. Sam divorced his wife when Michele was 4 years old and has custody of her. When Michele was 15 years old, Sam passed away without a will and the custody of Michele was returned to her mother. Upon reaching the age of 21, she decided to claim the money from this insurance policy but discovered that she does not have a vested interest in this policy. As a result, she was required by the insurer to produce the Letter of Administration (L.A.) for Sam's estate. This is to enable the insurer to release the money to the administrator for distribution according to the Distribution Act, 1958 that was amended in 1997.

When applying for L.A., it was further discovered that Sam's mother survived Sam. As such, Sam's mother and Michele are entitled to $\frac{1}{3}$ and $\frac{2}{3}$ of Sam's estate respectively. However, Sam's mother had already passed away when this Insurance claim was made. Because of this, her $\frac{1}{3}$ entitlement will now go to her children. One of the documents which Michele is now asked to produce is her grandmother's death certificate before the process of L.A. can commence. She is now in a dilemma because she could not obtain this document from the siblings of Sam as they have severed ties with her and her mother.

Just to claim that small amount, Michele will now have to go through a long and tedious process of L.A. filled with uncertainties as to whether she could obtain the death certificate of her grandmother. Even though most insurance policies have a vesting clause, it is always advisable to reconfirm it with your insurance agent. However, if you are in Sam's position, then you can either do an absolute assignment to the child you purchased for or to a Private Trust. If you know that there will be family problems when you pass away, then it is strongly advised that you execute an absolute assignment during your lifetime to a Private Trust. By doing so, you as the "Settlor" can appoint "Rockwills Trustee Bhd." to be the "Trustee" because it provides impartiality, expertise, professionalism and perpetual existence. You can then name your "Protectors" and "Guardian". Thereafter, the most important matter is to specify your distribution condition to your children. All these can be written in your "Trust Deed".

To reinforce your entire estate distribution, it is always important for you to write your will. This enables you to choose your Executors/Trustee to distribute your estate according to your wishes and if you anticipate the above problem, then you must choose Rockwills Trustee Bhd. as the sole Executors/Trustee. In addition, you can name the appropriate individual as the "Guardian" of your minor children and at the same time name your beneficiaries with the instructions to either distribute your estate immediately to them or through a "Testamentary Trust" in the will if the beneficiaries are still minors.

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 excelsec@streamyx.com. Website: <http://www.wills-trust.com.my>.



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Thinking ALLOWED

• by Mariam Mokhtar

The Right to Live

The alarming rate at which babies are abandoned is worrying. Many are found dead in rubbish bins or bitten to death by animals and insects whilst others are simply left on doorsteps or on the streets. The government, worried by this rising trend, is considering treating cases of abandoned babies as murder or attempted murder.

Shame and Despair

School children in Perak, just like the rest of Malaysia, are not taught any sex education, although this is currently being revisited and sex education will be taught

to our children in the near future. Our young are told to abstain from sex before marriage and that having a child out of wedlock heaps shame onto the family. It is this attitude which many social workers believe has driven desperate women to abandon their babies.

Baby Hatch

Some observers blame the usual targets: internet pornography, bad parenting, and an over-exposure to a sexually liberal western culture. As the authorities seek ways to stem the rising number of abandoned babies, various non-governmental organizations and hospitals have tried to rescue these

babies. One such method is by having a "baby hatch", which is a place where mothers can safely and anonymously leave their unwanted child.

Perak's First Hospital Hatch

Perak's first baby hatch in a hospital is located at the Ipoh Specialist Hospital (ISH) at Jalan Raja Di-Hilir. It is the ISH consultants' initiative led by its Medical Director, Dr. Fadli Cheah. At its launch, the chief executive officer of the hospital, Nasiruddin Harun, announced that the programme was part of its corporate social responsibility.

He said, "The baby



Baby hatch at ISH

hatch is aimed at saving the lives of innocent newborns who are not wanted by their parents". The hospital, said Nasiruddin, collaborated with the state Welfare Department.

"With this service, we hope to reduce the number of abandoned babies in Perak."

Then, assisted by a model, he explained the hatch's procedure and said that the action of a baby being placed within the hatch triggered an alarm which would then alert the hospital personnel.

"Our personnel will examine the baby and if he's found to be healthy, we will hand him over to the Welfare Department," he said.

Identity Kept Secret

He guaranteed that the identity of the person placing the baby in the hatch would remain a secret and reassured those who wanted to know what if the baby was found to be ill: "If the baby needs medical attention, our doctors will treat him first for free."

Hospital medical director. Dr. Fadli, defended the move in having the hatch, but admitted that it would not totally solve the problem of baby-dumping. "We need a holistic approach, including educating people on teenage pregnancy," he said.

State-wide Education Campaign

Meanwhile, state senior executive councillor Dato' Hamidah Osman confirmed that her administration

would embark on a state-wide campaign this year to educate people on pregnancy and about the hatch. She said, "We will go to schools and factories to distribute pamphlets about the need to place unwanted babies in a safe place" and reassured people that the state was not encouraging premarital sex with the baby hatch programme.

ISH First Hatch Baby

Eight days after the launch, the ISH received its first abandoned baby, which was left at the hatch on a Monday at about 4.00 p.m. Dr. Fadli, reported that the hatch's first baby was a boy of around seven months old who weighed approximately 7.8 kg.

"The baby is active and well-nourished," he said in a statement recently. "His head circumference is however, larger than normal and tense," he added. Dr. Fadli then stressed that the baby hatch was meant only for abandoned newborn babies.

"Every newborn baby has the right to live," he added as his staff took charge of the 7-month old Malay baby boy who had hydrocephalus. The really heartbreaking thing was that the 7-month old baby was desperately looking around for his mother in the ward, perhaps ready to be breastfed.

But like the good doctor says, every baby, regardless of it being a newborn baby or not, has the right to live, even though he has been abandoned by his mother.

Single Mothers Contribute To Charity



About 100 children from various primary and secondary schools received uniforms, bags and shoes, while 30 families received food supplies at SRK (T) Sangeetha Saba in Ipoh recently. The targeted group were all children from ibu tunggal (single mothers) families who required assistance. Children came from Batu Gajah, Pusing, Cameron Highlands, Felda Trolak, Sg Siput and Ipoh.

A group of five single mothers lead by Puan Monica Agnes and Puan M. Saraswathy together with the collaboration of Community Welfare Organisation in Negeri Perak headed by Mr. M.R. Murugan hosted the Khidmat Masyarakat Programme. It was officiated by Dato' S. Veerasingam, Advisor to Menteri Besar Perak on Indian Affairs.

The charity programme was made possible with donations from local businessmen and children from homes of single mothers, who are now having good income jobs. Puan Monica Agnes said that when the children who were brought up by the single mothers come forward to contribute to this kind of charity programme, it gives the young children who are in the same situation hope and a determination that they too can come up in life and being poor is not an obstacle to achieving their dreams.

Should any single mother require assistance or want to join this group of single mothers, contact **017-5600942** (Pn Saraswathy), **010-3764686** (Pn Maria) or **012-5523070** (Pn Noraini).

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Musings on Food

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By See Foon Chan-Koppen

Photos by Christian DiGiovanna

SEEFOON UNCOVERS HIDDEN TREASURES IN PASIR PINJI

Tucked away in a small cul-de-sac just a few doors down from the ever-popular Tuck Kee (if you're coming from Pasir Puteh it's just past our famous *Dai Su Keok* or Big Tree, on the left) is Restoran Makanan Laut Wong Kok, an unprepossessing restaurant that offers up a cornucopia of treasures especially if ordered in advance.

Chef and proprietor Lum Chee Kuen reigns supreme in the kitchen and at a moment's notice can whip up unique dishes that will titillate your taste buds as no other restaurant in Ipoh has done.

Two of these dishes spring to mind when I say unique. The first is the **Sea Cucumber Salad** which consists of fried anchovies, jelly fish, bitter melon, garnished with *kan choy*



or Chinese celery, spring onions, white onions, sesame seeds, cilantro, and tossed with a *taucheo/Ma Lat* (preserved soya beans, and the slightly mouth numbing Szechuan pepper) sauce – RM60/80/120 for 4/6/10 pax. The second one is the **Mo Mai Jook** or the no-rice *congee*, a white creamy smooth, delectably 'umami' porridge which had us guessing as to its ingredients which we subsequently discovered was pure egg white flavoured and textured with pork floss, fried shrimp *wonton* and chicken breast – RM8 per pax. Certainly a dish I will return over and over to savour.

On the day we went, I was fortunate to have a large enough group to savour many of Chef Lum's dishes which I discovered to be almost infinite, depending on the availability of ingredients in the market and from suppliers. In that one evening we tasted over 12 dishes with Chef Lum pushing us to try more as we left groaning from the table.

There was the excellent **Saito Yu Meen**, home-made fish noodles



• Chef Lum

(Chef Lum swears his are home-made and not from factories) fried with prawns and vegetables, with hints of pepper, (RM6 per pax), followed by the **Deep Fried Frog's Legs** and ginger slices. The frog's legs were fried to perfection, crisp on the outside and still juicy and tender inside while the ginger slices were crisp and crunchy and lent a sharp bite which helped to complement the blandness of the frog's legs – price by weight.

This was followed by the **Braised Spring Chicken** served with whole braised garlic pieces, juicy and tender and good to the last bite – RM6 per bird; Kam Heong Crab which was spicy, redolent with curry leaves, dried prawns and chilli – price by weight. Then came a whole pumpkin filled to overflowing with **Braised Spare Ribs** in black bean sauce – RM18; the **Chew**

Chao Fish Head, cut into portions and braised in a dark sauce. Price by weight with minimum RM15. And finally we had their famous **Lap Mei Fan** which is only available at this time of the year closer to Chinese New Year. This huge clay pot of rice with its air-dried sweet meats of *lap cheong* (pork sausages), *yuen cheong* (liver sausage), *lap ngap* (air-dried salted duck) and *lap yoke* (air-dried pork belly) which is steamed on top of the rice, allowing its cooking juices to seep in, permeating the rice with the fragrance and aroma of these special sweet meats. A sauce is then poured on top for extra flavour – RM40/60/80. This is a 'must-have' dish prior to or during Chinese New Year. Here in Wong Kok, it is done to perfection.

By this time we were totally sated but Chef Lum came over and insisted that we try their homemade **Saito Fish-balls** – 80 sen each with a minimum order of 10 pieces. And despite our protests, also their homemade **Char Siu** – RM12 minimum, both of which were some of the best I've tasted.

Ipohites will be delighted to know that they will be open throughout the Chinese New Year period.



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HAWKER FOOD



Ice Kacang

The perfect Malaysian dessert to indulge in on a hot, humid day has to be, none other than the *ice kacang*. Also known as 'Ais Batu Campur' or ABC in short, the *ice kacang*, when first introduced, was made up of only shaved ice and red beans. Today, you can find an array of variants ranging from the traditional one with a variety of jelly, *cendol*, sweet corn, red beans and peanuts under a mountain of shaved ice with evaporated milk or coconut milk and syrup drizzled over the top, to novelty ones served with durian, chocolate syrup or ice cream.

Gerei Ais Kacang Weng Kee

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(Branch at Sun Kam Wan located at 'the triangle' opp. BSN, Ipoh Garden). Famous for their 'gula melaka' version, fragrant and creamy. Open: morning till lunch time. RM2.20 per bowl.

Wooley Food City, Ipoh Garden

(Opposite Anika Selera, 'Toong Ku Theng')

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'Tong Sui Kai' or Rainbow City Food Lane

Opens daily, for dinner till late. Most of the stalls are established, so walk along the row and observe where the locals are having their ice kacang. We recommend the one somewhere in the middle of the row. Variants served with ice-cream and fruits available. From RM2.20 onwards.

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Opening hours: 6.00 p.m.-12.00 a.m. Closed on

Wednesdays. RM2.40 per bowl for a smallish serve.

RECIPE



By Margarita Lee

Pumpkin Fries with Salted Egg

- 1 small pumpkin (about 400-500g)
- 3 salted egg yolks
- 1 small fresh egg
- ¼ tsp of salt and pepper
- 1 cup all-purpose flour for coating
- Vegetable oil for deep frying

1. Steam the duck salted egg yolks for 8-10 minutes. Crush the egg yolks with a folk for later use.
2. Peel and remove the seeds from the pumpkin, and also remove the fibrous layer beneath.
3. Cut pumpkin thinly into the size of fries.
4. Mix the pumpkin with the small egg, salt and pepper, leave it for 10-20 minutes.
5. Coat the pumpkin fries evenly with flour.
6. Heat oil in a pan until hot, fry the pumpkin pieces until a golden colour.

7. Remove the pumpkin fries from the pan and drain excess oil with paper towels.
8. Heat ½ tbsp oil in a pan; add in the crushed salted egg yolks.
9. Stir fry the salted egg yolks until they are light and fluffy. (They should start foaming).
10. Add in the pumpkin fries and stir well with the egg yolk.
11. Serve immediately.



NEW LAUNCH

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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 Haven "Name the Rock"** contest winners' announcement by supermodel and Malaysian celebrity Amber Chia on Saturday, Jan 22 at 4.00 p.m. Also an opportunity to view Ipoh's iconic 280-million year old rock.
- **Perak Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA) Family Day/Food & Fun Fair** on Jan 23 (Sunday) from 9.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. at the SRJK (C) Yuk Choy, Jln Sultan Iskandar Shah, Ipoh. Part of the funds collected will go to various schools for special children and orphanages in the State of Perak. Colouring contest forms available at selected petrol stations (for listing, see Announcements at: www.ipohecho.com.my). For enquiries, contact: **012-5282196** (Miss Wong) or **012-5458188** (Mdm Irene).
- **The Haven Grand Launch Carnival** on Jan 30 from 10.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. at the Haven Show Gallery, Ipoh. A day of fun for the whole family! Call: **1700 8 17000** for more details.
- **MNS Perak's Learning Trip to an Organic Farm (Chederiang)** on Sunday Feb 20, from 8.30 a.m. - 2.00 p.m. Participants are expected to gather at Sam Poh Tong's pomelo stalls at 7.30 a.m. before leaving by car pooling. RM10 is payable to the farm for lunch. Closing date for booking is Feb 12, on first come first serve basis. For registration and details, email Lee Yuat Wah at leeyuatwah@yahoo.com or visit www.mnsperak.wordpress.com.
- **Free Yoga Classes by the Centre for Prana Yoga & Self Transformation** on 2nd & 4th Sundays of every month, at 8.30 a.m. at Wisma Ehsan, 2-5 Jln Sultan Yussuf, Ipoh. Contact: **05-2554590**.
- **MBI Drive-Through Counter** is open Monday-Thursday from 8.15 a.m. to 3.30 p.m., and Friday 8.15-11.45 a.m. & 2.45-3.30 p.m. Payment can be made for all MBI and other utility bills.

Letters

Ipoh World – Looking Back to 2010

It is traditional the world over, every January, to look back at the successes and failures of the previous year. For ipohWorld, Tenby Schools' in-house history project based on the Internet, 2010 was a good year, particularly with regard to information growth, continuity and an ever increasing audience on our website. As a very small organization, entirely dependent on funding from the school and with only two staff, myself only part-time, we have achieved a great deal. Much of this is due to the efforts of our full time member who remains with us having actually stayed with us for the entire year – the first to do so since we started the project.

For those who are not aware, IpohWorld is an education based, not-for-profit organization established in 2004 to promote awareness and appreciation of Perak, the Silver State of Malaysia and its unique, diverse and rich heritage, with particular focus on Ipoh and Kinta Valley. We provide an information archive in the form of a unique digital image database of heritage and social history in images and words. In addition there is an interactive blog to encourage discussion between our readers.

Looking at 2010, the archive has grown by more than 20% and now contains around 5000 items. In parallel with that the readership has also increased dramatically from 2,004 unique visitors in January to 10,412 in December, an increase of more than 500%.

Over the entire year there were 63,229 unique visitors and between them they looked at 436,974 pages giving a "Hit" total of 2,826,710. Now we understand that these figures are a mere "drop in the ocean" when compared to Google or Yahoo, but we believe they are impressive for such a small organisation as ours.

We have also been active socially having met up for a meal with some of our readers on four occasions and most exciting of all provided a community service that has put old friends in touch with each other across the world, found the burial place of a lost Australian great grandfather and proved to an English couple that their parents were married here. The most amazing reunion that we have brokered is of a British couple and their local friends who lost contact more than 50 years ago. They met again in KL on 4 January thanks to IpohWorld.

But what will 2011 bring? Well I can guarantee the archive will increase regularly and the blog will have at least three new entries every week. There is also certain to be a great deal of interaction between us and our readers, but of course the readership numbers will only continue to rise if you, the public join us. It is free, interesting and fun so if you have not done so already then log on to www.ipohworld.org. If you are already a supporter then please tell your friends.

Ian Anderson

Gang of Ten Smash up UTP Canteen – Security Does Nothing

My friend and I want to bring something to your attention.

We are students at Universiti Teknologi Petronas in Seri Iskandar. On the December 1 after we finished our class we went to our local Paparika cafe on campus. As we arrived a gang of ten or so men pushed in front of us and told us the cafe was closed. The gang then went in and locked the door behind them. They then started to throw chairs around and smash up the cafe. Then we could see them hit the owner Mr Alan and threaten him with a knife.

After about ten minutes, we saw security men arrive, but they only spoke to the gang members, who then left, so we followed them in a friend's car. We thought that police or more security men would be waiting for them at main gate, but no! They just got their ICs back from the security post and were seen joking with the guards before they drove off. We suspect the guards know the gang members.

Does this mean that we are not safe here; anyone can come inside campus, harm us and then get away without the police or campus security stopping them?

Anyone entering UTP needs to leave their IC at the guardhouse and collect it back on the way out. Therefore, the security should know who were the members of the gang who had caused the trouble.

Can you help us make UTP safer? We foreign students now fear for our safety.

Hazwan



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Location Map



Wellness

Breaking Through AUTISM



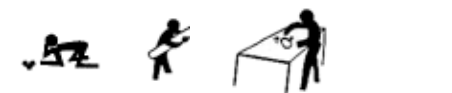
According to the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) of America, as many as **one in every 150 children** are diagnosed with Autism. What then is Autism? It is a **complex developmental disability** that typically appears during the first three years of a child's life. It is a spectrum disorder which covers a wide range and severity of symptoms and behaviours. A child with autism displays the following tendencies:

Impairment of Communication.

- Child avoids eye contact.
- Prefers to be alone.
- Echoes words or phrases
- Difficulties in expressing his needs.

Impairment of Social Interaction.

- Difficulty in interacting with other children.
- Inappropriate laughing or giggling.
- Refusing to be cuddled.

Impairment of Imagination.

- Uneven physical or verbal skills.
- Inappropriate attachment to objects.
- Likes to spin objects or self.

Some children may also have impairment of sensory processing and motor skills.

Boys are more likely than girls to be afflicted with autism. Early identification is, therefore, essential for future success. The characteristic behaviours of autism become apparent at between 18 to 24 months of age. Research indicates that early diagnosis, followed by **early intervention**, results in a dramatically better outcome.

Early childhood intervention is a support system for children with developmental disabilities and their families commencing from childbirth or after the first diagnosis. It involves specialised education and therapy services for the child, as well as assistance for the whole family through information, advocacy and emotional support.

There is currently no known 'cure' for autism. This does not mean, however, nothing can be done for children with autism. With the appropriate intervention for the child and support for their parents these children can make meaningful improvement. With this intention **Autism Asperger's Help Association (AAHA)**, Ipoh Perak (1168-10-PRK) has been set up. Follow our articles to find out more.



AAHA

Autism Asperger's Help Association
For more info contact:

Dr. Shan Narayanan
016 591 4735

Mrs. Michelle Cheah
012 512 1897

Mr. Yee
012 521 6348

Caring for Your Eyes



Dr. S.S. Gill
Resident Consultant
Ophthalmologist

We continue part 5 of our interview with Dr. S.S. Gill, Consultant Ophthalmologist at Hospital Fatimah, about Diabetes Mellitus and eye complications (diabetic retinopathy).

What are some other steps that diabetics can take apart from regular eye checks in order to help reduce their risk of developing diabetic eye complications?

Apart from **good diabetic and hypertension control**, it is advantageous to **control blood cholesterol levels**. Dr. Gill shares that he is sometimes asked by diabetic patients whether high cholesterol levels make a difference or not in slowing down the diabetic eye complications.

To this, he says that although studies have shown some conflicting results, it is clear that maintaining or lowering blood cholesterol levels is still a priority for people with diabetes. This is because high cholesterol increases the risk of heart attack and stroke. It is therefore good to keep cholesterol levels low in order to prevent vision complications in diabetics because high cholesterol can result in blood vessels in the retina (nerve tissue at the back of the eye) getting blocked. Dr. Gill also encourages diabetics to **quit smoking** because smoking cigarettes is a risk factor for diabetic retinopathy. The blood pressure-raising effect of smoking has clearly been shown to increase the risk of diabetic eye complications (diabetic retinopathy). Smoking therefore cannot be taken lightly. **Maintaining a healthy weight** and giving up smoking are all part of good diabetes control. Remember, nerve damage, kidney damage and cardiovascular diseases are more likely in smokers with diabetes.

Can you tell us what happens when a diabetic patient goes for an eye check-up to detect diabetic retinopathy?

The first check is to determine what clarity of vision a diabetic patient has. This is done as soon as the patient registers at the eye clinic. A **visual acuity test** is done using a chart test that measures how well he or she can see at various distances. For many patients who have never checked their eyes and come in only when they have blurred vision, they may be surprised to find that they are not able to read any of the letters on the chart.

Dr. Gill emphasises that it is always better to detect diabetic eye complications early before a person reaches a stage of complication where they are unable to read the chart. After the visual acuity test, the patient will then be **seated at a slit-lamp** to be checked by the ophthalmologist. This is where the preliminary eye examination, to look at the front of the eye, will be done. The **eye pressure** (intraocular pressure) will also be checked at this stage to look out for other associated conditions such as glaucoma that can also cause poor vision and blindness. **Cataracts** (clouding of the lens) can also be detected at this stage and later confirmed when the **dilated eye examination** is done. The ophthalmologist will also look at the retina when the eye has been dilated to examine if there are any changes, indicating the presence of diabetic eye disease. The patient will then be advised and treated accordingly.

Next issue: Dr. Gill elaborates on some of the signs of diabetic eye disease that are seen during examination. For more information, contact Gill Eye Specialist Centre, Hospital Fatimah (05-5455582), or email gilleyecentre@dr.com.

Kinta Medical to Maximise its Strengths and Location

• By SeeFoon Chan-Koppen

An interview with Chairman Dato' Dr. Foo Wan Kien

In a previous issue of Ipoh Echo 109, Kinta Medical Centre on Jalan Chung Thye Phin announced a major renovation programme that will see all its facilities and medical services upgraded over a two-year period. Ipoh Echo finally tracked down Chairman of the Board, Dato' Dr. Foo Wan Kien to learn more about the history of this 'grand old lady' of Ipoh hospitals and to understand the motivation for the upgrade and discover what future plans lie ahead.

IE: What is your vision for the Kinta Medical Centre (KMC)?

Dato' Foo: I want KMC to be known as the best 'Boutique' hospital in the Northern region offering warm personalised service and offering the best medical care in certain specialities like orthopaedics, maternity, obstetrics and gynaecology, Internal Medicine, Medical Oncology, Radiology and a 24-hour emergency centre. Our private rooms will be furnished like those in hotels, extremely roomy with an extra bed for loved ones who wish to accompany patients during their stay. All our wards too are being fully refurbished to hotel standard.

IE: How much money is being allocated to the entire refurbishment programme and what else is in the works?

Dato' Foo: RM5 million has been allocated for the first two years and another RM5 million is being budgeted for the next five.

IE: How do you see KMC as a 'Boutique' hospital differing in the services currently being offered by the other hospitals in Ipoh?

Dato' Foo: Firstly we will be charging reasonable rates in order to build volume which will in turn attract more quality doctors to use our facilities. Secondly, we are a not-for-profit organisation and whatever profits we make will be ploughed back into upgrading and equipment for the benefit of patients. Thirdly we have plans to build a 'Medical Mall' on our grounds which, as everyone knows, is ample. With its central location on Jalan Chung Thye



Phin and ample parking space, we're confident that we can attract many independent GPs and specialists to rent clinic space at the mall. This will certainly save many physicians the headache of storing their own pharmaceuticals, and with radiology and a diagnostic centre on premises, will be a boon to their patients who don't need to travel elsewhere for tests. We're also exploring setting up either a cosmetic surgery or TCM (traditional Chinese medicine) centre in the mall.

IE: What happened to the charity hospital started by your late father Mr. Foo Yet Kai?

Dato' Foo: We have been a charity hospital but due to the high cost of medicines and equipment, it is difficult for one family to fund the hospital. We need continuous funding to upgrade the hospital and equipment in line with our vision to provide the best service and to give more confidence to our patients.

IE: So does this mean that KMC will no longer be offering charity medical care?

Dato' Foo: No, not at all. In fact we are in the midst of making a decision on whether to have a charity dialysis centre on the premises or a charity eye centre. We are still doing our research on which speciality will offer the most good to the largest number of people and what is needed most. This funding will come from the Foo Yet Kai Foundation which is separate from that of KMC. We plan to invite members of NGOs to sit on a committee to vet patients deserving of free medical care. This will be easily facilitated through my network of Lion's clubs of which I am the Past District Governor of Lions Club International District 308-B2.

Phin and ample parking space, we're confident that we can attract many independent GPs and specialists to rent clinic space at the mall. This will certainly save many physicians the headache of storing their own pharmaceuticals, and with radiology and a diagnostic centre on premises, will be a boon to their patients who don't need to travel elsewhere for tests. We're also exploring setting up either a cosmetic surgery or TCM (traditional Chinese medicine) centre in the mall.

IE: What else is the Foo Yet Kai Foundation doing to carry on the family tradition of philanthropy established by your late father?

Dato' Foo: We have contributed to the building of a new Shen Jai Secondary School together with the Perak Hakka Association in the Seri Botani area. The old school which was started by my late father was named after my grandfather Foo Shen Jai. Further afield in China, we have donated a hospital to my late Father's village in Xiayang of Yongding in Fujian province.

IE: Well it looks like you have a very full plate in the next few years. As someone who at the tender age of 24 acquired the Alpha Romeo motor franchise and started City Motors, you have since been very successful and involved with cars all your adult life. What else is in store for you or shall we say, up your sleeves?

Dato' Foo: Well it hasn't only been cars, I have also done a fair amount of property development, palm oil plantations, and aquaculture. So my activities have been quite diverse. For the future, we'll see. I plan to do more property development and expand the agriculture sector. I also intend to build a high-rise, probably a hotel, in Ipoh for the purpose of branding of our company's continuous growth for the next generation to take over.

Ipoh Echo wishes Dato' Foo much success in all his endeavours in the future.



Shen Jai School

Education

Scholarships at Tenby Schools Ipoh



It's all speed ahead with Tenby Schools Ipoh as they continue to shape Malaysia's leaders of the future.

Starting as a simple kindergarten for expatriate children in 1960, Tenby recently celebrated its 50th Anniversary. Over the years Tenby has developed Ipoh's only international school offering a UK-style education alongside a private national school offering the Malaysian curriculum. Responding to the wishes of their customers, both schools provide learning in the English language to prepare their students as true global citizens. And sharing the best experiences in teaching and learning with each other, the schools have students ranging from pre-school to pre-university level.

Now, scholarships for A-Level students are available, courtesy of the SiWu Education Trust, announced the Director of Schools, Mdm. Lee Yam Sei

(Mrs. Lai) at the glittering 50th Anniversary Gala Dinner held recently in the Grand Ballroom of Syuen Hotel. Following on from those already established for students in Year 10/Form 4, the new scholarships have been set up to ensure high-achieving and well-rounded students have access to the range of quality education provided by Tenby Schools.

Having started in January 2010, the Cambridge International A-Level Programme has met with the greatest enthusiasm not only by existing Tenby students but also by the many high achievers from government schools in Ipoh and around Perak who have come to study in the programme.

Mrs. Lai added, "We are providing the people of Ipoh with a much-needed service by introducing the Cambridge A-Level Programme. Many parents are getting more and more concerned about letting their children live by themselves in bigger cities owing to logistics and security issues. Furthermore, the education and experience one gets by studying in Tenby Schools amid an international community is far more enriching than that anywhere else."

Over 600 members of the Tenby Schools community from past and present attended the gala dinner to honour their alma mater. They caught up with old friends and relived their happy memories of a school that had brought them all together. The lively entertainment for the evening – singing, dancing, cultural displays – was by courtesy of students, alumni and staff of the school, making it a truly Tenby evening for all.

All students in Tenby schools and from outside are encouraged to contact the school if they wish to apply for a scholarship. Tenby will offer free places to high achieving young people in Year 10 of its International School, Form 4 of its National School and in the A-Level Centre.

The schools look forward to another fifty glorious years and with the availability of the Cambridge A-Level Programme, Tenby now provides complete and holistic education to its students – in every sense of the word.

For more information and scholarship application, contact Tenby Schools Ipoh at 05-2538530 or email: ipoh@tenby.edu.my.

Yeun Yin Fong

Windfall for Vernacular Schools



The state government's intention of aiding vernacular schools in Perak became apparent when state land was awarded to nine Chinese vernacular schools recently. The simple handing-over ceremony was performed by Dato' Dr. Mah Hang Soon, Executive Councillor for Health, Local Government, Transportation and Non-Islamic Affairs at the State Secretariat Building, Ipoh on January 3. Mah handed over land grants (Borang 5A) to the representatives of Semangat Suwa Sdn Bhd, formed by the schools to manage the land.

Out of the total 3,642 ha of land which is located in Besout, Sungkai, 1,012 ha is allotted to the nine Chinese schools, 2,023 ha to religious schools and the remaining 607 ha to Tamil schools.

A private company has indicated its desire to develop the land by planting oil palm and is prepared to pay RM3.6 million annually for the privilege.

The money will come in handy for the nine schools, as they are now paying a hefty annual premium to the state government to operate independently.

RM

VACANCY

Principal, Teachers and Office Staff
For English Centre (new branch),
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For interview call:

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news roundup

Charity Dinner



A charity dinner to mark Yayasan Bina Upaya Darul Ridzuan's (YBUDR) first anniversary was held at the Royal Perak Golf Club on January 2. All tables were taken by eager donors and their guests, numbering over 700 who packed the club's banquet hall.

Perak Menteri Besar and patron of YBUDR, Dato' Seri Zambray Abdul Kadir and his wife, Datin Seri Saripah Zulkifly, the foundation chairman, Dato' Shaarani Mohamad and the foundation chief executive officer, Khairul Azwan Harun, and their spouses were in attendance.

Zambray, in his opening remarks, vouched for the relevance of YBUDR to the people of Perak, especially the poor, the underprivileged and the marginalised. He reminded state agencies, political representatives and YBUDR to update the data of those listed in E-Kasih to ensure that none will miss out.

Negligence, he said, could lead to abuse that would tarnish the government's reputation. "The hardcore poor will invariably suffer, as funds meant for them are being siphoned off by the cheats," he told the audience.

A whopping RM8.5 million was collected by the organisers of the dinner. Some of the major contributors were Rahman Hydraulic (RM350,000), Lembaga Air Perak and SEDC Perak (RM250,000 each) and Lembaga Tabung Haji Perak (RM230,000). The state government gave RM5 million.

RN

KBGK President's Inauguration

Kelab Bakti Gunong Kledang (KBGK), Ipoh's premier Malay service club, celebrated its president's inauguration night at the Perak Golf Club recently. The event was graced by the club's royal patron, DYTM Raja Muda Perak, Raja Dr. Nazrin Shah and DYTM Raja Puan Besar Perak, Tuanku Zara Salim. In attendance was Perak Menteri Besar, Dato' Seri Dr. Zambray Abdul Kadir and his wife, Datin Seri Saripah Zulkifly. The occasion was to mark the inauguration of KBGK's president-elect, Dato' Mohd Razali Khalid, who took the presidency of the club for Year 2011 from outgoing president, Dr. Zakaria Abdul Kadir.

KBGK has been in existence for over three decades and has actively pursued its primary responsibility of serving the people by way of deeds and goodwill. The club's efforts in helping the poor, the underprivileged and the marginalised, regardless of race and creed, have not gone unnoticed. In recognising the club's altruistic contributions, the state government, through the Menteri Besar, pledged a donation of RM100,000 in support of its numerous charitable activities. The bulk of the money will go towards financing the club's on-going orphanage project - Rumah Anak Yatim Yayasan Bakti Kledang.

The highlight of the evening was the appointment of the MB as KBGK's honorary member. Zambray felt honoured by the appointment and promised to give his utmost in fulfilling the club's responsibilities towards the rakyat. "KBGK members consist of the cream of the Malay society in Ipoh. In spite of their social standing they haven't lost touch with their roots," said Zambray in his acceptance speech. "Their empathy towards the poor and the marginalised is indicative of their desire to give rather than to take. This is a most noble attribute."

President-elect, Dato' Mohd Razali Khalid, felt that the burden of being the club's new president was something he had to shoulder with gusto befitting the trust vested upon him by members. "I'll continue with the unfinished programmes initiated by the club, especially those relating to the uplifting of moral values of Malay youths," he remarked.

RM

Blood Donation



Red Crescent Malaysia, Manjung, organised a blood donation drive recently. According to deputy chairman, A. Shanmugam, the campaign was part of the chapter's activities to maintain a regular blood supply at the Seri Manjung Hospital. Two such programmes are being conducted annually with the assistance of local NGOs, clubs and religious bodies. Thirty pints of blood were collected during the 6-hour campaign.

Other public-related activities conducted by the Red Crescent include basic first aid courses for housewives and interested parties under the "A First-Aider in Every House" programme. Those keen on attending the course can contact the nearest Red Crescent office for details.

SN

Wedding on Cloud 9

It was a perfect gift by Dato' Seri Tony Fernandes, CEO of Air Asia, to one of his employees, Iswara, thus fulfilling the man's dream of a wedding in the clouds. Iswara married his young bride in the cabin of an Airbus 320 while cruising 30,000 ft above sea level. Their marriage was solemnised by a priest during a traditional Hindu rite to the accompaniment of a thavil (drum) and a nathaswaram (clarinet). The persons chosen to play these traditional musical instruments were the well known Singam brothers from Ipoh, Subain, Jeevan and Prabu. The trio have been playing at Indian weddings all over Perak for the last two decades but never had they performed in an airplane while in flight. "It's a wonderful experience, one which none of us will ever forget," said Subain to Ipoh Echo.

FZB



Tamil Christian Dance Competition for Youths



Rhythm Dancers emerged as champion in the Tamil Christian Dance Competition 2010 held in Our Lady of Lourdes Church Hall. A total of seven teams participated in the competition which

was organised by Outflow, an outreach ministry of the church, which motivates youths.

Its Director, Y. Anthonisamy, said that the competition was free-style dancing to develop the creativity of youths and prevent them from indulging in anti-social activities. This is the first time such a competition is

being held in the country. Anthonisamy added that in the future the competition will be held on a larger scale.

The guest dancers were Natya Jothi Shri Santiago Samathanam, a veteran *bharathanatyam* dancer, accompanied by his son and daughter. Their fast movements captivated the audience.

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Personalities • By SeeFoon Chan-Koppen

What's Cooking For Julie Song?

Hobnobbing with two of the world's 'dishi' chefs is what she's been doing recently. Not only did Ipoh's own celebrity chef Julie Song get to be one of the judges of Gordon Ramsay (that 'enfant terrible' Celebrity chef or the one known for his 'F' expletives on his programme), cooking Nasi Lemak for one of his episodes in Kuala Lumpur where he competed against five other local experts on preparing the national dish and came in second; but she also had the honour of being guide and demonstration chef for Todd English the American Celebrity Chef who was in Ipoh in December on a shoot for his TV programme which is regularly featured on Astro's Asian Food Channel.

Todd, who has four restaurants in the US, was also shooting an episode on a food trail of Malaysia Matrade in New York.



This TV episode will be shown next summer in US.

Julie took Todd on arrival to Gua Tempurung, to check the fresh flowing waters which is credited with creating the delicacy of our Ipoh Hor Fun and the plump juicy crunchiness of our bean sprouts. Todd was fascinated with the natural cave and flowing waters which he actually tasted. Following this cave sojourn, Julie took Todd to the Clearwater Sanctuary where he learned how to make Rendang Tok of Perak from one of their chefs there.

Finally, a much needed rest at Indulgence where he stayed in the Modern Baroque room the Qatrynka. The following day, Julie set up a temporary kitchen table in the main restaurant (for the TV cameras) and since it was a local cuisine trail he wanted to feature, she taught him how to make Ipoh Chicken Hor Fun, using a few tips from Margarita Lee our Ipoh Echo's Recipe columnist. Judy Chin kindly made her special *nyonya kuih* of Serimuka to serve him as dessert which he enjoyed. On tasting the Ipoh Chicken Hor

Fun, he declared his conviction that the water is responsible: for the texture of the noodles as he had never tasted noodles that silky and smooth and bean sprouts so crunchy and plump.

In addition to playing host to celebrity chefs, Julie Song was happy to announce that she has won, for the second time, the HAPA (Hospitality Asia Platinum Award) 2010-2012 Best Western Cuisine Chef. This will qualify her for the Regional Series next year, a tough competition and one which she says will keep her on her toes.

During her acceptance speech for the award, she thanked the HAPA judges for coming from Singapore and KL to Ipoh adding that "Indulgence will always be Ipoh's very own".

Business

The 2008 Global Financial Crisis

Tommy Thomas, a respected and foremost litigator in headline and landmark cases, was in Ipoh recently at the invitation of the Perak Bar to give a talk on the global crisis that enveloped the entire world in a single week in September 2008.

Tongue-in-cheek, Mr. Thomas quoted a US Supreme Court judge who said that 'A lawyer who has not studied economics ... is likely to become a public enemy'. His in-depth knowledge of the workings of the economy certainly excludes him from this category.

This Great American Debt Bubble, which started to grow with the deregulation of the banks and financial services in the US and UK in the 80s finally burst, or rather exploded, with the collapse of the sub-prime market in the US in 2007. The orgy of debts from the immense scale of reckless borrowings and precarious leverages of the banks brought about the world's worst depression since the Great Crash of 1929.

Thomas warns of the possibility of an even deeper crisis in the future in the absence of deep structural reforms of the US, as well as global financial systems. In contrast, the strict legal regime over banks and insurance companies in Malaysia protected her from the Wall Street havoc and, at the time of the crisis, Malaysia was actually flushed with liquidity.

Thomas praised the prudent management of the banking industry in Malaysia and with its low borrowings and high savings; the banking industry in Malaysia has the sixth lowest leverage ratio in the world.

In conclusion, a complex mathematical formula is no substitute for good, old fashioned credit risk analysis. Man is ruled more by his heart than mind and if the maxim, "Know Thy Customer", is not grasped by men of finance in the Western World, the 2008 financial crisis might not be the last of its kind yet.

Valerie Chan



Sunway Convocation Ceremony



Sunway College Ipoh recently held their Convocation Ceremony which saw 108 graduates receiving their certificates.

On hand to present the graduates their certificates was Guest of Honour Puan Sri Datin (Dr.) Susan Cheah together with Sunway University College Director Elizabeth Lee and Director of Sunway College Ipoh Mr. Paul Tan.

Sri Yosephin, an Indonesian, was 1 of 12 students who received her diploma in Graphic Design. She was also the valedictorian of the college. In her valedictory (farewell) speech she described studying at Sunway College Ipoh as being "very nice" where she enjoyed the fresh air and made many good friends.

Among the graduates were 9 students who were Tuition Fee Waiver recipients who also passed with flying colours. The Tuition Fee Waiver programme is part of the Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah scholarship programme which provides a quality education for bright and deserving students.

Sunway College Ipoh is currently one of the leading private colleges in the northern region of Malaysia whose philosophy of learning goes beyond academic boundaries but also enhances the positive attributes of students.

Sunway College was founded in 1987 and was upgraded to Sunway University College in 2004 by the Malaysia Ministry of Education. The college in Ipoh was set up in 2003. On December 16 of last year, its Founder, Chairman and Chancellor, Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah received the official letter from Dato' Seri Mohd Khaled Nordin, Minister of Higher Education, Malaysia, upgrading it to a full-fledged University.

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Lifestyle

The Haven Meets Changing Trends and Lifestyles

Peter Chan, CEO of The Haven Sdn Bhd, is a man who has a vision for Perak to be a sought-after destination for discerning international investors and residents. Where others feared to tread, he took on the herculean task of building Ipoh's first international-standard five-star luxury condominium in Ipoh. It was duly met with a maelstrom of negativity.

Who would want to live in apartments when land was aplenty in Ipoh, people wondered. Why would international investors be attracted to venture into this hitherto sleepy hollow? Would there be a market for luxury apartments in this neck of the woods?

Well, it seems there would, if statistics are anything to go by. Of the three apartment towers, the first is 80% sold, the second 50%. The development has not been formally launched, yet there is already such encouraging demand for many of its units, including a wait list for its medium-sized units. And Peter will tell you why.

"When The Haven was first introduced in 2010, most people were sceptical. The local mentality is one of preference for landed property, and there was a negative perception of apartment living," he explains.

"There was also no apartment project of high enough standard to capture the international market, catering to discerning investors who were looking for a second home. The Haven is an eco-sustainable development carefully designed around the natural lush, green, eco-embracing surroundings. Careful thought went into the planning of the unit layouts, and the project incorporates a five-level security system with lavish facilities.

Hence, when the The Haven was launched, people began to realise that this was what they wanted. "It filled a gap in the market", says Peter.

Although it has been an uphill battle to dispel myths, change mindsets and reverse negativity, Peter is now confident that the battle is very nearly won.

"The biggest struggle for us is not in building or in marketing, but in changing the perceptions and mindsets of Ipohites."

"The general mentality of Ipohites of old is that one progresses from terrace house to semi-D to bungalow and that living in a bungalow is a sign that one has "made it". Thus, many cling to this idea, although living in a big bungalow is a chore, especially when children have left home.

"We know of old couples who use only one bedroom of their five or six-room bungalows. They have become 'prisoners' of their own success without realising it", he laments.

Peter believes The Haven provides such people with the opportunity to free themselves from the burden of big and lonely houses, to truly enjoy a carefree and relaxed lifestyle of a luxury condominium, where facilities and neighbours from the same social standing abound.

"Besides having a better lifestyle, their children and grandchildren are more likely to visit them on vacations", Peter says.

"People are finally waking up to

the immense benefits they will get as residents of The Haven. With the rising crime rate in Ipoh and the many incidents of house break-ins in broad daylight, people no longer have peace of mind living in houses, or leaving their aged parents or children home alone", Peter says.

"At The Haven, you will have complete peace of mind, as there are five levels of security and your own private lift that only accesses your floor. Our 60-metre infinity pool juxtaposed over a pristine lake, may be one of its kind anywhere in the country. In fact, The Haven is so unique that a leading expert on the subject of Eco Living from the USA hailed it as a fine example of a sustainable development to be emulated by developers everywhere.

"Your home can be your haven. And at The Haven, it really is!" Peter enthuses.

According to Peter, international interest is mounting in The Haven, as investors see the immense potential, not only in the project but in Ipoh as a place to live in.

"We recently had a Middle Eastern conglomerate representing the interests of a few royalties approaching us to invest in The Haven.

"These are exciting times for The Haven and for Perak, as a whole. It is encouraging to see that Perakeans are waking up to the realisation that there may be investment potentials in their own backyard after all.

"We need to ride with the wave of change instead of resisting it", Peter stresses.



● Peter Chan tells us why apartment living is the lifestyle trend of the new Perak



● Show unit

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My Say

• By Jerry Francis



Political Constraints or Mere Excuses?



Eating stalls on pavement along busy Jalan Dato Onn Jaafar.

Are most of Ipoh City Council's failures to enforce various regulations due to political constraints, or are they excuses conveniently used by its councillors, officers and workers?

To answer this question, one just has to look at the "no action" taken on certain problems in the city. What one will be told usually is that no action can be taken due to political constraints: either the persons connected with the problems are strong supporters of political parties or the fear that any action could cause a backlash.

In fact, an enforcement officer even admitted that he was told by his superior that the operator of a certain food outlet in the city was a "party's man" and that they have to restrain from taking any action. Take for instance the much talked about eateries constructed on the pavement along busy Jalan Dato' Oon Jaafar. The question on the lips of many residents is how the food stalls could be built on the pavement and yet no action taken for years. Are pavements constructed for the safety of pedestrians or for such stalls? Pedestrians walking along the street need to come down to the road risking life and limb. Another location is in front of the former Odean Theatre, where night food stalls operate. It is considered unhygienic and unsuitable, but there is no move to relocate them.

Why the double standard? While some are allowed to operate on the pavements even along busy streets, others are immediately summoned and their stalls demolished not just on pavements,



but even along roadsides. Relocation of street hawkers and food stalls, demolishing illegal structures, even ensuring every household has a rubbish bin are some of the many issues in the city considered as "political risks."

It is so because some political leaders have this notion that offending those guilty of breaching the regulations could cost them their support as well as their votes. This has resulted in certain influential people getting away with anything. The decision to "close an eye" often comes from the top. Even the mayor, they will argue, cannot undertake these tough measures because of political constraints.

No Action without Directive

Taking this cue, many officials entrusted with enforcing regulations are reluctant to act unless they receive a directive. "How can we take action when my superior said that no action is to be taken," commented an official.

This inaction is giving opposition party leaders the opportunity to cash in on these "political constraints" by threatening to organise protests and demonstrations should any unfair action involve their supporters.

About two decades ago, there was a move to clear all street stalls in the city and relocate them indoors for the sake of cleanliness and hygiene. As a result, a number of food-courts were set up in strategic areas in the

city. The street hawkers, who had been doing good business in a certain location, began to move into shop-houses in the same vicinity, while others moved into nearby food-courts. Those who could afford to take over whole premises, established their own restaurants. Among them are the popular "Nga Choy Kai" (chicken *taugeh* or bean sprouts) operators in the new town sector.

Hawkers Now Defiant

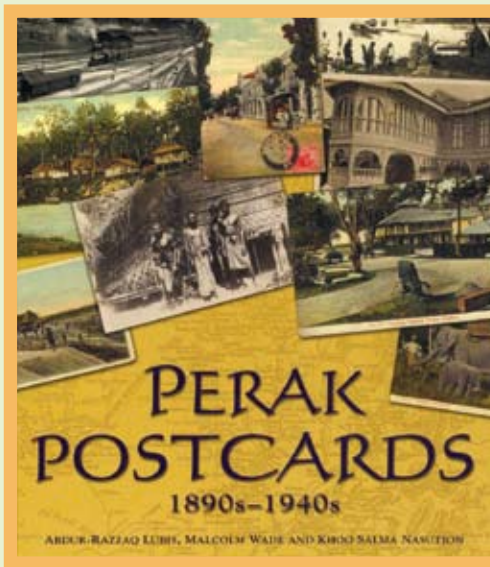
For a few years the city looked progressive and clean; then the street hawkers began to slowly move back to the unhealthy environment in the streets, especially at night, and some of the food-courts began to lose their purpose. Generally most of these hawkers question why they should abide by the regulations, while others can get away by breaching them. Those "with right connections" or those in certain locations are being spared and appear to be untouchable. So, they moved out to the streets in defiance of the authorities.

Such a lack of action is not good for the city. Instead of moving forward as a healthy and progressive city, it is stepping backwards. The progress of the city must not be marred by such 'political constraints'. Ipoh City Council needs to wake up and carry out its responsibility "without fear or favour." And the rakyat have a right to be served regardless of which political party is in power.

Book Review

By Ian Anderson

Perak Postcards, 1890s-1940s



Regular readers of the Echo will know that I often voice my concern over the lack of interest in Perak's heritage, tangible or intangible. We seem to be losing our trees, limestone hills, culture, buildings and genuine history faster than ever, despite the cries in the wilderness that come from the different heritage organisations. Soon there will be nothing left of these things but faded memories.

It is therefore with great pleasure that I picked up Areca Books' latest publication, "Perak Postcards 1890s to 1940s" as this is a mighty volume of 336 pages, sturdily bound and beautifully presented. The book leaves no doubt in anyone's mind that at one time Perak really did have an

amazing array of heritage buildings, streets, public gardens, recreation areas and a wide array of grand landscapes. Anyone who buys this book will therefore have no need for faded memories as it covers all that anyone could wish for regarding our heritage.

Co-authored by Abdur-Razzaq Lubis and Khoo Salma Nasution, prolific authors and publishers from Penang, and Malcolm Wade, soldier, teacher, technical author and avid collector of Malaysiana, the book is supported by Kementerian Penerangan Komunikasi Dan Kebudayaan Malaysia (KPKK). Featuring the largest collection of postcards ever assembled into one volume, with more than 500 picture postcards contributed by several collectors, this is a masterpiece of design. Aesthetically reproduced cards, with just enough information about each one, present the facts in an interesting and entertaining way.

Introduced by a short history of Perak, the Abode of Grace, there follows a chapter on Perak's postal history. Then, for the real postal enthusiast there is also a chapter on Perak Post, detailing the Post Offices, illustrated Postmarks and concluding with a list of publishers and retailers of Perak postcards. These valuable, introductory pages makes this book a complete record of Perak and its postcards and a "must-buy" for students, authors, teachers and indeed anyone who has the slightest interest in Perak and its history.

We expect the official launch of the book to be in March this year, but in the meantime it is already available from local bookstores at a cost RM120.00. I recommend this volume to Perakeans far and wide.

Enquiries for bulk buys should be made to arecabooks@gmail.com.

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