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Parking Nightmare in Ipoh



Photos by Ed Shahir

The main thoroughfares of the city's centre were converted to a one-way system in the late seventies to facilitate a smoother flow of traffic. The implementation of the system also included provisions to build car-parks at strategic locations in the city centre. This, however, was not done and has resulted in this being one of the main reasons for the chaotic parking problems in the city today.

Continued on page 2



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Triple parking at Greentown

Number of Summonses Issued Daily Shows Insufficient Parking Spaces

• By A. Jeyaraj

The number of summonses (900) issued daily by the city council for parking offences in the city is clear evidence of its parking woes. In terms of monetary gain, the Ipoh City Council benefits while business establishments in the affected areas and motorists, suffer. About RM27,000 in summonses are collected every day.

One of the worst areas is the Greentown Commercial Centre, a stone's throw from the Ipoh City Council complex, where motorists risk summonses daily by parking abreast and on every available space, including at junctions and pavements.

Motor-cyclists are also contributing to the parking woes by parking their machines on bays meant for vehicles, especially in front of banks around the city; sometimes cluttering up two or three bays, leaving the spaces reserved for them empty.

Councillor Ir Lai Kong Phooi, a member of the city council's traffic committee, admitted that there are traffic jams especially in Greentown and few other areas, especially during peak hours.

He added that com-

pared with Kuala Lumpur and other cities the situation is not critical. He said that one of the yardsticks to measure whether the jams have reached critical levels is to find out whether shoppers avoid visiting the shops in certain locations.

He feels that the jams in Ipoh have not reached the critical threshold level yet. However, they must not be complacent and must start planning to ease the situation.

Remedial Measures

The city council is looking into various measures to overcome the parking problem in the city. A short-term solution is to abolish full-day parking in sensitive areas where staff working in nearby offices monopolise the parking bays early in the morning.

He said parking must be limited to two-hour intervals, whereby motorists must prepare new coupons every two hours.

For a start this must be implemented in Greentown and roads around the banking area in the old town sector while other areas can be identified by city council. According to him the system is in practice in Perth and Melbourne, Australia and working efficiently.

He added that road-side pavements could also be converted to car-parks.

For this the width of the pavement must be able to accommodate parking of a vehicle and the structural strength of the pavement must be able to withstand the weight of the vehicles.

Lastly, vehicles getting in and out of the parking bay must not be a safety hazard to vehicles travelling along the adjacent road.

As a long-term plan MBI must build new car-parks to accommodate the increase in the number of cars. The elevated car-park along Jalan Maharajalela was built in the fifties and was the first of its kind in the country. The only other one under MBI is the underground car park in the main market. Developers of high rise commercial and office buildings are required to provide car-parks for staff as well as visitors. This is not strictly enforced and there is a shortage of parking space around high rise buildings.

There are more than a thousand people working in the Federal Building in Greentown, but there are only 141 basement parking bays for the staff and 68 for visitors. Adequate parking facilities are not provided as per requirements.

Acute Shortage Of Parking Bays

There are more than 13,000 parking bays under MBI supervision, out of which about 8,500 are coupon parking bays and the rest are for free parking. These figures do not include parking facilities in buildings, shopping complexes and private car-parks.

The basement car-park in the main market is under utilised. The place is dark and there are no security guards and motorists are afraid to park their cars there. The place is a haven for drug addicts and they damage the lighting when they are replaced.

State JPJ director

Jaafar bin Mohamed said that the department does not have statistics on the number of vehicles in Ipoh, only for the whole state. As of July, last year, the total number of motorised vehicles in Perak was more than 1.7 million.

There are about 600,000 cars, more than 4,000 taxis, about 63,000 lorries, more than a million motorcycles and about 26,000 other vehicles.

50,000 New Vehicles Registered In Perak Each Year

Director Jaafar informed that every year about 50,000 new vehicles are registered in the state. Some of the vehicles registered in Perak may be used in other states and vehicles registered in other states would be used in Perak.

The public transport system is so pathetic that people have to drive their own cars. There is no regulation on taxi fares and tax-

is charge as they like and the rates are too high.

The use of taxi meters must be introduced. If the public transport system was efficient more people would use it and the parking problem and traffic jams can be reduced. This can be done quickly only if the relevant authorities have the will to do it.

In Miri there is a two-tier parking system classified as Zone A and Zone B. Zone A is the area around the city centre where the parking rate is higher and Zone B includes the suburbs where the parking rate is cheaper.

Lai feels that at the moment MBI should not use the tax payers' money to engage a consultant to study the traffic system. MBI should use its own resources to plan the building of more car-parks and widening of roads. The building of car-parks can be privatised.



...while a few metres away the motorcycle parking lot is almost empty



Motorcycles parked at parking bays for cars

Balik Kampong Syndrome

These new developments offer opportunities for non-skilled labour rather than skilled. In due course, they will be filled by foreigners, instead of locals.

The *balik kampong* syndrome is not peculiar to the Malays only. It cuts across all races, judging from what I saw and experienced during the recent Chinese New Year holidays. The Malays would preferably return to their kampongs during Hari Raya. The Chinese, however, would rather return to their parents' hometowns for Chinese New Year.

This annual migration is phenomenal. While other towns and cities experience a steady decrease in their population, Ipoh experiences a reversal in fortune. The influx of outsiders into Ipoh seems to increase with time. If the latest development is a yardstick to gauge growing trends, the number of Ipohites of Chinese origin, who live and work outside of Ipoh, is obviously huge. Based on observations, traffic volume in the city alone increases by over a hundred per cent. Moving about in the city, especially within the business districts of Greentown, Station 18 and Bercham is difficult, as the traffic snarl is horrendous.

This phenomenon points to only one thing – Ipohites are found everywhere, in and outside the country. Their numbers are most pronounced in cities such as Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Singapore. Most are from Singapore, judging from the number of Singapore-registered cars in the town and scores of jam-packed buses returning daily from the island republic.

Since the demise of the tin industry in the early 1980s, due largely to Mahathir's obsession with cornering the global tin price, Ipohites, especially the young and the talented, left the city in droves to seek their fortunes elsewhere. Ipoh's youths have become a highly sought-after commodity by our neighbour in the



south. Singapore's economic miracle has been in no small way due to its policy of attracting foreign talents to its shores. It offers full scholarships to those wishing to pursue courses of their choice in the republic. Upon graduation, the Ministry of Manpower gives them a year to seek employment. Which other developed countries in the world are so generous, especially to foreigners? According to the Singapore Straits Times, January 13, almost half of the Permanent Resident (PR) population in 2010 were degree holders compared to 18 per cent of Singaporeans. The mercurial rise of Singapore's GDP is attributed to these foreign talents. And a good number of them are from Ipoh.

Have there been any concerted efforts to arrest the exodus? Sadly, there has never been any worthy of mention. Ipoh has remained stagnant since the tin mines ceased operations. The dearth of local institutions of higher learning offering degree courses in the 80s right to the early 2000s resulted in our youths moving to Penang, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. And the absence of good-paying jobs, commensurate with the expertise these kids had acquired, prompted them to remain where they were.

Although attempts at stemming the outflow of Ipohites are being taken of late, they are too little too late. The state government insists that it has acquired a substantial amount of direct foreign investments. But there is little to show on the ground. Menteri Besar, Dato' Seri Dr. Zambry Abdul Kadir, has gone on record to claim that the investment climate in Perak is healthy. He based this on feedback received on his wooing trips overseas. One suspects that these statements are made for political mileage.

The recent boom in the property market, as evidenced by the construction of high-end condominiums and the race by supermarket chains to out-perform one another, is a welcome relief, but are they remedies for our woes? For some inexplicable reasons, we are still trapped in a time-war. These new developments offer opportunities for non-skilled labour rather than skilled. In due course, they will be filled by foreigners, instead of locals. As we seek an amiable solution, Ipohites will continue to head south or somewhere else more promising.

Breaking Up Is Hard To Do

● by Peter Lee

After 10 years of setting up a private limited Company distributing soft drinks to local and overseas markets, the four shareholders having equal holdings in the Company prepared a simple Shareholders' Agreement. The agreement is to bind them to transfer the portion of their shares to the surviving shareholders equally if anyone of them passes away and, in return, the family members of the deceased shareholder receives RM500,000. Since all of the shareholders are in their early forties and healthy, each of them purchased an insurance policy with a sum assured of RM500,000 as this is the cheapest form of funding for this transaction. Each of the insurance policies was assigned to the Company and upon the death of the shareholder, the insurance money will be released to the Company. Subsequently, this money will be paid to the family of the deceased shareholder and the shares of the deceased will be transferred to the surviving shareholders by way of a share transfer form pre-signed together with the shareholder agreement.



After 5 years, one of the shareholders died and the sum assured of RM500,000 was released to the Company. However, when this money was supposed to be paid to the family of the deceased shareholder, the Company encountered financial difficulties and hence the money was withheld to finance its operation. Subsequently, the family of the deceased shareholder filed a suit against the surviving shareholders for breaching the agreement. The surviving shareholders were also ordered not to transfer out the shares of the deceased shareholder.

This can drag both parties into a long drawn legal battle. In the meantime, the family of the deceased will not be paid the RM500,000 and the business may not be able to move on. To avoid such problems, the shareholders should have set up a Business Value Protection Trust which utilises a Buy-Sell Agreement, a Power of Attorney and Trust and Life Insurance Policies. The concept of the Buy-Sell Agreement is something similar to the shareholders agreement as mentioned above but a trust company, like Rockwills Trustee Berhad, is appointed as trustee to carry out the transfer of shares and directly claim the insurance proceeds from the insurer (instead of the company itself getting involved). In the Buy-Sell Agreement, among others, it is important to agree on the price to buy and sell the shares as well as when to have the shares sold, for example, due to death and/or disability and/or retirement.

In addition, it is essential that the shareholders prearrange the funding to purchase the shares easily. The most practical and cheapest funding is to use Life Insurance. All that is required for the shareholders to pay is their insurance premium for the sum assured to be paid out in the future. The personal assets of the shareholders need not be liquidated or there is no need to borrow the money to make the purchase. The insurance policies are transferred to the trustee to hold until death or disability occurs to a particular shareholder where the trustee (instead of the company) will make a claim to pay for the purchase of the shares. When the trustee receives the money, it could immediately release the money to the family of the deceased shareholder. At the same time, the shares of the deceased shareholder will be transferred to the surviving shareholders using a Power of Attorney signed by all shareholders during their lifetime authorising Rockwills Trustee Bhd. to deal with this transaction. At least, with this arrangement breaking up is not hard to do.

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>.

Leisure

Khadijah Homestay



Nestled in a rustic almost kampong-like environment, a short distance from Ipoh's airport is Khadijah Homestay, a perfect hideaway for those wishing to seek some peace and quiet away from the hustle and bustle of city life. Its delectable home-away-from-home ambience is well suited for those who have their families in tow on holidays. The compound can accommodate half a dozen cars at any one time.

Khadijah Shahbaba, 62, whose name the homestay carries, is optimistic that business will pick up given time. "I just started in August last year and response so far has been encouraging," she said. "It's spread by word of mouth. Hopefully, with some publicity, more will come this way."

The single-storey bungalow lot has four air-conditioned rooms, two toilets, a kitchen, a dining hall and a well furnished living room. The kitchen is fully equipped and functional.

The house is not meant for staying only. It is a suitable place to hold family gatherings, as its spacious lawn provides such an opportunity. Catering, tents and related facilities can be arranged on request.

It costs RM450 for a day stay and RM200 a day for an extension. Khadijah Homestay is located at 28, Jalan Piper, Taman Lapangan Terbang, 31350 Ipoh.

One plus point – there is no checking-in and checking-out policy. "Hospitality is my forte," Khadijah remarked.

For reservations call: Khadijah (Kak Jah) at 017-5061127 or 05-3125112.

Ed



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Thinking **ALLOWED** • by Mariam Mokhtar

A Child's Dark Secret

Behind the beauty and innocence of some children in Perak, lies a deep secret involving violence at home and in school. Many children are victims of a slew of sexual crimes – rape, sodomy, exposure to pornographic material, fondling, forcible kissing and sexual advances, among others.

Amy's mother noticed that Amy had difficulty walking and brought her to the clinic. The doctors noticed bleeding, and after an internal exam, found she had been sexually abused. The alleged rapist was a family friend who was giving her religious lessons.

Uma became withdrawn after a grand-uncle came to stay. Upon questioning, it was discovered that the relative had asked Tina to touch him in inappropriate places.

Nur was made to watch pornographic movies with her step-father after school. He attempted to rape her but was caught when his wife returned early from work.

The names have been changed to protect their identities. All live in Ipoh and were abused when they were 7 years old.

Most children are abused by those closest to them. The three girls lodged police reports, but many wonder if they made the right decision.

Interminable Wait for Trial

The girls waited around five years for the trial. The delay was because the prosecutor or judge was on leave, the lawyer was unavailable, the witness refused to attend trial, or there were several cases

for that particular day.

If the government is serious about combating child sexual abuse/crime, they should give such cases priority. A growing child is traumatised recalling past unpleasant experiences.

As children get older, they become more sensitive. They are searching for their own identities and will be aware that they are victims of sexual crime.

Confidence Undermined

Repeated cross-examinations undermine their confidence, self-respect and pride. They are more embarrassed than when they were younger. Older children may be uncooperative and refuse to be cross-examined.

One doctor said, "A prolonged trial would definitely affect the child and her parents. Going to court is stressful. There is bound to be long-term damage to the child's pride and self-esteem."

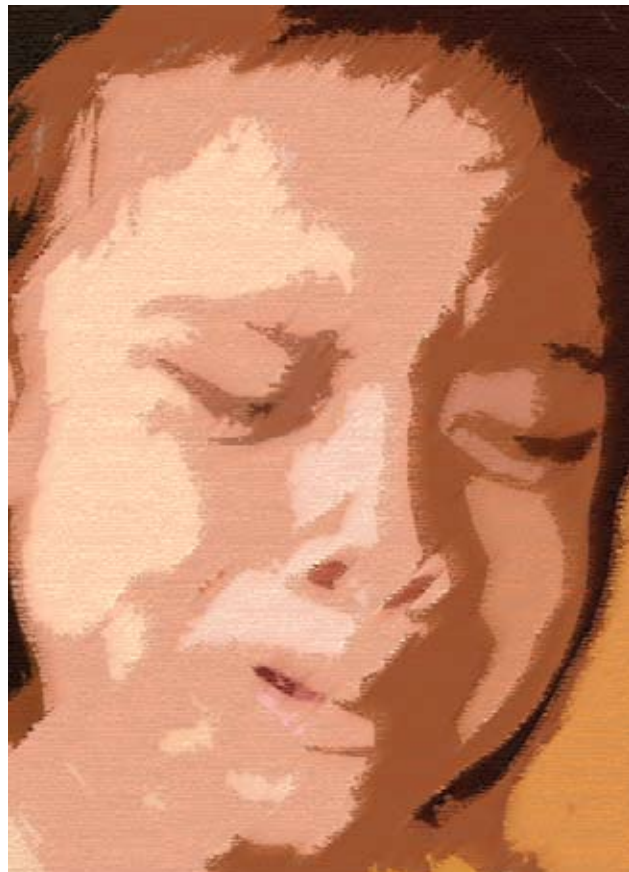
One offender was found guilty and sentenced to only two months jail. He immediately appealed and was freed on bail pending appeal. After two years, he was cleared of all charges. He escaped scot-free.

Apparently, the DPP had 'lost' the evidence, and had not cross-examined the main witness, the doctor who treated the victim.

"Justice Non-existent"

"The girl is devastated. The law can no longer protect the rights of the victims," one family member said. "Her mother does not want to subject her daughter to an appeal in which she might suffer more trauma. Justice is non-existent in Perak."

In child sexual abuse,



the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) is dependent on the police to protect the evidence or do a thorough investigation.

Victims depend on the police and the DPP to secure a conviction whereas the offenders can hire the best lawyers.

One girl was so traumatised by the long wait (a few years) that when the case came to trial, she was tearful and refused to proceed. She only agreed after much psychiatric counselling. However, the alleged rapist pleaded guilty just before the trial started.

The guilty plea meant the judge was not presented with the full story and evidence. The offender received a light sentence of a few months jail and a minimal fine.

Another child psychologist said, "Sometimes

both, depending on the offence. Punishment may include whipping.

Only 10% of such crimes are reported. The conviction rate of sexual crime is very low, perhaps 5%.

System Raping Victims

Many victims make several court appearances. The cross-examination makes them relive the rape. When their perpetrators receive light punishments, they feel that the system is raping them.

The family of one of the victims is disillusioned with Malaysian justice and is reluctant to appeal: "Why bother? Nothing will ever change."

Parents lack confidence in the Attorney-General. One parent said, "It might take years before we get any reply, that is, if the AG wants to reply."

Studies have shown that abused children grow into adults with suicidal tendencies and severe behavioural problems. They tend to be promiscuous and enter dysfunctional relationships.

Our judiciary and police must make a concerted effort to dispense justice because their failure to perform means our children will continue to be victims of both the perpetrators and the system.

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Musings on Food

seefoon@ipohecho.com.my

By See Foon Chan-Koppen

Photos by Christian DiGiovanna

SeeFoon checks out newest restaurant in Chemor

As I mentioned in my last column, I don't review an outlet unless it's been highly recommended by my foodie friends or if I find the taste to my liking. My friends, Christine and Chris DiGiovanna being the true foodies that they are, were driving back to Bandar Sri Klebang when a new sign on a corner restaurant caught their eyes and promptly dropped in for a tasting.

The following Sunday saw me with a group checking it out on their recommendation. The congratulatory bouquets were still on display when I went to Chemor's newest restaurant. Situated on a corner shop house laid back from the main Jalan Kuala Kangsar just a few hundred metres before the petrol station where you turn left to head towards Jelapang, is Wong Kee, a family restaurant that has been in business in Chemor for 23 years but owing to a fire in their old premises, had to relocate to their present one; a fortunate set of circumstances in my view for I would never have discovered it otherwise.

A family restaurant it certainly is with Chef Wong Chong Jyh in the kitchen and brother Chong Ming in front taking care of customers. Mother, Father, sisters-in-law and a host of other relatives cater to the bustling clientele who know a good place when they taste one. As did I.

The first dish to land on the table was the **Fried Frog's Legs**, tender chunks of succulent frog legs which had been marinated in their special concoction and deep fried with masses of thinly sliced ginger. Judging by the size of the frogs they get at this time of the year (Dec-Feb) which Ming insisted on showing me (see pic) ours were small in comparison and hence the price of RM40 for our dish. According to him the big ones can cost up to RM100 per kilo and one can have a choice of cooking styles depending on preference. They can serve frog's legs with ginger and scallions, steamed with ginger or chicken stock, 'Gong Pao' with dried chillies and a dark sauce, or Drunken which is their most expensive style as he claims he uses good wine.



The next was their signature dish, their **Ikan Haruan (Snakehead) Fish Broth**, which according to the Chinese is widely believed to speed up wound healing. This was a large tureen of bubbling broth with a whole fish, the head and bones



fried, and the meat in plain slices jostling for attention amidst red dates, wolf berries, wood ear (*mook yee*) fungus, coarsely ground pepper, and dowsed with a generous dollop of Shao Hsing wine. The option for this dish is to eat the soup with just the fish head/bones and serve the fish meat fried with ginger and scallions – RM45.

As usual we went overboard with the ordering. **Squid and cuttlefish** served sizzling on a hot platter came next sauced with *sambal belacan*, tomatoes and onions; the softer squid presenting a



nice contrast to the chewy cuttlefish – RM15. In rapid succession we had **Salt-Baked Roe Crabs** which they can do in

any variety of styles, very tasty – RM38 for 4 smallish crabs; **Bitter Gourd with Spare Ribs** – RM15; the **Four Heavenly Kings**, that ubiquitous vegetable dish of *brinjals*, long beans, ladies fingers but minus the *petai* and with winged bean instead, this time with the addition of prawns – RM12.

As we sat groaning from the surfeit of food, our mouths still watered as we watched plate after plate of interesting looking dishes waft by, destined for other tables. We promptly made a promise to return to savour more of their infinite menu.

This we did with alacrity a week later and had the following dishes which I can recommend. We had their **Kampung Chicken**, in the same style as the fried frog's legs, which is equally succulent and tender for RM18 for half a chicken; their **Fresh Eel** done 'Gong Pao' style which I enjoyed as it was not sweet as in a lot of other restaurants; their **Sweet Meats Fried Rice** and their **Thai-Style Fried Tilapia**. This is not as sweet as I had anticipated and the tilapia had no muddy taste or smell; in fact the meat was sweet and succulent while the bones



were fried to a nice crunch. Thin slivers of cucumber, onions adorned the fish which lent a freshness to the whole dish – RM30.

After chatting with the chef, we discovered that more taste treats were in store and promised to return to savour their **Sambal Lo Shi Fun** which piqued my curiosity; their deep fried octopus; their fried egg with dried shrimp, their crab meehoon and a host of other delectables that space constraints prevent me from listing.

Restoran Wong Kee

24, Laluan Sinaran

Desa Chemor Sinaran, Chemor.

Tel.: 012-5182686/019-5561870

Open: 10.30 a.m.-2.30p.m. & 5.30-11.00 p.m.

Closed every fortnight on Tuesdays.

HAWKER FOOD



Char Kway Teow (Revisited)



The Char Kway Teow (CKT) is certainly one of Malaysia's most popular dishes, typically fried with eggs, prawns, cockles, bean sprouts and chives, served mostly on a banana leaf. What began as a poor man's meal of broad rice noodles fried with dark soy sauce and lard, has now evolved to a hearty staple found in any food court or coffee shop.

This dish was first reviewed by the Ipoh Echo food testers about 2 years ago. In this update, we brought back CKT from 7 different stalls to test side by side. We narrowed them down to 4 and here are our recommendations:

Gerei Seng Loong

Stall No. 32, Medan Selera Stadium Perak

RM3.80 per plate. Opens 7.30-3.00 p.m.

Has a smokey, 'charred', flavourful taste with large size prawns and enough bean sprouts and chives to give the dish a nice, yummy crunch. Lard-free.

Restoran Jen Jen

Corner of Jalan Chew Sin Onn (behind Tow Boo Keong temple)

RM4.00 per plate, with added lup cheong. Ask for extra chu yow cha or fried lardons. Opens daily 7.00 a.m.- 3.00 p.m. A must-eat for the *lup cheong* lovers out there. Generous serving size.

Nam Heong Coffee Shop

Corner Jalan Bandar Timah and Persiaran Bijeh Timah (opp Sin Yoon Loong)

RM3.80 per plate. Opens daily, 6.30 a.m.-4.00 p.m. Tasty and fragrant, served on banana leaf. Ask for more bean sprouts as serving a little under.

Wah Nam Kopitiam

Modern, clean kopitiam at No. 15-19 Jalan Seenivasagam

RM3.80 per plate. Opens daily 7.00 a.m.-4.00 p.m.

RECIPE

By Margarita Lee



Prawn Chowder



Ingredients

- 10 to 12 large prawns
- ½ cup potatoes, diced
- ½ cup carrots, diced
- ½ cup onion, diced
- 1 tbsp butter
- 2 tbsp flour
- 300 ml prawn stock (from the prawn heads)
- 250 ml milk
- 2 tbsp cooking oil
- ½ tbsp crushed peppercorns
- Salt and pepper to taste

Method

1. Shell and de-vein prawns, keep the prawn heads and shells for stock.
2. Heat oil in a pan, add in prawn heads and shells, stir fry until pink and cooked through, pour in 500 ml of water and peppercorns. Bring to a boil and simmer for 45 minutes. Strain and set aside.
3. Boil diced potatoes and carrots until soft, strain and keep aside.
4. Heat butter, fry onions lightly.
5. Stir in flour. Pour in milk and stock.
6. Add in cooked potatoes and carrots.
7. Bring to a boil and cook for 10 minutes.
8. Add prawns. Cook for 3-4 minutes.
9. Season with salt and pepper.

Wellness

By See Foon Chan-Koppen

Keeping Abreast of Breast Cancer

There is much in talk and print in the media today on the prevalence of cancer around the world. Breast cancer in particular appears to hog the headlines and many medical practitioners are sounding alarm bells about the need for early detection. In the UK alone the statistic is an eye-opening 1 in 9 women diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime while in Malaysia, where actual numbers are not available, the figures are equally dire.

According to the latest information from MD Anderson Hospital, Texas, "the overall 10-year survival rate for all types of breast cancer improved significantly over 60 years from 25% between 1944 and 1954, to 77% between 1995 and 2004."

IpoH Echo spoke to Kinta Medical Centre's Consultant Radiologist Dr. Ranjit Singh who deals with the diagnostic aspect and Dr. Perdamen Singh, Consultant in Radiotherapy and Clinical Oncology (Cancer) who handles the therapeutic options of breast cancer.

Both concur on one important point in the management of this disease and that is that early detection is the key to higher survival rates. Both specialists recommend women to perform self-examinations every month a few days after their menstruation when hormone levels are stable. Ninety per cent of all breast lumps are found by women themselves, hence the importance of this monthly ritual.

According to Dr. Ranjit, the next line of defence is for women to have mammograms annually for those aged 40-50 and every two years for those over 50. It has been found that more women in the 40-50 age group develop breast cancer than those who are older and that younger women also have more aggressive cancers. Mammograms can pick up tumours that are not palpable in a physical examination and have been proven to lower death rates by 30%.

For women under 40, with no familial history of breast cancer, Dr. Ranjit recommends ultrasound examination while those with a strong history are urged to reduce their risks with a combination of ultrasound, mammogram and MRI. While this may be more expensive and time consuming, an MRI can detect cancer not visible on mammograms and ultrasound.



Dr. Perdamen Singh



Dr. Ranjit Singh

The next step in the process of managing breast cancer is to have a biopsy of any breast lumps that are detected to ascertain if the lump is malignant and this is where Dr. Perdamen steps in.

Dr. Perdamen, a native Ipohite, offers therapeutic options once a lump has been found to be malignant. As a seasoned oncologist and the first Malaysian to become a Fellow of the Royal College of Radiologists in London, he was the head of the Cancer Centre at Hospital Kuala Lumpur and in Ipoh Specialist Hospital (ISH) where he treated his first radiotherapy patient in 1989. Today Dr. Perdamen practices from his clinic in Kinta Medical Centre in Jalan Chung Thye Ping with radiation treatment facilities made available to him at ISH as visiting consultant.

According to Dr. Perdamen, the 5-year survival rate for breast cancer patients depends on the stage at which the cancer is detected. At stage 1, the survival rate is 90-95%; stage two 70%; stage three, 50-60%; and stage four 15-20%. When asked if tumour markers especially the one for breast is useful for early detection, Dr. Perdamen said, "Tumour markers like the CA 153 are good indicators for further diagnostic options. It is a simple blood test which if found to be high, will be indicative of a need for further testing with either ultrasound, mammogram, MRI and finally a biopsy."

"When a confirmed cancer diagnosis is reached, then treatment options can be discussed with the patient. Today we have a plethora of treatment options ranging from simple lumpectomy, to chemotherapy and radiotherapy. In early stages you have a good option to have your breast conserved just with lumpectomy followed by radiation and chemotherapy. The sooner a patient is diagnosed, the faster and better the chances of full remission," he added.

Both Dr. Perdamen and Dr. Ranjit agree that women should be more alert to the signs of breast cancer and take preventative measures to examine themselves regularly as well as go for mammograms and ultrasound testing on an annual and bi-annual basis.

Kinta Medical Centre will be having a promotion through the months of February and March to promote awareness of breast cancer screening. Special rates will be available during this period.

No More Spectacles

IpoH Specialist Hospital has started a new era in vision correction and the whole surgery has become completely bladeless. A new Lasik centre now offers the computer-controlled VisuMax® FS laser which creates extremely thin, precise corneal flaps. This makes the bladeless procedure safe for a wider variety of patients who may not be eligible for Lasik with a conventional blade.

The most common complication of Lasik is flap-created-complication by blade. However with the new equipment making the procedure reliably effective with an extremely low rate of Lasik complications, two specialist consultants in ISH are helping their patients to undergo the painless procedure and throw away their spectacles for good.

Dr. Lee Mun Toong and Dr. Lam Fook Shin are using the Zeiss Workstation from Carl Zeiss Meditech, a new refractive surgery device for blade-free cornea flap creation, giving patients from Ipoh, a new alternative for bladeless Lasik.

IE: What does Lasik Do?

Dr. Lam: The first step with Lasik is to have a thin corneal flap made to reveal the tissue that will be reshaped to correct your nearsightedness, farsightedness, or astigmatism. There are two main methods to create a corneal flap; a microkeratome with a metal blade, or a femtosecond laser such as the VisuMax which is bladeless using a very accurately focused laser beam which is guided through to the cornea in a computerized treatment that is unique to each patient.

IE: Which specific advantages does the VisuMax procedure provide?

Dr. Lee: A significant feature of the VisuMax is that it uses a curved contact interface that attaches to the cornea during the treatment. The cornea is only slightly flattened, which prevents unnecessarily high intraocular pressure and stress to your eyes. This provides maximum comfort and allows you to see throughout the entire procedure, unlike with microkeratomes or other femtosecond lasers, where your vision is "blacked out" for awhile and patients have reported feeling uncomfortable pressure.

Due to the Zeiss high performance optics, the laser beam is guided very precisely to the desired depth, resulting in most accurate flap thickness. In addition, the laser beam is directed in a very focused manner which allows the doctor to apply only minimum laser energy to the eye during the treatment. As a result, the tissue outside the defined area of the cut remains untouched.

IE: Is the VisuMax procedure painful?

Dr. Lam: Due to the specific advantages of the VisuMax, the procedure is very gentle and patients often describe the VisuMax procedure like the insertion of a soft contact lens.

We use an eye drop to numb the eye prior to the procedure and most patients describe the VisuMax procedure, along with Lasik, as painless.

IE: How long does the VisuMax procedure take?

Dr. Lee: The creation of the corneal flap with the VisuMax takes about 20 to 30 seconds, while the complete Lasik procedure may take about 30 minutes for both eyes.

IE: Does every patient benefit from the advantages of the VisuMax procedure?

Dr. Lam: In general, patients who qualify for Lasik are also candidates for the VisuMax and thus will benefit from its accuracy and gentleness. In fact, since the VisuMax is able to create very thin corneal flaps, some patients who were previously not a candidate for Lasik, due to thin corneas, are now benefiting from the procedure thanks to the VisuMax. We doctors make the final determination.

IE: Who are good candidates for Lasik?

Dr. Lee: To have Lasik, you must:

- Be 18 years of age or older.
- Have healthy eyes free from retinal problems, corneal scars, and any eye disease.
- Have nearsightedness within the range of treatment. The range is up to 13.00 D of sphere with up to -4.00 of astigmatism.
- Have proof your vision has not changed more than



Dr M.T. Lee surrounded by happy patients who have had Lasik surgery



Dr. Lam Fook Shin

one half diopters for at least one year before your pre-surgery exam.

- Be fully informed about the risks and benefits of Lasik as compared to other treatments for nearsightedness.
- Be able to lie flat without difficulty.
- Be able to keep your eye fixed and follow the target and the blinking light during the entire Lasik process.
- Be willing to sign an informed consent form provided by your doctor.
- Be able to tolerate eye drops to numb your eye.

Dr. Lam: If you think you want Lasik, you will need an exam to make sure your eyes are healthy and suitable for Lasik. This would include a medical exam and eye history. Both eyes will be checked.

Dr. Lee: I was the first person to undergo the procedure to clear my short-sightedness and reading problems. It was almost painless and I started work the next day. Of course the experience will vary from person to person. I am so happy to have thrown away my glasses for good!

news roundup

One-Stop Cultural Centre

Plans to convert the open space at the State Department of Culture and Arts into a one-stop cultural centre were realised with the launching of the department's calendar of events for 2011 recently. Executive Councillor for Culture, Youth and Sports, Dato' Zainol Fadzi Paharuddin, said the department has planned a total of 117 activities for the year. Some of the major events on the department's list are "Merakyatkan Seni Budaya", "Kuliah Budaya" and "Bengkel Kemahiran dan Manifestasi Bahasa". These programmes are tailor-made



for those keen on taking an active role in Malay performing arts.

"I hope individuals and performing arts groups will make use of this opportunity for their benefit," said Dato'

Zainol to Ipoh Echo. Zainol too hoped that the programmes would enable Perakians to appreciate culture and arts more intimately. "It's an enriching and a life-long experience," he added.

Department Director, Encik Abdul Mutalib Abdul Rahman, was optimistic that cultural activities, which he had initiated based on the 1Malaysia concept, such as the "Senaman Seni 1Malaysia" and the multi-racial cultural dances, had achieved their desired results.

The programme will be held on a monthly basis at the one-stop centre within the department's compound. "Despite its frequency, I am certain visitors and art lovers will get the information and training they seek," said Mutalib. "Its relocation from Ipoh's Night Bazaar is most appropriate considering the ambience and its proximity to our work place."

RM

Chinese New Year Celebrations around Ipoh



The 83 year old Perak Chinese Assembly Hall whose members include over 200 Chinese Associations, held their Chinese New Year Open House at the Impiana Hotel on the second day of the New Year.

Its President, Tan Sri Dato' Chong Chin Shoong, was on hand to greet his guest of Honour Perak Menteri Besar Dato' Sri Dr. Zambry Abdul Kadir. Other VVIPs included Perak MCA Youth Chairman Dato' Dr. Mah Hong Soon, Perak Gerakan Chairman Dato' Chong Ko Youn and Deputy Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Heng Seai Kie.

Zambry in his address said that Chinese New year was a time for unity and urged "everyone" to "unite and



come together to bring the glory days back to Perak". Tan Sri Chong hoped that the Year of the Rabbit would bring harmony and health to the people and requested that the government look into the issues of reducing red tape and price increases.

Other notable guests at the open house included the new CPO of Perak Datuk Mohd Shukri Dahlan as well as PKR's YB Chan Ming Kai and YB Tai Sing Ng seen sharing a table with MCA's Dato' Lee Kon Yin.

On the fourth day of the New Year it was another boisterous Open House organised by party Pakatan Rakyat at the DAP office at Medan Istana. Organising Chairman Dato' Ngeh Koo Ham was on hand to greet his guests which included former Perak Menteri Besar Dato' Sri Mohd Nizar Jamaluddin and MP for Ipoh Barat Lim Kit Siang.

Besides the fiery speeches, guests were entertained with cultural performances.

JAG

MB Launches The Haven



"The Haven is the pride of Ipoh and the envy of the nation," remarked Perak Menteri Besar, Dato' Seri Dr. Zambry Abdul Kadir, at the official launch of the Haven Lakeside Residences on Saturday, January 29.

He then touched a crystal globe which started a spectacular laser light display on the face of the Haven's iconic 280 million year-old centrepiece, named **RockHaven**. The pomp and splendour of the launch captivated the 300-odd guests present.

The accompanying music "Mission Impossible" was a fitting coincidence, considering the success story of The Haven. When Superboom Projects Sdn Bhd undertook the task of developing Ipoh's first international standard luxury condo, it was met with scepticism and criticism.

This has, however, changed. Zambry confirmed this by saying that "the Haven condominiums will change mindsets and the landscape of Perak forever."

The Haven's three 26-storey towers, when completed, will be the tallest buildings in Perak. Residents of the 489 condo units would form a new community in the rapidly developing Tambun suburb. The partnerships Superboom Projects secured with Best Western International, the world's largest hotel chain and Tasweek, an Abu Dhabi-based conglomerate representing the interests of individuals and companies in the Middle East, will set a new benchmark for The Haven.

"The Haven aims to promote Ipoh to the world, and the world to Ipoh," said Peter Chan, CEO and Co-Principal of Superboom Projects, in his welcoming remarks.

So far, 85 per cent of the units in Tower A and 60 per cent of the units in Tower C have been sold. Units in Tower B, which were released at the launch, were eagerly sought by those present.

Ed



Good News at CNY Open House

Perak Menteri Besar, Dato' Seri Dr. Zambry Abdul Kadir is optimistic that more foreign investors will make Perak their base considering the number of inquiries he received to date. He said this to reporters at his Chinese New Year open house on Thursday, February 3. "I've received invitations from companies and individuals from Japan, Germany, USA and some European countries for discussions. They're keen to know what kinds of investment opportunities are available in Perak," he said.

Over 5,000 guests of all races gathered at the MB's residence on Chinese New Year day, to usher in the golden Year of the Rabbit. Although the event was scheduled at 2.00 p.m., a large crowd had gathered at the gates well before opening time. Dato' Seri Zambry Abdul Kadir and his wife, Datin Seri Saripah Zulkifli, mixed freely with the visitors and were seen entertaining the young and old. They gave away *ang paws* to orphans and senior citizens who were specially invited for the occasion.

Hollywood luminary and Ipoh's icon, Dato' Michelle Yeoh, was among the dignitaries who came a calling. "I am intrigued by the festivity and will not miss this opportunity to be with fellow Ipohites," she told reporters.

RM

news roundup

Big Brother Watching You



“Thieves and petty criminals, beware,” said Mayor Dato’ Roshidi Hashim reminding them that their wayward ways were over. He said this to reporters during the opening of the Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) Operations Room at MBI recently. The function marked the installing of 52 cameras within MBI’s complex, which began on Wednesday, December 1. “The overall cost of RM371,450 will be borne by the council,” he said.

The aim of having the entire council complex under surveillance is to keep a watch over thieves and petty criminals whose habits are becoming a bane with those patronising the council. “Bag snatchings and break-ins are frequent. Even council staff are not spared,” said Roshidi. “Cars parked within and outside the council premises have become easy targets for these bad hats.”

The operations room is manned 24 hours a day. It is linked to the Ipoh Police Department for accessibility and quick reaction when a crime is committed.

Plans to install cameras in “hot areas” within the city are also afoot. So far 24 cameras are in place. An additional 76 cameras will be installed in stages before 2012. The scheme is provided for by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and Ipoh City Council. “The programme is aimed at reducing street crimes in Ipoh,” said Roshidi. “It’ll also assist in countering anti-social activities such as vandalism, illegal dumping of rubbish and immoral activities.”

RM

Economic Activities



Dato’ Hamidah Osman, Executive Councillor for Industry, Entrepreneur Development and Tourism, was on hand to usher in Chinese New Year at Station 18 in Pengkalan, organised by Keris Properties recently. Station 18, a one-time semi-rural suburb, is in for bigger things with the completion of the gigantic Jusco Hypermarket rivalling that of Mydin, Tesco and Giant in Meru and Bercham, respectively. The project, scheduled for completion in March of 2012, will provide the impetus to propel this once sleepy hollow to greater heights.

Hamidah, in her opening remarks, dispelled deep-rooted fear that the influx of supermarkets and hypermarkets would kill small businesses. “It’s to the contrary,” she told the crowd. “These giant departments will help stimulate economic activities and provide jobs for the masses, instead.”

She thanked Keris Properties for helping the state government in realising its aim of bringing developments to the state, especially to Ipoh. The property developer has been a major player on the state economic scene, building resident cum commercial centres for the business community.

In attendance was the Mayor, Dato’ Roshidi Hashim. They then handed over mandarin oranges and ang paws to 80 senior citizens who were guests of Keris Properties.

The event ended with a dazzling fireworks display that kept both spectators and buyers at the nearby *pasar malam* enthralled.

RM

Greening Greentown



Ipoh City Council’s plan to develop Persiaran Tugu along MBI’s Terrace at Greentown into a “greener and cleaner” area is on course.

Mayor Dato’ Roshidi Hashim, who inspected the site recently, told media that the project, which began last November, is scheduled for completion by April.

Persiaran Tugu is the location where open-air foodstalls operate nightly, providing an outdoor café ambience. However, due to poor planning and “unconventional” water supply and inadequate drainage, the area had a stench from food wastes and clogged drains. Apart from these, customer safety was compromised by having chairs and tables being placed alongside the road.

Under the current upgrading work, proper work stations comprising of piped water, a sink and grease trap for each mobile operator will be constructed. The work stations will be located at the parking area, which will be a car park during the day. The parking lot will be paved with interlocking tiles.

For safety, the road has been turned into a one-way street with traffic originating from Jalan Dato Seri Ahmad Said. Additionally, the seating area for customers will be away from traffic and will allow for trees to be planted and better lighting.

According to Roshidi, contrary to public perception the upgrading work will allow for 72 parking lots which is 17 more than the previous 55 lots. The upgrading work, covering an area of 800 x 30m, along Persiaran Tugu will cost the Council RM812,000.

JAG

Financial Aid



It was pay day for 32 recipients consisting of police retirees, widows and dependents of police personnel from Perak. The money, totalling RM60,345.12 in

all, was from the Warrior and National Defence Trust Fund (Tabong Amanah Perwira dan Pertahanan Negara) set up 42 years ago to provide assistance to security personnel killed or injured while defending the nation.

A brief ceremony, graced by Deputy Home Minister, Dato’ Lee Chee Leong, was held at the Senior Police Officers’ Mess, Ipoh on Monday, January 31. The fund, according to Lee, was not only meant for regular police personnel but for auxiliaries, reserves and volunteers too. “So long as they don the police uniform and are maimed or killed while on duty, they’ll receive financial aid, as a form of recognition by the government.”

The trust fund is managed by Amanah Raya Berhad, the nation’s premier trustee company. DCP Dato’ Mohd Shukri Dahlan, the state police chief, was in attendance.

RM

Rotary Club of Greentown Donates Equipment

The Rotary Club of Greentown officially handed over Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy equipment costing RM44,100.00 to the Community Based Rehabilitation Centre in Buntong. F. Vijeyaselvan, President of Greentown Rotary Club informed that this donation was made with grants received from other rotary clubs as well. The Guest of Honour, Lim Kok Beng, Rotary International District Governor officiated the ceremony by unveiling the commemorative plaque.

The Centre was opened in 1999 and provides services to cater to the needs of people with disabilities. The services include physiotherapy, occupational therapy and early intervention programme. It also runs a pre-school for disabled children. The children are taught activities for daily living, including personal hygiene, toiletry, dressing and how to look after themselves and prepares them to attend normal schools. There are 50 students in the pre-school. About 25 people with disabilities are being rehabilitated. The equipment provided would enhance the services provided.



Those who wish to volunteer or send disabled persons to the centre can call Saras at 05-2420805.

AJ

Compassion for the Poor



The Association of Wives of State Assemblymen Perak (BAIDURI) and Yayasan Bina Upaya (YBU) jointly hosted a Chinese New Year party for 500 senior citizens, single mothers and orphans at the Menteri Besar’s residence recently. The event was officiated by Datin Seri Saripah Zulkifli, President of BAIDURI and wife of Menteri Besar Perak. It was graced by the MB himself and several executive councillors and their wives. The event was preceded by a lion dance performance. BAIDURI choir, led by Datin Seri Saripah, sang a medley of songs to entertain the crowd. The presentation of money, micro-credit cheques and house keys to 42 deserving recipients consisting of senior citizens, single mothers and the hardcore poor was the grand finale. This altruistic gesture would continue into the Year of the Rabbit, said the BAIDURI President.

RM

Community

A Hindu Festival



The jetty at Sg. Pinang Kecil on Pangkor Island was operational effective Wednesday, February 9 after being closed for almost a year. Its opening is most timely in view of the Masimagam Festival on February 17 and 18. The Sg. Pinang Hindu temple, as in previous years, will be overwhelmed by devotees who will converge at its site to pay homage to the Seri Pathirakaliamman deity.

The closure of the jetty had caused much hardship to devotees who had only the Pangkor town jetty as their entry and exit point. Temple Secretary, V. Karunanithi, thanked the authorities for their empathy.

He advised devotees to check the ferry schedule before coming. The Lumut-Pangkor service during the festive days will commence at 6.30 a.m. The last ferry will leave Pangkor for Lumut at 11.00 p.m. on the first day and at 8.00 p.m. on the second day.

Temple authorities are expecting over 20,000 devotees during the festival. They will do penance by carrying karagam and kavadies from the Pasir Bogak beach to the temple, a distance of about 4km.

SN

Police to Improve Rapport with Public

In response to the cover feature in issue 113 of Ipoh Echo (Feb 1-15, 2011) headlined "Reduced Crime Rate – Reality or Perception", Ipoh City police chief Assistant Commissioner Azisman Alias is taking steps to change the relationship between the police and the public and for the police to build better rapport with the public.

He has given instructions for the police force in the city to intensify its Convoy Community Oriented Policing (CCOP) scheme in an effort to combat crimes.

A soft launch of the scheme was held recently at a restaurant in Jalan Labrooy with residents from Lim Garden, Merdeka Garden, Cherry Park and Taman Idris.

Under this programme, the police would meet the public over breakfast for a chat, thus breaking the barriers between them. The meetings have since been held regularly in various housing estates.

Azisman said that he had also intensified the SWAT (Stop Walk and Talk) programme, whereby policemen would chat with the people and discuss their problems.

Azisman is confident that the initiatives he has taken will help reduce the crime rate and create confidence in the police. He stressed the need for members of the public to be in close contact with police so that based on their information the police could increase surveillance on crime prone areas.

On the complaint that many criminals are let off, Azisman said that by law, the police can only detain a person for one day and then he has to be presented to the court. It is the decision of the court to release a person on bail. Most of the suspected criminals come out on bail. Even if the police know a person is a criminal, he cannot be arrested without evidence. He stressed that the Human Rights Groups are always on the watch and accuse the police of abuse of power.

On frontline personnel in the police stations, Azisman had instructed them to be courteous to the public and attend to their needs fast. "The public must not be made to wait to see staff or make a police report," he said. For those in patrol cars, who are the first to arrive at the crime scenes, he had instructed them to be sensitive to the needs of the people and situation.

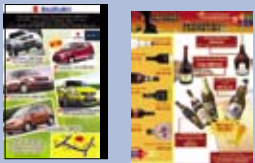
Meanwhile, a resident from Taman Semarak, Hamid Lee, said that crimes in the housing estates along Kuala Kangsar Road were increasing. House break-ins, burglary in shops, snatch thefts and gang fights are common. Most of the thefts are not reported. The residents complain that it takes too long to make a police report and they have to take leave to do so.

A. Jeyaraj

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Mini Roundabout Ease Traffic Flow in Kampong Manjoi



Motorists driving on the roads in Kampong Manjoi must be extra careful. They have to watch out for teenagers riding motor cycles without safety helmets and making abrupt turns without giving signals.

The recently constructed mini roundabout at the junction of Jalan Padang, Jalan Tengku Hussin and Jalan Kledang Raya 14 has made driving safer as motorists know whose right of way it is. Minor accidents can be avoided.

MBI should also build a roundabout at the junction of Jalan Baru and Jalan Madrasah. This junction is confusing for the motorists.

A. Jeyaraj

news roundup

Preparing Perak's Human Capital



The Perak State government has set a target of a minimum of 10,000 new jobs in the state this year. To achieve this, it has initiated the creation of a career placement centre to match the employees with the requirements of employers.

These plans were announced by Institute Darul Ridzuan, Chief Executive Aminudin Hashim during the recent forum organized by the Perak Economic Council. The forum entitled "Preparing Perak's Human Capital for The New Economy" saw speakers from PSMB Ministry of Human Resource, USM, UPSI and Talent Solutions addressing the floor. The forum which was attended by Heads of Government Departments, GLCs, NGOs and students focused on the supply, demand and development of human capital.

According to Aminudin the centre will be launched sometime in March this year. It will be located in Ipoh but will operate at district level.

The purpose of the centre is generally for creating employment and job matching of employee skills to employer requirements. Its other goal is to create high income jobs which in turn will address the issue of retaining university graduates in the state.

Acknowledging that 80% of the work force that is being generated each year are SPM leavers, the initial employment will be in the low to medium category.

Subsequently, the centre plans to work with the respective institutions of higher education to upgrade the skills of employees. Its strategy to achieve this is to "reskilling and reskill" potential employees, a strategy applied successfully during economic downturns.

The sectors for employment were in marine and shipbuilding, wholesale and retail, manufacturing, automotive, food and service industry.

JAG

Theresa Lim – Reaching Out Through Art

Theresa Lim Mun Sim was born and bred in Ipoh. She developed a keen interest in art from a young age and pursued her studies in Architecture at Sydney University. In 1956 she became the first woman architect from Perak. After her graduation she worked in Singapore and served as the Principal Lecturer in the Civil Engineering Building Department of the Singapore Polytechnic till 1987.



Under the tutorage of Chinese artists including Chen Wen Hsi and David Kwok she continued to nurture her passion for art throughout her career. As an expression of affection for her family and hometown she has published two books about growing up in Ipoh. She is eager to share the love she has received, through her painting and writing with fellow Ipohites. Her program of activities can be found under announcements on page 6. All proceeds will be donated to Autism Support Association for Parents, Ipoh, Perak (ASAP).

New Alumni



The gathering of former students of Sekolah Menengah Idris Shah (SIS), Gopeng on the third day of the Year of the Rabbit was a joyous evening despite the crawling traffic leading to Gopeng Town Hall and the journey taking over an hour to get to the dinner.

The gathering was the school's 46th Anniversary though more importantly it was a gathering of all Alumni Classes in preparation for the setting up of the SIS Gopeng Alumni Association.

The guest of honour for the night was their beloved former headmaster Dato' Seri N.S. Selvamany with his wife. Other guests included a table full of former teachers.

The majority of the former students present for the dinner no longer live in Gopeng, having moved on to greener pastures. However, many of the students have fond memories of their growing up years there and some have made their own little contribution to brighten up the town.

One such person, Bernard Yaw Ban Yew, had touched up his family house and, together with two other Class of 77 students, turned it into Muzium Gopeng.

Bernard, who described himself as "notorious" while in school, poured praise on the school's first Headmaster Dato' Seri N.S. Selvamany and the teachers during his time, describing them as carrying out their duties with "passion and dedication" and thanked them for their guidance.

For Selvamany, it was a joy seeing all his former students again though what jolted him was the racial mix of his students surrounding him to take photographs. "While we are talking about 1Malaysia now, little did I realise that I was living it then and it was so beautiful."

Indeed the ex-students of SIS are a proud lot. The owners of well-known Gopeng establishments such as Adelins Resort and Gopeng Rainforest Resort are all ex students. Additionally on April 18, another new product, Heritage House (a heritage homestay project), will be added to the list. Needless to say, behind this new project is...you've guessed it...another former student of SIS.

JAG

Can I Help You? English Language Workshop



Cosmopoint International College of Technology (CICT), Ipoh, organised an English language workshop recently. The workshop titled "Can I Help You?" was attended by 100 SPM school-leavers. It was coordinated and conducted by CICT's two Senior English lecturers Mr. Kailash and Mr. Loga and officiated by Miss Joyce Chong, the principal of CICT.

The event consisted of games, songs, picture dictation, and conversational English. The students were exposed to all the four language skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking. The focus of the workshop was on fundamental speaking skills. Focusing on the theme, Mr. Loga elaborated and demonstrated to the students the significance of interpersonal skills, especially using language to communicate confidently and effectively with one another. The event started with having students introduce themselves to each other using English. Surprisingly, many of them used English without any difficulty, and the workshop proceeded at an exhilarating pace.

The students' response, excitement, and curiosity in all the activities were beyond expectation. The crowd left with smiling and joyful faces, and the feedback CICT received was positive. The event ended with a lucky draw and prize giving by Miss Joyce Chong.

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SJK(C) Padang Gajah is now in operation.
Interested parents can contact the school at
05-312 4813 for information on student enrolment.

Sport

Veterans Hockey Carnival



The Ipoh Lads Recreation and Social Club paid honour to 10 former Hockey Coaches from Perak at their prize presentation dinner recently. The event was part of their first Ipoh Lads Veteran Hockey Carnival and Fund Raising Dinner for their junior programme.

The 10 coaches, Bryan Fernandez, T.C. Sharma, V. Maniam, M. Vishnu, Elison Netto, Noel D'Oliveiro, Benedict Arrias, Balachander, Loh Ah Kew and V. Selvarajah (better known as Uncle Sam) were honoured for their contribution to the development of the sport.

As an example V. Selvarajah, 72, had represented the state from 1961 till 1972 and was in the team that won the Razak Cup in 1966. He formed the Perak Veterans Team in 1984 and helped the ICHA organise the Ipoh Hockey League and Sultan Azlan Shah Tournaments until 2007.

Earlier in the day the Veterans Hockey Carnival was played out at Stadium Sultan Azlan Shah between 10 teams, 2 from Perak, 1 from Penang and the rest from Selangor and KL.

The carnival in the morning was officially opened by state Arts, Culture, Youth and Sports Chairman Dato' Zainal Fadzi Paharudin. In his speech Zainal commended the club for helping to promote and develop the sport and coming up with the junior programme plan.

The Organising Chairman of the event, Sharan Kumar, explained that the junior programme was the club's 5-year project to select 30 under-12 players whom the club will groom till age 18.

The tournament held earlier in the day had the air of a carnival as the players' families were present to cheer on their teams.

The champion of the winner's pool was Club Solero while the champion from the loser's pool was Club Synergy. Incidentally Club Synergy was dubbed the 'ladies team' as they had a female player Victoria Lamb, playing for them.

JAG

Easy Rider

Folding bicycles are not new. However, with a little imagination one can have a fun and adventurous weekend.

Bike Leader, Sam Cheong, from Kuala Lumpur (he's the leader because he thought up the idea) was aware of the Ipoh Heritage Trail maps available.

He proposed his idea to his regular group of 13 bikers which was to take the train to Ipoh hand carrying their foldable bicycles along and follow the heritage trail maps upon arrival in Ipoh. The purpose was to view old buildings and have Ipoh food before returning to KL via the evening train.

Another biker, Chanson Lau demonstrated how

Without Malice or Hidden Agenda

Recently, some friends asked me why I am creating a reputation as a critic of the Ipoh City Council. My reply has been, and will always be, that I harbour no grudges against the city council, its Mayor, councillors or employees.

It is my responsibility as a journalist towards the society, particularly the city's ratepayers in this case, to highlight the short-comings of the city council. Therefore, since early 1990 I have been raising various issues or forwarding suggestions, not just to city council, but also to those of government agencies and the private sector, in my desire to see good governance.

First through the weekly column "Ipoh Outlook" of the New Straits Times, later the "The Other Side of the Valley" of the Sun, and now "My Say" of the Ipoh Echo. These columns are written without malice or hidden agenda. They are meant to be "feedback" to the relevant authorities.

My cherished wish is to see Ipoh regain the vibrant and beautiful image it had prior to being accorded city status 22 years ago. I had taken a liking to Ipoh since I took residence in 1973; it was then a municipal council, which had many qualities I found worthy of praise.

However, after two decades of my highlighting the issues, the city council appears to have adopted a nonresponsive attitude. Maybe, it feels that "silence is golden" and allows the issues to be blown over, rather than clarifying them or taking steps to remedy them. Therefore, I have been repeatedly raising certain issues, in the hope that the relevant authorities will take note and begin to address them.

Among them is the need for the city council to rejuvenate the city centre. It saddens me to see much of the city centre becoming neglected and desolate and may soon become swiftlet hotels as the recorded chirpings of

My Say

By Jerry Francis



the swiftlets can now be heard loud and clear.

Already about 10 per cent of the business premises in the heart of new and old town sectors, bordering Jalan Sultan Idris Shah-Jalan Raja Ekram-Jalan Sultan Iskandar-Jalan Sultan Yusuf, have either been vacated or condemned.

Owners of most business premises seem to have lost any interest in redeveloping them as they see no future and much of the business and commercial activities are moving to new growth areas outside the city centre.

Evidence of the city centre being unattractive to investments can be seen by the poor response to the offer for development of the site along Jalan Raja Ekram once occupied by the famous landmark Yau Tet Shin Market, or popularly known as the circular market, which is proposed to be the hub of a cultural district in the city.

If there is going to be any hope of the city centre reviving, the city council must sincerely look into activities that could induce re-development that include parking spaces, but it is yet to come up with some viable proposals or projects. Even existing beautification projects such as the fountains are being neglected.

Ipoh needs a good theme, around which it could be developed and promoted. I don't see why the well-known slogan "City That Tin Built" should not be used to market the city. These four words aptly describe the history of the city and the heritage it inherited from the once glorious tin mining industry in the Kinta Valley.

Why use other slogans, such as, "City of Bougainvillea...Virtual City...Ipoh Indah dan Maju" and currently, "Bersih, Hijau dan Membangun", which only serve as mockery to the ability of the city council, while we have the heritage assets to promote tourism for the city.

to fold the bicycle in just over a minute. It was fast and easy and certainly is a practical solution for an adventure weekend.

When I met them at an exhibition at Garden Villa they were planning to go to Sunway Tambun for their next destination. I was glad to note that our local tourists are appreciating the local sights. Good on you bikers!

But come to think of it Taiping too would make a good biking destination. Locations are close to each other; it has lots of heritage buildings and good food too. Pity though that the train doesn't stop there....yet.

JAG



Sports Carnival



The Perak Malayalee Association began 2011 on a high note by organising a sports carnival for its members and their families. The event was held at the playing field of SMK Tarcisian Convent, Lim Garden recently. Dato' Chang Ko Youn, special advisor to the Menteri Besar, was the guest of honour. Chang opened the carnival which attracted over a hundred participants of all ages. Team sports such as: tug-of-war, football, netball and tele-matches were held. Association President, K. Letchimanan, announced that the carnival would be an annual affair as it was a healthy medium to foster fellowship. Winners were given prizes for their achievements.

Ed

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