

THEY PROMISE THIS WILL REPLACE THE DEADLY JELAPANG TOLL GATE BY JULY 2008



But those responsible have
been talking about the
replacement since 2002!

See staff reporter Nisha Devina Roy's story - page 2

THE JELAPANG TOLL BOOTH – *PROMISES, PROMISES*

by Nisha Devina Roy



Only five days elapsed between last month's horrific Jelapang toll-gate collision and the next accident to occur along that treacherous stretch of North-South Expressway leading downhill from the Manora Tunnel to the Ipoh approaches.

While eight passengers died and another 10 were injured when a latex tanker slammed into a bus at the toll-gate early on the morning of December 11, mercifully no casualties resulted from the follow-up accident.

Here the driver of a trailer hauling paddy husks lost control of his vehicle on the downhill run, crashing into a truck just a kilometre short of the notorious toll-gate location.

A STERN WARNING

But the speed with which the "killer stretch" of highway has delivered its follow-up incident is serving a stern warning to the authorities that long-overdue safety measures they have been promising must now be delivered on time. There must be no more delays.

Significantly, PLUS Expressway, operators of the North-South Highway felt pressured enough by December 21 to issue a special public statement on the "killer stretch" controversy.

Speaking to the press, the General Manager of PLUS' Communications Department, Khalilah Datuk Mohd Talha, sought to explain safety measures already in place along the downhill section and the additional safety precautions soon to be added.

HIGH PRIORITY AREAS

According to Khalilah, the Jelapang stretch is "one of" PLUS Expressways' "high priority areas". In view of this remark, frequent travellers using the Expressway might well be prompted to ask where the other "high priority areas" might be located. If there are,



A section of the 14 km new highway additions authorities now claim are 60% completed.

indeed, other sections posing similar dangers to life and limb should they not be told about them?

The information made available by PLUS' senior Communications' official noted that safety features along the 5 kilometres between tunnel and toll gate already include 45 flashing amber lights, 24 warning/advisory signs, chevron signs in addition to a number of speed-limit warnings.

Few would doubt these claims. But motorists are currently arguing that clearly such measures have proved decidedly wanting to date. There is no getting away from the mounting statistics indicating 12 deaths and 74 injuries along the stretch since 2003. Or, examined from another viewpoint, into the calculation come a staggering 143 accidents along the same road segment in the past 10 years.

TRAFFIC VOLUMES

Speaking in the lead-up to the festive seasons of Xmas, New Year and Chinese New Year, Khalilah added that additional warning features such as robotic flagmen and portable variable message signs would soon be in place and operational. It is recognised that a huge volume of Malaysian road traffic passes back and forth

through the current Jelapang toll-gate over the festival period, particularly during Chinese New Year.

She went on to detail how travel time advisories would be implemented to reduce plaza congestion and promote



Federal Works Minister
Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu

safer travel. "We strongly advise users, including bus and lorry drivers, to check their vehicles before starting their travel," she continued.

ALTERNATIVE FACILITIES

A few days after these remarks by PLUS' Communications head, the Expressway's Chief Operating Officer, Nik Airina, felt obliged to make further public pronouncements. These concentrated on the precise issue of replacing the current Jalapang toll-gate with alternative fa-

cilities.

Removing the Jelapang toll plaza, according to Nik Airina, involves "an additional 14 kilometre stretch of highway to be built on both sides and new toll plazas for cars entering and



Perak's Menteri Besar,
Datuk Seri Mohamad Tajol
Rosli Ghazali

exiting Ipoh. She argued, somewhat obviously, that improvements of this nature required "planning, clearing of new land and a lot of construction work".

60% COMPLETED

However, she remained convinced that her company would meet its July, 2008 deadline. The job, she said, was 60% completed.

"Not only will the North-South Expressway's Ipoh stretch be congestion-free, but road safety will improve as well," Nik Airina confidently predicted.

Before concluding her statement, the COO made one curious observation. The December 11 accident, she said, was the first time in two years that fatalities were recorded on the controversial stretch of highway. This might well appear to many highway users as a somewhat obscure reaction. Unquestionably it would be a point totally lost on the numerous grieving relatives of the eight Wanita UMNO members killed in the December 11 disaster.

LOOKING BACK

A review of newspaper archives indicates other unusual remarks about the Jelapang plaza and the downhill highway leading to it have been made by various officials over the years.

On November 25, 2002, one mainstream Malaysian newspaper quoted Federal Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu as admitting the Jelapang toll booth did indeed pose a danger to motorists. In the same report Perak's Menteri Besar, Datuk Seri Mohamad Tajol Rosli Ghazali, said: "We agree that the location of the toll plazas need to be changed. We suggest that it be brought further up north between Sungai Perak and Kuala Kangsar. A second alternative is to shift it to the Kuala Kangsar Road. The Menteri

Besar added that he hoped the Federal Government would give its consideration to the replacement requirements as the state did not want the development of Ipoh to be affected. He was concerned that moving the toll gate might somehow deter visitors coming to Ipoh.

"A LITTLE AWKWARD"

Pointedly, in the same report, Deputy Works Minister Datuk Mohamad Khaled Nordin, described the Jelapang toll booth position as "a little awkward" But this, he assured, could not be entirely blamed for the fatal road accident that had occurred on the previous Friday – November 23, 2002.

The following day Datuk Seri Samy Vellu was quoted as rebuking the Perak state government over the toll plaza issue. "I had mentioned in my statement the other day that I would brief the state government on the proposal, but unfortunately it was not given prominence."

He went on to clarify: "The proposal to close-down the toll plazas was the most feasible as there have been numerous deaths and accidents and we cannot allow such incidents to continue."

Before the final day of November, 2002, Perak's Menteri Besar had formally agreed to the replacement of the Jalapang toll.

And that all took place five years and six weeks ago.

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From the Editor's Desk

By Fathol Zaman Bukhari

DOES ANYBODY CARE ABOUT OUR PADANG?

It badly needs maintenance and running repairs

In all probability Ipoh Padang will soon be assigned to the dustbin of history unless remedial actions are taken to arrest its decline. The 8-acre playing field was once the epicentre of sporting activities patronised by a thriving community of tin miners and petty traders that inhabited Old Town at the end of the 19th Century.

After the Great Fire of 1892 the town was re-laid under the supervision of W.P. Hume, the Kinta Collector of Land Revenue. Frank Swettenham, the Resident of Perak, during his visit to Ipoh in February 1893 instructed that a new police station, a rest house, a club house and the Residency be built. The building of the club house overlooking the playing field was a significant development in the history of Ipoh Padang.

MAJOR FACELIFT

Some of the remaining fixtures of the padang are the old casuarina trees and the cement fencing. In 2002 the padang underwent a major

facelift with funding from the Federal government.

A jogging track and a hard standing were built. According to the mayor then,



Neglect and apathy are transforming our once proud ground.

the renovation exercise was to enhance the esthetics of the padang.

In spite of protestations from Ipohites and several non-governmental organisations, the state government insisted upon its completion. The contractor undertook measures to prevent the media from

encroaching into the work-site and publicising it. Perak's tallest flag pole was erected to complement the structure at a cost of RM300,000.

Today the hard standing, the flag pole and the surroundings are in a sorry state largely due to neglect and apathy. Malaysians generally do not have an active maintenance culture. The whole place requires sprucing up. Although the council's Recreational and

Landscaping Department is located nearby a sense of indifference pervades the air. It is a sorry sight indeed. Broken lamp posts, exposed

wiring, rubbish and stains can be seen from afar. It is slowly becoming an eyesore.

The underground drainage system is no longer functional due to age and neglect. Although successive mayors had promised to repair the system, it was merely lip service to appease

the sporting fraternity.

Numerous games have been played on the field. Before a dedicated stadium was built, football, hockey and rugby competitions were held on the pitch. Cricket was once the mainstay of Ipoh Padang but today only a matted patch is visible.

The hard-working groundskeeper is long gone. A rusty roller that has seen better times lies idle within the landscaping department's compound bearing testimony to the field's prominence as a cricket ground of choice in the 50s up to the 70s.

PRIMARY REASON

The decision to have the launching of the Perak MSC Cyber Centre at Ipoh Padang on Tuesday, October 23, 2007 is the primary reason for the latest batch of deteriorating conditions. A large air-conditioned tent was erected in the middle of the field for the grand opening ceremony graced by the Prime Minister and his entourage. No stones were left unturned to please the VIPs. The contractor,

through sheer ignorance and negligence, single-handedly turned the padang into a dirt track filled with tyre marks that have deeply scarred the surface of the field.

Dato' Mohamad Rafai bin Hj Mokhtar, the mayor, said on Monday, November 12, 2007 that repairs to the damaged field would be undertaken immediately. He announced the closure of the field to the public for a month.

Now, who is to foot the bill, estimated at a cool RM200,000?

This, it was decreed, would be decided at a meeting between representatives of K-Perak Incorporated, the event organizer, and City Council the following day.

Almost two months have passed since then. Nothing seems to have happened in spite of the mayor's pronouncement. Iconic Ipoh Padang is in danger of becoming a disused lallang-infested open space like the Sentul field in Kuala Lumpur. The spectre looms large in the background.

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Editorial

TO GREEN OR NOT TO GREEN, THAT IS THE QUESTION.

Perak State Exco member, Datuk Chang Ko Youn, who chairs the State Urban and Local Government Committee, is now on record as having promised to push for more greenery in Ipoh.

He is reported to have stated that the process will begin by a reduction in the number of traffic lanes in the city's two main roads – Jalan Sultan Idris Shah and Jalan Sultan Iskandar. Each five-lane thoroughfare will be reduced to four and the freed space, thus created, will be landscaped with lines of large shady trees.

This is indeed great news. It is what the Ipoh community has been demanding and what the Ipoh Echo has been strongly advocating. Such moves could well be the catalyst for the long-awaited rejuvenation of the Inner City. We totally agree with Chang that the added greenery would not only improve the surrounds aesthetically, but would lower the city's temperature, making it agreeable for shoppers to stroll along pedestrian walkways. With some added streetscape like public art and water features, together with the existing heritage buildings, the inner city could be transformed into a most attractive location, not only for the local populace, but for tourists as well.

We also agree that it will boost the business of traders as 'people can actually walk along the pathway and shop, even during the daytime'. It could emerge as one huge departmental store, but one with an enthralling difference. The layout, of course, would be vastly different, but the business activities quite similar. Instead of being contained in a single building it would be spread out in individual shops, each unique with its own architecture, character and heritage.

For all his hopeful utterances, though, Chang errs on the side of caution to the point that, despite what he is now saying openly, he still privately fears nothing will come of his drive for greenery. Apparently, some two years ago, he proposed similar ideas to several businessmen who quickly rejected them on the grounds that scrapping one lane from these roads would worsen traffic jams. He is reported to have added that the state government would not want to undertake improvements of this nature unless the businessmen were in favour.

We would have thought that any businessman with a sense of community commitment – not just a desire to get rich quickly and to hell with the consequences – would have welcomed Chang's proposal enthusiastically. City planners and traffic experts are always available to advise on alternative traffic routing arrangements.

At present both roads fail to serve the inner city shops. They are highways for speeding traffic travelling from one end of town to the other. We suspect this has been the root cause of the many shop closures that have taken place down both routes.

Perhaps Chang spoke to the wrong businessmen. At any rate, taking the issue a step further, we would strongly challenge the concept that businessman should be the sole arbiters of such matters.

Let's have your thoughts.

THERE IS ANOTHER WAY

Joseph Michael Lee, PTA chairman of a mission school, warns that without adequate funding from the government or parents, there is a real danger of the quality of education offered by these institution being compromised. (*Your Concerns, Ipoh Echo*, Dec15-31, 2007)

The reality is that as long as these schools are owned by religious institutions, the government's contribution will remain meager. By the same token, so long as parents perceive that government officials control and manage these establishments, little support can be expected from parental coffers.

In short, the future looks bleak for such institutions.

There is, however, a single ray of hope that must be explored. As grim as the picture appears, it might just present the private sector with a rare opportunity to initiate a revolutionary path in education delivery.

Such activity would require generating financial resources not merely to survive but to raise the process of education to an entirely new plane. Education would then be substantially different in form and content from what is currently being provided by traditional schools. Within the current world scenario, such a structure holds great promise.

There is a growing realization, locally and internationally, that scholarly achievement alone is inadequate for survival, let alone to progress in the global world. Fortunately, the knowledge and tools for implementing a more relevant education system for today's need already exist. All that is needed is the vision, boldness and the resources to actualise it.

The strategy would be for the school to comply with the curriculum guidelines set by the ministry but in addition apply resources to deliver a more holistic and liberal education targeted at producing confident, articulate and knowledgeable young people who are creative, ambitious and destination driven. The process will target the object of education well beyond accomplishments in examinations. High academic attainment will be a natural but incidental consequence.

With education being liberalized, perhaps English should be introduced as an alternative medium of instruction in these schools.

The product of mission schools have historically been highly regarded. It is for this reason that these institutions have been the schools of choice for the middle and professional class. Of late, this reputation has somewhat suffered. But the foundation remains intact. The plan is to reinforce on this base the traditional values of these institutions but remodeled to meet current and future demands. If well structured and executed it would breed a sense of pride and loyalty among the students leading to an alumnus playing an infinitely more supportive role.

Again, let's have your views.

Your Concerns

THE STATE OF OUR CITY

Year-end summing up brings together the good news and the bad. . .

As 2007 was drawing to a close, the Ipoh City Council met to examine the year's report card.

The expected rhetoric was delivered: achievements were lauded and calls for better performance for the time ahead were made. Then Mayor Datuk Mohamad Rafai Moktar and his team turned to the most relevant point of the meeting – presenting the picture of what 2007 had been to the city. The cut-off date for figures given was end November.

POSITIVE

The financial health of Ipoh was declared sufficiently robust. Revenue collected from assessments was RM71.63million, 109 percent

Residential homeowners were among the worst culprits. There were 39, 251 of them and their combined arrears totalled RM16.36. Under the factory category, 875 premises had unpaid assessments of RM2.05 million.

Five areas have made it to the list of top errant payers. A total of 15, 653 cases of assessment arrears have been recorded with the highest number coming from Pengkalan (2,698). The other four are Bercham (4,432), Menglembu (2,721), Rapat (1, 937) and Lapangan (3.865).

ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

Revenue from summonses from various offences increased by a marked 15% - RM3.28million compare4d



Revenue for the city was up but it could have been better.

up the council's target!

Licensing brought in RM6.7million while Services earned RM12.47. Rental returns gave RM5, 24million while Summonses and Penalties raked in RM4.22million.

The total of RM119.41 was impressive when compared with the RM100.3million reported for 2006.

NEGATIVE

But there are arrears from assessments. Up to November 2007, defaulters owed the city RM26.96million. Members of the Task Force which was set up the previous September would, according to the mayor, monitor and take action against the erring ratepayers.

with RM2.84million in 2006. Cash collections from cow-catching, confiscation of property, advertising, tents, crane and dog licences amounted to RM1.67 million, up 16% from 2006. From licensing fees for banners and various types of bunting, the Council accumulated RM1.2 million - RM200, 000 more than what it collected the previous year.

STRAYS

The meeting also brought to light the fact that there are now more strays roaming the streets of Ipoh. Enforcement officers caught 113 stray animals in 2007, nearly four times their catch (35) in 2006.

Peter Khiew

THINKING ALOUD

By Siva Pragasam

**“WHERE HAD ALL THE LAWYERS GONE?
LONG TIME PASSING.
WHERE HAD ALL THE LAWYERS GONE?
NOT SO LONG AGO.”**



(With apologies to Peter, Paul and Mary's '60s hit song)

They had, understandably, been talking about this get-together for sometime. They needed, naturally enough, to ensure that all the arrangements were spot-on. After all, it WAS the annual dinner of the Perak Bar. The date: Thursday evening, December 13, last.

Well, you've got to give credit where credit is due. The organisation was unquestionably efficient, the entertainment superb and the night's proceedings seamless. The Perak Bar Chairman's address was thought provoking. The master of ceremonies was in his element.

But something, clearly, was sadly amiss.

BLIND FAITH

Apparently more than 650 lawyers make up the Perak Bar but looking at the attendance that evening it would require blind faith to accept this figure as accurate. There were less than two hundred at the function with non-members possibly making up half the attendees. And it has often been stated – perhaps facetiously and by the envious – that Ipoh has more lawyers than you can shake a stick at!

For an event that takes place once a year, it is sad to note that only 20% of the members deemed it worth their while to make their presence felt. Attendance at an event is normally dependent on the perception of its value. Obviously the annual Bar dinner rates very low in the estimation of the majority of Perak lawyers.

PRESSURE

Perhaps the 500-plus local lawyers who chose to miss the dinner did so under pressure of commitment to clients. If this is the case, we're in for some truly riveting court cases in the weeks and months ahead. But I think not.

Our legal system has its roots in Britain where throughout history the Bench and Bar have been the pillars in the administration of justice.

Steeped in tradition, these institutions have historically placed much importance on ceremony. The intent is to create a sense of gravity and seriousness not only as its portrait to society but to strengthen, amongst themselves, the sacred values they have sworn to uphold.

The tradition of mandatory dining at the hall for students reading for the Bar is as much a part of education as attending lectures. It brings a cultural spectrum into the profession.

The annual bar dinner is a continuation of this ceremonial tradition. It is not only an opportunity for members of this select community to interact with each other and the members of the Bench in a semi-formal environment. Specifically, it should remind attendees of the institution they belong to and their role on its behalf.

ETHICS AND CODE

Culture has a great bearing on behaviour and ceremonies influence conduct. Ethics and code of conduct need forms of physical manifestation for continuous reinforcement.

Perhaps the Bar needs make some serious effort in not only persuading more of their members to attend the Annual Dinner but reviving other traditions that are slowly disappearing. These, after all, are what make up the soul of the institution.

Issues To Watch

DEVELOPMENT PLANS THAT INCLUDE THE KINTA RIVER

A 1.5 km spruce-up is promised.

Rivers have always been focal points of towns and cities all over the world. A beautiful and well-maintained riverbank certainly contributes to the over-all image of any destination.

Many old towns and cities were founded along

It has replaced damaged ornamental lights and seen to it that these new fittings are kept in working order. The Council has also attempted to beautify the bridge along Jalan Kampar but the efforts were thwarted by vandals – possibly scrap metal thieves

on a big rock by the bridge along Jalan Idris Shah is a sad reminder. These days, tall grass and bushes are testimony to yet another failed community project.

The interlocked brick footpath and benches along the embankments in the Old Town sector from Jalan Kampar to Jalan Sultan Idris Shah also need proper maintenance.

FRESH ATTEMPT

Lately, a massive development scheme that promises to enhance the area along the Kinta River has been unveiled.

The project, undertaken by a private group of companies, has secured the full support of the State



The bridge along Jalan Sultan Idris Shah

rivers which, at one time, were used daily for ferrying produce and, therefore, indispensable to commerce.

IMPRESSIVE EXAMPLES

Most towns and cities are considered beautiful because of their rivers – bridges and riverbanks get spruced-up over the years to blend in with various development schemes. In Europe, bridges, rivers and their embankments have been made attractive for both local residents and visitors. Consider London, Paris and Amsterdam.

Ipoh City should follow such examples. The development of our riverbanks is long overdue.

EFFORTS

Currently, there are five bridges in the city centre spanning the Kinta River. The one along Jalan Sultan Idris Shah is my favourite.

The City Council has done its share of maintenance.



Sad reminder of another abandoned project.

– who carted away sections of the gold-painted railings.

Much should be done for our neglected bridges and embankments. In 1991 – 17 years ago! – the Ipoh Rotary Club launched a tree planting programme along the riverbanks as part of a beautification campaign. In less than four years, the exercise was abandoned and forgotten. The commemorative plaque

Government. A temporary occupancy licence (TOL) has been issued, allowing for the development of approximately 1.5 kilometres of riverbank on both sides of the Kinta River, from Jalan Raja Musa Aziz to Jalan Iskandar Shah.

By Jerry Francis

Photographs by Rosli Mansor

THUMBS UP

FAREWELL TO MIKELSAMY, HARUN et al

How many times do we remember those who function quietly in the background?

On Friday, January 4, 2008, Ipoh City Council organised a dinner at the Ipoh Town Hall, to pay tribute to all its retiring council workers. Among the longest-serving employees were Mr Mikelsamy a/l Kolandiasamy and Mr Harun bin Dahalan. Each had been with the council for 37 years and 9 months.

The honorees were treated to a scrumptious dinner as well as entertainment. The evening's programme included traditional Malay dancing, a live band and performers who sang a variety of Malay, Chinese, Indian and even Japanese songs.

The atmosphere was

charged with mixed emotions. Many retirees expressed sadness at having to leave the work force. Some, however, found consolation in the fact that their new free-wheeling schedules would now allow them to spend more time with family and catch up

on activities they had not had time for because of job commitments.

A minute of silence was observed as a remembrance of those who had passed on and therefore could not be part of the evening's bitter-sweet gathering.

NDR



A couple of well-wishers arrive for the evening's tribute.



One of the three traditional Malay dances that were performed for the retirees and their guests.

THE WAY IT WAS 100 YEARS AGO THIS FORTNIGHT

Perak Pioneer Established in 1894

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THE MAN WHO COULD NOT BE HANGED

January 18, 1908

RELEASE OF JOHN LEE AFTER 23 YEARS IMPRISONMENT

Thrice on a scaffold

ESCAPE FROM DEATH FORETOLD IN A DREAM

Could it possibly be true? It certainly could. And here's the story that put the stamp of truth on the extraordinary rumours a century ago -The editor, Ipoh Echo.

It is reported that John Lee, who was condemned to death for the murder of Miss Keyse at Babbacombe has been released from Portland prison.

Lee, who protested his innocence at Devon Assizes in 1885 and after three abortive attempts were made to hang him on February 23 that year the sentence was commuted to one of penal servitude for life.

The crime for which Lee was sentenced to death may be told in a few words. On the morning of November 15, 1884, a Miss Keyse, a well-to-do maiden lady was found murdered in the dining room of her house in Babbacombe. As the result of investigation her butler, John Lee, was arrested and eventually put upon his trial for murder. Miss Keyse had befriended Lee as a lad and after he had served imprisonment for six months for theft, she took him into her service.

Discovery of the murder

On the morning of November 15 the servants at 'The Glen', Miss Keyse's house, were roused by the smell of fire. Ellen Neck, one of the old and valued servants of Miss Keyse, made her way downstairs and met Lee in the hall. Jan Neck, her sister, visited her mistress's room, but Miss Keyse was not there. She also went downstairs and was conducted by John Lee through the smoke. On her nightdress where John Lee

had touched her were found marks of blood. A pool of blood was seen in the hall, where the murder had evidently been committed. The body had then been dragged into the dining room. A lot of old papers had been placed around the body, and saturated with oil, for the purpose of destroying by fire all traces of the murder.

The evidence against Lee was entirely circumstantial but was such strong cumulative evidence that little doubt was left in the minds of those who heard the trial as to the prisoner's guilt.

The execution was fixed for Monday, February 23, 1885 at 8 o'clock in the morning. The chief warden led the way, followed by the chaplain and the schoolmasters. Lee, pinioned, and walking between two warders, followed behind. Berry, the executioner, followed the convict.

The scaffold scene

Then ensued a scene which has never perhaps been paralleled. The chaplain, in deep impressive tones, recited the concluding portion of the burial service used at executions. The condemned man was placed on the drop, the white cap being drawn over

his face. The governor, under-sheriff, doctor and warders stood facing the scaffold. The chapel bell was tolling. As soon as the chaplain has said the Grace, Berry pulled the lever and tried to release the bolts for the drop to fall.

There was no response. A shiver passed through the circle of onlookers. Berry and the warders stamped upon the drop. It would not work. All this while when minutes seemed like years, John Lee stood erect and apparently unmoved, save when his body was shaken by the jerks made by the stamping of feet on the trap-door.

Six minutes elapsed; the thin boards gave way a little to the violent stamping and the prisoner's weight, and Lee had the sensation of being slowly strangled, but the bolts were still immovable and the drop clung persistently to the surface. Lee made no sound. He was taken off the scaffold, while the engineers and warders chopped away at the woodwork. The drop was tried again, and this time seemed to work satisfactorily.

Lee was placed upon the scaffold once more. The chaplain repeated the words of the burial service a second time, and the second time the bolts refused to act. Berry pulled

the lever backwards and forwards with all the force at his command. It was all to no purpose.

Lee was taken to the basement of the prison, attended by the chaplain and two warders. He seemed to be in a catatonic condition, he spoke to no one and looked upon the scene with a vacant gaze. In a few more minutes the wretched man was summoned for the third time to the scaffold. For the third time the terrible ordeal was gone through with the convict and for the third time the chaplain recited the burial service.

Escape foretold in a dream

What follows is best told in the words of the chaplain, the Reverend John Pitkin:-

'The lever was pulled again and again. A great noise was heard which sounded like the falling of the drop. But to my horror, when I turned my eyes towards the scaffold I saw the poor convict standing on the drop as I had seen him twice before. Three times they had tried to take away his life. This seemed to me enough and that I ought to interfere. The surgeon advised me to stop the execution, and I refused to stay any longer. The under-sheriff ordered Lee to



Shortly after his release - a dapper John Lee

be taken back to the prison.'

During a subsequent interview with the chaplain, Lee told the latter of a dream he had had on the night previous to his attempted execution. He had related this dream to the two warders who had charge of him adding: 'So I shall not be hanged to-day.

In this dream Lee saw himself being pinioned, taken out of his cell and led down through the reception cell to the scaffold. He saw himself placed on the drop, which would not work, and then taken back to his cell because they could not carry out the sentence of the law.

So, what ever happened to John Lee?

by Ipoh Echo's own correspondent

The story of John Henry George Lee - the man British authorities couldn't hang, despite three attempts - sent shockwaves of alarm, amazement and decided unease throughout Britain and her dominions when it first broke in November 1885.

It was not surprising, then, that when convicted murderer Lee was finally and controversially released from jail after 22 years incarceration, news of his newly-gained freedom made headlines worldwide.

Accordingly, the Perak Pioneer ran a major feature on Lee in its January 18, 1908, edition. We re-produce this account in full as our current

"The Way It Was" column above.

FADED AND FORGOTTEN

Like everyone else, local Perakians and members of the expatriate community here were amazed by the Lee saga as recounted by their local newspaper. Unfortunately for them, additional information on the story was hard to come by. Communication problems of the time continually plagued the effective transfer of news from England to her far-flung colonial interests. In time, the Lee story would fade from memory and, ultimately, be forgotten altogether.

So, what ever happened to the man - variously tagged "the Babbacombe murderer" and "the man they couldn't hang" or "three times lucky Lee" - after he walked away from Portland Prison?

Throughout his long years behind bars he had steadfastly maintained his innocence of the charge of murdering socialite spinster, Emma Anne Keyse. Moreover, he continued to do so as a free man. Indeed, his protestations of innocence became a key theme at public lectures he delivered in major cities across Britain for a period of some three to four years after his release. In this way he was able to exploit his notoriety as



Lee ready to lecture

a means of livelihood.

Nattily attired in a neat Edwardian suit, Lee would describe for his enthralled audiences how he came to be arrested for a crime, he insisted, he had never committed.

He maintained another person had been the guilty party and that his arrest had been essentially manufactured

by a police force under pressure to wrap the case up quickly.

Lee's lectures provided graphic details of the harrowing moments he had spent on the scaffold at Exeter Prison on February 23, 1885. There he had stood, hooded with rope drawn tightly around his neck, as hangman James Berry struggled with a release handle which refused to drop the platform's trapdoor. Three times Berry attempted to send Lee hurtling to his death. Three times the trapdoor mechanism failed to function.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE

There could be little dispute over claims Lee made regularly to his audiences that he had been convicted on nothing more

than circumstantial evidence. And this, he argued, police had further manipulated in order to secure the required conviction.

Lee would later claim that the murder had been committed by none other than his half sister, Elizabeth Harris. She had been a servant in Emma Keyse's substantial residence, The Glen, at Babbacombe, Torquay, where the killing had taken place and where Lee, himself, had been employed as a butler. As it happened, a written statement from Elizabeth Harris had been submitted by police as evidence at Lee's original trial proceedings.

In 1912, with his public appearance schedule drying up, Lee collaborated in the making of a silent feature film on his 'incredible life'. The British Film Institute, in 2000, located a copy of the original

The John Lee story; continued from the previous page.

film stock and transferred it to video tape. This has since been lodged at the Torquay Museum where it is now available for public viewing.

According to British Home Office archive documents, John Lee was last reported alive in 1916 and was probably then residing in the Brighton area on England's southern coast. Subsequent independent reports, however, have him travelling variously to America, Canada and Australia.

More recently a book entitled *The Man They Could Not Hang*, by Mike Holgate and Ian David Waugh, revealed that Lee's gravestone had been discovered at the Forest Home Cemetery, Milwaukee, USA. Such a find would strongly support a research line indicating it was indeed Lee, who on September 25, 1939, completed a Declaration of Intention in Milwaukee,



After 22 years this release gave John Lee his freedom.

Wisconsin – the first step in a process towards becoming an American citizen.

Associated research has uncovered that John Henry George Lee was employed as a shipping clerk in Milwaukee, was married to an

Adelina Gibbs, of Canterbury, Kent, England, and was the father of a daughter, Evelyn. Lee died in Milwaukee on March 19, 1945, aged 80.

An interesting footnote to the Lee story is provided by Home Office archive pa-

pers in London showing that a formal enquiry was subsequently launched into the hanging procedure that had gone horribly wrong . . . or, alternatively, horribly right!

It found that hangman Berry had correctly tested the trapdoor beforehand and had pronounced it working satisfactorily. But incorrect assembly of the gallows mechanism, declared the enquiry report, had resulted in the system malfunctioning. At fault had been the trapdoor hinges. They had been misaligned by a matter of an eighth of an inch. The misalignment had prevented them from opening effectively when the trapdoor was weighted.

As a direct result, Britain's penal authorities ordered an entirely new and standardized gallows design in order to avoid a repeat occurrence.



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Ipoh Facts and Fancies

by Ho Tak Ming

THE FIRST MOVING PICTURES ARRIVE IN TOWN

The earliest cinematograph – or gambar hantu as the locals called the new silent moving picture show – first came to Ipoh in August, 1906.

The Matsuo Japanese Cinematograph Company held nightly shows in a tent for sell-out crowds over a period of seven weeks. They then moved on to another Malayan town for identical presentations.

He was a wily one, was Matsuo. He had something for everyone. There were comedies, like the "Troublesome Mother-in-Law" and "The Amorous Soldier", dramatic pieces like "The Sailor's Wedding" and documentaries with scenes from Dear Old Mother India, which brought a tear to the eyes of the burly ghari-wallahs and bullock-carters.

Matsuo even managed to sneak in propaganda shots of the recently-concluded Russo-Japanese War, and the Japanese among the audience would shout "Banzai!" at the victory scenes. The cinematographer was well-pleased with Ipoh for he left it with well-lined pockets.

COMPETITION

The following year Matsuo was back, but this time he had competition. Besides his company, there were three other cinematograph companies making the circuit – the

British Cinematograph Co, the French Cinematograph Co and the Besan Cinematograph Co.

Matsuo promised a change of programme every three days to keep the audience coming back. The British Cinematograph Co's tent at Lahat Road was lit through-



Ready for the movie chains

out by electricity, and it introduced a novel idea. As each film was brought forward, a Chinese description of it was hoisted on a panel prior to its reflection on the screen. The French Co supplied stirring music on a gramophone while the Besan Cinematograph Co banked on technical perfection (keeping vibration to a minimum) to please the audience.

Matsuo had a soft spot for Ipoh. He donated the proceeds of some matinees to the building fund of the newly established Convent. He even gave free performances on Sunday afternoons to

the schoolchildren of the Anglo-Chinese and Convent schools.

His up-to-date tent in New Town, just off the then Togo Street – named, as it happened after his famous compatriot, Admiral Heihatiro Togo, hero of the Russo-Japanese War – was

well-patronised every night. Among the attendees were numerous Europeans. Togo Street, though, was destined for a name change. The only thoroughfare in Malaya named after a Japanese, it was later changed to Cockman Street and, eventually, to Jalan Dato Onn Jaafar.

FROM TENT SHOWS TO THEATRE

However, in spite of Matsuo's popularity, the days of travelling cinema shows were numbered, at least in a modern, progressive town like Ipoh. In 1907, when Yau

Tet Shin started building New Town, he included a theatre in Anderson Road especially for this new medium of entertainment.

A local syndicate, headed by R.L. Corbett, a tin miner, formed a company, the Ipoh Cinematograph Company, to lease Yau Tet Shin's theatre



And, given time, this would be ready too. . .

and screen cinema shows in a permanent and comfortable premise. The company made arrangements with the well-known firm of Pathe Freres to supply a batch of new films by every mail from England.

From time to time, travelling dramatic companies like the Warwick Major Comedy Company could also give shows at the theatre, which would allow the people of Ipoh a chance to see live performances. At the time, the only English theatre in town was the Ipoh Club Theatre, which was very small, and did not cater to people who were not members, such as the

English-speaking Eurasians and Straits-born Chinese.

The Ipoh Cinematograph was a success. The films were of a varied nature, and some of them were even coloured. At last Ipoh had its own Picture Palace that offered some entertainment at night to planters who were tired

THE FIRST CINEMA CHAIN

Spurred by the success of the Ipoh Cinema, a well-known Japanese cinematograph exhibitor in Singapore, K Harima, built another theatre in Anderson Road, a thoroughly up-to-date building capable of seating 1,500 people. This was the third cinema hall in his chain that ran eventually throughout Singapore and Malaya.

The competition meant that each cinematograph company had to offer something extra to draw in the crowd. The Ipoh Cinema's French manager set up a live band that played wonderful music. Harima Hall attracted no less a crowd by its attention to technical perfection. Of course, the people of Ipoh benefited.

The two Cinematographs in Ipoh are said to be "lawan-ing" with each other, and as a result, a number of people are getting free show passes

Ipohites became movie buffs in no time. The town's newspaper commented on the new situation:

We have had various circus companies, variety shows, outside cinematographs and many other touring entertainments in our midst during the past half year, and each have been fully patronized by our local public, with more or less profit and loss to the management, but none of them have in any ordinary sense of the word, approached the popular and flourishing Picture Palace of our town in the shape of the Ipoh Cinematograph Theatre in the New Town. Ever since its commencement, now going on for over two years, it has sustained, and greatly improved, what it promised to supply and is at present the most up-to-date entertainment of its kind either in the Federated Malay States or Straits Settlements.

Musings

by See Foon Chan-Koppen



See Foon

“Raising the Altitude of your Attitude”

Get out of your mind-made prisons and celebrate life

The quoted headline above piqued my curiosity – enough for me to read it rather than perform my usual action with the delete button. The smorgasbord of uplifting ideas brought me to reflecting on myself, the people in my life, and the attitude we adopt as we soldier on through life's vicissitudes.

Each of us has a personal view on life and for the most part, it is based upon whatever the bulk of our beliefs happen to be. We all know people who never seem to succeed at anything . . . the “poor me” victims for whom life is a series of failures. Chances are they had probably been making failure-based decisions for some time, and had thus

boxed themselves into a no-win belief system . . . such as “it won't work”, “if only . . . I was taller, shorter, prettier, richer, smarter, more educated, stronger,” or the most common one, “its not my fault, . . . he, she, they, the system, the weather, perhaps even God, . . . is to blame”.

Our lives, after all, are determined by our attitudes. While we may not always consciously choose our experiences, we do consciously choose our *reactions* to them and from those reactions our attitudes are determined.

We either adopt a high-altitude attitude or, like many of the victim types we know, we choose an attitude that is buried in defeat.

WE'VE GOT CHOICES!

Of course, when we're troubled, it is difficult for us to see anything but the problems surrounding us, and it's easy to feel victimised and a failure. The idea that we can change our circumstance by choice seems almost nonsensical. But the truth remains:

WE ALWAYS HAVE A CHOICE.

And WE ARE ALWAYS CHOOSING.

In fact, even when we've convinced ourselves we have no choice, we are making one: We are choosing to NOT take control of the situation. By doing so, we lock ourselves into believing we have no options available. This *dis*-empowers us, draining our energy and literally turning us into captives in our own mind-made prisons.

OUR KEYS

The good news is we can always escape. We have, each and every one of us, been given the keys necessary for release from our self-imposed shackles, and even in those moments when we are stressed out, overwhelmed and our lives feel totally out of control – even in those moments – we are capable of choosing the way to freedom. We are capable of developing a winning attitude.

How often do we hear the lament from residents

about how little is going on in Ipoh, the lack of attractive jobs for young people, the lack of a strong manufacturing sector, the lack of an effective air-link and on and on, ad infinitum.

And yet . . . from a “high altitude” perspective, look at what Ipoh has to offer: mystical valleys amidst the verdant limestone hills, miles and miles of mysterious caves, the best hawker food in the world, good medical care, no traffic jams, a relatively lower cost of living.

TRY!

So why haven't we cornered the market for the “Malaysia My Second Home” programme for retirees?

Have we even tried? Or have we just been lamenting about the same old issues which are never going to be resolved quickly . . . in other words, play the victim?

I would like to borrow a thought from Edward De Bono who runs workshops on creative thinking and finding creative solutions to prob-

lems. De Bono says that the key to finding oil is not digging a deeper hole in one spot but to dig many other holes around the same area. If the geological studies have been right, one of these holes is bound to hit oil.

LAST WORD & A POEM

One of my favourite seminars that I run, is called “Taking the ‘T’ out of *Can't*” a workshop where attendees are stimulated to explore and expand possibilities and make choices which were hitherto not in their world view.

The results are astonishing. It never ceases to amaze me how participants who may have begun the workshop with downcast demeanours, doubting frowns or sad expressions, inevitably leave at the end of the workshop with a spring in their step, a smile on their face and perhaps even a song in their hearts. Such is the power of raising the Altitude of one's Attitude.

Lastly I'd like to share an edited version of a pet poem of mine. It is worth reflecting

each time we feel defeated.

It Couldn't Be Done
By Edgar Guest

Somebody said that it couldn't be done,

But he with a chuckle replied
That “maybe it couldn't,” but he would be one

Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.

So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin

On his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing

That couldn't be done, and he did it.

Somebody scoffed: “Oh, you'll never do that;

At least no one ever has done it”;

But he took off his coat and he took off his hat,

And the first thing we knew he'd begun it.

With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,

Without any doubting or quiddit,

He started to sing as he tackled the thing

That couldn't be done, and he did it.

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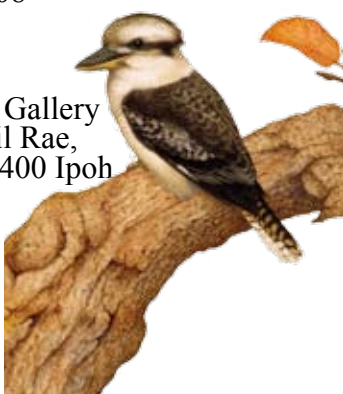
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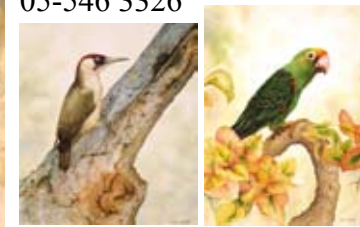
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Kafe Paprika's

Beef Provençale

This recipe can be made the day before required; it is unsuitable to freeze.
Serves: 4

INGREDIENTS

1 kg oyster blade steak
60g butter
2 leeks, sliced



2 cloves garlic, crushed
400g can tomatoes
2 bay leaves
1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves (or 1 teaspoon dried thyme leaves)
1 cup water
1 beef stock cube
1 ½ cups dry red wine or substitute apple or grape

juice.
500g baby potatoes
4 small zucchini, sliced
12 black olives
1 tablespoon plain flour
2 tablespoons water, extra

METHOD

1. Cut fat and sinew from steak. Cut steak into bite-sized pieces. Melt butter in large saucepan, add steak in single layer, fry until well browned all over; remove from pan.
2. Add leeks and garlic to pan, fry until leeks are lightly browned.
3. Stir in undrained crushed

tomatoes, bay leaves, thyme, water and crumbled stock cube, wine, potatoes and steak. Bring to the boil, reduce heat, cover, simmer 40 minutes or until steak is tender (or transfer mixture to shallow ovenproof dish, cover, microwave on HIGH for about 20 minutes).

4. Add zucchini and olives, cook further 10 minutes (or microwave on HIGH about 8 minutes). Blend flour with extra water, stir into mixture, stir over heat until mixture boils and thickens (or microwave on HIGH 3 minutes).

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Among Us, '20 - somethings'

WANTED: 'THE RIGHT ONE'

Breaking up is hard to do? Try looking for love! by Nisha Devina Roy

Working in Ipoh as a young, hip, 20-something has its benefits – you save a lot of money, it takes two minutes to get to work, food is cheaper...etc.

Some, however, are still unhappy!

I sip coffee with a group of my contemporaries, discussing (again!) about how difficult relationships are and how finding partners are impossible in this town. One of the girls starts to rattle off about how, as we get older, the pool of single people will dwindle – look, she says, there are more single people in their 20s than in their 30s.

One of the guys proceeds to say, "That's because choices are limited these days!" His pronouncement was, of course, met with a number of 'not-so friendly-looks' from the girls.

This discussion is, I realise, time-worn. But it is a cliché that affects us 20-somethings so we have to talk about it, dissect it, exhaust it: is it that Ipoh really has nothing to offer in terms of a partner or are we being too fussy?

PICKY, PICKY

Falling in love has never really had a good reputation – outside of Hollywood anyway. But that is the problem – we think Hollywood is real!

For women, it comes down to the deterrent power of Percy Sledge and Bryan Adams with powerful romantic songs. like 'When a man loves a woman' and 'When you love someone'. Romantic songs placing women on pedestals are a recipe for disaster.

Women expect uninterrupted Hollywood romance so much so that when they get a dose of reality – a private joke among friends – they immediately feel alienated and therefore get upset! A man cannot be Superman every minute of everyday, and vice-versa.

After talking

admits that men who wear socks with their sandals, long nasal hair and crusty ears send her running in the other direction.

Kelvin Leong, 28, IT Director, notes, "Overly-flirtatious women make me think of them in a not-so-nice light...don't get me wrong, flirting is normal but not when a girl forgets she's a lady."

J

Thambianathan, 24, sales executive, quickly adds, "I hate it when a girl has food stuck in her teeth...it is disgusting!"

Just like

Vanessa, Claire, Kelvin and J. Thambianathan, most of us have issues about the opposite sex. We nit-pick – people who have food stuck in their teeth can't all be horrible, can they?

LOVE... IN IPOH?

After finishing college or university, our circle of friends and acquaintances becomes smaller. In university, meeting people was not a problem – one would meet new acquaintances nearly everyday.

This however is harder in the everyday world of making a living. There's not much time to cultivate new friendships and this, one supposes, leads to fewer choices for the love aspect.

CAREER FIRST?

The other point to note is that at college, dating was not a problem. The work force is different. We hesitate to start becoming emo-

Pedantic Nitpicking

t o

m e n

in Ipoh one gets a peek into the mental list they create. Subconsciously, they get the 'she is not as good, as kind, as giving as my mother' syndrome. The list so far consists of, "She must cook well, she must have a good figure, she must have brown eyes, she must...she must...she must!"

Thus, the field gets narrower and narrower.

PERCEIVED WARNING SIGNS

The notion of falling in love and finding 'The One' seems impossible when we have embedded in our own minds, preconceived notions of how the opposite sex should behave.

Vanessa Shanti, 28, an advertising executive says, "I get put off a guy the moment I see him chewing with his mouth open...and if he asks me to drive on the first date! That is a definite no-no!"

Claire Bong, 25, Head of Resource, giggles as she

VIEW FROM A DISTANCE ...

thoughts of home from Malaysians abroad

A GATHERING OF 'ORPHANS'

Pamela Drakos on a great dinner idea, the Polar Bear swim and the celebrated opposite number of the humble Fung Keong flip-flops

I start this fortnight's column with - what else - food! The holidays are so much about family and friends gathering over food and drinks, lots of it. Sometimes however, we may be in situations where your friends and family are simply too far away to celebrate with... so the Malaysian Association of British Columbia came up with this idea of an orphans' dinner - if you had nobody to spend Christmas with, you could all gather for a traditional turkey dinner (with all the turkey fixin's like s mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, brussels sprouts, and gravy) in the company of fellow Malaysians.

I thought it was simply a great idea. They all gathered at a fellow Malaysian's home where the host cooked the turkey plus fixin's. The guests came with a potluck dish to share. There were about 30 adults and 12 children and all had a whale of a time. A few days later, a group of Malaysians got together at English Bay in Vancouver to

tionally involved with colleagues. Dating an officemate is, very often, a bad career move. And let's face it, at this time, our careers are very important to us.

Maybe we should make the effort to get out more – get out at night, join social clubs and see what events are being held in and around Perak – you never know... somewhere out there. Biding his/her time is 'The One'.

check out the annual Polar Bear Swim. The event happens every Jan 1 at 1pm, where daring Vancouverites take a plunge into the icy cold waters just to herald-in the new year. They say it's *shio*, I am not sure it's so *shio*! None of the Malaysians I know participated.

FUNG KEONG vs HAVAIANAS

We had a couple of houseguests this past year visiting from Brazil. They came on separate occasions and both came bearing some *buah tangan* gifts; something Brazilians are extremely proud of, Havaianas. One will ask, what are Havaianas? I'd say, not much different from a pair of Fung Keong slippers (also known as "thongs" or flip flops) ... you know the kind that have a y-strap and are/were blue and white coloured, made of rubber. Why is this topic interesting? It's simply a lowly slipper, for grief's sake. Havaianas

have achieved world-class star status and these flip flops sell in North America for anywhere in the range of C\$30/US\$30. Celebrities were seen sporting these things like Fendis and Blackberrys, all the rage in Hollywood (and of course the fashion conscious. They cannot be any flip flops, they have to be Havaiana. I wonder what marketing/branding talent they must have there to catapult the lowly flip flops to the world's top fashion scene? If only our Fung Keong could take a page from their marketing playbook.

This fortnight's column is by Pamela Yoon Drakos. She has been living in Vancouver since 1990. She works for HSBC as an Investment Advisor & Portfolio Manager. She has started a Mandarin Chinese school for tots & preschoolers in North Vancouver: www.globalkids.ca She welcomes comments/discussions at pamela_drakos@hsbc.ca

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STUDENT FROM TELUK INTAN BEATS THE ODDS



Nor Umairah Ahmad Jamhari receiving the proof of her highly motivated attitude

Gritty is the word for Nor Umairah Ahmad Jamhari, 15, of SMK Jaja Muda Musa in Telok Intan. She is living proof that, with diligence and determination, one can prevail over major hurdles. She is Malaysia's top student in the disabled category, having earned eight As in the PMR. She is now a step closer to her dream of becoming a lawyer.

Nor Umairah was born with under-developed hands but, with encouragement from her elders, she perfected using her left toe to write, paint and eat. When she sat down for

the PMR, her teacher kindly volunteered to write a letter requesting that her student be given extended time to complete her eight papers. Nor Umairah declined politely, saying she could manage, like the rest of her peers, to finish the work within the allocated schedules.

The winsome girl scored five As in her UPSR. Because she paid close attention in class and spent three hours daily for revision, Nor Umairah says she had felt no need to attend tuition classes.

She thanks her fellow students and her teachers because they gave her "great support and encouragement". She says they gave her confidence.

Modified tables to suit Nor Umairah's needs were placed in classrooms, science laboratory and library. She felt she had to give something in return for this kindly approach. Her handicap, Nor Umairah states, made her persevere and work harder at whatever she does. It has, she pursues, made her truly motivated.

Students from participating schools are invited to share their thoughts with others. E-mail articles to editorial@ipohecho.com.my attn: Peter Khiew

HARD WORK PAYS OFF FOR TAIPING LAD

Kwek Zi Hao of SMK Hua Lian in Taiping told the Ipoh Echo that his eight As were an excellent New Year present for his parents and teachers.

They, he said, gave him both inspiration and unstinting support. Now one of Perak's top students, he also recalled the six months of committed diligence that preceded the PMR. He would like to be a pharmacist one day. Kwek said he was prepared to devote a great deal of time to achieve this objective. After all, he added, there are no shortcuts to success – you need to work hard for things to happen!

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Celebration day for Kwek Zi Hao

CONVENT GIRLS SCORE AGAIN



Seventy (70) students from SMK Main Convent, Ipoh, scored straight As in the PMR examinations. Pictured with some of the top scorers is Bonnie Lee (fifth from left) who aspires to be a successful businesswoman. She attributes her recent exam achievements to her teachers. On the other hand, V. Yuashini, a daughter of an Ipoh Council enforcement officer, thanks her sister whom she describes as 'my backbone'.

She also thinks she has been rewarded for the five-hour study period she had put in daily.

CHANGE THOSE BENCHES!

Students and teachers of SMK Main Convent celebrate with pride the school's centennial anniversary this year. However, there were concerns that somehow threatened to mar the otherwise happy picture.

The benches in the school canteen were giving way, the tables needed replacing and the stalls obviously had to undergo extensive renovation

works.

The state committee chairman for Health, Science, Technology and Environment, Datuk Tan Chin Meng - presented an allocation of RM5,000 towards the upgrading of the 100-year-old canteen. The aid came as a pleasant surprise.

"The contribution is timely and with the sprucing up of the canteen, we look

forward to a more pleasant and conducive setting. The canteen is where our own students congregate for their recess and fellowship," said principal Loh Wei Seng after the school's Annual Excellent Award ceremony.

She said the upgrading of the canteen is also in line with the Education Ministry's cleanliness, health and safety programme.

The chairman of the school's Board of Governors, K. Letchimanam, parents and some former students who received awards and certificates for various achievements were present.



Tan Chin Meng (second from right) handing over the cheque to Letchimanam. Looking on are Loh (middle), senior assistant Arpah Ismail (far left) and teacher Ng Kit Wan (extreme right).

GURU SHANGAR'S LATEST HARVEST

Kristin Hartlich attends a graduating ceremony with a difference

Fourteen young students – 13 girls and a boy – marked the conclusion of their two-

year training in Classical Indian Temple Dancing at a filled – to – capacity Dewan Bandaraya last month. Guru Shangar Krishnasamy, Dance Master, led the celebration.

An on-stage offering by the graduates and their parents to Nataraja, the God of Dance, was made before the main programme. Only after the blessing did the ceremony start.

The stunningly made-up youngsters, in elegant costumes – designed and stitched by Guru Shangar himself – began



Graduating students displayed both grace and endurance.

marching into the Ipoh Hall. The orchestra – comprising traditional Indian instruments began playing background music.

The young talents presented various types of Classical Indian Dance. They treated the audience to the distinctive feature of Bharatnatyam Dance - the use of expressive hand gestures as a way of communication. The show - brilliant ensemble acting, choreography and sound was most impressive. The students, from the age of seven to sixteen, were able to manage challenging sections and displayed both discipline and endurance, performing non-stop for an equally enthusiastic audience.

Guru Shangar, the founder of The Ananda Narthana Choodamanu Dance Academy, began his involvement in Bharatnatyam at a very young age, was highly pleased with his graduates'



Preparing to perform performance.

Hamsaroopini D/O Ramakershinan, 16, felt so enthused at having danced before family and friends. Proudly, she announced that she could now teach and dance at social functions.

Kristin Hartlich is a German AFS Exchange student. She is presently attending Form 5 Orchid, Main Convent, Ipoh. She is returning to her home in Lahnstein sometime next July.

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Sport

HOW TO LOSE

A few leaders in our team help make Perak a winning team. So please be fair when they occasionally lose . . .

I am a big fan of Arsene Wenger. Not just because of the way his teams play but the manner in which he conducts himself as a professional. I have read all the biographies on him (he has yet to write an autobiography) and one of the most interesting things he says is that coaches must learn how to lose.

The reality in any sport is that you will lose some time. It may be your fault because you played badly, or the other teams were better, or often a combination of reasons such as injuries, poor decisions and even that dreaded word - luck!

It is how you handle defeat and control the environment around you that can shape you as a Coach.

It also shows you how mentally strong your players can be. Some players "fall apart" after a defeat and their confidence disappears and others (the ones you want in your team) roll up their sleeves and fight harder. I am fortunate in Perak in that I have a few leaders in my team who do fight when defeats occur and their enthusiasm is infectious and they lead the less strong players on.

DISHEARTENING

We recently lost at home to Negeri Sembilan, 0-1. A good game, which could have gone either way with maximum commitment from both

teams. It was our first defeat in Ipoh for 25 games unbeaten for over a year at home. However, some of the criticism and I could easily call it abuse, was amazing.

An example of this was at training one morning. A fan came into the stadium - a few fans watch training

light his behaviour. It is often stated (and not by professionals) that a professional should ignore this abuse. I have yet to read any contract where that clause is written. Why should you put up with personal, family or racial abuse because you are a professional footballer?

up with. What would possibly pass as a criminal act in the street is accepted at sporting stadiums.

It's not a majority - only a small mindless minority. I stop for every photo request - and this has massively increased with the advent of phone cameras - and sign every autograph. Mainly because I was a fan when I was young. But players are wary of strangers coming up to them in the street as often this ends up in a stupid comment. Sad for the genuine fan who the players are more than happy to assist.

BE FAIR!

Comment is acceptable but it has to be fair and realistic. I recently read the Minister of Sport saying that Nicole David had to buck up after she lost a game. What more does that wonderful athlete have to do? It's no secret she bases her self abroad to reduce the interference and criticism. A world champion and she has to buck up!

ANOTHER WIN

We are lucky to have what we believe is the best job in the world. Let's not take it for granted. But let's also be sane. We all lose sometime, it's just how you bounce back that judges your character. We bounced back with a 5-0 win at home against Sarawak and a 2-0 win away to Penang. Once again the strong characters led the way.



MINDLESS MINORITY

The unique atmosphere of sport does make people do irrational things. If I don't like a film at the cinema I don't smash the chairs or boo the screen. If a meal is bad at a restaurant I just don't go there again; I do not go into the kitchen and hurl abuse at the chef. I also wouldn't dream of stopping my mechanic or dentist in the street and tell them how to do their job. That is the daily pattern that players and coaches put

On 'crazy guy on a bike' STILL RIDING THROUGH CHINA...



records that the flu made him really sick and tired of sleeping in a bed - he missed his hammock terribly. He says, "I miss sleeping out too much. This bed thing is just so..... unfun." The past few weeks, he has had to take shelter in hotels and homes of some people because of the

bitter cold.

Upon reaching his 20,000 kilometre mark in Qinan, China, Tzou-Hann felt a great sense of achievement.

He celebrated by having a packet of peanuts and a much deserved bottle of beer. He thinks of how close to home he is and remarks, "I'm so close, I can almost smell the durian."

T z o u - Hann spent Christmas

in Zhenping where he got his Christmas wish and spent the night in his Hammock. New Year was celebrated in Nanjing, where Tzou-Hann met his sister who he had not seen for two years. In his journal he mentions how happy he was. Tzou-Hann, in his journal puts together a 'to-do' list for 2008:

"Get home, in one piece, not in a body bag. Until the May, 1, 2008 - heart and soul to this charity. It concludes then. Write a book of my adventure, translate it. Decide what the rest of the life is good for"

Tzou-Hann adds, "That is enough for a year..."



Tzou-Hann and sister get reunited in China

Those who wish to donate to Tzou-Hann's Charity Ride in aid of SMK St George Taiping Development Fund, the National Cancer Society of Malaysia and the MAA-MEDICare Kidney Charity Fund should send their contributions to: OGA- Longwayhome Charity Ride, c/o No 36, 1st Floor, Jalan Pasar, 34000 Taiping, Perak, Malaysia.

With determination to fulfill his dream, Law Tzou-Hann rides on after recovering from a bad bout of the flu. At this point, Tzou-Hann has reached Nanjing and has travelled a total of 21,694 kilometres.

He writes of the many obstacles that face him as he travels through China - the difficulty of getting drinking water from a hotel, sharing a room with loud, inconsiderate smokers, not getting what he ordered at a restaurant, riding in six inches of snow - all these and he manages to keep a cool head. He has after all, bigger fish to fry.

Tzou-Hann candidly