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CHRISTMAS



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Your Community Newspaper

ISSUE
64

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OF THE OLD
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AN END IN SIGHT FOR RESIDENTS' WOES?

A special report



The anxiety suffered by residents of Taman Istana along the Kinta riverfront seems over. Is there light at the end of the tunnel? A recent meeting with the mayor and the developer paved the way for an amicable ending to an otherwise heart-wrenching nightmare. So it seems . . .

Photographs by Rosli Mansor



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IPOH MALI *from Ipoh
by: yu azman b. hamid

yu_azman@yahoo.com

You're lucky lah Ong. Your house is near the riverfront project. Value will go up mah

What lucky? I am suffering lah!

Huh!

Suffering! Why?

My house is falling apart.

really??

Have you informed the authorities?

Aaaa.. tell them already but no actions!!

Like that huh...

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DINING-OUT THE CARE-GIVERS AND SURVIVORS

A well-meaning society that deserves more than just goodwill. Ipohites have to answer the clarion call for help coming from the local chapter...

Looks defy belief, for they are a sturdy group of people who have undergone great pains and hardship to be what they are today. They are not some high-flying personalities who have come the hard way to be at the apex of the social ladder.

These are ordinary people who, because of the disease that has afflicted them or their loved ones, have persevered when everything else seems hopeless. Some have endured only to succumb at the end. Others have struggled on gamely living it out by the day. It hurts to see the ones who suffer but it is more painful for their loved ones who not only have to endure the sight but the stress that ensues.

WHAT'S CANCER

Cancer or malignant neoplasm is a class of diseases in which a group of cells display uncontrolled growth, which sometimes spread to other locations in the body via the lymph or blood. These are the three malignant properties of cancer. Most cancers form a tumor but some, like leukemia, do not.



Dr Akhbar Ali and his committee members some of whom are cancer survivors

The Cancerlink Society, a non-governmental organisation, was incepted in 1986. The society provides emotional, practical and information support for cancer victims, their families and friends. It is based in Petaling Jaya and has three active branches in Penang, Kuantan and Ipoh.

The Ipoh chapter was formed in 1995 and has been providing the kind of support envisaged in the Society's charter to victims

and care-givers in the city.

IPOH CHAPTER

The Ipoh branch held its annual dinner at the Syuen Hotel recently. Some 150 people were present and they included survivors, care-givers and guests. It was a joyous occasion as the gathering provided the diners an opportunity to interact and be entertained by songs, dances and a magic show.

The Chairman, Dr

Akhbar Ali, in his welcoming speech, detailed the chapter's activities for the year and the programmes planned the following year. The one lingering issue which he could not dodge was finance.

According to Akhbar, the society requires RM20,000 a year to see its many programmes through. He has managed with only half the amount. This has, unwittingly, placed a heavy burden on the chapter's members as

they have to source the funds themselves. Being a voluntary body the chapter's resources are limited.

PROGRAMMES

Akhbar sought assistance from individuals and bodies to fulfill the chapter's many out-reach programmes. These programmes include seminars, talks, exhibitions for creating awareness, outings and camping for cancer-stricken children

and motivational activities for those diagnosed with cancer. Akhbar had turned to the Welfare Department for assistance. The department's resources are too stretched, as it has to cater to the many poor and destitute in the state. It is doubtful whether the welfare department could help.

LET'S DONATE

Ipohites and Perakians, in general, should respond by donating in kind to the Cancerlink Society Ipoh Branch. There are many out there who are prepared to help but are shying away for reasons best known to them. Let's come to the fore and help the Ipoh chapter in its hour of need. Cancer survivors, victims and the care-givers in Ipoh deserve better.

FATHOL ZAMAN

For details please call Deputy Chairman, Mrs. Esme Subramaniam at 05-5472441 or 012-5930314

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EDITORIAL

In truth we as a society do not appreciate the value of heritage. Sustainable development is merely a fashion statement.

The supporters of conservation and preservation of our legacy constitute only a tiny fraction of the State's population. Contending with a powerful commercial lobby, an unsupportive authority and apathy from the general public the tiny group has not been able to generate results.

Few recognise the value of our limestone cliffs, rainforests, streams, waterfalls, mega fauna, built heritage and aboriginal culture and even then the perception of their value is as tourist attractions. I would be hard put to find anyone who truly and genuinely sees its

Are Perakians Ready For Conservation?

value for itself and desire its conservation for the love of it.

Is any wonder that we have no compunctions in allowing unsupervised quarrying of our limestone outcrops, indiscriminate logging of our forests, polluting our rivers, wiping out our fauna, dispossessing our aborigines and destroying our built heritage?

Creating a culture that values heritage is however not a characteristic that can be developed overnight. It is a mindset that requires a long period of time to evolve. Only the young are receptive to imbibing values of this nature and the best place to begin this process is in the

schools.

So if we as a society are truly desirous of engendering a culture that is conscious of our heritage and a deep felt desire to conserve it, we need to structure a program to implant these values in our school children.

In addition to making them aware and delivering them knowledge of our natural and built heritage, the process would need to include taking them on field trips to visit these sites and interpreting them so that these features take root in their young minds.

With knowledge would come appreciation and that would lead to conservation.

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THINKING ALOUD

By G. Sivapragasam

PENANG HERITAGE POSER

Penang may lose its UNESCO-accorded heritage status if it goes on with its development plans. The state government has to decide....

There are no free lunches – only trade-offs. This is the reality that was brought home to Mr Lim Guan Eng's Penang State Government this mid-November.

Readers would recall the alacrity with which the newly minted Pakatan State Government welcomed the news of UNESCO's recognition of the 260ha Penang inner city as a world heritage site early July. The new government, no doubt perceiving the inscription as a godsend, enthusiastically took ownership of it and set about preparing to celebrate this event, even complaining that the central government's grant for the celebration was inadequate.

Today less than six months down the road the state is facing the very real danger of losing its newly acquired world heritage site status. Penang may yet acquire the dubious record of having been a heritage site for the shortest period of time in history. Unfortunately their loss of this status may also result in Malacca losing its claim to the title.

The declaration by Lim Guan Eng that he and his government were unaware of the conditions of the listing is peculiar, taking into consideration that the conditions came into the hands of the government as long ago as August



such things.

Having said that it is somewhat strange that the 13-storey Boustead building was approved 10 days before the recognition was announced – leading to a not unreasonable suspicion that there was an attempt to steal a march.

Adding to the confusion is the statement of the Municipal Council

Committee. As Dr Richard Engelhardt, UNESCO Asia-Pacific regional adviser, put it - when the status is approved, the guidelines of the World Heritage Committee's trump all previous existing regulations.

Luang Prabang in Laos is a world heritage city that is experiencing mass increase in tourist arrival but investors are fac-



last year. Perhaps the government would have been better advised to have looked at the documents that came with the recognition than seeing how to celebrate the event.

At the very least they could have sought some advice on the implications of the recognition from those who know about

President that UNESCO was told about the high rise buildings before the award was made and they had raised no objection.

The problem that has surfaced is only the tip of the iceberg. There can be little doubt that all future development in the area will be subject to guidelines of the World Heritage

ing difficulty in increasing accommodation space for the tourists due to their inability to meet the strict conditions set by Unesco.

I would predict that there are more problems to come and the Penang planning authority would be well advised to go through the guidelines with a fine tooth comb.

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Takaful

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MUSINGS



See Foon

As the financial tsunami is sending its tumultuous waves across the globe and while Malaysia has not felt the full brunt of its devastation; yet despite the lower oil prices, prices on everyday household commodities and necessities have not come down. Whether one points fingers at greedy merchants or the lack of government intervention, the fact remains that except for those with very deep pockets, most people will need to tighten their belts and start to

COPING IN CHAOTIC TIMES

Stretching the Ringgit Even Further

by See Foon Chan-Koppen

ipohecho.sf@gmail.com

think about stretching the Ringgit.

CAR-POOLING OR WALKING

There are many ways to stretch your ringgit and today I'd like to explore a few of these. It is a pity that public transport in Ipoh is not as readily available as in other cities, but car-pooling is certainly an option. Our bodies might even thank us if we resort to walking to appointments if the distance is short enough.

INTERNET PHONE CALLS

I often wonder why more people are not using the Internet for free phone calls instead of relying on mobile phones which can tally up a large monthly bill. I use Skype, a free

software easily downloadable on the web and keep it open to all my friends who may wish to call me. I even include my Skype identity in all my emails but alas, most of my friends, whether out of fear of technology or just resistance to change, don't use it. Other cost-cutting ideas include digging out your old clothes (vintage trend is in) and resisting buying anything new, no matter how tempting or irresistible.

FRUGAL GOURMET

How about restricting eating meat to once or twice a week or turning vegetarian completely? Not only will your food budget be halved but your cholesterol levels may go down. Or when cooking for the family, double the portions and freeze half for

the following week. There is economy of scale in the buying and cooking.

FESTIVE GIFT GIVING

We're now in the festive season and thoughts turn to what to give to whom. Many of you may even feel stressed out making lists, buying presents, wrappers, ribbons etc. If we can look beyond our friends and loved ones and give a thought to the less fortunate, the ones who may be sick, or alone, or lost in their own world. We can perhaps use this festive season to share our abundance with our friends while spreading some cheer to the underprivileged.

SHARING LARGESSE

What I'm suggesting is to make donations to the

charity of your choice and send out greeting cards with notes attached, saying, "A donation has been made to ABC charity on your behalf"

Not only can you do this over all festive seasons but for all birthdays, anniversaries and any other gift-giving occasion. And if money is an issue, consider giving of yourself....your time, in whatever way you can assist; your energy, in organizing, galvanizing; your influence, in gathering

support from your friends and acquaintances. And share these acts of kindness with your friends instead of giving what may be useless presents. (How many of you have a gift box where you store unopened presents which you hope to recycle? Come on...be honest and own up!)

Let us not forget that the main purpose of a gift is to commemorate some person, occasion or festival. There are a myriad ways to do that in these dire financial times.

And to quote Oren Arnold:

- Christmas gift suggestions:
- To your enemy, forgiveness.
- To an opponent, tolerance.
- To a friend, your heart.
- To a customer, service.
- To every child, a good example.
- To yourself, respect.
- To all, Charity

31 December 2008

Wednesday 8.00pm onwards

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- >> Main Course
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THEME

BLACK & WHITE WITH A TOUCH OF RED



Most Gorgeous Contest

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&

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FOR WOMEN

A NEW YOU

Makeovers for the New Year: What to do and Where to go

As the year draws to a close and the festivities are upon us, its time to think about welcoming the New Year with A NEW YOU! It's all possible here in Ipoh as the Ipoh Echo made a quick round-up of the beauty options and special promotions available.

GET GLOWING

Start now with a course of Diamond Microdermabrasion which is a painless removal of the top layers of dead skin, leaving the skin below glowing and radiant. While you're at **Lindee's 012-5075202** in Bandar Baru Medan Ipoh, check out her LPG Endermologie full body contouring and Radio Frequency treatment which removes wrinkles & sagging. All three non-invasive treatments come in a package price of

RM388.

HAIR MAGIC

Still in Bandar Baru Medan Ipoh, get your hair styled at **HK** with **Ann 012 430 1608** a HK trained hairstylist with magic scissors. Or wander across the street to **Aroma Leisure: 05 5450766** where you can get pampered with a full body massage, a facial and special neck treatment for RM268.

VAMP IT UP

Get the vamp look and bat your lashes at that man across a crowded room by having your eyelashes permed with SanSan who operates a salon in the **Kuku Spa 05-5451899** in Ipoh Garden South.

PAMPER, PAMPER

While she's doing

that, treat yourself to the sumptuous Essie Spa treatment for hand and foot with **Charmaine and Kit**. Marine sea salts are used to exfoliate your feet and legs, followed by the Hydromasque to soften and purify. Then lie back and luxuriate with the Ylang-ylang leg & foot massage followed by moisturizer. Your hands receive a similar pampering and finish



off with the nail lacquer of your choice. Package price RM150. Or be a devil and go all out for the "bling".

Opt for the Nail Art and be as creative as you wish.

MORE HAIR HEAVEN

Moving further downtown behind the New Town police station, visit **Team Florence** for your complete makeover where you can do everything possible for your hair, face, body and nails. They give the best head and shoulder massage in town with your hair shampoo. Ask for **Florence or Bee 05 52422782** for your hair makeover.

BLING IT TO THE HILT

With your face and body toned, glowing and radiant, its time to think about a really special dress for all the parties coming up. **Call Chic and Sleek's Christy 016-5504900** for

the drop-dead glamour girl outfit that will wow all your friends. If she doesn't have what you want, she will tailor it for you from her wide range of fabulous fabrics.

If drop-dead "Bling" is not your cup of tea, then head over to **Greenleaf boutique** in Ipoh Garden East and ask **Michelle 017-5712511** to show you her latest collection. She carries a large range of day-wear and some casual evening numbers that will stand out on any occasion.

Happy Makeover and welcome to the NEW YOU!

A gown from Chic and Sleek



LETTER FROM ULU KINTA

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS BUT ONCE

Perak has potentials to be a tourist-destination but inaction and indecision are holding things back. But it's not the end of the road.....

Opportunity knocks but once. In early December, thousands of stranded tourists at Survanabhumi Airport, Bangkok, finally flew home, but not before venting their frustrations and anger at the Thai authorities for their enforced captivity. Unable to return to families and jobs, their holiday had turned into a nightmare. Most vowed never to return.

The reasons Thailand attracts millions - namely sun, sea, shopping, scenery and service - are what we too, possess. Old habits die hard. These disgruntled people will want similar attractions in ensuing holidays, but in an alternative location. Thus, this turmoil is our opportunity. We may yet receive a significant

boost in visitor numbers and revenue, in forthcoming years. But extra groundwork is needed beforehand to reach the excellence of Thai tourism.

Perak has much to offer from the beaches of Pangkor, the wealth of Belum, or our misty hill-stations. There is agro-tourism, mining history, palaces, historical and archaeological sites. Our old buildings are a beautiful mixture of Indian, Chinese, Gothic, British and Islamic architecture. All give a feel for Malaysian history.

The global recession will cause a fall in foreign visitors and a contraction of our economy. Nevertheless, tourism can still be supported with the appropriate financial tools and policy support. Businesses only respond

if it is in their interest. It is the job of government to ensure that it is.

First and foremost is information. Staff in our tourist information centres seem disinterested and ignorant about what is on offer for visitors. They lack communication and multi-lingual capability. There is a glaring shortage of skills and experience.

More investment is needed in Perak's public transportation system. An absence of good, fast links and facilities to connect Ipoh with other cities is a barrier to growth and tourism. Lengthy train journeys, belligerent taxi drivers, unsafe buses all infuriate travellers. Controversy over the bus terminal still rages. Even at KLIA one is hard pressed to learn about transport to Ipoh.

We must address the different patterns of demand. A westerner may expect high levels of professionalism from our services. The majority want tranquility and relaxation, will shun over-development but will head for unspoilt beaches or forest reserves. Conservation, environment concerns and animal welfare are their top priorities.

European visitor numbers may decrease, and the emergence and importance of tourists from China should not be discounted. Their needs differ greatly. Similarly, the budget of our own domestic tourist must be considered. To capture high-income tourists, as in quality tourism, we need to be more specialised and provide better services in innovative recreation,

good health services and safety and the prompt dealing of complaints.

Perak food is famous, but cleanliness and hygiene in our restaurants and public toilets, are below standard. As individuals, we treat our streets and drains as one open-air garbage bin. Street litter, fly-tipping, dirty rivers, blocked drains and sewers all stink. They are an eyesore and a health problem; a community issue, but the responsibility of local government.

In the opening scenes of Australia, Nicole Kidman's film, the audience receives a flavour of the outback. We should copy this and promote Perak aggressively through the film industry. Films could be part of a massive advertising strategy

for Perak. The message? Come here and have an experience that is more than a holiday; in effect, we make Perak, the co-star. Red tape should be removed and the government should actively engage with film-makers. "Lord of the Rings" caused a massive increase of tourists to New Zealand; "Indochine" had a similar effect on Vietnam.

Building more theme parks, replica bridges or shopping complexes are not as sustainable as concentrating on what we already have. Improving our services, providing quality and being committed are more important. Thailand represents fun! Malaysia is stifled by officialdom. We are in grave danger of squandering this opportunity. Let us work hard to improve our welcome.

YMM

PHASES & FACES

BIRTHDAY BASH



Mdm Rosline Ang, Datuk Sandra Lee, Margarita Lee & Caroline Wong.

Caroline Wong celebrated her 40th birthday with a lavish party at Tai Thong Restaurant. Dressed in 'Carmen Miranda' style, Caroline was an exotic vision to behold as she entertained her guests with a stage number from the inimitable Kevin Lee who did a creditable revue ala the late Anita Mui. Caroline took to the stage herself, ably supported by her friends Ceylyn Woo, Maria Tan, Margarita Lee and Marion Chong, who choreographed the routines, all of whom exhibited some nifty footwork.

GRAND OPENING



MCA Public Complaints Department chief, Datuk Michael Chong, was in Ipoh on Friday, December 5 for the grand opening of Shanghai Bay Café and Pub located at the Greentown Business Centre. A sports car exhibition complete with GT girls was held in conjunction with the gala opening.

More pics at ipohecho on line

IPOH DIARY
DECEMBER 16 TO 31

Book Fair at Tun Razak Library Jalan Panglima Bukit Gatang Wahab, Ipoh. Books for sale to the general public. Date/Time: Thursday, December 18 to Saturday, December 20. Library opens from 10am to 6 pm. Admission: Free. For details please call Pn Afizah at 05-2558073

Alzheimer's Foundation Dinner to raise funds for a day care centre for victims of dementia. Menti Besar Perak is the guest of honour. Date/Time: Saturday, December 20 at 7.30pm. Venue: Banquet Hall, State Secretariat Building Ipoh. For details please call Dr Esther Ebenezer at 05-2432635 or 013-5201220 (mobile).

Christmas Day Buffet Dinner with Santa Claus and singing performance. Date/Time: December 25 commencing at 7pm. Venue: Lakeside Terrace, Clearwater Sanctuary Golf Resort, Batu Gajah. Admission: RM66 (Adult) and RM33 (Children). For reservations please call 05-3667433 Ext 546 or 567.

New Year Countdown 2009 at MBI Square on December 31 commencing at 8 pm. Join the merry-making and the countdown to New Year. Fireworks display at stroke of midnight

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A WORKING MOTHER'S DILEMMA (WMD)

A working mother's lifestyle is not as glamorous as some would think. Our columnist shares her experience and offers tips on how to juggle a career and family. . .



I'm a working mom, albeit a happy one. But I will be the first to admit that it is tough juggling a demanding career and a young family.

Don't get me wrong, I have always imagined myself as a working mother. As a child, I had always admired my own mother who organised a family of four children and elderly parents-in-law efficiently while holding a full-time

job. I have vivid memories of my mother fixing her hair and make-up every morning, donning her white nurses' cap and white heels before leaving the house for work. When I became a teenager, I grew to love children and imagined having a family of six kids and coming home every evening to a house full of noise and activity. But of course that was way before I had any inkling

of what life would be like with children and a job.

By design or otherwise, mothers who work outside the home for income, in addition to the work performed at home in raising children, go through unimaginable highs and lows, often at the expense of their well-being.

Mothers are always torn between working and staying at home. As one SAHM (stay at home mom) girlfriend puts it, "When I was working, I wanted to stay home for my kids. Now that I'm at home, I wish I was back at work!" I wonder if this is true for most SAHMs who were once FTWMs (full time working moms).

First WMD Experience

My first working mom dilemma happened the day my son was born. He was born premature, a "29+ weeker" in medical

terms; 10+ weeks short of his due date. I had suffered a PROM (premature rupture of the membrane, or a water bag leak) and went into spontaneous labour a week after that. My son was 1.3kg at birth, and looked every bit a spring chicken. Oh how I entertained the idea of quitting my job permanently so I could devote my life to nursing my spring chicken to a full-fledged chook! Fortunately, my boss allowed me some extra time off work so I could keep my job.

That was five years ago, and now with another addition to the fold, my days are full to the brim with work, ferrying the kids around, evening activities and social obligations. Fortunately, working in Ipoh has allowed me the luxury of picking my kids up from kindy and having lunch with

them before getting back to work in the afternoon. Yes, it's one hectic schedule alright. However, the time spent chatting with my kids about their morning at school is precious and well worth the effort a hundred times over.

Whatever your lot is in life, and in this case whether a SAHM or

FTWM, contentment is a virtue. I am constantly reminded to count my blessings daily. Life is too short and rather than live wishing for something that isn't there or hasn't happened, we should focus on family, love and friendships and cherish every moment spent with them.

WERN SZE GILL

USEFUL TIPS FOR WORKING MOMS

- Have the kids pack their bags and set out clothes the night before.
- Before bedtime, make a to-do list for the next day's tasks.
- Listen to relaxing music on your way to and from work.
- For quick, easy meals, use a slow cooker often. Add ingredients in the morning, turn it on low and you'll have a meal ready when you get home.
- If you have to take work home, do it only after spending time with the family.
- Make it a point to have meals together.
- Remind yourself that the job is only a means to helping your family, not destroying it.

REFLECTIONS

MY LONGEST THREE MINUTES

Wan's 3 minutes on the mat with Uzbek Champion, Umarov seems a lifetime. Although Umarov triumphs he remains a downright humble man. Wan learns a thing or two from this grandfather

"O'bekistan! Boom! Boom! Boom! O'bekistan!" The battle cry of the 300 or so fervent Uzbekistan supporters situated just behind Ring 3 reverberated around the Winter Sports Palace. Amongst them was my wife, my sole supporter, who had somehow squeezed her way into the front row.

I was competing in the free sparring event for the middle-weight category in the 3rd Veteran TaeKwon-Do, ITF World Championship in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. I could not sleep the night before. My imagination was running wild. My op-

ponent was from the host country. His name was Umarov Fakhritdin. His entry number was 002, a hint of his seniority in ITF TaeKwon-Do in his country. From afar, the day before, I observed him strutting around the stadium floor, bossing over officials. He was obviously someone of authority. He was approximately my height but seemed more robust. Like most of the competitors he had a crew cut hairstyle and he looked fierce.

"Malaysia, blue corner. Uzbekistan, red corner in Ring 3, please get ready." We approached the referee at the centre of Ring 3 at

his command. After checking our sparring and safety gears and other preliminaries, he signalled for us to be ready....

Nothing in my 3 months intensive training could have prepared me for Umarov. He was not only light on his feet but displayed daring aggression for his hands never protected his face as he openly taunted me. I held my ground to make him come to get me. His assaults were launched by lunging forward with his whole body weight behind him followed by an easy combination of slapping kicks and punches.

Unprepared for this

style of fighting, I was pushed out of the ring a couple of times. The ring which measured 9 x 9 metres, bigger than anything I had trained on, was beginning to feel really small. Whenever he was close in, I was able to punch and kick him. After what seemed forever (90 seconds to be precise) the bell rang signalling a half minute respite. My stamina held up great. The punishing pace that I was put through during our intensive training paid off.

In the 2nd round, I moved about the fringes of the ring occasionally jabbing my opponent, tempting him to retaliate. When



Umarov (L) and Wan (R)

he came in I registered a few punches on his head and a couple of slapping kicks on his mid section. When the bell rang again, I was so relieved. Amidst all the noise, I could still hear my wife cheering through-

out the entire two rounds, "C'mon Malaysia, C'mon Loh Koong" She must have been quite a sight. As expected, my opponent won.

South African, Bobby Rizzo and his coach, Karel

continued page 11

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HERITAGE DAY

Preserving our rich heritage the Ipoh International School way



Students learning to make chapati

Some 1000 visitors attended Heritage Day celebration organised by the Ipoh International School recently. Its purpose was to promote the spirit of community and allowing the students to participate in projects which would preserve the rich heritage of the state.

Among the activities organised were model-building, sketching, photography depicting unique structures, buildings and historical landmarks found in Perak. Documents, rare photographs and a diorama of Malaya during World War Two were also exhibited.

Ipoh World, a non-governmental organisation,

provided invaluable support by displaying historical artifacts and memorabilia like rickshaw lamps, torches and bicycle lamps.

Visitors were also treated to demonstrations on batik painting and pottery making.

Members of the Persatuan Pemulihan Orang Cacat Perak impressed the crowd with their skills in weaving baskets, bags, hats and other household products.

It was an event-filled occasion filled with memories for the many first-time visitors. Kudos to the parents and teachers who had pooled their resources for a worthy cause.

PK

LEARNING THE ROPES

PSPA imparts its knowledge to its young and eager participants

Holidays will never be the same again for 280 participants who attended the Junior Associate Conference 2008 organised by the Perak Society for Performing Arts at the Ipoh YMCA recently.

While the younger participants were introduced to the rudiments of vocal techniques and a chance to explore their potential, the older students were taught the basics in vocal production, breathing and relaxation.

In another class, Timothy Chee enlightened the students on character and scene development. Students participated eagerly in theatre games and acting exercises, with an



Students listening to Timothy Chee

aim to develop their imagination and creativity. Participants were exceptionally attentive as the presenters were renowned in their respective fields.

Among them were

Jessica Ho, Loghandran Krishnasamy, Susanna Saw, Timothy Chee and Rosalina Ooi.

Ho is a graduate of the National Arts Culture and Heritage Academy

(ASWARA) and a two-time winner of The Dance Society, Malaysia Solo Ballet competition while Loghandran is an international speaker and first runner-up at the 2008 World Public Speaking Championship. Chee is a renowned artist and has directed over 30 musical productions.

PSPA president Rosalina Ooi said the conference was an effective platform for the youths to gain insights into the world of performing arts.

The 3-day program was sponsored by Kuala Lumpur Kepong (KLK) Berhad, an Ipoh-based public listed company.

PK

ASSISTANCE FOR THE CHAMPION

A timely morale-boosting aid for a winning school hockey team

The gritty hockey boys of SMK Sungai Pari were ecstatic when teacher cum adviser, N. Ragunathan, announced that they would be getting new jerseys and hockey shoes to replace their worn-out ones.

This was made possible by members of the Millennium Heart Caring Society who presented the winning team with a RM3,000 cheque at a simple ceremony witnessed by PTA Chairman, B.K. Kumar, recently.

Its president, Rosslyn See, said she was touched by the boys' determination



Rosslyn handing over donation to the players

despite the many odds they faced. She came to know of the team's achievement after reading Ipoh Echo.

Rosslyn said the society would continue to

assist the school in developing and financing its hockey team

In the run up to next year's competition, the boys will make do with

old sticks, for the moment at least.

Their humble background, notwithstanding, these youngsters have what it takes to be champions - attitude, determination and most importantly, perseverance.

Two of the school players had represented the state said Principal Mohd Jamil Mat Isa, acting as a constant source of inspiration to the whole team.

And with TC Sharma, K Anbalagan and Kulwant Singh at the helm, the SMK Sg Pari hockey team is definitely going places.

PK

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IPOH IN BRIEF

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TOUCH OF LATIN



MY Dancesports Studio Ipoh Garden East held its annual dinner and dance at the Hei Lai Toy Restaurant Ipoh recently. The climax of the evening was a talent show by students of the studio. Sixteen couples took part the largest ever, according to the studio principal, Ms Yeap. This year's theme was Latin Fever. The participants did not disappoint the 600-odd diners who were entertained to some fancy foot works choreographed by Yeap and her team. It took over three months to prepare for the finale with the performers practising at least 4 times a week. The result was simply stupendous, an observation shared by most diners.

RM'S OPEN HOUSE



Raja Muda of Perak, Raja Nazrin Shah and his consort held a tea party at Istana Raja Muda on the morning of Hari Raya Aidil Adha. Among the guests were MB Dato Seri Mohd Nizar Jamaluddin, executive councilors, state assemblymen and the mayor. Former MB, Dato' Seri Tajol Rosli was also present.

PERAK BLOGGERS

The recently appointed Perak state government bloggers held their inaugural meeting which was chaired by executive councillor, Hj Mohd Zainuddin. The purpose was to form a steering committee to oversee the bloggers' functions and responsibilities. Zulkifly Ibrahim, the Director of Administrative Communication, was elected Chairman and he will be assisted by Affendy (aka Mat Saman Kati), a popular local blogger. The bloggers will assist in disseminating information of interest, especially state's policies, to the general public. The mainstream media according to the MB has not been truthful in its reporting.

NEW FOOTBALL TEAM



Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Mohd Nizar met with members of the newly formed Perak soccer team. Taking on the role as coach from Englishman Steve Darby is evergreen M. Karathu who will be assisted by Raja Azlan Shah Raja So'ib. In the absence of a manager Karathu will officiate as one temporarily.

Appointments to the Football Association of Perak will be made in January 2009. Nizar reminded the 24 players to act and behave like professionals in order to lift the standard of the game. They should remain committed to the game, which has a huge following in the state.

RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION



Residents of Canning Garden, Ipoh Garden and Taman Hock Lee held a meeting recently to launch the Canning Residents' Association. Dr Ng Yook Sun was nominated the association's pro-tem chairman. Present at the brief ceremony were Canning state assemblyman, Wong Kah Woh and Canning councillor, Liu Then Ten. Flooding at Taman Hock Lee is an on-going problem that requires attention. Councillor Liu will forward his findings to city council. Wong reminded residents not to throw rubbish indiscriminately.



Hj Mohd Zainuddin chairing bloggers' meeting

FELLOWSHIP DINNER



The Bar Council Legal Aid Centre of Perak hosted Fellowship Dinner 2008 at Hillcity Hotel Ipoh recently. The objective was to thank the volunteer lawyers for their selfless service in providing legal aid to the underprivileged.

Executive Officer, M. Gokoolaram Naidu, thanked the volunteers for their sacrifices. The centre, which was launched in 1985, handles an average of 500 cases annually. It has also formed an Orang Asli task-force commission with the state government to assist this minority group. The diners were later entertained to songs and dances and a skit by chambering students.

CANCER AWARENESS



Pantai Putri Hospital Ipoh hosted an outreach programme under the Ribbon of Life Campaign 2008 recently. The event involving 172 participants, including a team from the US Navy and 15 cancer survivors, was held at The Lost World of Tambun. The participants enjoyed themselves to some outdoor games organised by the theme park management. The campaign, according to the CEO of Pantai Putri, Dr Dilsahaad Ali, was to create awareness regarding cancer in the public. RM32,000 had been raised and the money would go to deserving cancer support groups and Yayasan Jantung Negara.

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LETTER TO EDITOR

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

Dear Sir,

THE IPOH-KL SHUTTLE SERVICE

I took the opportunity to travel to KL using KTM's newly introduced shuttle service on Monday, December 1, 2008. I was at the Ipoh Railway station before 8 am in time to see the arrival of the first train from KL, which departed KL at 5 in the morning. About 20 passengers disembarked from three

coaches. The 9 am train to KL was almost full. There were, however, some minor glitches. I was unable to locate my seat on the coach marked. KTM had the wrong seat numbers on one of the coaches. The problem was promptly resolved with the timely intervention of the ticketing staff. Air-conditioning in my coach was problematic and this remained throughout the three-hour journey to Kuala Lumpur. I arrived in KL 15 minutes later than the scheduled arrival time

of 11.56 am. On the whole the journey was smooth.

Are Ipohites ready for this new service? For a start, facilities at the Ipoh Railway station are far from satisfactory. There are still too many unoccupied spaces in the station. The toilets are dismally poor. Too many fittings are missing leaving those answering the call of nature in a quandary.

The Ipoh Railway station is located in Old Town and is within the heritage enclave of the city. The state government

can promote Old Town by reintroducing the erstwhile heritage trail. Passengers from outside Ipoh arriving at 8 in the morning have almost 13 hours of idle time to waste before they leave at 9 pm. The idle time could be well spent on the heritage trail and a day trip, either by bus or train, outside Ipoh. This self-guided tour could be aggressively promoted on the coaches, at both stations and in the media. All travellers need is a simple map with the information added on.



The downside of the shuttle service is it is non-operational on weekends. KTM should reconsider the merits of having it on

weekends as it could be a potential money spinner.

MOHD TAIB
Ipoh

SPORTS

JUNIOR AMATEUR GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP 2008

Abel declared winner after carding an even-par 144 in the two-day tournament at Clearwater Sanctuary Golf Resort, Batu Gajah

The ninth leg of the SportsExcel Junior Amateur Open Golf Championship was held at the Par 72 Clearwater Sanctuary Golf Resort at Batu Gajah recently. The golf resort organized the tournament with the collaboration of Sports Excel and Majlis Sukan Negeri Perak.

The tournament was divided into five categories namely, Boys Under-18, Boys Under-15, Girls Under-18 and Boys/Girls Under-12. A super junior category consisting of boys and girls below 8 years was created specifically to expose the youngsters to the game. A record number of 153 juniors participated. Selangor had the most number of players with 71 while Perak, 20 players.

Abel Tam Kwang Yuan, 16 from the Royal Johore Golf Club who carded a two-day total of 144 strokes was declared the overall Champion. Abel, a 3 handicapper, took up golfing eight years ago. On the second day of play

Abel fired a 2-under 70 and birdied four holes in a row. He attributed his consistency to a "good meal and good sleep". Abel wants to play on professional circuit when he is eligible.

The Boys Under-15 category was won by Jeremiah Kim Leun Kwang from Montere Golf and Country Club, Shah Alam. Fifteen years old Jeremy, another 3 handicapper, had a credible score of 3 over 147 at the end of play. The Girls Under-18 title was won by 14 year old Isza Fariza from Staffield Golf Resort, Seremban. Isya a student of SMK Taman Melwati took up the game three years ago while following her brother around the Staffield links.

SportExcel, said Executive Director Mr Teng Mui Ngee, had been sponsoring the junior championship for 17 years. "We provide the youths a platform to showcase their skills. They have a role model in Ben Leong," he added. Young Ben Leong, a product of the junior

championship, is the highest ranking Malaysian professional golfer presently. He finished joint 22nd at the recent Singapore Open and pocketed US\$50,000.

Clearwater Golf Sanctuary Resort has been hosting the Sport Excel Junior Championship six years in a row. "Our objective is to provide a conducive venue in Perak for all these young talents," said Kenny Yap, the resort's Executive Director. JAG

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Abel Tam Kwang Yuan

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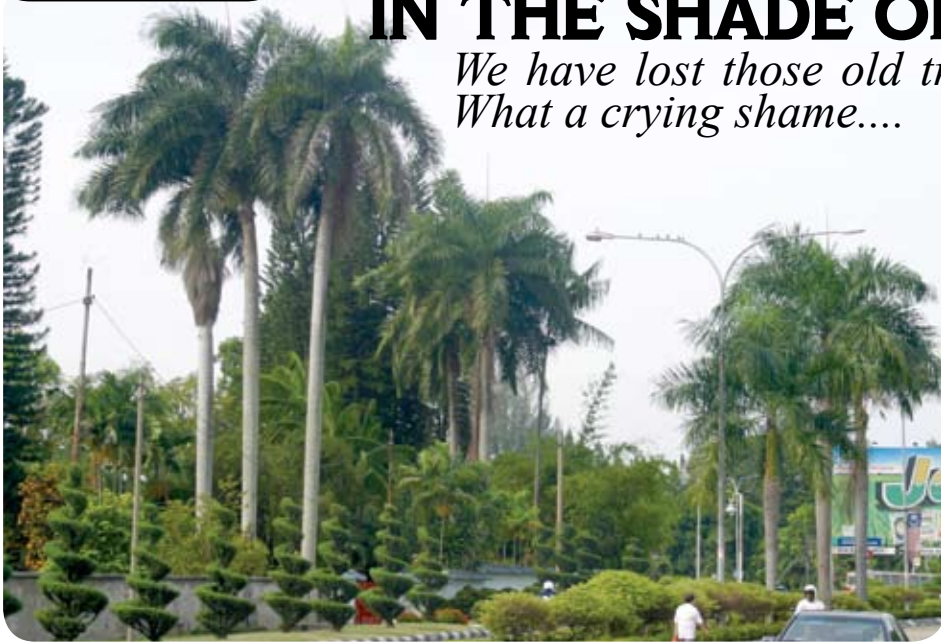
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PERSPECTIVE

IN THE SHADE OF THE OLD TROPICAL TREES

*We have lost those old tropical trees all in the name of progress.
What a crying shame....*



Jalan Raja Di Hilir (Tambun Road)

Someone once commented that a city's greatness could be measured by its public spaces, parks, fine homes and leafy oases. They add to the charm of the place and give it, its unique character.

In the 'old' Ipoh, as most of us know it by its old names of Tambun Road (Jalan Raja Di Hilir), Gopeng Road (Jalan Raja Dr. Nazrin Shah), Jalan Brewster (Jalan Sultan Idris Shah), most of the main avenues were once lined with majestic trees. If there was no other attraction for Ipoh then, the beauty of its flowering trees was enough to arouse the interest of people from all over the country.

The city planners in

those days used nature to enhance the city. They had foresight, vision and were 'green', even before 'green' became a popular word. Trees were planted with careful thought and consideration. A single type or species of tree would be planted along a particular road. The result when these flowered was not only breathtaking, it was also magical.

Tiger Lane (Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah) used to be carpeted in gold when the angsa trees were in bloom. One felt like royalty driving along the road or walking on the grass verges, sinking one's feet into the thick pile of yellow flowers that had been blown onto the ground.

Similarly, Gopeng

Road was awash in red when it was the turn of the flowers of the Flame of the Forest. From a distance, it would look like the tree tops were ablaze. Later on, when the wind swept blooms landed on the road, one was reminded of Chinese New Year, of drifts of spent firecrackers carpeting the ground, heralding the arrival of the new lunar year. Jalan Gopeng transformed by a thick covering of deep red petals. It was a wondrous sight.

Polo Ground off Tambun Road had a profusion of jacaranda trees. At the right time of year, the blue was so intense that it looked like nature was presented to us in shades of blue – light blue sky,

smoky blue hills in the distance and the fiery blue of the jacaranda trees in the foreground. Nothing could equal the beauty of jacaranda trees in bloom.

IPOH PADANG

Ipoh Padang was once lined with the majestic rain flower trees. With a massive span and arching branches which were tipped with small delicate pink flowers, they offered shade to the people who frequented the padang. Children from the schools nearby would practise hockey and other games on the field. I was one of them. It was heavenly to rest under the massive boughs, protected from the intense sun.

Sadly, most of these trees were felled. It is not necessary to go deep into our jungles to find indiscriminate logging and felling of trees. It happened there, in front of our eyes, right there in our city centre. The same occurs to this very day.

The few remaining beautiful flowering tropical trees disappeared quickly only to be replaced by boring, characterless mock pine trees. Possibly, in an effort to provide someone with topiary jobs, some of these are artificially sculp-

tured. It is labour intensive and time consuming. I wonder why some eyes do not, or cannot, appreciate the beauty and natural forms of the types of trees that once lined our roads.

Throughout the rest of Ipoh, most of its major roads and fields have been replanted with the royal palm. In my opinion, the only thing that is regal about these trees is their name. It is without beauty. It provides no shade. But it blends in well with the lampposts. It has no colour and it is almost characterless. It doesn't inspire. It is, however, easy maintenance – just pick up the fronds that drop to the

ground. There is no pruning, no leaves to be swept, no branches to lob off. It is like a perfectly genetically cultured tree – well behaved, well tamed, no problem at all.

It is a crying shame. The disappearance of the majestic tropical trees that once graced our avenues and proudly gave Ipoh its character is a crime. If these trees could talk, they would tell us stories of years gone by, wars they survived, occasions of joy and of trouble, times of drought, periods of flooding. Oh, if only they could talk.

MARIAM MOKHTAR

NIZAR A BLACK BELTER



MB a 4th degree black belt holder

The International TaeKwon-Do Federation, Austria conferred on the MB of Perak, Dato' Seri Mohammad Nizar Jamaluddin, an honorary 4th degree black belt in recognition of his service to the people of Perak. The presentation was made by the Deputy Vice President ITF Malaysia, Master Mohd Azman Khoo, during a simple ceremony at the MB's office recently. It was officiated by the Chairman of the the Ipoh TaeKwan-Do Club, Wan Koon Seng.

Present during the conferment ceremony were Executive Councillor for Youth, Cultural, Arts and Sports, Seah Leong Peng, Drs Khalil Idham Lim Abdullah and other office bearers of the Persatuan TaeKwon-Do Perak. Perak hosted the National TaeKwon-Do Championship, 2008 on December 13 and 14 in Ipoh.

SUE MAH

continued from page 7 MY LONGEST THREE MINUTES

Wethmar both of whom I had befriended came up to me and shook my hand, "It took courage, really," said Harald Nygaard of Norway. Most of the foreign competitors, who were waiting for their turn at Ring 3, patted me on my shoulder. Their gestures lifted my spirits. Personally, I was glad that I was uninjured and that I had done my best in the circumstances.

Later, I found Umarov sitting alone at an obscure

corner of the stadium. I went over to congratulate him. I discovered that I was two years his senior and that he was the champion of the middle-weight category in the 1st Veteran Championship at Genting Highlands in 2004. He was also the Head Coach of the Uzbekistan national team and a 6th degree black belt. I was lucky to be alive. Later still, at the cafeteria, after his fight with Russian, Alexander Boikov, (Umarov lost due

to a nose injury which he claimed was the result of a head butt by Boikov) he introduced me to his parents, wife, children and grandchildren. At 43, the man is complete. We made small talk. I then asked him for a photograph and he willingly obliged. "You make me famous in Malai...zsia," he said with a wry smile on his face.

It was strange for an hour ago, the man was trying to do me in and now we were like life long buddies.

After he departed, some Uzbekistan junior team members crowded around me for a photo, probably because I was friendly with their boss.

That night, back at Shodlik Palace, I was informed by the team members of Greenland that my fight with Umarov was on Uzbekistan National TV. It was the other way round, the man made me famous instead, in Uzbekistan anyway.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

WOMEN WEAVERS OF PWW

Basket-weaving skills which can benefit single mothers and improve their economic standing . . .

We have heard of environmentally conscious people doing some pretty crazy stuff with paper. Some turn used paper wrappers into elegant evening bags. Others turn cartons into handy shopping baskets.

A group of women at Perak Women for Women Society (PWW), however, transform magazines into beautiful baskets, trays, boxes etc. They reinvent existing paper materials using traditional techniques of weaving. Each piece is woven by

hand and hence, they come with slightly different shape and size. To ensure durability a coat of lacquer is added to strengthen and to provide the shine.

BASKET-WEAVING CLASSES

Throughout 2008, PWW has organised three basket-weaving classes for single mothers. This project is developed for the benefit of women to work from their homes. They can either weave at home or at a community centre

where they can bond with other women or even at PWW centre, where a support group is present to motivate them.

Sales from these crafts have helped some of the more industrious women to come to grips with their lives. It has enabled them to better cope with the most vulnerable aspect of living - finance. The society's mission is not only to empower single mothers economically but to rehabilitate them as well. Moreover, crafting bags and household ware from



Hand-woven bag and boxes for sale. Available at PWW office

used paper products help reduce wastage through recycling. So these hard-working woman weavers do deserve our attention and support. PWW

For information on the finished products and basket-weaving classes, please access our website at www.perakwomenforwomen.org or call our office at 05-5469715.

THE MANJUNG MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

Councillors in Manjung have devised a simple method to make them more visible to the public. They'll man a special counter....

Manjung Municipal Council was accorded municipal administrative status in August 2001. The council, formerly known as Manjung District Council, is located within Manjung District. The council is reputed to be the best-managed local council in Perak.

The council celebrated its 7th anniversary recently. The emphasis of this year's celebration was on the workforce and their performance at work. Their children too were feted, especially those who had obtained good grades in their UPSR examination. Awards were given to retirees in recognition for their service.

Council President, Zamri Man, in his welcoming speech alluded to the progress made by the council since attaining municipal status. The Manjung municipality covers an area of 301.82 sq km and has a population of over 165,000 inhabitants or almost 80 per cent



Municipal staff, spouses and children feted during the council's anniversary celebration

of the district population. Manjung District, incidentally, enjoys the second highest growth rate after Kinta Valley. Newly built Bandar Baru Seri Manjung is the administrative capital of the municipality.

Programmes introduced by the council had helped improved the quality of life of residents said

Zamri. The number of staff too had almost doubled from a mere 343 in 2001 to 577 presently. The council's ongoing efforts at improving public facilities and amenities within the municipal boundary are being well received by residents. Landscaping is one of the council's top priorities, as this enhances

the beauty and makeover of the municipality.

Since the council requires money for its many development programmes, revenue collection has to be efficient and arrears minimised. As at June 2008 some RM33 million has been collected. This is huge compared to the meager RM13 million gar-

nered during the same period in 2001. The increase is made possible due to the large number of property owners who reside in the many housing estates within the municipality. The proliferation of small and medium scale industries in and around Bandar Baru Seri Manjung is another contributing factor.

The revenue collected, said the President, had been well spent for upgrading works within the council.

To encourage interaction, in tandem with the requirements of the state government, councillors had agreed to open a special counter for the public to voice their problems. The counter will be opened between 10 am to 1 pm daily and will be manned by a duty councillor. This, said the president, was a simple method to avail the public to the 24 councillors at all times.

"Moreover, it helps make them more visible," Zamri remarked.

SAMINATHAN


IPoh echo

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