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AND ROCK ART



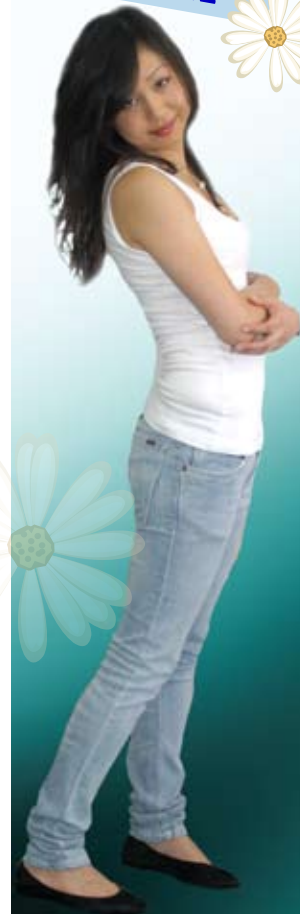
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READERS A
HAPPY AND
PROSPEROUS
CHINESE NEW
YEAR

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JANUARY



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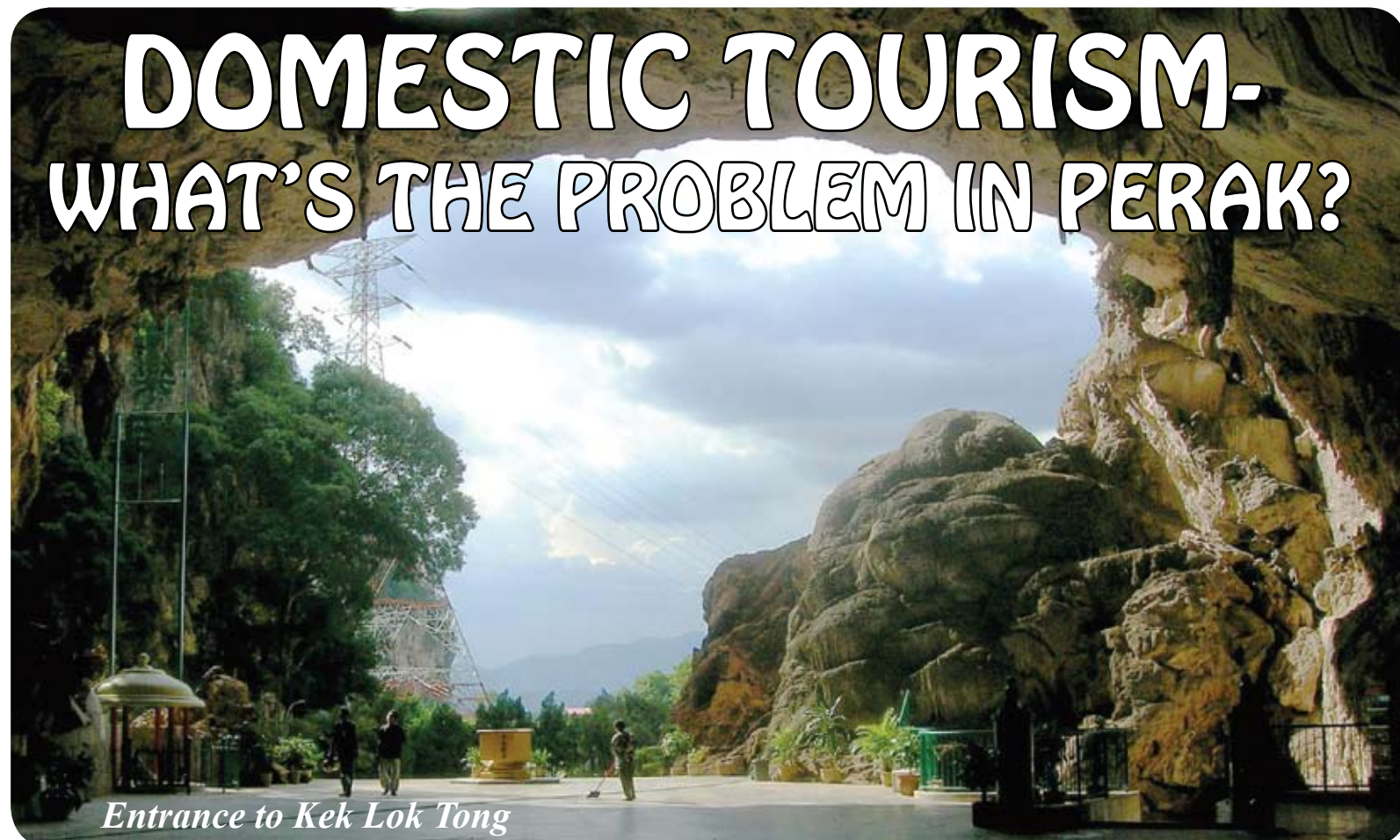
The quality I admire most:

HONESTY & LOYALTY

Ambition:

STILL IN THE PROCESS
OF FINDING THAT OUT

DOMESTIC TOURISM- WHAT'S THE PROBLEM IN PERAK?



Entrance to Kek Lok Tong

In 2007 the tourism industry raked in RM46 billion, the second largest contributor to the country's economy after the manufacturing sector. Perak reportedly earned over RM 1.28 billion from 3.2 million visitors. That amounted to a mere fraction of the pie. A dismal performance indeed considering that 2007 was Visit Malaysia year and also the nation's 50th Anniversary. The figure for 2008 dipped down to RM1.2 billion with only 3 million visitors. This was despite a change in the state government after the March 8 General Election.

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There's plenty to see and do for all in-bound tourists. What is needed is some imagination and due diligence..

A well managed tourism sector has the potential to create employment and generate revenue for local businesses involved in the hospitality industry. Year 2009 has been predicted to be a tough year due to a global economic slowdown. Should Perak get its act together, would a viable tourism industry help stimulate the domestic economy?

President of Penang Chinese Chamber of Commerce, Tan Sri Tan Kok Seng, thinks so. He urges the state and federal governments to work together to "promote domestic tourism as it would promote spending within the country." The Tourism Ministry has taken the initiative with the launching of its new website, "Zoom Malaysia", which replaced the "Cutti-cutti Malaysia" campaign. The purpose of Zoom Malaysia is to promote domestic tourism by constantly updating travel news and promotions. A new TV commercial has also been produced and run.

During the World Travel Market promo-

tion held in London, Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Azalina Othman was quoted as saying that eco-tourism and back-to-nature packages were the products that Tourism Malaysia would emphasise to get tourists to enjoy Malaysia's rich flora and fauna.

Incidentally, Ipoh has everything that a domestic tourist would wish for. Topping the list is food in its original form. Old Town white coffee, nga choy kai and char kuey teow just to name a few. The street where Old Town white coffee originated is still there. Each of the coffeshop there boasts that its blend of white coffee is better than the other. A cup taken with *kaya* (egg jam) and toast is an attraction by itself. Package the whole of Old Town, from the Kinta River to the railway station and, presto, you have a living heritage product to show to tourists.

Interesting sites to visit are rock paintings at Gua Tambun, pomelo farm and the Kek Lok Si and Sam Poh Tong cave temples. For the adventurous they can head to



White water rafting in Sungai Kampar

Gopeng and explore the massive Gua Tempurung and (white water) raft down the Sungai Kampar. In between, they can also visit the Orang Asli settlements at Ulu Groh. The locations of these attractions are minutes away from the city. Unlike Sarawak and Sabah, the close proximity of these sites to town is a plus point.

In spite of this in-bound tourism had been poor lamented Monica Liew, MATTA Chairman.

Hj Rahmad, the General Manager of the State Tourism Action Council (MTPN), disagreed. He cited the case of the Johore Tour Guides Association regularly bringing in Singaporeans to Gopeng for adventure

tours. Rahmad would prefer that local (Ipoh) agents bring in visitors so it would benefit support services players in the industry.

Ng Wi Soo of Keris Travel and Tours provided an insight of what Perak needs to do to encourage more visitation. Citing the case of the Singapore River which was smelly and unsightly a couple of decades ago. The Singapore government, said Ng, took the initiative to clean the river and today it is an attraction by itself.

Similarly for Ipoh, the government should take the lead to plan a tourism product, develop, package and promote it until it generates the kind of revenue needed. The Tambun pomelo farm is one shining

example said Ng. Pomelo is synonymous with Ipoh. More farms in Tambun, where the citrus fruits are found, should be nurtured for this purpose.

Cooperation between tour agents and the authorities is not lacking though. Both MATTA and MTPN had initiated programmes to train tour guides. Monica declared that MATTA was ready. "We have coaches and guides to take visitors on tours"

Cooperation from caretakers is important in terms of maintenance of the product sites. Shabby premises and dirty toilets are the common complaints of tourists. Caretakers, recommen tour agents should be subjected to regular service audits. But

this is easier said than done as the caretakers are rather indifferent.


Since tourism is an industry that requires an all-round effort and cooperation, Ipoh, as a whole, should be involved. City Hall has a major role to play said Rahmad. "It has to ensure that the streets, eateries and toilets are clean. That local buses must run on schedule and taxi drivers don't overcharge."

Ng rightly summed up by saying that the whole city should have a singular goal and that was to ensure that tourist had a pleasant stay so they would return for more. The impending economic slowdown should not be an excuse for us to slack.

JAMES COUGH

THE PARTIES INTERVIEWED AGREED ON THESE ISSUES

1. The Ipoh Airport must be operational
2. The Medan Gopeng bus terminal is an eyesore.
3. City bus services must be improved
4. KTMB's Ipoh-KL shuttle service is good.



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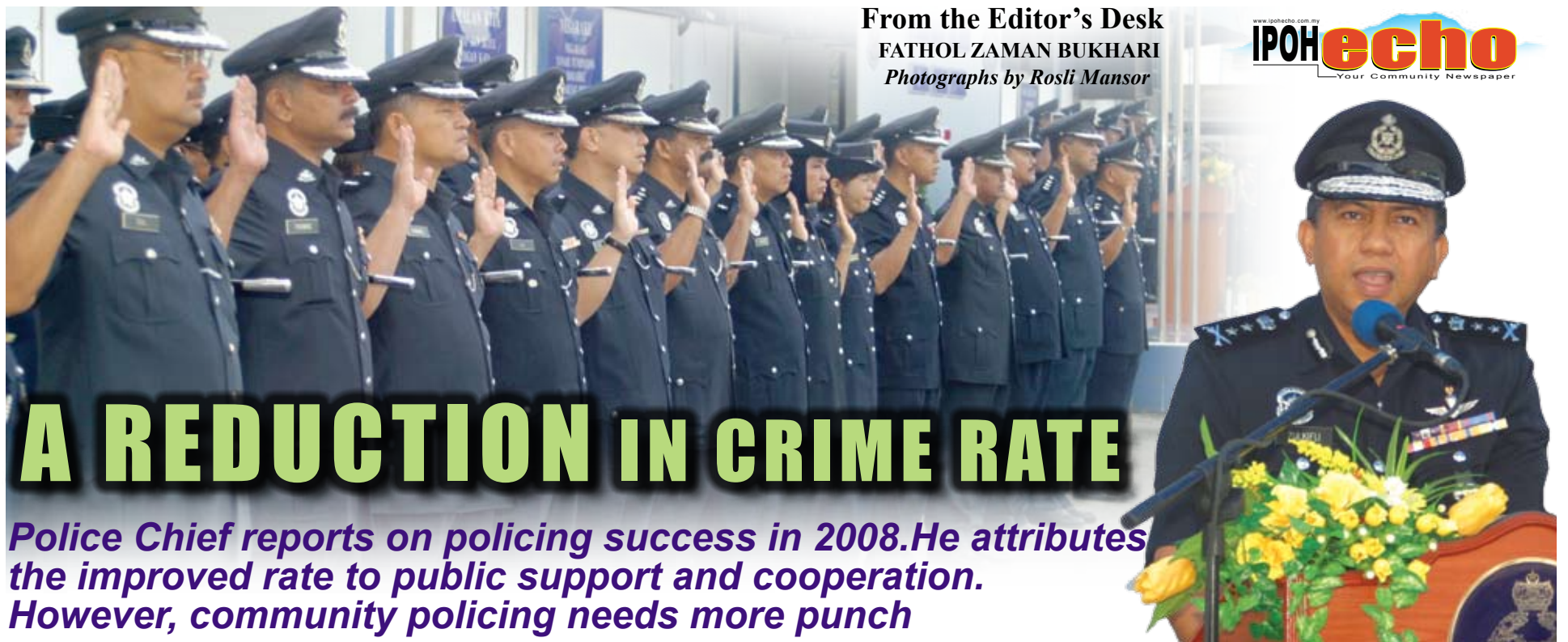
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From the Editor's Desk
FATHOL ZAMAN BUKHARI
Photographs by Rosli Mansor

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A REDUCTION IN CRIME RATE

Police Chief reports on policing success in 2008. He attributes the improved rate to public support and cooperation. However, community policing needs more punch

Chief Police Officer of Perak, DCP Dato' Zulkifli bin Abdullah, in his maiden press conference for 2009 at the contingent headquarters recently, proffered some heady statistics relating to crime in 2008.

According to Zulkifli there had been a reduction in the overall crime rate in 2008. From 12,859 reported cases in 2007, the figure had dwindled to 12,581 in 2008. The reduction, though small, amounted to 2.16 per cent. The last

time a reduction was recorded was in 2003. Seven of the nine police districts in Perak witnessed a lower crime index in 2008. Ipoh District saw a reduction of 7.1 per cent. Violent crime had gone down by 5.44 per cent while crime relating to properties went down by 7.46 per cent over the same period in 2007. He regarded Ipoh Echo's article "A Shocking Statistic" (Issue 65) on violent and business crimes in Ipoh as being callous. He requested that the news media be

more responsible in their reporting.

SUCCESS RATES

Police success in solving crime too had increased. Of the 12,859 reported cases in 2007, a total of 4,204 cases were solved. The 2007 success rate amounted to 32.7 per cent. However, of the 12,851 cases reported in 2008, a total of 5,286 cases were resolved or 42 per cent. The figure conforms to international policing standards.

The one single factor that contributed to the higher percentage point, said the police chief, was the busting of 26 thieving gangs operating in the state. A total of 110 people were arrested and loot amounting to RM1.1 million was recovered. Police had also recovered stolen cars and car parts valued at over RM1 million in 2008.

In the fight against drug abuse and trafficking, the Perak Police had seized nearly 270 kg of drugs compared to only 101 kg in 2007. This represented

an increase of 167 per cent. The larger amount seized indicates that drug trafficking in Perak has not abated but is on an upward swing, instead. The CPO recommends an "integrated and coordinated" approach by the relevant authorities in combating the menace.

PUBLIC COOPERATION

Zulkifli attributed the success of his force to co-operation received from the public. However, ef-

orts at addressing the Mat Rempit scourge saw little progress. "I blame parents for not instilling values in their charges," lamented the police chief.

Crime prevention, said Zulkifli, is a collective effort.

The public can participate effectively by joining district policing committees or subscribe to the Rakan Cop programme currently in place.

Membership in Rakan Cop is relatively small. Most of the 45,000 recorded figure are students.

EDITORIAL

WE DON'T SEEM TO HAVE MATURED MUCH

The excitement surrounding the appointment of lawyer Chan Kok Keong as deputy mayor of Ipoh was laid to rest by none other than the Menteri Besar, Dato' Seri Mohammad Nizar Jamalluddin, himself. It took the strong resolve of the chief executive officer to obviate whatever motives the mainstream media might have to stoke the flame of discontentment among Ipohites. For a period of time Kok Keong was the toast of the media. He was initially known as the "lawyer" and as the days passed as "Chan Kok Keong the lawyer."

It has been the expressed desire of Pakatan Rakyat to liberalise local governments by reintroducing the Third Vote - local council election. But constitutional constraints have placed a lid on such noble intention. However, some legal pundits have submitted that there is a way to circumvent Local Government Act 1976. This has yet to be realised although the matter has been the focus of one NGO forum too many.

Local government is for the rakyat. It is this tier of governance where the rakyat actively partake in administrating themselves. Local election was suspended when Confrontation with Indonesia began in 1962. Although efforts at reviving the election were made through the tabling of the Athi Nahappan Report 1971, there was no serious attempt on the part of the Federal Government in ensuring its continuity. So the matter was left in the back burner only to gain momentum after the March 8, 2008 General Election when the Opposition was swept to power in five states.

And since local council election remains a pipe dream, a better way to ensure that an elected representative heads a council or a municipality is by nominating one. Penang has taken the lead. Its two local councils and five districts will soon have politicians at the helm. They will replace civil servants currently appointed to the positions.

Incidentally, December 31, 2008 marks the end of

term for Ipoh City Council's 24 nominated councillors. How have they performed? Some have done pretty well while disappointing would be the best word to describe the few stubborn ones. Having sat in the august council for over five months the recalcitrant few are still strangers in their own backyards. Unfortunately, a majority of them are those who represent NGOs. The one marked improvement observed, however, was the spontaneity of councillors in voicing their views during the monthly full-board meetings. Previously, councillors had remained subdued and reticent. They were there to make up the number.

In so far as Ipohites are concerned SLR (Sampah, Longkang, Rumpit) remains our priority. The safest way to the residents' hearts, one politician vouched, is to ensure that SLR is maintained at all times. We don't seem to have matured much have we?

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Women Society
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THINKING ALOUD



PERAK WATER – KEY TO ITS REVIVAL

The intention to federalise water resource is good as it provides for centralised control and management. How will it benefit Perak in the long term?

There is no other resource more essential for life than water. It is a merchandise that is crucial not only for sustaining life but for the pursuit of agriculture, industries and almost every human endeavour. This resource is rapidly depleting not only in this country but the world over and global warming is compounding the problem. Many believe that future wars will be fought over this commodity.

Perak has been fortunate in being gifted with this supply in comparative abundance. To date it does not face the problems that confront other Malaysian states. Perak's fortune could be attributed to moderate development and good management. Indeed it is perhaps the only state that turns in an attractive profit in water management. The profit may not be sufficient for major capital expenditure but with more efficiency and less waste this problem could be remedied.

Water is one resource that holds hope for Perak's

future. I foresee the day when Perak will experience development and progress all because of this resource. Clean water production at low cost will persuade economic activities to be relocated in this state.

However, events are taking place that could affect the realisation of this future. Since January 1, 2008 the water industry has been governed by the Water Services Industry Act 2006 and regulated by the National Water Services Commission (SPAN) which effectively makes the water industry centrally controlled. The legislation is all-encompassing, empowering SPAN with authority ranging from issuing licences and permits to owners and service providers of water related activities to approving tariffs and charges to consumers.

Pursuant to this legislation Pengurusan Aset Air Bhd (PAAB), a wholly owned unit of Minister of Finance Inc, will take over all water related assets of the State in exchange for effectively setting off

the amount owed by the State to the Government. However, after the takeover PAAB will lease these same assets back to the state to manage the water supply operations in Perak for 45 years at a monthly charge.

The asset takeover is part of the restructuring exercise to establish a uniform national system for the water services industry in Peninsular Malaysia and Labuan ensuring uniformity in tariff, legislation, rules and procedures. Besides taking over the assets, PAAB will plan future water needs in the country and bear all future capital expenditure.

Under this structure some questions need to be asked.

Firstly, why are the states of Sarawak and Sabah excluded from this scheme? If it is so beneficial should it not be extended to the eastern states? It cannot be by reason of distance as Labuan is included in the exercise.

Secondly, whilst PAAB will take over the responsibility for capital expenditure the question

is who will determine the form and value of the capital expenditure. Will the State play a role in deciding this or will it be the sole discretion of PAAB. Going by past track record Perak has not been a major beneficiary of Federal development plans. Hopefully, the capital expenditure will enhance the distribution network within the State and not focus on providing water supply to other states.

There is also the fear that the structure may be the precursor to eventual privatisation. The understanding is that this will not happen as it is financially unattractive for privatisation and that before any privatisation attempt the state will have the option of taking back the assets.

It must be remembered that whilst it is not financially attractive today a time will come when water will be so valuable that it will become an attractive proposition. As for the State taking back the assets, there is this question of what compensation the State has to make to PAAB

and whether it can afford to.

Lastly, with licences and capital expenditure centrally controlled, will the Perak businesses engaged in this field be adversely affected?

I well understand the sentiments expressed by the Mentri Besar that water is a God-given resource and should be shared with those who do not have it.

His intention of assisting Penang and Selangor is praiseworthy. But charity should begin at home. Today the reality is that Perak is far behind Selangor and Penang. And the water delivered to them will, in all probability, be used to enhance their economic competitiveness at the expense of Perak.

Water is a natural resource that belongs to the people. Control and management of this resource should be with the government to be held and managed in trust for the people. It is too important a resource to be surrendered to corporations which are too intent on cost recovery within the shortest possible timeframe.

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MUSINGS

by See Foon Chan-Koppen

ipohecho.sf@gmail.com



Nearly half of all men and one-third of women have lied about what they have read to try to impress friends or potential partners, a survey from the UK suggests.

Men were most likely to do this to appear intellectual or romantic, found the poll of 1,500 people by Populus for the National Year of Reading campaign. About four in 10 of the 1,500 said they had lied about what they had read to impress friends or potential partners - 46% of men and 33% of women.

Among teenagers, the figure rose to 74%. One in five adults said they would read their chosen material whilst waiting for their date to arrive in the hope of making a good first impression.

While reading is a brilliant tool for self-expression, will it increase one's potential appeal in the search for love and romance? And do brains contribute to sex appeal after all?

A quick poll amongst my friends and colleagues in Ipoh surfaced data to the

READING HABITS

What You Read May Speak Volumes About You

contrary. In fact, none of the people in my informal survey ever lied about their reading habits! And one person even admitted that he had no qualms about admitting to not reading at all.

So is this the great divide between East and West I wonder? If breadth and depth of knowledge, culture, history and current affairs do not impress, then what does? Or is making an impression as regards reading habits not part of the Malaysian psyche?

LOCAL TRENDS

Looking around Ipoh, I discovered that reading appears to be primarily about self-improvement. Enquiries to the Tun Razak Library revealed that non fiction books were borrowed at more than 25% higher frequency than fiction for adults, both in Bahasa and English. In English, the most popular topics were on Economics, Mathematics, and Management followed by Education, Zoology and Medicine.

Only children enjoyed the luxury of reading fiction with fiction outnumbering non-fiction three to one.

Further research at MPH and Popular bookstores at Kinta City re-

vealed a similar proclivity for self-improvement and self-help. Natural remedies, healthy eating, the Law of Attraction, fulfilling dreams and reaching one's destiny are at the top of their best seller lists. Books on business strategies naturally rank high with the current best being Blue Ocean Strategies, teaching companies not how to outperform the competition but to create a new market space or a blue ocean thereby making the competition irrelevant. Inspirational titles like Randy Pausch's "The Last Lecture" and Robin Sharma's "The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari-A fable about fulfilling your Dreams and Reaching your Destiny" have remained on their bestseller lists for weeks. Locally, Dr. Tun Mahathir Mohammad is hot.

Fiction themes at MPH and Popular reveal a more disturbing trend. Vampires and ghost stories, and "chick lit" (women's literature appealing primarily to the younger set) are high on the bestseller lists with the usual well-known Jeffrey Archers, Ken Follett thrillers filling in between.

ARE YOU WHAT YOU READ?

So does what you read speak volumes about you? When I look at someone's private bookshelves, what can I deduce about the person? If your bookshelves are filled with self-improvement books are you always striving, eager for knowledge, willing to change? If thrillers and novels predominate, are you someone who likes to switch off the external world? Or if fantasy books grab you, are you a dreamer? Are you interested in people, if you find yourself reading many biographies; looking to the past in historical novels; looking to the future in science fiction? Are you a seeker when you like metaphysical subjects; deep soul searching or pious when you have many religious books?

READING AS PAMPERING

As for me, I love curling up with a book. There is nothing as indulgent and pampering as taking the whole afternoon off and reading a delicious book. Whole worlds open up and I find myself lost in the wonder of the moment, be it figuring out "whodunit" with Inspector Lynley, becoming intimately acquainted with the world of the mysterious Geisha,

FOOD

There is definitely more than one kind of curry mee that we know of. Let's see - there's the one with cockles, chicken, mint leaves and maybe roasted pork; and then there's the one with an assortment of stuffed vegetables, tofu, etc.; and also there's one with pork skin, long beans. Whichever one you fancy, here's four that we have tasted. Now, if you do not agree with our choice of testing specimens, feel free to tell us your choice of curry mee. After all, there is no mountain (Kledang) that we will not climb or river (Kinta) that we will not cross for a food review.



CURRY MEE

The rating is done in this order:
'the best first but the last is also tasty'

RESTAURANT	LOCATION	COMMENTS +	COMMENTS -	PRICE (RM)	RATING
Yin Kuan Fang (morning)	Opposite New Town Police Station	gravy is aromatic & rich	long queue on weekends	3.50	4/5
Sin Yuan Hong	17 Jln Bandar Timah	curry is spicy & 'lemak'	too mild	3.30	3/5
Hawker stall (from 8pm)*	service road Jln Labrooy	tasty & a variety of stuffed soya skin & vege	g r a v y not spicy enough	2.60	2/5
Skyway Eatery (morning)	Across the road from the Excelsior Hotel	crispy accompaniments	prawns not fresh, gravy not aromatic enough	3.50	4/5

If readers would like us to review their favourite hawker food, please email us at: ipohecho.vw@gmail.com

lost in the intrigues of "Hogwarts" with Harry Potter, giggling with PG Wodehouse or pondering the secrets of "why am I here" or "what is my larger purpose in life" when I delve deep into metaphysics. Even contemplate the BIG question of "What is God" when I read a book on religion.

I agree wholehearted

with Edward P. Morgan who said:

"A book is the only place in which you can examine a fragile thought without breaking it, or explore an explosive idea without fear it will go off in your face. It is one of the few havens remaining where a man's mind can get both provocation and privacy."

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Olympia applies a student-centred learning approach in all its study programmes. Its curriculum is always relevant to the industry and is constantly reviewed to keep pace with dynamic changes within Malaysia and the global environment. Generally, its curriculum produces graduates who are innovative and with

leadership qualities which can be applied at the workplace. This is aligned with its slogan as 'The Employers Choice'

The courses offered at the six Olympia College centres in Malaysia are short programmes, foundation, pre-university, undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The qualification would lead to external awards from

universities in Australia, United Kingdom, USA, Switzerland and Canada.

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LETTER FROM ULU KINTA

writer's email: letterfromulukinta@yahoo.com

NEGLECT AT YOUR OWN PERIL - A MESSAGE FOR 2009

The new year is riddled with uncertainties. What is inevitable is global financial turmoil, economic slowdown and expected job losses. We have, therefore, to remain focused. However, don't neglect our loved ones

We, in Ipoh, are not immune to the far reaching consequences of what originated in America, Malaysia's biggest trading partner. It was the American banks' neglect that caused the sub-prime housing mess. Financial watchdogs, in America and the European Community, neglected to monitor their banks. Countries, like Iceland, went bankrupt. Famous names like Woolworths and Lehman Brothers vanished. Even Chrysler and Toyota needed emergency cash injections.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGLECT

Here, Malaysian developers neglected to look at the social and environmental implications in their mad push to build, even on steep slopes. Our political masters compounded this, nursed their own interests and neglected their duty in curbing the insatiable

appetite of the developers. The tragic landslides are a testament to these. Right up till the middle of last year, we neglected to rein in our spending but instead went shopping like there was no tomorrow.

Nevertheless, 2009 will be one of prudence.

MANY FORMS OF NEGLECT

Neglect, takes many forms; each has its own devastating effect.

If we neglect to provide humanitarian aid to those who need it, people die. Our moral and social standing suffers.

If we neglect to preserve our old buildings and historical sites, we lose a part of our past and cultural heritage.

If we neglect to care for ourselves, our health deteriorates. We become ill, get stressed, have low self-esteem and reduced confidence. Depression sets in. Our relationships suffer. We may even lose our jobs – a vicious circle.

NEGLECT OF CHILDREN

But it isn't only self neglect that should be avoided. At a time when the economy is bad and unemployment high, it is important that we do not neglect our young. Children are just as vulnerable to the ups and downs in the economy. Parents, busy with making ends meet, may ignore their children's safety and welfare. For some, the ensuing stress, may make them abuse their children, deny them medical treatment or medication, even food, clothing and schooling.

But the area of neglect that concerns me is our treatment of single people, not just the divorced but principally the elderly, widowed and bereaved. They, for one reason or another, are unable to be with their 'normal' family.

Recently, I met several widows/widowers, living on their own, in Ipoh or in the villages. I was

saddened to discover how they struggled alone, fearful that their children may yet place them in a care home.

NEGLECT OF ELDERLY

Neglect of the elderly, much like the neglected child, can cause serious effects on the person's physical, mental and emotional well-being. But like babies and very young children, neglect of the elderly can be life threatening.

Why do we overlook the care of our elders? What happened to responsibility and filial duty? Do we now copy the west and pack them off to a care home to be nursed in their

twilight years, in unfamiliar surroundings, eating unappetizing food, expecting the odd visit from a relative during the festive season, if lucky? It was never going to be easy in this age of modernity, with our numerous responsibilities and commitments. There are no simple solutions.

ANTIDOTE: COMPASSION

But try and include compassion in your 2009 wish list. Why not pick up the telephone and con-

tact your elderly relative? Show that you care, that he or she is not forgotten. If planning a visit, be aware of the signs of neglect – poor appetite, being underweight, inadequate clothing. Elderly people have their pride, too. They fear asking for help; for being seen as a burden. Talk to them, reach out and if necessary, arrange for outside assistance.

Don't delay. That phone call might make a difference to that old person's happiness and desire to live.

MARIAM MOKHTAR

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ANNOUNCEMENT

*Nothing Special Art Gallery at No 11, Lorong Cecil Rae, Canning Garden, Ipoh will open its doors to the public beginning January 17 to February 15, 2008 between 11 am to 7 pm daily. Artworks by renowned local and international artists such as Chow Ngan Moi, Dzulkarnian Daud, Khor Theng Theng, Hong Kok Leng, M. Aminuddin Osman etc will be on display.

For enquiries please call 016-5507155

*MBI's payment counters will remain open on Saturdays and Sundays beginning January till end February 2009. The counters are located at the lobby of the council's building. Operating time is between 9 am to 3 pm.

*Ipoh City Council (MBI) has changed its official telephone number to 05 - 208 3333. The Council's hotline number remains as pervious 05-255 1515.

MBI has initiated an anti-litter campaign since December 2008. The fine for littering is RM250. MBI's enforcement officers will be focusing on "serious" areas such as Jalan Lau Pak Kuan, Taman Cempaka and Kuala Kangsar Road.

The 6th Iron Bound Challenge, an extreme sports event, will be held on January 18 at Taiping. Contestants have to complete 30-40km within 6 hours. Sixty local and foreign teams will be participating.

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MY FACEBOOKING FAMILY

Facebook, an internet phenomenon and the fastest growing social network in the world, has currently over 140 million users worldwide. Find out why people are signing up and how to cope with it in the home.

My Facebooking Family
Facebook, an internet phenomenon and the fastest growing social network in the world, has currently over 140 million users worldwide. Find out why people are signing up and how to cope with it in the home.

My family is currently 'gila-Facebook'. Ever since this seriously addictive social website began permeating the clan and families married into the clan; the sheer reach and extent of our online connections have grown by leaps and bounds. Thanks to Facebook, we have all suddenly become best pals and intra-family communication has never been this robust!

To the uninitiated, Facebook is currently the fastest growing social network in the world. It allows you to find and communicate with friends, share photographs and compare your likes and dislikes. People can add friends, send them messages, connect with friends of friends, and update their personal profile to notify friends about themselves.

WHAT IS FACEBOOK?
Facebook is a great place

facebook

to look for family, friends, or that long-lost someone whom you have always wondered about. You can search for people based on their high school, college, country, city or place of work, etc. You will certainly be amazed by the amount of people you are able to connect with upon signing up. I, for one, found my high school best friend whom I had lost contact with for 7 years. But fun and curiosity are only two of many reasons to join Facebook. A growing number of business people, actors, artists, and even politicians are finding Facebook to be a key asset in getting in touch with their target audience, and businesses are finding social networks to be a great form of marketing.

HOW IT BEGAN

Facebook was designed by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004 originally for Harvard students to connect with each other. Users created a personal page and were able to accept or send out

electronic 'friend' requests for people to be included in their networks.

Due to its popularity, Facebook was soon opened to other colleges and high schools in the United States and Canada, and in 2006, it was opened to everyone above the age of 13. However, this move drew flak from its original audience as it meant that the door was now opened for parental invasion.

ADD MOM AS MY FACEBOOK FRIEND?

When Facebook moved out of college to mainstream and became an instant hit, young people the world over suddenly faced the dilemma of whether to add their parents, grandparents(!), siblings and relatives as their Facebook friends.

Don't add them and you risk cutting yourself out of the relationship. Add them and they will be suddenly aware of all your previous flings and closet skeletons, and chide you if you add *beep* words to your status message!

When Marianne, signed into her Facebook account recently to check the status of her 400-plus friends, she had two friend

requests. One of them was from her mom.

The twenty-something who works in KL and whose parents live in Ipoh did not panic. She simply took a deep breath and pondered over the implications of 'friending' her mom. She wondered what her mother would think about the tone of language and expressions posted on her 'wall', as well as 'naughty' photographs her friends had tagged her in.

Faced with accepting or ignoring the friend request, she finally accepted it, but chose the option of limiting parts of her Facebook profile that her mom could see.

Facebook users around the world are contemplating similar questions when they receive a friend request. Parents are signing onto Facebook to keep up with their kids. Not only are they friending their children, they're also friending their children's friends to keep tabs on what their kids' circle of friends are up to online.

FACEBOOK ETIQUETTE AND WISDOM

If you are a parent with teenage children and both are Facebook members,



Facebook founder, Mark Zuckerberg

take the opportunity to talk openly with each other and come up with parameters on online etiquette that is acceptable to both parties. Talk to them about possible dangers they may encounter online and encourage them to use Facebook in a safe manner and to report offensive Facebook content if they come across them.

The safety page on the website (<http://www.facebook.com/safety/>), describes privacy controls that enables people to share information with only the people they choose. It gives you advice on how not to post personal particulars such

as phone numbers and addresses in your profile, and also to review your privacy options periodically.

HAVEN'T SIGNED UP?

If you have yet to sign up on Facebook, what are you waiting for? Use a pseudonym if you wish to remain anonymous to the world but be visible to those whom you choose to connect with. After all, you do want to keep abreast with what your daughter's boyfriend's mother's best friend's husband's sister is doing, don't you?

Happy Facebooking everyone!

WERN SZE GILL

OUR CONCERN

The introduction of KTMB's popular KL-Ipoh train shuttle service in December 2008 has spawned a new kind of problem – chaotic parking. Parking at the Ipoh Railway station is a nightmare, to say the least. The service entails the movements of five trains in and out of the station at regular intervals. And coupled with the daily scheduled north- and

south-bound trains, the number of people using the station has increased substantially.

Each train off-loads and up-loads close to 400 passengers. Multiply this by five and you get a figure of about 2,000 people. The number will increase depending on the occasion and period. Since most of the users book their tickets in advance they will come to the station twice – once

CHAOTIC PARKING



to book and the other to leave. We have not taken into account the send-off parties that converge at the station in droves.

Since the allotted parking bays are limited, motorists have no other choice but to park their vehicles haphazardly. Double parking becomes the norm. Even the drop-off point at the station's main entrance is not spared.

The situation is chaotic and therefore needs to be addressed. More parking bays should be provided to ease the congestion. MBI should consider this instead of booking errant motorists for illegal parking. But the blame should not fall squarely on the authorities alone, motorists too are responsible for the problem.

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YOUNG PERAK

by PETER KHIEW

Teachers and students from schools are invited to write about their respective institutions of learning.
E-mail articles to: ipohecho.pk@gmail.com

THE TOAST OF TARCISIAN CONVENT



Cheong with her family members

Cheong Yee Harn was on cloud nine when she received her results slip. She scored straight As in the 2008 PMR. After being congratulated by her family, Yee Harn walked over to her teachers and thanked them for their efforts in ensuring her success. The 15-year-old was an active member of the Interact Club, played badminton for her school and was a prefect. She aspires to be an accountant. Sharing her joy was Bhanupiriya a/p Muniandy, who scored 7As. She spent about 3 hours daily for revision and still had time for the Internet. "Time management is important," she said. The duo are from Tarcisian Convent who, along with 71 others, excelled academically by scoring straight As. A total of 222 candidates sat for the exams. Principal Lee Gaik Wuat, was obviously proud of her students' achievements.

New Horizons Society, Ipoh is a local NGO providing services to children with learning disabilities.

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BOOK DONATION TO RURAL SCHOOLS

An endearing corporate responsibility



Recipients and donor posing for the camera

In keeping with its commitment to provide equal learning opportunities to rural school children, Chemical Company of Malaysia Berhad (CCM) donated RM30,000 worth of books on science, technology and health to 10 primary schools in Perak.

This is the third consecutive year that the CCM has donated books in English and Bahasa Malaysia. To date, CCM has presented over RM100,000 worth of referral books to 37 rural primary schools in Perak.

"Motivating students to read will help them en-

hance their language and vocabulary proficiency as well as develop a better comprehension of all types of information. This will eventually improve their confidence as they become more knowledgeable," said CCM Group Managing Director, Dato' Dr Mohd Hashim Tajudin.

Perak Deputy Director of Education, Hj. Muhammad Roli Hassan, who attended the presentation ceremony, applauded CCM's effort towards achieving a fair balance in educational opportunities

between rural and urban schools.

The initiative is part of the Group's corporate responsibility towards educational development in Malaysia. CCM also provides scholarships to local university students through the CCM Foundation as well as to children of smallholders through the Golden Growers' Club. The company is listed on the main board of Bursa Malaysia and is a key player in the fertilizer, chemical and pharmaceutical industry.

PMR RESULTS 2008



Director Mohd Radzi announcing PMR results

Eight schools in Perak achieved hundred per cent passes in last year's PMR examinations. They are SM Sains Raja Tun Azlan Shah Taiping, Sek. Tuanku Abdul Rahman Ipoh (STAR), Malay College Kuala Kangsar (MCKK) and SM Sains Teluk Intan. The others are SM Integrasi Gopeng, SMK Permaisuri Bainun Ipoh, SMK Taman Tasik Taiping and SM Agama Sultan Azlan Shah Seri Iskandar.

The number of students who scored straight As were from STAR (73.5%), MCKK (72.88%), SMK Convent Taiping

(34.43%), SMK Tarcisian Convent (32.74%), SMK Perempuan Methodist (29.32%), SMJK Ave Maria (27.09%), SMK Convent (24%) and SMK Gunung Rapat (25%).

SMK Seri Putera Ipoh was singled out by Perak Director of Education, Mohd Radzi Abd Jabar, as being the school with the most improved results in the state.

Out of a total of 41,676 candidates who sat for the 2008 PMR exams in the state, 2,591 (6.11%) scored straight As - 206 candidates with 9As, 1774 with 8As and 611 obtained 7As.

A WORTHY TALENT SHOW

Youngsters mesmerised their audience



The pre-schoolers, dressed in their best, try to impress the judges.

Enrolling a child in a pre-school programme lays the foundation for academic, social interaction skills and instilling self-esteem and self-confidence in a child.

Realising this, Ipoh Tadika Kinderland organised a memorable event to usher in Christmas and New Year for the children recently. Central to the event were performances by former students of the kindergarten and traditional dances by an Orang Asli group from Pengkalan Hulu.

Despite their age, the youngsters mesmerised teachers, guests and



Lucky draw winner Jason Yong posing with Santa Claus.

parents with their sterling performance. They sang, danced and recited poems effortlessly.

The gathering was an opportune moment for parents, children, former students, teachers and guests to interact with one another.

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IPOH IN BRIEFMore pics at
ipohecho on line**FOR JAZZ LOVERS**

For Ipohites who have a preference for live music, check out Jazz and Bits at Greentown. It offers alternative live music every other night except Mondays. Sunday night is ordained as Jazz Night. Owner Titus would occasionally invite international jazz vocalists and musicians to “jazz” up the local scene. Recently, Brazilian jazz vocalist, Carulina Franco and Penang saxophonist, Teresa Lim, jammed up to provide some soft jazz pieces to patrons. Both artists were accompanied by Spunk Unit Jazz Trio. Titus is trying to promote his establishment as a family outlet. “The music isn’t loud and we don’t have GROs”. To check out happenings at Jazz and Bits, log on to <http://jazzandbits.com>

FREE BOOKS FOR POOR CHILDREN

Mentri Besar of Perak, Dato' Seri Mohammad Nizar bin Jamaluddin was on hand to distribute free school books to children of the poor in Ipoh. The presentation ceremony was conducted at the old Town Council Hall on Wednesday, December 31, 2008 and witnessed by executive councilors, parents and recipients. Some 400 school-going children were involved. Nizar thanked Ipoh City Council for initiating the programme, as the poor, he reasoned, were not only confined to the rural population but among urbanites as well. Over RM40,000 worth of books were distributed during the presentation ceremony. The Pakatan Rakyat government said the Mentri Besar would endeavour to help the needy to lighten their burden especially during this difficult time.

JOINT OPERATION

A joint-operation, involving two enforcement agencies namely the Police and the Road and Transport Department supported by men from the anti-narcotic department and Rela, was conducted in the wee hours on New Year's day in three areas within the city. The aim was to check on motorists and motorcyclists flouting the law. In spite of the rule on the use of rear seat belts, which came into force effective January 1, 2009, many motorists were caught unaware. They were let off with just a warning. Ten motorcycles were seized by the Police as their owners had no insurance coverage. RTD issued summons to a number of motorists for modifying their car engines and for spotting illegal high-density white head lights.

SQUATTERS IN A QUANDARY

Squatters from Kg Sri Keramat, Kg Sri Murni and Kg Tok Cendang in Pasir Puteh are miffed by promises heaped on them by the state government since 1997. They were told that their “kampongs” would be accorded kampong tersusun (planned village) status. They have made representations to three successive mentri besars, beginning with Tan Sri Ngah Talib then Dato' Seri Tajol Rosli and now Dato' Seri Nizar Jamaluddin. But to no avail. Their application to Nizar was made in March 2008. Hopefully, the Pakatan Rakyat-led government, they reasoned, would be more discerning.

GOODWILL CONCERT

The Perak State Government organised a goodwill Christmas concert aptly named “A Silent And Holy Night To Remember” at Stadium Indera Mulia recently. Approximately fifty churches throughout the state participated. The various church groups sang Christmas hymns and carols in a number of languages. The Orang Asli group from Gopeng Shalom Church was an eye-opener. They performed traditional dances and sang Christmas carols in Bahasa Malaysia accompanied by their own musicians. The finale saw popular singer Juwito Suweto leading the crowd in a sing-along.

KAMPONG UNDER SIEGE

Residents of Kampong Kepayang have long been exposed to air pollution. Dust emanating from the nearby cement factory in Tasek is the cause of their long-standing problem. The issue has been raised with the state authorities several times. However, punitive actions by the authorities, tantamount to a slap on the wrist, have not resolved the problem. Residents have to endure the discomfort of living in an unclean environment one that affects their health and physical well-being. The village action committee hopes that the state government would find a more permanent solution to their woes.

IDENTITY UNCLEAR

Birth certificates with incomplete details had caused much hardship to parents of two school-going children in Klebang recently. The problem, said Puan Norazizan Mohd Gazali, 37, was caused by the Mersing registration office where the two kids were registered upon their birth. Their father's name was missing in both certificates. As such the Klebang school had refused entry into the primary school. The couple even had difficulty in acquiring their own birth certificates as their personal data too were insufficient. The lackadaisical attitude of the Mersing registration office staff was to be blamed, said a frustrated Norazizan.

FMS BAR & RESTAURANT

For all former patrons of the FMS Bar and Restaurant, please note that this fine heritage establishment is currently undergoing a massive upgrade on its existing structure. Ipoh Echo met up with its owner recently and was assured that it will be reopened “before the end of 2009”. Its floorboards both upstairs and downstairs have been removed. From the scope of the work being done it appears that this establishment will be around for generations to come. Its reopening will be something to look forward to during the year.



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OPTIMISE THE OPPORTUNITIES

We should refrain from pursuing the issue of upgrading Sultan Azlan Shah Airport. Efforts should rather be focused on getting smaller aircrafts to use the airport instead. Firefly can carry passengers from Kuala Lumpur and southern Thailand. Tiger Airways from Singapore and some small airlines from Indonesia, like we used to have before. However, for the business sector, load is a factor. But that is a different matter altogether.

Perak is sufficiently connected by roads and rail links to all parts of Peninsular Malaysia. We have the East-West Highway connecting us to the East Coast. The Simpang Pulai-Cameron Highlands-Gua Musang Highway, a scenic shortcut to Kelantan. The Plus Expressway, traversing Perak from north to south and KTM's recently introduced KL-Ipoh shuttle service. In short, getting into Perak poses no problem at all.

Relevant government agencies should consider the opportunities available in our own backyard.

Regretfully, they are never being optimised. There is a dearth of tourist information kiosks anywhere along the highways and at resorts in Gerik, Banded and Pengkalan Hulu. There are no rest areas for commuters plying the Simpang Pulai-Cameron Highlands-Gua Musang Highway. The list goes on.

As for KTM's shuttle train service, we should consider passengers arriving at KL Sentral via rail (ERL) from KLIA. A more meaningful discussion with KTM is desirous. Ipoh has three bus companies serv-

ing the Ipoh-KLIA-LCCT route. However, the significance of this service has been conveniently forgotten for reasons best known to those concerned.

The authorities should work closely with PLUS, KTM, express bus companies and tour agents to make Perak attractive to in-bound tourists.

And since Penang, Kelantan and Selangor are PR-led governments opportunities for cooperation are aplenty. We have to look at the broader picture.

Mohd Taib, Ipoh

by RAYMOND SIEW

SPORT

PERAK CHESS IN DIRE STRAITS - WHERE DO WE GO?

We need commitment from our leaders . . .

The National Junior Chess Championship (10-14 Dec) and the Kuala Lumpur Open (15-21 Dec) in Kuala Lumpur were real eye-openers.

There is fever sweeping across Malaysia. Perhaps this tagline from GilaChess.com says it all - "Malaysian Chess ~ climbing up from the depths of mediocrity." This movement has two notable Perakians: Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib is the President of the Malaysian Chess Federation. Our Regent offers the Raja Nazrin Shah Challenge Trophy for the KL Open.

It was amazing to witness the economic activities and buzz of sponsors circling the two chess events. Hotels were filled with Grandmasters and International Masters from across Asia. Foreign

coaches and national players shared freely their training programmes and resources. It was a truly educational experience.

Sadly, the one question I was asked almost everywhere I went, "What is happening to Perak chess?" The state was never represented in many national events. The National Junior is the tournament to select the national squad, yet, there was only one representative from Perak - my son and sponsored by the parent (me).

Last year's Majlis Sukan Sekolah Malaysia (MSSM) showed some interesting developments: The vanguards of Malaysian chess - Selangor, KL, Perak and Penang - were challenged by Johor and Melaka.

Both Sarawak and Terengganu recently organised FIDE-rated tourna-

ments (FIDE is the French acronym for the World Chess Federation). There is a lot of chess activity in Kelantan. Labuan sponsored a team of 11 players to the National Junior, spending RM30,000. In fact, most states recognise the importance of chess in its development and sponsors are appearing out of the woodwork to support this effort. Chess helps to develop the ability to think clearly under pressure. This is an important legacy to leave our children as they face a more challenging global world.

Our associations should bequeath this gift to all our deserving young players. Will the leaders in Perak chess answer the challenge? Or will we see a further decline in the popularity of the game? Our few players require the state's support. Will 2009



National Junior Chess Championship 2008

augur a new beginning for chess in Perak? I am keeping my fingers crossed.

Check out GilaChess.com if you want to see the Malaysian chess scene. This year, MSSM and MCF will jointly organise the national age group competition. Incidentally, MSSM's technical chair, Aminuddin Abdul Malik, is a Perakian.



SIX-MILE TUNNEL

I refer to the piece on Six-Mile Tunnel in Ipoh Echo Issue 65. There are some factual inaccuracies.

It is written that the tunnel was made by the Communist Terrorists during the Emergency (1948 to 1960). The tunnel is actually in a natural cave, although the lower passages have been enlarged by man. And it was almost certainly done by tin miners, not the terrorists, and done much earlier than during the Emergency period.

These facts are supported by a piece in Ipoh Echo Issue 16 (2006), which says the tunnel was used by tin miners in the early 1900s. In fact, you

can still see artifacts left by the tin miners inside the cave.

The cave is prone to flooding and I don't know if the terrorists actually used it as a hideout, although they could have hidden supplies in the upper dry areas.

The Six-Mile Tunnel is an important piece of Perak's heritage from the mining history, and is also a special cave in its own right. It is home to a variety of cave fauna.

The cave should be protected. The writer must have found it fashionable to write about tunnels after the recent disclosure of a tunnel underneath the city.

Liz Price, Kuala Lumpur



FAULTY TRAFFIC LIGHTS

I reside in First Garden and drive to work daily into the city. For the past month or so getting out of First Garden is a hassle all because of the traffic lights at the Jalan Silibin-First Garden junction. The lights are faulty, causing a massive jam every morning and evening. I have tried calling the distress number posted but to no avail. Calling 05-2442360 is an

exercise in futility. No one answers the call and a pre-recorded message leads you nowhere. Hopefully, MBI will do something to overcome the problem which is beginning to affect my productivity. The jam along Jalan Silibin can be resolved with a little foresight. Regulate the timing of all the traffic lights along the road. That's all.

Is this too difficult to do?

Chan Boon Chin, Ipoh



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OUTDOOR

PERAK'S FOSSIL BONES AND ROCK ART

There are "treasures" hidden away in our caves. Two such caves near Ipoh are worth seeing and saving. Liz Price reports after her recent exploration

Perak has some important cultural and natural relics – rock paintings at Gua Tambun and fossil bones of a big cat in Gua Naga Mas. These two sites are an important part of Perak's heritage. But since their discovery, little has been done to preserve these sites.

The Perak Heritage Society organised an outing to these locations recently, to get interested people together in the hope that something can be done to protect these places. On a previous visit we had found the access steps to be very overgrown. On this trip, however, we were pleasantly surprised to find that the stairs to both places had been cleared. There is a new gravel path leading to the Tambun staircase, so we were able to avoid the swampy land. Jabatan Muzium dan Antikuiti is responsible for the clearing.

The ancient rock paintings are found on a limestone cliff at Tambun. The paintings, discovered in 1959 by Lt. Rawlings at that time were the only known coloured paintings in Malaya. They differ from the more recent char-

coal drawings made by the Orang Asli. The pictures depict men and animals, and were reported then to be in colours of dark purple and dull red. However today, due to exposure, the red colour has faded and has become more orangey.

known for sure the medium used to create these paintings. It was originally assumed to be hematite, which is found in the area, but now natural pigments from fat, blood or iron oxide have been suggested.

As the paintings are

they saw and probably ate. Sadly, modern graffiti is being added to the cliff wall. Fortunately, most of the ancient paintings are out of reach.


In 1992 members of the Malaysian Nature Society noticed some bones on the

the remains of a large cat, such as a tiger or leopard. These observations were made based on the shape and size of the bones. Dr Davison (ex-WWF) suggested the left premolar is the cutting tooth of a big cat, he thinks a tiger from

other organisms from the remote past". Such a preserved specimen is called a "fossil" if it is older than some minimum age, most often the arbitrary date of 10,000 years ago" so it seems the term is applicable here.

Sometime between 2001 and 2003 reflective markers were placed around the skeleton. In 2003 there were 9 markers, now there are only 2. Also comparing my photos from 1990s, parts of the bones seem to have been removed – it was suggested by Davison that bits of bones were shaved off around 1995, possibly for magical purposes.

The vertebrate bones and rock paintings are both unique parts of Perak's prehistory, and hopefully they will last for eons to come. But the sites need to be preserved from human and environmental molestations. The group of people on this PHS trip are interested in encouraging and helping any conservation plans for these sites. They want to spread the words around to make people aware of the importance of these treasures.

 More pics at ipohecho on line



Only known fossil in Malaysia

The paintings are estimated to be around 2,000 years old. Some of the animals are easily identified, such as a civet, deer, turtles, wild boar and a tapir. There is also a prominent painting that looks like a dugong, although it could be a giant catfish.

There are not many pictures of people, although one man is shown with long genitalia. Other shapes are not really understood, one could be a bunch of bananas. It is not

all much higher than the present day floor level, it is not known how ancient man was able to reach so high up on the cliff. In Australia, it is thought that the aborigines built scaffolding to do their rock art.

The Tambun paintings do show that humans were living in the Kinta Valley during this period. They might have been farmers rather than hunters and gatherers. The animals they drew were the ones



Rock paintings on wall of Gua Tambun

ceiling of Gua Naga Mas. These vertebrate bones are about 5 metres above the floor and the skeleton, which is about 98 cm long, is embedded in travertine. The age of the bones has not been determined, but they could date back to the Pleistocene (1.8 million to 10,000 years ago). An earlier estimate implies they are 10,000 years old. Tjia (2000) suggests the fossil to be more than 700,000 years old.

They are probably

Middle Pleistocene (780-130 ka).

Few detailed studies have been made on the bones. The identity and age are still unknown. It is the only such fossil known in Malaysian caves. Speleothem samples were taken for uranium series dating recently. There were some questions as to whether the word fossil is accurate. According to Wikipedia, "fossils are the preserved remains or traces of animals, plants, and



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COMMUNITY NEWS

IPOH CHARTER OF SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

After 18 years in Malaysia, Soroptimist International is finally being chartered in Ipoh. The Charter Night will be held on 12th of February 2009 at the Ballroom of the Impiana Casuarina Hotel. The evening will be graced by Duli Yang Teramat Mulia Raja Puan Besar of Perak, Tuanku Zara Salim, D.K.S.A.

Soroptimist International Ipoh (SII) will be the fourteenth club of the Region of Malaysia (SIROM) and will be working within the areas of Soroptimist International's six focus areas of Human Rights and the Status of Women, Education, Economic and Social Development, Health, Environment, International Goodwill and Understanding.

The name, Soroptimist, is derived from two Latin words, "soror" meaning sister and "optima" meaning best. Soroptimists are women at their best, working to help other women to be their best.

ABOUT SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

Founded in 1921,



President Jeyamalar Jeyaratnam finalising plans for Charter Night. From left to right: Khoo Kuan Hwa, Dr. Sharifah Halimah, Caroline Chan, Jeyamalar, Lanka Devi, See Foon Koppen

Soroptimist International is the largest worldwide service organisation for women in business and the professions working through service projects to improve the lives of women and girls, in local communities and throughout the world. The objectives of the organisation are to strive for the advancement of the status of women and equality development and peace through International Goodwill and Understanding. Soroptimist International has been ac-

corded General (Category One) Consultative Status as NGO at the United Nations.

Headquartered in Cambridge, United Kingdom, the organisation comprises approximately 95,000 members in over 3,000 clubs in 125 countries and territories worldwide who contribute time and financial support to local, national and international projects. Soroptimist International consists of four Federations which are Americas, Europe, Great Britain & Ireland and

South West Pacific.

5-YEAR PROGRAMME

Soroptimist International has an ambitious programme ahead in the next 5 years. They aim to eliminate poverty and gender discrimination through ensuring women's full social and economic rights, end human trafficking and all forms of violence against women and girls, ensure access to health care for women and girls, support programmes and policies that eliminate HIV/Aids, malaria and tu-

berculosis and other major diseases, improve access to clean water, sanitation and essential food resources, mitigate the effects of climate change and integrate sustainability into personal choices and government policies and programmes, meet the needs of women and girls during and after armed conflicts and disasters, promote peaceful conflict resolution, inter-cultural and inter-racial tolerance and condemn genocide and terrorism, ensure equal access to education and training for women and girls throughout their lifespan, and finally, assure women's advancement in management, politics and decision-making.

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL REGION OF MALAYSIA (SIROM)

SIROM is one of 12 Regions in the Federation of South West Pacific. With the addition of SI Ipoh, there will be 14 clubs in the Region of Malaysia.

The other clubs are Kuala Lumpur, Bangsar, Damansara, Likas, Sabah, Kuantan, Petaling Jaya, Shah Alam, Penang, Ampang, Teruntum, Johor

Bahru, Miri Sarawak, with the last club to be chartered in 2007, Seremban.

HELPING SINGLE MOTHERS

On the home front in Ipoh, 32 members from different walks of life and professions will be inducted on charter night.

Funds raised during the evening will go towards helping single mothers in Perak by providing skills training, with the aim of empowering them to set up their own home based business. This will enable them to earn income while caring for their children.

SI Ipoh will be working in close collaboration with Perak Women for Women Society and Daybreak in this programme.

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THE IRISH SCOUTS

Doing their bid for a worthy cause

It was a superb act of altruism by 19 Irish scouts from the 177th Group when they helped set up the sound and sensory room at the Sultan Idris Shah Foundation (Yayasan Sultan Idris) recently. The facility, which was made possible by funds raised by the scouts themselves, will benefit children suffering from cerebral palsy and severe limb paralysis. The sound and sensory

system will help trigger some form of stimulation and response in them.

The scouts, aged between 16 and 27, had laid the ground work for more outreach projects this year. The Foundation with the assistance of the Scout movement overseas, is planning to bring in more scouts to Malaysia to assist in other humanitarian projects at the centre.

Foundation Chairman, Tan Sri V. Jeyaratnam, was




The Irish Scouts lending a helping hand to YSIS

amazed at the scouts' enthusiasm as they went about installing the equipment, worth over RM60,000, with much gusto and co-ordination.

"We're looking forward to the construction of the sensory garden with the Irish scouts this year. Therapy sessions will help stimulate the disabled children and ultimately enable them to be mobile and independent," said Jeyaratnam.

Yayasan Sultan Idris Shah is the only centre in Perak with such a facility.



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