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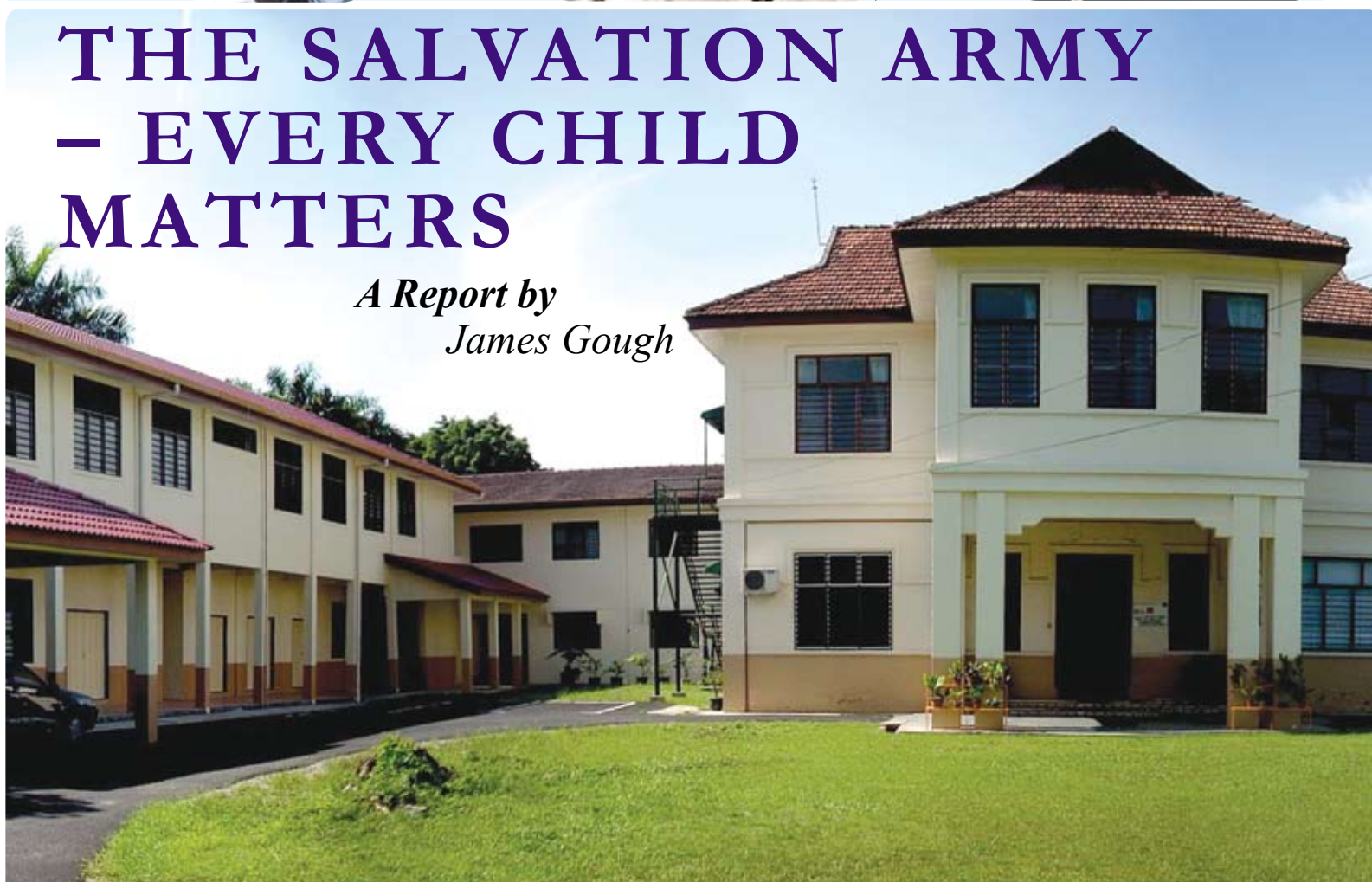
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## THE SALVATION ARMY - EVERY CHILD MATTERS

A Report by  
James Gough



*The Salvation Army Children's Home at Jalan Tuanku Bainun (Jalan Kampar) celebrated the opening of a new wing on its premises recently. The new block comes with its own bedrooms, living rooms, toilets and multipurpose rooms complete with kitchen and dining facilities.*

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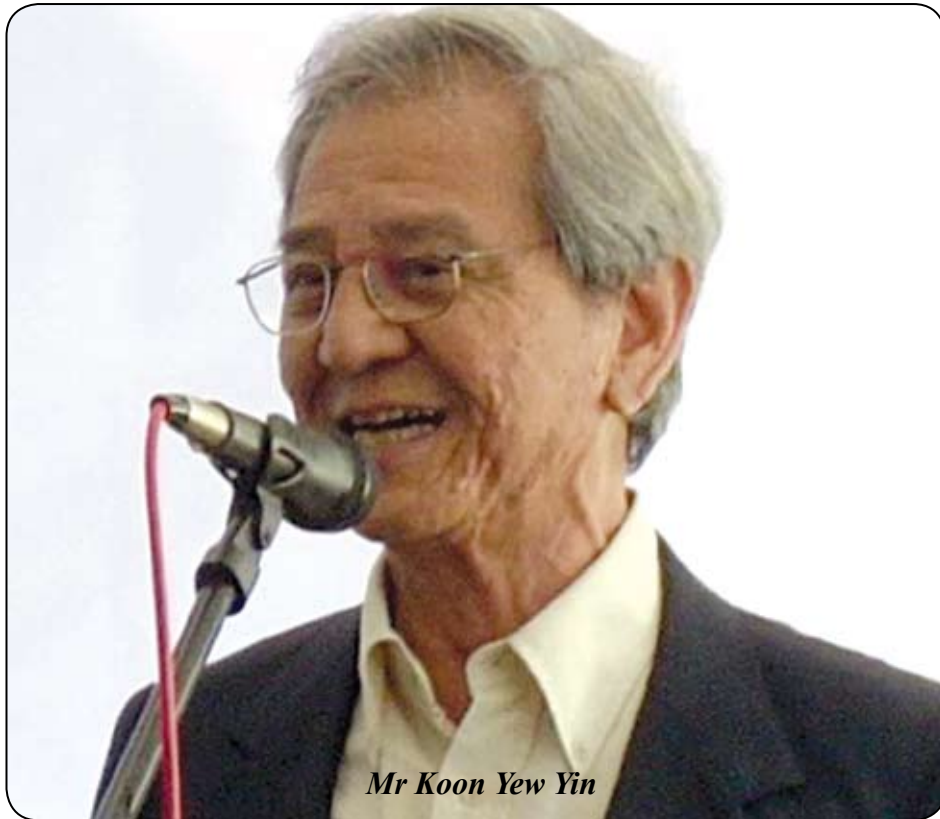
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## SALVATION ARMY REQUIRES NOT ONLY FUNDS BUT DONORS WHO APPRECIATE ITS ROLE IN SOCIETY. ONE BENEFACTOR WHO STANDS ABOVE THE REST IS KOON YEW YIN



Mr Koon Yew Yin

**T**he addition of this new wing was made possible through the generosity of Mr Koon Yew Yin who fully financed the cost of the building, which is as big as the current building.

The Home, which started in 1947, was originally located along Jalan Dr Raja Nazrin Shah (Gopeng Road). It has been providing residential care for hundreds of needy and underprivileged children for over 60 years.

A testimony of the good work done by the Home is told by Captain Tong Yat Lam, now the Superintendent of the Perak Home for the Aged at Jelapang, another establishment managed by the Salvation Army. Tong,

56, was brought to the school along with her two brothers after their father passed away. She recalls her strict and disciplined upbringing. Education was always very important. She completed her studies at the Perak Chinese High School nearby. Tong is grateful to the Salvation Army as it has provided her with an opportunity to lead a decent life.

"The Salvation Army strives to improve its services and is extremely grateful to Mr Koon for his generous support especially during these difficult economic times," said Commissioner David Bringans in his opening address. Other attendees included Dato Dr. Majumder, a long-time

patron, as well as representatives from the Perak Welfare Department.

The Salvation Army began in 1865 when William Booth, a London minister, gave up the comfort of his pulpit and decided to take his message into the streets where it would reach the poor, the homeless, the hungry and the destitute.

Today, The Salvation Army is stronger and more powerful than ever. Now, in over 106 countries around the world, The Salvation Army continues to work where the need is greatest, guided by faith in God and love for all people.

The Salvation Army started in Ipoh about 70 years ago. Besides this Jalan Kampar home for



Guests celebrating with inmates of the Salvation Army Children's Home

girls and young boys, they also have a boys home in Tambun, an old folks home in Jelapang and a Salvation Army Church at Wah Keong Park. All these facilities are open to poor orphans, irrespective of race or religion.

After the opening celebration ceremonies, Ipoh Echo interviewed the donor, Mr Koon Yew Yin who is a retired 76 year-old Chartered Civil Engineer and was one of the founders of IJM Corporation Bhd and Gamuda Bhd. He was a member of the Board of Engineers, Malaysia, for 3 terms and a member of SIRIM for the writing of the Malaysian Standards for Cement and Concrete. He was the former Secretary General of the Master Builders Association Malaysia for 9 years. He was also one of the Directors of the Perak Community Specialist Hospital.

**Ipoh Echo:** Why are you donating RM 500,000 for the construction of this new building extension?

**Koon:** I want to help poor children. Most of the

children are orphans or some have only one parent. We must realise that our survival depends on others. Our very existence from birth was the result of some others' actions and we survive everyday in varying dependence on many people. There is hardly a moment when we do not benefit from what others do for us e.g., someone must have purified the water or produced the food for us. Even Bill Gates needs people to produce and buy his products.

We could not have accumulated wealth without the help of others. I believe that after I have provided enough for all my dependents, I want to spend all my money before others spend it for me. I want to give back the rest of our money to help the unfortunate; otherwise, my life has no meaning.

**Ipoh Echo:** You said in your speech that you have already given scholarships to 40 poor students and you are willing to consider helping more students. Please tell us how you se-



Captain Tong Yat Lam

lect the students and what is their obligation to you?

**Koon:** I will help needy students whose total family monthly income is less than RM2,000. They must pass the SPM with reasonably good results so that they can gain entry to the University Tunku Abdul Rahman to study finance and accountancy. I will help them financially to complete a degree course.

They do not have to return the money I spent on them and they do not have to work for me when they qualify. They only have to promise that they will help needy students when they begin their working life.

A noble deed and thought indeed.

### LETTER FROM ULU KINTA

writer's email: [letterulukinta@yahoo.com](mailto:letterulukinta@yahoo.com)

Malaysia is no stranger to a female workforce. Ever since female immigration from China and India to the Malay Peninsula increased dramatically from the early 20th century, Chinese and Indian women have played a major role in the economic growth of early Malaya. They joined the labour force as paid or unpaid workers in the tin mines, the agricultural sector, as domestic helpers and in prostitution. In certain parts of the country, indigenous Malay women were already prominent as traders and in the textile weaving industry.

For generations, women in modern Malaysia have struggled to make their way to the top of their professions, their paths obstructed by prejudice or tradition. Now, simple analysis will show that they can become the domi-

nant force in our workplace in the next decade. The proportion of women is high (and steadily rising), in an ever increasing array of professions – teaching and education, medicine, law, science, architecture and engineering. Encouragingly, the more traditional male bastions of medicine and engineering are now dominated by women.

In schools and universities, girls easily excel and overtake boys in their studies. Contrast this with the late 19th century when Malay girls only gained access to formal education in 1885, and 50 years later, there were 150 girls schools in Malaya and a teacher training college for female Malay teachers.

At present, what is alarming is that many males are alienated from the world of education and engineering. A higher pro-

portion of girls are taking up options in science and technology based courses at higher education level, whilst increasing numbers of boys choose soft subjects like media, religious studies and the arts.

Women make more suitable candidates for a variety of jobs because they have a wide range of skills and achieve better academic qualifications. They excel at teamwork, leadership skills, communication and emotional intelligence. They also exhibit better resilience and integrity. Men, on the other hand, have mainly relied on their powers of intellectual ability or their physical strength.

Currently, the reason why women do not make it to the top of their profession is not for lack of ability. It is that the work-life balance they crave is missing. In this respect, more

### THE TROUBLE WITH MEN AND THE PROBLEM WITH WOMEN

YMM

workplaces must adapt changes in work-hours and patterns to suit women with family responsibilities. Either that or they will risk losing these women to a rival or in extreme cases, cause them to drop out of the employment market altogether.

Nevertheless we must seriously address the falling numbers of males into areas of education and the professions. Although men should be praised for increasingly taking greater responsibility in running the home and bringing up children, more must be done to support boys at school, engage them in education and raise their ambitions and expectations in life. All attempts must be made to limit their decline behind their female contemporaries. Men, too have an important role in society, alongside their female counterparts.

The notable rise in the professions cannot explain why there is a lack of women reaching the top in politics, the councils, the professional bodies or the police, for instance. Is it the work-life balance issue again? Or is it the fact that we women can be our own worst enemies? Some of us easily permit our petty jealousies to get in the way of our careers.

In a study by scientists at the University of Toronto, it was found that women prefer to be told what to do by men (we've been so used to this throughout the millennia so why bother to change?). Also, the Queen Bee Syndrome predominates in that we abhor being surrounded by competitors of the same sex.

So, we hate to have to answer to someone with breasts and a high-pitched voice. We suffer

more stress and get easily depressed than if we were told what to do by a strapping hunk of a man.

For ages, we have blamed men for hindering our careers, that they have made it difficult for us to achieve gender equality in the workplace and that they only treat us a pretty face, good for preparing meals and procreation.

Those arguments won't wash anymore and we have to get over this last hurdle because year-in, year-out, we have consistently outperformed the boys in education. Despite that, there exists a wide pay gap between the sexes and a dearth of places of seniority in the professions and politics.

That change has got to come from within us. The sooner we accept it, the faster we can adapt and the more glass ceilings we can smash through.



From the Editor's Desk

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FATHOL ZAMAN BUKHARI

# UNRAVELLING THE TRUTH BEHIND THE POLITICAL MESS IN PERAK

*In an attempt to get an insight into the political quagmire that Perak has unwittingly found itself, Ipoh Echo will endeavour to find answers from both sides of the political divide. The series starts with an interview with Augustine Anthony, a prominent human rights lawyer*

**Ipoh Echo:** Perakians in general are rather in the dark as to events clouding the Perak political landscape. How did events unfold?

**Augustine:** It's common knowledge, judging from the sequence of events in the past month, what took place. It all started with the appointment of Dato' Dr Zambry, replacing Dato' Seri Nizar Jamaluddin as the Menteri Besar on February 6. Beyond the legal aspects, it's the feelings of the people that matter.

Perak has been under Barisan Nasional since 1957. There was never an occasion when the state government was ruled by another party other than BN. After the March 8 General Election, the rakyat had voted in a new government under the tripartite coalition named Pakatan Rakyat.

**Ipoh Echo:** What events have left a lasting impression on Perakians?

**Augustine:** The openness of the PR-led Government is something new to Perakians. The PR politicians are very approachable and are willing listeners. Long standing issues relating to Orang Asli's land rights, for example, have been resolved. Land titles, which were once a taboo subject, were given out. A two-way communication was established with those in authority and the common folk. Suddenly, this channel of commu-



Augustine Anthony

nication was snuffed out when a "power grab" took place.

The rakyat don't mind a change in the government but it's the manner the change is instituted that left many unhappy. They voted for the parties that could bring about changes and now they are left in the lurch.

**Ipoh Echo:** How had the actions of the three BN-friendly assemblymen impacted the rakyat?

**Augustine:** The people felt that the three individuals had betrayed their trust.

The response from the rakyat was something unexpected. There had never been such an outpouring of anger in the streets. It translated into a phenomenal scene with people protest-

ing against the swearing-in of the new MB in Kuala Kangsar. The spontaneity of this unplanned protest goes to show how unhappy the people are.

**Ipoh Echo:** What are the other contributing factors?

**Augustine:** Power grab is not something easy because we are a country with a written constitution, which has evolved over the years. Besides the Federal Constitution, individual states have their own constitutions. The civil society of the country believes that the Rule of Law must prevail.

There is separation of powers between the Judiciary, the Legislative and the Executive. The three branches must work harmoniously but independently without any form of "unholy interference". We have been jolted in the past. The Executive assault on the Judiciary in 1988 is a case in point and we have never recovered since. What happened in Perak is another round of Executive meddling in the affairs of a legislative body.

**Ipoh Echo:** Can this outpouring of anger be averted?

**Augustine:** Yes, it can. When one party seeks legitimacy to rule why is it so difficult to ask the people for their consent? Seek the mandate from the rakyat. Let the public choose the government of their choice through the ballot boxes.

**Ipoh Echo:** The rakyat have inferred that there is interference by the Judiciary insofar as the Perak situation is concerned. Your comments.

**Augustine:** The good governance of the state is enhanced by the independence of the three branches – Judiciary, Legislative and Executive. The people perceive that the Judiciary is imposing itself on the Legislative. The slew of litigations taken against and for the newly-formed BN government is the result of this shortcoming.

**Ipoh Echo:** There is a general feeling among Perakians that truth will be suppressed. Your comments.

**Augustine:** With the developments taking place presently, I don't think that's easy. The monarchy has been unwittingly dragged into the fray. It's not about defending the Institution of the Rulers per se. It's about defending the interest of certain individuals. We no longer live in the 50s and 60s where the flow of information was so restricted. With Internet people today can access news as it unfolds. Blogs and online newspapers provide better and wider coverage than the mainstream media do. The people can differentiate between truth and fiction. Truth, therefore, will never be suppressed.

**Ipoh Echo:** What is the effect of this mess on the rakyat?

**Augustine:** One positive

**Ipoh Echo:** Do you think that this impasse will end on a happy note? What are the lessons learnt?

**Augustine:** I cannot predict that it will end on a happy note. However, I can say this for certain that those involved in the "power grab" thought that it was a walk in the park. Now they know that the Constitution has enough provisions to protect the man in the street.

Any setback is good education for the people to be vigilant, prudent, compassionate and circumspect. It will teach future generations how to respect the Constitution, the Rule of Law and the people. It will also teach those in power that they cannot disregard the feelings of the masses. They must acknowledge the fact that their number is small while the masses are huge.

**Ipoh Echo:** How can this crisis be resolved?

**Augustine:** Dissolve the state assembly and call for a fresh election. Let Perakians decide what's best for their state. Otherwise it's denying their legitimate expectations.

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30450 Ipoh Perak Darul  
Ridzuan  
Tel: (605) 249 5936  
Fax: (605) 255 2181  
Email: [ipohecho.jag@gmail.com](mailto:ipohecho.jag@gmail.com)

**EDITORIAL**

Fathol Zaman Bukhari  
James Gough

**GRAPHIC DESIGN/  
PHOTOGRAPHY**

Rosli Mansor Ahd Razali  
Azril Aryandi Bin Zambri

**MARKETING &  
DISTRIBUTION  
MANAGER**

Ramesh Kumar

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**THINKING ALOUD****G. SIVAPRAGASAM****PERAK PROBLEM - CRISIS****Response to 'RAKYAT's' letter published in 1st March Ipoh Echo**

**L**et me begin with the accusation that I was not providing a balanced view. In my article I favoured neither BN nor PR. Both the parties in my opinion have behaved badly and are at fault. My message essentially was that whatever the rights and wrongs the warring parties need to settle down and move forward. As a citizen of Perak it matters little to me which party controls this state so long as they acknowledge that their authority comes from the people of Perak and are accountable to them. Whether in government or opposition there is a role to play and it is their duty to discharge this role as effectively as possible. In this regard perhaps 'winner takes all' tradition needs to be replaced with a 'work together for the benefit of society' culture. If Obama can do it why can't we?

I agree with the writer that the *rakyat* are being made fools of by elected members jumping from one party to another. The 'people' undoubtedly have the right to protest. PR on the other hand lost this right by advocating this type of behaviour. Let me add that it was not some

individuals in PR talking about party hopping but the whole of PR celebrating the defection of BN's Datuk Nasaruddin Hashim's to PR.

Also let us not confuse PR with the *rakyat*. PR does not represent the whole *rakyat*. About half the people voted for BN in the last elections and strictly the only people with a claim to complain would be the voters who provided the vote difference to give the three turncoats victory over their opponents. PR should accept the blame for offering these unprincipled candidates to the electorate.

As for the writer's complaint that I have not criticised BN I think he should look at all that I have written in the last five years. In the subject article my criticism was directed at PR for the simple reason that PR was the immediate past power. In any event the answer to bad behaviour is not bad behaviour but good behaviour. Also let us not be naive. Power corrupts and though BN may have much to answer for PR too was beginning to exhibit unacceptable traits.

My main criticism against PR was their failure to empower the people.

If they had done this during their 10 month tenure at least it would have emboldened people like the writer to declare his name in his letter without fear. People must be moved to stand up and be counted for their opinions and beliefs. Only then can there be progressive change. This empowerment of the people was what I expected from PR and sadly their effort had been disappointing.

My other concern was PR's inability to present a truly common policy. One component party speaks of implementing Islamic law and another denies an Islamic state identity. The only common objective appears to be to deny BN power. Though this proved successful in the last elections it may not have long term prospects. It is significant that the component parties of PR contested the elections under their individual flags and continue to do so. A common philosophy, values and principles I feel is crucial if PR is to emerge as a political force. Only with this will it be able to present itself as a viable alternative in a two party system.

I agree that for the people of this state the ideal would be fresh elections. But we do not live in

an ideal world. All that PR had was a slim majority, a risky situation and when two of their members were charged for corruption they were in jeopardy. That would have been the right time to have sought dissolution of the assembly and fresh elections. They held on to power and only when they lost their numbers did they seek dissolution. Can they realistically expect BN to do what they themselves were not willing to do?

The issues to me are simple.

One – is it unlawful for elected representatives to move from one party to another.

Two – are undated resignations valid

Three – have the crossovers resulted in BN acquiring majority in the legislature.

This is the substance – the rest is procedure.

For the record let me state that what is happening now disturbs me. With each passing day the crisis is deepening and the stakes are getting higher. We are reaching a level where there can never be any goodwill between the two parts that form the legislature. In this contest it is society that suffers.

In 2000 the victory of George W Bush was controversial. Al Gore could have mounted a challenge against the result. Putting the interest of society above that of his party and himself he accepted the result. His supporters and the people too did the same. That is first world politics.

In Thailand there are elections after elections, every election result disputed, court case after court case and perpetual street protests. All this and no conclusive result. This is third world politics.

Which model do we want to follow?

To truly attain developed nation status our political structure needs to mutate from a one party to a two party system that delivers a strong government and a strong opposition. When people are empowered with choice, efficiency will increase and abuse will reduce.

It is my fervent hope that PR and BN emerge as true alternatives. For this to happen both would need to reform. They would need an enlightened philosophy, inspiring objectives and great values with a membership founded not on power but principle.

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The Jazzercise programme was created by Judi Sheppard in 1969. A traditional jazz dance teacher she incorporated elements of jazz into aerobic exercise hence the name Jazzercise.

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## MUSINGS ON FOOD

by See Foon Chan-Koppen  
ipohecho.sf@gmail.com



## FORGOTTEN CLASSIC

Having lived in Ipoh for 13 years, I consider it gross negligence on the part of all my foodie friends for not introducing me to Hoong Tho Restaurant! While not as venerable in terms as age as Hung Kee which I reviewed in the previous issue, nevertheless Hoong Tho vies for a place in Ipoh's food heritage archives, a popular family restaurant that has served happy diners since 1957.

I had heard of Hoong Tho often over the years and it was only a year ago when my hounding of one of my friends finally got her to relent and take me there. When asked why she had kept the restaurant a secret for so long, she was apologetic and said she thought the place was a tad too down-market for me!

Well it wasn't quite the Ritz in Paris, occupying a two storey shop house on 20 Jln Bijih Timah (Leech Street) and sporting only wall fans with no air-conditioning, but one can see the vestiges of what was probably quite a trend setter in the old Chinese tea-house style, back in 1957. Alas, no efforts have been made to renovate nor refurbish and the physical premises have been left to languish in a state of neglect. The culinary wizardry though, has not been neglected and has flourished to this day, recipes having been passed down to the current third generation who now run the restaurant.

Specialties of the house are their various noodle dishes done in characteristic Cantonese style

with their own innovative touches. Their portions are generous one-person portions and of any of their noodles will be sufficient tasting for five or six people if ordering a few at one time.

Highest on my list of "must-taste" noodles is their Kwai Fah Meen, an egg noodle dish fried with eggs, bean sprouts and thinly sliced meat and other garnishes that has the reminiscent taste of sharks fin fried the same style, except that in this instance, instead of sharks fin they're using the more environmentally correct noodles in its place and of course at a fraction of the price.

rice noodles and the Wat Tan Hor or flat rice noodles with a choice of either fish paste or mixed meat and vegetables or sliced beef.

In fact Hoong Tho specialises in this Wat Tan, which means silky smooth egg, style of noodles where the noodles are first fried, some to crispiness and others like the flat rice noodles, with a touch of soya and plated. Then the sauce, cooked separately with choice of meat, fish or seafood, thickened with corn starch and egg white, is added and served immediately. At Hoong Tho their variety in just this style alone is quite phenomenal. (RM5-5.50 per portion)



Hoong Tho in 1957



Phoenix Balls

Next on my list of recommendations is the Sang Har Kon Cheen Meen, egg noodles fried crisp and topped with fresh water prawns in an aromatically fragrant sauce redolent of prawn stock generously added. Having eaten this dish in Kuala Lumpur on many occasions at quite exorbitant prices, I was delighted to find that this portion cost only RM10 and the prawns were fresh and firm.

We followed this with the Kon Chow Ngow Hor or the dried fried beef with

Having dipped extensively into the noodle menu, we then ventured into some of their other signature dishes. We had the Foong Wong Kao or Phoenix Balls, (RM8 for 4) minced pork paste wrapped around a salted egg yolk, with a further outer wrapping of pigs caul fat and deep fried. The end result is crispy on the outside, succulent on the inside and with the addition of pieces of water chestnut lending further texture, the salted egg yolk providing the right degree

## FOOD BANANA LEAF RICE

**FINGER(S) LICKING GOOD!** Need we say more? Let's start with your basic banana leaf (vegetarian) meal. First you have the banana leaf (hence the name) – very good for people who hate washing dishes! Then comes the rice, which is piled on until you say 'oop cukup' (enough). The rice can be white rice, parboiled, or 'briyani'. Next come the vegetables. Usually 3 different kinds, which may be: cabbage, potato, bean sprouts, long beans, French beans, green-leafy vegetables, etc. – cooked with mustard seeds, turmeric, onions, etc., and is sometimes a little overcooked. The gravy (no meat) could be: chicken, fish or dhal curries and rasam (spicy soup), and maybe also a pickle (lime or mango) to give it 'zing'. Other extra curries available are: chicken, mutton, fish, prawn, crab, or sotong (squid). Now let's talk papadums! For the uninitiated, it's a crispy, spicy, thin cracker made from chick pea flour which usually comes in various round sizes. No decent banana leaf meal would be without it. Papadums are also very good eaten on its own. So roll up your sleeves, wash your hands, and let your fingers do the work! (Most places will supply fork and spoons for the squeamish!)



NAME	WHERE	BANANA LEAF COMMENTS	PRICE (RM)	
SAMY RESTORAN (7.am-9.30pm) Closed alternate Mondays	70 Main Road, 32100 Chemor (05-2014066)	Also available: 4 types vegetable, greens, dhal, papadum, acar(pickles), dry chilli – RM6.00	Vege meal – 4.00 (3 vege, dhal, papadum, acar, dry chilli) Chicken curry – 7.00 Mutton curry – 9.00	
KALAI CURRY HOUSE (7am - 12 midnight) Opens everyday	38 Jln Sultan Yussuf, 30000 Ipoh	Mutton & chicken curry is middle spicy – meat is tender – rasam (spicy soup) is spicy enough. Also available for dinner: ala carte, naan, tandoori chicken, romali, etc.	Vege meal – 4.50 (3 vege, coconut 'sambal', papadam & rasam (Kampung) chicken curry – 3.50 Mutton curry – 3.00	
RESTORAN SRI CHETEENATH Closes once a month – no specific day	83 Jln Sultan Yussuf, 30000 Ipoh	Rasam is peppery hot– chicken curry is mild & tender – mutton is bony & has mild taste.	Vege meal – 3.50 (3 vege, dhal papadum, rasam) Mutton curry – 4.00 Chicken curry – 3.00	
THILLAI STALL Breakfast (from 6:30am) & lunch Sundays closed	Stadium stall #25	Very tasty – may have too much MSG. Most of the food is finished by 2:30pm.	Vege meal - 3.50 (3 vege, papadum, rasam) Chicken curry – 5.00 Mutton curry – 5.00	

Our next food review will be BEEF NOODLES (NGAU LAM).  
Email your favourite recommendations to: ipohecho.vw@gmail.com

of saltiness, it was a delectable taste sensation for which I will go back again and again. They also do spring rolls with pigs caul, but the Phoenix Balls far surpass the spring rolls.

Pigs caul has gone out of fashion in most Chinese kitchens as the dire warnings of high cholesterol has permeated most people's awareness and so it is rare to find a restaurant that still use it. It is also a difficult ingredient to clean, and use with dexterity. So I congratulate Hoong Tho

on sticking with some of these old traditions. Where else would we find some of these almost "extinct" culinary masterpieces which should be preserved for posterity, not just for its novelty value but for the skill it requires and the taste it imparts to the dish. Other dishes of note are their Fried Fish Paste dumplings or Chao Yu Wat, fresh-made that day, wrapped in wonton skin and deep fried, (RM2.20 each) their Yeung Chao Chow Fun or Cantonese fried rice which has a de-

liciously distinctive taste contributed by the crispy fried dried prawns (RM 5.50), their various dumplings (RM1.00 each) and plain greens (RM6.00).

The menu at Hoong Tho is extensive and a meal for 6 averages RM10.00 per head at the most. Value for money in today's financial crunch. Location: 20 Jalan Bijih Timah (Leech Street) Operating time: 10:00 am – 9:30 pm Closed: Tuesdays



b)The peel of ½ a limau kesturi (ket chai in Cantonese)  
2 flat-leaved parsley (hoong mow yin sai yip)  
2 pips garlic

Mince all the 2 types separately and stuff the fish as above and follow the same method of pan-grilling.

## PAN-GRILLED-STUFFED IKAN KEMBONG

gestions which may open your taste buds to its new flavours – using some fresh herbs from your garden or the market. Ikan kembong or the mackerel is available at fish stalls all-year round and cheap too. With the spiraling cost in seafood, marketing has become the home-maker's headache!

## INGREDIENTS

4 ikan kembong (mackerel), cleaned, stomach slit. Rub all over with 2½ tsp salt  
20 polygonum leaves (daun

kesom)  
4 shallots, peeled  
1 stalk lemongrass, use white part

## METHOD

\* Mince or chop above 3 items and lightly smear the fish stomach and heads with them. Set aside for 15 minutes.

\* In a heated non-stick pan, put in 1 tablespoon cooking oil and shake the pan to swirl the oil. When it is hot, lay the fish in, one by one. Cover immediately.

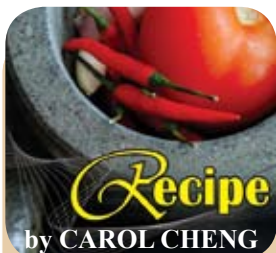
Lower heat to medium and wait for 2 minutes. Uncover and turn fish over. Recover. Allow another 1½ minutes and then switch off fire. If you fear it is uncooked, lift out the fish on to a plate and cover it tightly with an up-turned tin plate. The body heat from the fish will finish the job.

This technique of pan-grilling the fish yields a very moist-textured flesh and seared skin. The faint aroma of sealed-in herbs gives an intriguing taste to an oth-

erwise very mundane and cheap fare. Don't ever overcook this fish, otherwise the result is just the opposite – flesh will be dry and hard!

Interesting flavours can be achieved by varying the usage of herbs. Following are some well received combinations.

a) 2 chekur leaves (sar keong yip in Cantonese)  
1 thumb-size piece of fresh ginger  
2 shallots or scallion heads



The seafood section yields one type of fish considered inferior by housewives. Or they have run out of ideas to serve this species. They don't realise that this is a delicacy to those who have been residing overseas. Here are some sug-



## PARENTING

by GAVIN TANG

• ipohecho.parenting@gmail.com

## LESSONS LEARNT

*Lawyer Gavin Tang, who together with his father runs an established legal firm in Ipoh, shares memories of his childhood days and how his parents have led him to where he is today...*

It is almost surreal that I will be celebrating my 33rd birthday this year, that I am now a husband to a wonderful woman, and that soon I will be a father with a family of my own. Even though the visage that stares back at me in the mirror is one of a fully grown man, in my parent's presence I am comforted and assured that I am still their little boy. After all these years, I wonder how I will ever repay the both of them for all they've done for me and I am beginning to realize that this is a debt which I may never be able to repay.

Looking back on my childhood, there were so many days of joy, happiness and love. My parents always said they never spoilt me but I definitely was. Spoilt with love. I remember my mom and dad taking me to school in my dad's Morris Minor and how I would kiss them both before leaving the car.

I remember too, Sundays spent in the living room, dad sprawled out on the sofa reading the dailies, singing along to familiar songs on the radio, mom reading her books and me playing with my toys or running to mom or dad, demanding a kiss or a hug. I didn't really have many toys but I thank them for the lego sets they gave me as I spent countless hours building castles, trucks, planes and anything else I could imagine. The gift of imagination was invaluable. My parents both loved to read and from them I learned to love books and value the knowledge to be found in them. Till today my mom still reads voraciously although my efforts to intellectualise her reading have met with some resistance!

MEMORABLE  
YESTERYEARS

As the firstborn, I remember



that in the early days when dad was building his career, we never travelled too far due to time and financial constraints, unlike my youngest sister Julia who has traveled extensively to places like Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, South Africa, Australia and so on. However, I remember weekend road trips to Penang, KL, Taiping, Alor Setar and Muar where my parents, sister Melissa and I would sing along to songs on the radio, play games in the car and be subjected

to my dad's general knowledge quizzes. From these trips, I learnt the value of time with the family, the simpler things in life, history, geography and that many great experiences in life don't require vast amounts of money.

I learnt to love sports through my dad who was an active sportsman in his younger years and I remember a sense of déjà vu one day when I sat in the bleachers of the Penang Sports Club during the Inter-Bar Games and

realized that I had sat in the very same bleachers as a little boy watching my father play football.

Through my mom I learnt what it means to sacrifice, to be gentle, to always put family first and of course I inherited her sinus problems and I always know I'm home when I hear sneezes in the morning coming from my mom's, sisters' and my room. Solidarity in Kleenex!

Music plays a huge part in my life and without it there would be a void as deep as the Marianna trench and I have to attribute my love of music to my parents as my house was always filled with singing and music. Their love of music didn't stop them complaining at all the money I spent on cd's when I was in the UK and I think my dad finally realized where all his hard earned money had gone.

My parents have never failed me nor given

up on me. Even in my darkest hours, they were the beacons that lit the way for me. When I doubted myself, they never doubted me and continued to believe in me and to encourage me to see myself as they saw me. They had faith in me and trusted in the values they had inculcated in me and till today they still give me the confidence to do the right thing and to be a responsible and dutiful man who lives his life in faith, principles and love.

Thanks mom and dad. I am who I am today only because of you. I love you.

We invite you to share how your parent has been a role model to you so others may draw inspiration from him/her. Email your stories (about 700 words) to ipohecho.parenting@gmail.com, along with a scanned photograph of your parents. We will feature the best stories here!

## REFLECTIONS

## COLOUR SERGEANT

by MERV SPRAGUE

*The sergeant's strange behaviour was finally unravelled...*

In the British Army Infantry regiments there exists the rank of Colour Sergeant, the next step up the rank from Sergeant but below that of a Warrant Officer. Such talented individuals, with the exception of specialist platoons, such as signals and musicians, hold the appointment of Company Quartermaster Sergeant [CQMS]. Next in the non-commissioned pecking order comes the Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant [RQMS] who is ultimately answerable to the Quartermaster – usually a Major who has risen through the ranks and joined his brother Commissioned Officers.

All of the abovementioned ranks are responsible for operating and maintaining the stores that provide the equipment and provisions needed to permit the lower ranks to be clothed, fed and armed, to create as much discomfort as possible for any potential enemy.

Theoretically, those entrusted with the treasures contained within the Aladdin's Cave of the company stores are supposed to deal with the issue of commodities without fear of favour, but in reality

tend to have more in common with Ali Baba and his famed forty thieves. For some peculiar reason, once promoted, a Colour Sergeant automatically assumes all that fall under his control. They become his personal property rather than that of the Ministry of Defence.

Soldiers of the 1960's were issued with what many will fondly recall as a "housewife". In fact this was a small bag which contained a selection of sewing needles, woollen darning yarn and a few other odds and sods to repair items of clothing. Mostly, the grey woollen yarn was used to darn socks. Those who had the privilege to watch their mother darn socks were off to a good start. Other less attentive squaddies watched in envy and admiration as the 'Old Sweats' plied their needlecraft. Needless to say, there comes a time when a pair of socks becomes composed of more darns than the actual sock. As a result, blistered feet were commonplace. At this juncture, the soldier is faced with two options, either to approach the Company Stores to exchange the derelict socks for a new pair or suffer in silence and hope that his blisters will even-

uate in a nasty infection and necessitate a bi-lateral amputation of his feet and hasten his discharge from the Army.

The first option of seeking an exchange was fraught with danger. Invariably, the storeman chosen by the Colour Sergeant was a miserly creature who had been indoctrinated to give absolutely nothing away. Such miscreants ranked close to the regimental cooks in the hierarchy of hatred by the rank and file. All too often, despite pleading and grovelling one would be told to "p&\*#" off and darn your socks yet again.

One morning a very strange thing happened at A Company stores at Minden Barracks, Penang. A crippled colleague of mine went to the stores and rejoiced that he had received three pairs of brand new socks when he had only taken one pair in to hopefully exchange. He remarked that there was a baffling change in the demeanour of both the storeman and that of the Colour Sergeant. Both men were very agreeable, appearing to be sharing a private joke as they giggled during the conversation with the said soldier. This was a complete mystery to us all.



*Equipment inspection by a senior Ministry of Defence official – circa 1952*

Had the stores' 'Scrooges' undergone a religious conversion or had they won the Penang State Lottery? Not to miss an opportunity, I, quickly with several other mates gathered up my old socks and headed for the stores.

Lo and behold, my colleague had been truthful and after a breathtakingly convivial meeting, my socks were replaced without further ado. It seemed a little odd that both the Colour Sergeant and his head honcho had rather bloodshot eyes and there seemed to be a funny smell lingering around the counter area. One got the

impression that if we had asked for extra ammunition or a flagon of Gurkha rum we would have received a favourable response.

It was a much wiser and older Corporal who unravelled the mystery. In the days when soldiers limited their vices to alcohol, cigarettes and women, it appeared that the observant Corporal detected the pungent smell of cannabis wafting around the stores. Having achieved our objective, nobody was of the mind to make any official complaint and we were later to discover that the illicit drugs had been procured from the camp

Char Wallah who always seemed to have a glazed expression on his face as he made our egg and banana "banjo" (sandwich) at morning work breaks.

Sadly, this was a short-lived event. What happened next is open to question, but I guess that someone somehow had had a quiet word with the Colour Sergeant and his partner in crime. So in the fullness of time we returned to the onerous task of darning our socks, succumbing to blistered feet and continuing warfare with the men's hosiery section of A Company Stores and our tormentors.



## PERSPECTIVE

**T**he debate about the quality and level of our policing has surfaced again. Recently, we were assured, that crime had gone down in Ipoh. The feeling of being threatened when we leave the security of our homes, is unjustified. As we have previously been told – the compiled statistic prove it. The messages have been drilled into us – there is nothing to fear; the police are doing their job; they are there to protect us.

Are we comforted? Do we really feel safe when we venture out into the streets? Can we depend on the boys in blue?

I can understand the reluctance of police attempts at resolving domestic disputes. Their prime function is not as social workers, or marriage counsellors. Moreover, concerned parties who have tried to intervene in the past, have themselves been set upon. And although I've never had reason to approach the police in such matters, I am reliably informed that they will intervene only if someone's safety is threatened.

But for the unfortunate Mrs Kamala, a short outing by her husband,

## KIDNAPPING, ASSAULT, ROBBERY: JUST ANOTHER DAY IN IPOH

unfolded into a nightmare. It could have ended with tragic consequences had she not been determined and patient.

Hers is a story that was borne of bravery and tenacity. And as we celebrate International Women's Day this March, she is worthy of a mention.

Mrs Kamala did the right thing in seeking the police's help in tracing her missing husband. When they failed to do so immediately, through no fault of their own, she persisted. A missing person's report, she was told, could only be lodged after 24 hours had elapsed.

She had difficulty convincing the police that her husband had disappeared after withdrawing some money the previous night. Did it ever cross their minds that he may have been robbed? Possibly.

But they could also have wrongly assumed that it was another marital spat, like the countless ones they are called to, on a regular basis. They probably reckoned that he had gone off in a huff. Maybe, they reasoned, he had sought refuge in another bolthole.

As far as they were concerned, no lives were seen to be threatened and there was no immediate visible danger. Probably, the only trouble anyone would face, was them at the receiving end of Mrs Kamala's invective arising from her rage, anger and frustration.

Undeterred, she sought the help of her friend and scoured the streets of Ipoh. She assembled photographs to assist the police in their investigations. Time, she knew, was of the essence. Clues, she surmised, must be looked for whilst still fresh.

Armed with nothing more than her steely determination and thorough organisation she first confirmed that her husband had not been hospitalised. She then proceeded to trawl the streets and his usual haunts.

It must have been several hours of exhaustive, distressing and unproductive driving. But at the eleventh hour, at a time when most of us would have abandoned the search, she was finally rewarded for her efforts when she spied her husband's car being driven by strangers. This was midnight. Her only

companion, her neighbour. If the people driving her husband's car had realised they were being followed, things might have turned nasty. But Mrs Kamala refused to back-down at her first lucky break. Others would have been too petrified to continue. Not so, this plucky lady. She coolly trailed them until they dropped someone off at a house. She must have been in two minds as to follow the car or to stay, call the police and await their arrival.

Then came the second lucky break. A police car drove past and Mrs. Kamala was able to summon immediate help. The person who was dropped off earlier, was apprehended. He later revealed the location where her husband was found bound, bloodied but blissfully relieved.

Was this a happy ending or not? For Mrs Kamala and her husband, the second phase of their ordeal was just beginning. It was a setback that the kidnappers had fled. Infuriatingly, the initial suspect was released on bail, when her husband was recovering in hospital. One wonders if the occupants of the house

where the suspect was arrested, had alerted the kidnappers. Somehow, they got wind of the first arrest and had hastily abandoned her husband's car and their evil deed.

Mrs Kamala and her husband enjoyed a short-lived victory. After the initial euphoria of discovery and freedom, they now feel that they are denied justice, at least for the moment.

This devoted wife was instrumental in great detective work (one marvels that for all the CCTV installed and police involvement, the stolen car's registration number had not been picked up earlier). With a lot of effort and cooperation of her friends and family, she single handedly solved this kidnapping case.

Some would argue that Mrs Kamala was more foolhardy than heroic. Others would say that she should have waited for the police to act. And a few would interject that it was unwise of her to do her own sleuth work.

Not many people would have the guts or inclination or energy to do what Mrs Kamala did. Fewer still would have felt

MARIAM MOKHTAR

confident to leave it all to the police either. Was Mrs Kamala lucky? She was certainly courageous and deserves a medal.

Several will agree with me that crime seems to be on the increase. And regrettably, much of this perceived rise is to do with violent crime. We know that what we read in the papers, and hear and observe in our own community, is far removed from reality. With this recession, we can expect more of the same.

No, we do not want to live in a police state. Not if it reduces us to living a life free of civil liberties or freedom of speech, but at the expense of personal security, within an ever-eroding confidence in our public services.

Sure, we have been fed the statistics. But why do we only use the language of statistics to discuss something as important as policing? Haven't those in authority heard of "Lies, damned lies and statistics"? Maybe someone ought to acquaint them with Disraeli.



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## LEARNING THE TECHNIQUES OF CPR

How many of us know that cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) may be necessary for children or adults during many emergencies such as accidents, suffocation, poisoning, smoke inhalation and electrocution?

Realising the importance of this, members of the St John Ambulance, Perak Division, conducted a special class on CPR for participants at the Anderson School's Centennial celebrations recently.

The one-day programme was a huge success as over two hundred students and visitors were taught techniques and procedures for performing CPR by qualified instructors.

The Secretary of Perak St John Ambulance, Manin Singh, said that schools should organise such events as part of their school curriculum so that students and teachers can learn the correct way of administering CPR.



**BRINGING BACK THE GLORY OF ACS**

SMK Methodist (ACS) Ipoh held its 94th Sports Day with a message to the current students – to participate actively in sports and bring back the golden years of the school.

Dato' Chew Choong Seong, one of its illustrious old boys, said the school had produced numerous internationally-acclaimed sportsmen like swimmers Allan Ong and Anthony Ang. Others include hockey greats Chet Singh who represented the country at the Tokyo Olympics in 1964 and Dato' Poon Fook Loke who played at several world cup championships.

"I hope the present batch of students will achieve international status and bring glory to the school", said Chew in his opening remarks while officiating the annual sporting event.

N. Satiaya was named Sportsman of the Year while Foong Mei Ling the Sportswoman award.

Principal Mr Cheng Sai Lak presented the awards to the winners.

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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](mailto:ipohecho.pk@gmail.com)



**REMEMBERING LORD BADEN-POWELL**

Scouts from 02 Kinta of St Michael's Institution organised a modest gathering to remember their founder, Lord Robert Baden-Powell, who started the scout movement with only 22 boys on a small island in Dorset, England, 102 years ago. The movement has since grown to 28 million scouts in over 150 countries around the world today.

In paying tribute to Lord Robert, Scout Master Christopher Arulsamy said that the primary aim of occasion was to strengthen the values enshrined in the Scout Promise – to do one's best, to do one's duty to God, to help other people and to obey the values in the scout law.

He advised the scouts to not only acquire the skills and knowledge they learn in the movement but to develop positive values like honesty, reliability and trust.

Veteran King Scouts, Timothy Chee, Thomas Choo and Joseph Michael Lee were present as guests.

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A hotly contested by-election is coming up in P59 Bukit Gantang Parliamentary constituency on Apr 7th. Let's keep the election free and fair, its results free from controversies, and the winner represents the true choice of the people.

Report these offences during elections

According to the Election Offences Act (1948) it is an offence to do the following to voters during an election:

- \*treating-with food and drinks
- \*undue influence-use of threats, inducements, violence etc
- \*bribery-with money, loans, jobs etc

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Police -05-2451222  
MACC - 05-2531982/2536064 and  
Mafrel - 012-5222664

Conviction over these offences are punishable by prison terms and heavy fines.

Volunteers welcome!

Volunteers are required, among other things, to be posted at each polling centre to keep the election under close scrutiny. You are welcome to join the SPR accredited Mafrel election observers team! Full and free training will be provided on Mar 22nd. There are still vacancies.

Donate to a good cause

As a voluntary body Mafrel rely on public donations to carry out its election observation missions. Mafrel welcome your donation towards the Bukit Gantang election observation operation, which is essential to improve our democracy.

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## IPOH IN BRIEF

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## SHIFTING BLAME



Zainal Ali Mohammad Salleh was the proud owner of a Naza Sutera until his car got burnt while he was driving with his fiancée along Lengkok Cavendish, Ipoh, recently. According to him the fire started in the engine compartment and before he could do anything, the whole engine was gutted. He and his fiancée looked on in disbelief. The car was still under warranty said Zainal. The Fire and Rescue Department had attributed the fire to a faulty wiring system. However, the Naza Ipoh branch had refused to accept responsibility claiming that the car's wiring system had been altered without its consent. Zainal had refuted the claim saying that the car was regularly serviced at the branch's service centre. "The motor company is covering up its weaknesses and had shifted the blame to me," said Zainal. "I am now saddled with another problem – outstanding instalments amounting to RM1,203.92 incurred since the incident." Zainal plans to take matters to court.

## MEDIA NIGHT



The Perak Art and Culture Department organised a media night at the Purnama Beach Resort, Pangkor on February 28. Department director, Ramli Salleh, said that the gathering was to honour the media and non-governmental organisations involved in promoting art and culture in the state. The activities of the NGOs, said Ramli, complemented that of the department and as such helped in spreading the gospel. The evening was filled with fun and games much to the amusement of the participants. A karaoke competition amongst the invitees was won by Puan Ruzy Adila of Sinar Harian.

## CEYLONESE FOOD FAIR



The Ceylonese Association (Lim Garden Branch) held a food fair at the St John Ambulance assembly hall on March 1. The event kicked off at 10 am. Besides the usual fare of local Indian cuisine, there was also the traditional Ceylonese dish "Kool", a flour-based broth containing vegetables, meat and diced young jackfruit. The food was sold ala hawker-fashion from stalls arranged around the hall. The stalls selling satay and fried rice were the crowd's favourites. Both vegetarian and non-vegetarian food were offered for sale. This was the second time the association had organised such an event said branch chairman, Dr. Rajadurai. Proceeds from the sale of food would go to an orphanage and a half-way house.

## VISIT TO THE MUSEUM



Some 50 pupils of Taman Star Kindergarten visited Perak Museum on February 25 as part of its annual visitation programme. The pre-school kids were led by four teaching staff. The Taman Star Kindergarten is managed and run by the National Unity and Integration Department of Kinta. The children were taken around the museum and were shown the various exhibits on display. They were later taken to the Ipoh railway station and then to the Gunong Lang Recreational Park. The day trip ended at Taman DR Senivasagam. It was a rewarding outing for the children as well as for the accompanying adults.

## MALAM PUISI GAZA



Members of ASTAKA (Angkatan Teater Anak-anak Kampar) a local theatre group and the Art and Culture Department of Perak organised a poem-recital evening titled, "Malam Puisi Gaza" for the benefit of the Gaza war victims recently. The event, held at the Taman Budaya Perak theatre Ipoh, was officiated by Dato' Jamaludin, the State Finance Officer. The objective, said Ramli Salleh, the director of the Perak Art and Culture Department, was two-fold; one, to collect much needed funds for the war victims and the other, to create public awareness on the suffering of the victims and the atrocities committed by the perpetrators. The recital, said Farouk, the President of ASTAKA, will be held in other districts of Perak. "Antologi Kembala" a poem read by youngster Norain Farouk was adjudged the best by the audience.

## POLICE HARASSMENT



PKR Ipoh Barat Division Chief, Fauzi Muda, filed a report at the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Perak branch recently complaining of harassment by the Perak Police regarding his statutory declaration made to MACC on February 2, 2009.

Fauzi, on the said date, had made a statutory declaration that Najib had offered him RM50 million, when he met the deputy prime minister at his official residence on March 11, 2008. The money was to secure the defection of PKR state assemblymen before Mohd Nizar Jamaluddin assumed the Perak Menteri Besar's post.

"I am not happy with the way the Ipoh Police reacted to my statutory declaration," he said. "They called me several times to the station to record my statements. Why must they investigate me when no Police report was lodged by either Najib or his representatives?" Fauzi asked.

The PKR leader is seeking MACC's help to stop the Police from "intimidating" and "harassing" him.

## PERAK CID CHIEF



SAC 2 Mohd Dzuraiddi Ibrahim took over the appointment as head of the Perak Criminal Investigation Department (CID) effective March 5. The handing taking over ceremony, conducted at the Perak Contingent Headquarters, was witnessed by the Perak Chief Police Officer, DCP Dato' Zulkifli Abdullah. Dzuraiddi, 48, was formerly a senior staff officer attached to the Narcotic Department at Bukit Aman. ACP Zulkifli Hassan, who stood in as the CID Chief, handed over the appointment to Dzuraiddi. The new chief promised to carry out his responsibilities professionally in line with the requirements of the Police Department and that of the CPO.

## SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY



Some 30 members of the Perak Community Specialist Hospital (PCSH) Sports Club dropped by the Perak Society for the Promotion of Mental Health (PSPMH) to entertain its residents with songs and gifts. The gathering was in conjunction with PCSH's 105th anniversary. The hospital has lived up to its billing as a community-friendly hospital judging from its years of selfless service to the public.

Present were PSPMH President Dato' Dr M. Majumder, Administration Chairman K. Letchimanan and PCSH Sports Club Chairman, Vasugi Sundralingam.

## THE DEMOCRACY TREE



On March 8, before a crowd of hundreds, Dato' Seri Nizar Jamaluddin, executive councillors, assemblymen, along with Ipoh Timur MP, Lim Kit Siang, placed a plaque under the "pokok demokrasi" or Democracy Tree, outside the Perak State Secretariat building. This auspicious event was to mark the impromptu sitting of state assembly on March 3, which saw Speaker V. Sivakumar declaring the Perak State Assembly as dissolved. The ceremony also saw the planting of five saplings symbolising the five pillars of Pakatan Rakyat - justice, transparency, trustworthiness, welfare and integrity. The event kick-started Pakatan Rakyat's one-year anniversary celebrations. Nizar said that the monument would also serve as a "new tourist attraction," seeing how many locals and foreign visitors had stopped to pose for pictures under the tree. He hoped city council would not remove the plaque and saplings once the ceremony was over.



## LETTERS TO EDITOR

@  
mail/email

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](mailto:ipohecho.fzb@gmail.com). Letters must have writer's full name, address and phone number. A pseudonym may be included.

## THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

At last after more than a month of uncertainty, humiliation and embarrassment since the BN seized power to run Perak from the PR-led Government, the dust has settled down for the moment. But before PR supporters scream for a fresh election, have any Perakians given an honest comment on what the PR Government had done for the state in the 11 months they were ruling Perak?

I am born and bred in Perak and have lived in



the state for over 50 years. I am, therefore, qualified to make a performance report.

I cannot say that Barisan Nasional, after 50 years in power, has done a good job. But at least it has given the state some meas-

ures of security and stability. The PR Government started with plenty of promises but they eventually fizzled out. Here is my

list of the Good, Bad and Ugly:

## GOOD

\* Giving freehold titles to inhabitants of planned and new villages who did not have security of tenure.

\* Exposing the misdeeds of land grabbing by a component party of BN at cheating a soy sauce factory operator in Pasir Pinji.  
\* Appointment of NGOs to local councils.

## BAD

\*Public consultation only when it suits them. Decisions made before consultations, e.g., the Meru bus terminal and proposed airport at Manjung.  
\*Off-the-cuff pronouncements eg. Bukit Larut cable car project, botanical

garden and new airport at Manjung.

\*No strategy to develop the state's resources. The executive councillor in charge of tourism had been so inconspicuous. One executive councillor spoke on his behalf.

## UGLY

\*Did not back local government election as promised. They had no intention of implementing this in the first place.  
\*They preached prudence and responsibility with

the *rakyat's* money but they bought new top of the range Toyota Camry.

\*Jockeying for the deputy mayor's post between the MP for Ipoh Barat and the "proxy" of one executive councillor. While it is unsatisfactory to have a civil servant as mayor it is just as bad having a politician as one.

So, what do we do now? Call for a fresh election or allow BN to run the state for the remaining term?

**Ridzuan Lee Abdullah**

## OUR CONCERN

## FROM TAMBUN TO TSODILO

*Tambun paintings - it's protection first before tourism...*

Reading the "Ode to Tambun Rock Paintings", obviously a letter from the heart of a real heritage enthusiast, in Issue No 68 of the Ipoh Echo, set off a whole host of memories for me. I remembered the many times I have taken visitors to see those ancient rock paintings, high on the abrupt limestone cliff above Tambun, struggling through the overgrown path and up the steep and slippery steps;

I remember the wonder my guests, particularly the children, expressed about the detail of the paintings of wild boar, a dugong, a tapir and some deer; one of the latter being especially fascinating and exciting, appearing pregnant, with a small infant drawn inside its swollen frame. Then there were the lost tourists on the Tambun Road who had read about the paintings, but could not find them, despite the glowing article on the Tourism Malaysia website! Sadly, I also recalled just how often national and local media and our NGOs have also written articles and letters from

the heart, without any attention being paid to them. So, as our letter writer advises us, the paintings continue to deteriorate.

Now many of you may not be aware that a whole series of the paintings, drawn with haematite and estimated to be between 5,000 to 12,000 years old, were not found until 1959. They were once part of a 'gallery' that, we are told, stretched for over 90 metres, discovered by an Englishman, Lieutenant R L Rawlings, but over the last 50 years most of it has disappeared. He was serving with the 2nd Battalion, 6th Queen Elizabeth's Own Gurkha Rifles as part of the Commonwealth Armed Forces' presence in Malaya for the Malayan Emergency. It was one of the most important historic discoveries in the country, in the opinion of experts, second only to the Perak Man.

The paintings are situated on a wide ledge at the top of a steep slope, about 30 metres above the floor of Lembah Kinta on a smooth limestone cliff. Some 6 metres or more above the ledge, there are a number of illustrations



Rock paintings on wall of Gua Tambun

of wildlife, people and abstract designs. Some are quite small while some of the animals are more than one metre long. It is believed they are the first and only ancient rock paintings known in Malaysia, but the sunlight is fading the artwork while water has completely eroded some parts of the sketches.

In November 1959, J.M. Matthews, an author in an issue of Malaya in History - Magazine of the Malayan Historical Society, wrote this description of the discovery: "The paintings are monochrome - indistinct. In some groups, the paint is dark purple, in others, dull red. Some of the figures are obviously men, rather crudely drawn. Some of the ani-

mals are easily identified, others are rather vague and imagination is needed for their representation".

## LEMBAH KINTA

However, there are still enough paintings to prove that long before the history of the Malay Peninsula was written, there were primitive men living in Lembah Kinta, who illustrated the environment surrounding them. So why have they not been properly protected and controlled so that both Malaysians and tourists can enjoy our unique piece of history?

Clearly, only the appropriate government department could answer that, but if I may, I would draw their attention to another

memory of mine, this time not in Perak, but a visit to the paintings of the ancient Bushmen in Botswana, Southern Africa, a third world country where its people still live in mud huts and wooden shacks.

The place is called Tsodilo hills and it is one of many different sites in Africa where paintings of the Bushmen can be found. Of course, with 3,000 paintings spread over several hills and a great deal of climbing needed to see the best ones, this is a much larger area than ours at Tambun, but the main points are still relevant. The most important one being that the local government actually value the paintings as part of their heritage. I do not believe we can say the same here.

Consequently, access to Tsodilo is restricted and compulsory guides are provided at a reasonable cost. For the 'less than fit' or disabled there is a small air-conditioned museum and seating under shady trees. Access is also excellent with signposts and a tarred road covering the last stretch from the normal dirt roads of Botswana; parking is plen-

tiful. Finally, as the nearest airport is far away they have built a landing strip for light aircraft. Compare that with Tambun if you will!

It was there, in far-away Botswana, that I remembered again - Tambun - with despair. So, what can be done for Tambun? Well, first and foremost some method of protection of the paintings should be carefully put in hand using expertise from wherever it is available. Once that is underway and not before, we can look at the tourism aspects. We have an airport and an excellent article in the same issue as the above-mentioned letter provided a solution to getting that 'white elephant' back to work again. We also have tarred roads, dramatically improved over the past few months, that lead straight to the base of the cliffs. But here the similarity with Africa ends! No signs, no proper car park, no guides, footpaths, seats, museum or any semblance of trying to make the paintings an attraction to be proud of.

Is that how we want people to remember their visit here? **WR**

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

## WORLD THINKING DAY

The Girl Guides Association of Malaysia, Perak Branch, celebrated its annual World Thinking Day at the Girls Guides Hall, Greentown recently. World Thinking Day is the mutual birthday of scout movement founder, Lord Baden-Powell and his wife, Olave, who was the World Chief Guide.

The theme for this year's celebration is "Stop the Spread of Aids, Malaria and Other Diseases" which complements the movement's global-action theme, "Together We Can Change the World".



A total of 350 uniformed guides (Brownies, Guides and Rangers) from all nine districts in Perak participated in the celebration.

In line with this uni-

versal theme, the Kinta District Health Department, held an exhibition on ways to control dengue, cikungunya and other infectious diseases. A distributor of

mosquito repellent floor cleaners, Y-Slimz's Floor Master, participated in the celebration. A percentage of the sale of its products would be donated to the Girl Guides Association of Malaysia.

Among the activities held was a poster drawing competition. The participants took the liberty to create their own "masterpieces" within the time given.

The finale was the reading of the World Thinking Day message from the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts.

JAMES GOUGH

## SEEKING FUNDS

The Ipoh Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ISPCA) will hold its annual charity dinner on April 12 at the Hee Loi Ton Restaurant Ipoh. President, Dr Goh Hue Lang, said the charity drive is necessary as the society is running short of funds to care for the many strays at its shelter in Jalan Gopeng.

The animals, numbering 140 dogs and 60 cats, are picked up from the streets. Some are diseased and some, badly wounded.

"We have come a long way since 1985 to fulfil our duty in caring for these unwanted animals," she told Ipoh Echo.

The society is self-funded and does not receive any financial assistance from organisations or individuals, said Dr Goh.



Dr Goh with puppies for adoption.

"Although it is MBI's responsibility to tackle the problem of strays within its boundaries, the council has never made any attempts to help out," she added. "Between RM8,000 to RM10,000 is required monthly to keep the shelter running."

The objectives of ISPCA are: to help Perak

sport a clean image by reducing strays from the streets; carry out a neutering campaign once a year with the help of most veterinarians in town; create awareness and a caring attitude by giving talks to school children; and en-

courage people to adopt puppies and kittens.

Those wishing to extend a helping hand, please call Dr Goh at **012-5235933** or Doreen at **016-5608905**.

PETER KHIEW

## RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL IN PANGKOR

Over 50,000 devotees thronged the grounds of the Seri Pathirakaliamman Temple in Sg Pinang Besar, Pulau Pangkor, for a religious ceremony which lasted 10 days beginning February 28 till March 9. Several thousands devotees paid penance to the Goddess of Fury by carrying silver pots filled with milk. The milk was later poured on the statue of the deity to receive her blessings.



On the final day of the festival hundreds of devotees carried *karagam* and *kavadi* from the beach in Pasir Bogak to the temple, a distance of 4 km.

This too was a way of paying penance and to fulfill vows.

Temple committee chairman, Segaran, said that he had met with ferry

operators seeking a reduction in fare for the two main days of the festival. This would encourage more visitors to Pangkor. The operators, however, were not receptive and had turned down the request.

Segaran handed over a memorandum on the fare problem to Dato' Veerasingam, the Special Adviser on Indian Affairs, who was in Pangkor for the festival.

SAMINATHAN

## EDUCATIONAL TEMPLE

The Sri Murugan Centre (SMC) Ipoh launched its inaugural *Kalvi Kovil* (educational temple) project at the Masterskill College at Tasek recently. Over a thousand guests were present to witness the auspicious event. Founder and Director, Dato' Dr M. Thambirajah, in his opening address, recounted the centre's history. Formed in 1982 with 42 student volunteers, SMC's primary objective was to make the Indian community self-reliant through education. It started with four centres. Today there are over a hundred centres managed by volunteers throughout the country. More than 15,000 students from SMC have graduated from both local and foreign universities.

The three fundamental principles observed by the Sri Murugan Center are that all the students are created equal, that they are endowed with the same intellectual capacity and that religion is crucial for



Mock cheque presentation

success in education and life. To achieve these, the centre has developed a triadic relationship between the management, students and their parents. It harnesses the *sakthi* (power) of religion for educational achievement. Hence their motto: "Education Through Discipline: Discipline Through Religion".

Dato' K.S. Devamany, a founding member of SMC, reiterated that SMC is not a tuition centre per se but it prepares students

for a holistic lifestyle. The purpose of building the *Kalvi Kovil* is to provide tuition for students sitting for SPM and STPM examinations from Perak, under one roof.

The building will be built behind the Gunong Cheroh Hindu temple at an estimated cost of RM3 million. Donations, totalling over RM400,000, were pledged by the well-wishers during the ceremony.

A. JEYARAJ

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

## CONFUSION AT BUNTONG MARKET



Locked-up power point at Buntong Market

Stall owners at the Buntong market food court had a nasty surprise recently when City Council locked up their power points. They then approached their political representative, Sivasubramaniam, for assistance. Siva told the media that power supply to stall owners at the market

was disconnected by MBI officers. A visit to the food court revealed the truth – electrical points were indeed locked up.

A check with the relevant MBI officer proved otherwise. The locked power points were reserved for use by MBI maintenance crew. The supply points were installed following a recent facelift of the market. The whole wiring system was being upgraded. Unfortunately, 3 meters at the food court were overlooked. The officer voiced his concern about traders sharing the power points. It could cause a short-circuit. So he ordered them locked for safety reasons.

As an interim measure, City Council will allow the use of the locked power points until the end of March. Subsequently, the traders have to apply for their individual power points and bear the cost of the installation and usage.

Sivasubramaniam confirmed that power supply was back to normal. He hoped the problem would be settled amicably. MBI has, to date, received a few applications from the traders.



The Soroptimist International Ipoh Charter Night was held on the 12th of February 2009, at the Impiana Casuarina.

The President, Ms Jayamalar Jeyaratnam, greeting the Guest of Honour, Duli Yang Teramat Mulia Raja Puan Besar Perak Darul Ridzuan Tuanku Zara Salim, D.K.S.A, D.K.A.

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## ANNOUNCEMENT

- Ipoh City Watch will be holding its AGM on Sunday, March 29 at 9.30 am, at the Old Andersonian Club, Ipoh. All members are invited to attend. Call ICW Secretary, Jefri Nathan, at **012-5085090** for details.
- The Perak Medical Practitioners Society and the Postgraduate Medical Education Society of Hospital Raja Permaisuri Bainun will jointly organise the Sixth ASEAN Conference on Primary Healthcare with the theme "Challenges in Primary Care". Date and Venue: March 27-29 at the Impiana Casuarina Hotel. Please refer to the society's website: [www.pmps.org.my](http://www.pmps.org.my) or call Secretary, Ms Wendy Wong, at **05-2426549** for details.
- A charity dinner by Ipoh Society For the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ISPCA) will be held at Hee Lai Ton Restaurant on April 12 at 7.30pm. Call Dr P. Sunitha at **05-5467676** or Doreen Laidlaw at **016-5608905** for tickets.
- The Perak Heritage Society will organise a movie night in Papan on March 20 commencing at 8 pm. Venue: Wayang stage, opposite the Koon Yam Old Temple, Papan. Two movies will be screened: "The Bird House" and "The Pirate and the Emperor's Ship". Admission: Free. Call Hong at **017-5061875** for details.
- Free memory power technique training by Ancient Yoga Consulting Malaysia for schools. Those interested please call Dr R.M. Mutiah at **05-5278230** for details. Company's website: [www.ancientyogaconsulting.com](http://www.ancientyogaconsulting.com)

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