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ISSUE **74**

NEWS

DRIVEN TO
DISTRACTION



6

GUA TEMPURUNG
MOTOR CROSS 2009



9

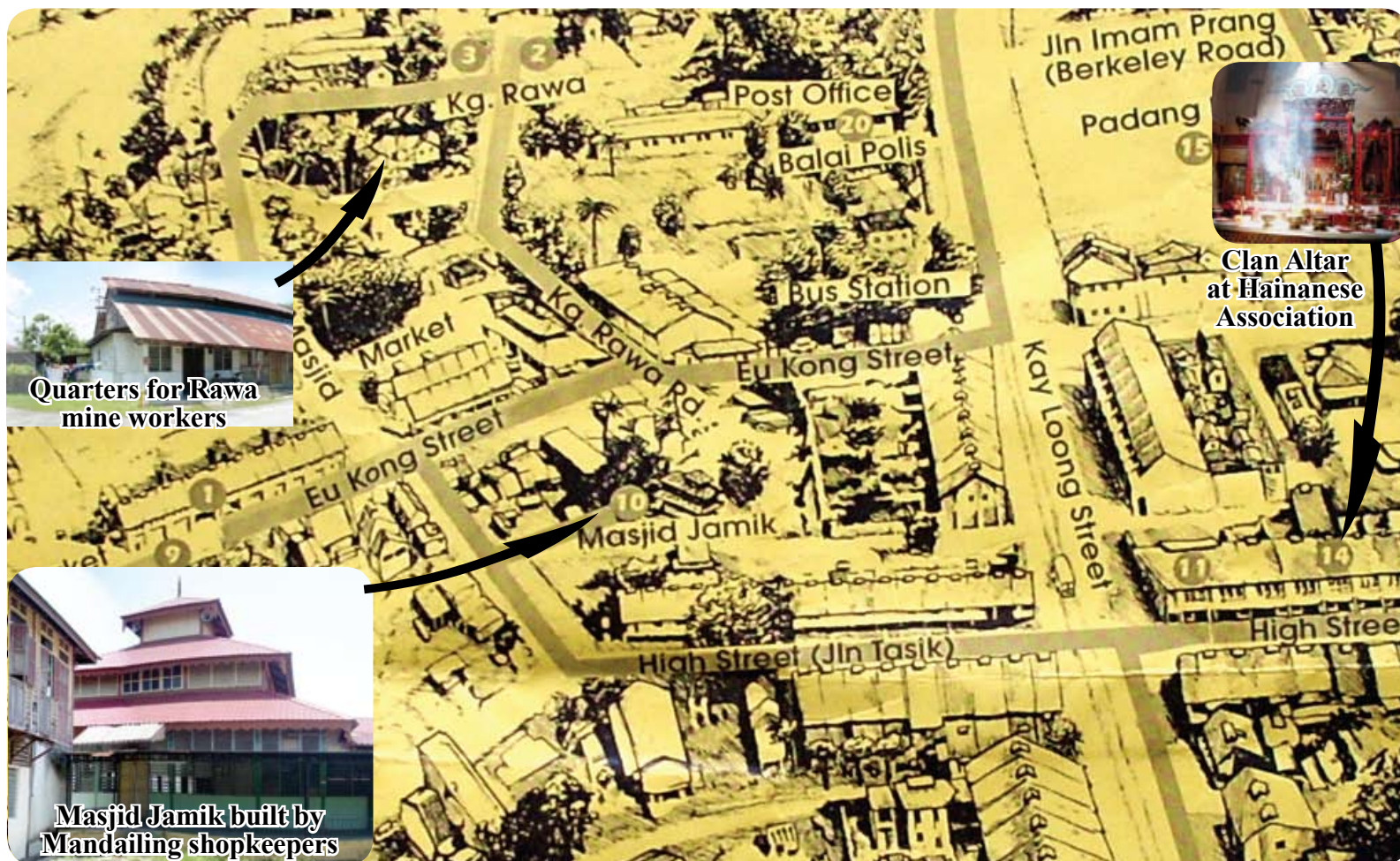
BUDGET HOLIDAYS
CLOSE TO HOME



10

*Mrs
Echo*
MAY

GOPENG - POTENTIAL HOMETOWN HERITAGE SITE



Map of Gopeng Heritage Walk

World Heritage day on April 18 was celebrated with the official opening of the Gopeng Museum in Gopeng itself.

Continued on page two



Name: Caroline Wong

Occupation:
Music Teacher/
Homemaker

Hobbies:
Music/Dancing/
Travelling

The Quality I Admire
Most:

Sincerity, dynamism,
enthusiasm &
compassion
Ideals I Live By
Live everyday to the
fullest. Learning to love
oneself & cherish family
moments

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Difference:

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learning new things in
order to teach and benefit
the younger generation,
beginning with my own
children.

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The large turnout on opening day

Bernard turns his Gopeng family home 'Mun Chong' into a museum

Located at 28 Jalan Eu Kong, the museum is a private initiative by Gopeng resident Mr Bernard Yaw whose great grand father Yaw Mun Chong leased the property from the TCM founder of Eu Yan Sang in 1897. Bernard subsequently purchased the property in 1999.

When the core economy of Kinta Valley, which was dependent on tin and rubber was devastated by falling prices, many of its residents ventured overseas to make a living and support their family back home.

Bernard, then studying in the USA, recalled "hearing Manglish and Jen Shen Hakka spoken while in New York's Chinatown area called Canal Street". There he befriended some Gopeng Chinese and they fondly renamed Canal Street as 'Kopisan Street' a long established suburb in Gopeng.

The encounter made Bernard nostalgic for his hometown and growing up on Eu Kong Street. Memories of men tapping rubber in the morning hours, mining tin in *palongs*; mums and daughters panning for tin in their wooden dulangs for a second income. He also remembered the communities then, "the Semai *orang asli*, the local Malays, the overseas Malays, i.e., the Rawa and Mandailing, the Indian and Sikh all gath-



Cutting the ribbon, Bernard with Perak Heritage Society president Law Siak Hong

ered at the market or at their next favourite socialising place: the cinema."

Several months ago during "a *lai fun* and local coffee discussion with hometown friends" they decided to "preserve a legacy of Gopeng for future generations by forming a Gopeng Museum".

Bernard had offered to share the family's heritage home 'Mun Chong' to be the cultural centre for the museum. The shophouse was restored. The ground floor houses the history centre while the upstairs is the family living area.

With the help of local historian Phang Sai Hong, the museum now houses a wide selection of exhibits, all of historical interest. Almost all of the 300

exhibits were provided by Gopeng residents. The walls are pasted with dated photographic images of places, events and personalities that made up the culture that was Gopeng from as early as 1850. A walk through is like a passage through time.

The Perak Heritage Society (PHS), in recognising the contribution of the museum towards hometown heritage had enhanced the significance of the opening by creating a comprehensive self guided heritage walk map through the town.

A tour of the heritage walk by PHS President Law Siak Hong, revealed the Chinese association houses, a mosque built by Mandailing shopkeepers



Historian Phang Sai Hong explaining the history of Gopeng to the visitors

and the old premises of the Straits Trading Company, among many other interesting sites.

Currently Gopeng is a popular eco-tourism destination and has a regular number of visitors weekly to the nearby jungles and *orang asli* settlements.

Law envisages that the museum will further enhance the popularity of this eco-tourism destination and an appreciation of the town's history. He hopes that it will inspire other shophouse owners to restore their premises for economic use and create employment opportunities for the young.

Indeed the various private initiatives by several groups around Gopeng, similar to Bernard's, have





6th generation Yaw, Kristin with her father Bernard

helped bring economic activities to the town. Law's vision could become a reality. Detailed planning, preservation of the surrounding environment and the restoration of the

town could make Gopeng the first hometown heritage site in the country.

JAMES GOUGH
email: ipohecho.jag@gmail.com





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HERITAGE

NO LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

Not long before the Christmas break last year, Ipoh was agog with tales of tunnels galore. Most fanciful of all was the suggestion of a tunnel between the Main Convent (Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus as it would have been called then), and St Michael's Institution. A kind of subterranean boy meets girl, perhaps not dissimilar to what the young Viet Cong might have got up to in their Cù Chi tunnels of South Vietnam, but with the Nuns and Brothers being their enemy rather than the Americans.

But, there was one Ipoh tunnel spoken about in high places, complete with an eye witness to the existence of the same. But this tunnel had no romance associated with it, for it was to move criminals to the Ipoh High Court from the Town Hall or, as suggested at the time, maybe further afield, perhaps from the Railway Station or the Police Headquarters. What was even more exciting was the revelation by the Datuk Bandar that the legendary tunnel was to be investigated. Indeed, not only investigated, but opened to the public as part of a historical trail that

would take in parts of Old Town as well including Lorong Panglima (aka Concubine Lane). Council was to bring in experts to find the apparently sealed-up tunnel and open it to tourism as part of an Ipoh Heritage Walk. Clearly this was going to be great news for Ipoh which, as we all know is sadly short of tourists spending their dollars here. We could hardly wait to hear more, particularly as the State Government's annual budget deficit was being lamented at the time and the subject of bringing in more tourists (and their money) into Perak was a burning issue, as it seems to have been since time immemorial.

However, as we all know pronouncements in a similar vein have been made many times before, but failed to bear fruit and, to all intents and purposes, it seems that this great new project has also gone the way of many of its predecessors, passing into oblivion.

But, at this stage perhaps it is time to ask would the project have ever been a success, even if the tunnel had been found and opened up? Any suggestion of encouraging



tourists to traverse a tunnel and then walk around Old Town needs careful thought. One may wonder if the Datuk Bandar or any of his advisers have actually tried to do the latter on a normal day for, apart from the heat, and regular torrential rain, it is far from an easy evolution with motorcycles parked on pavements and shop goods and *kopitiams* spilling out into the 5-foot way. Then one has to cope with the ever-changing height of the walkways from shophouse to shophouse and the difficulty in crossing the busy streets. In addition, are we really sure that we are ready to show our 'dirty washing' of dilapidated buildings like Lorong Panglima to the International public at large? Perhaps some serious preparations should be put in hand before we embark on this scheme, if we ever do!

Having said that, it

should be pointed out that the article "The Heartache of Heritage" (Ipoh Echo Issue 63) referred to a philanthropist's effort to do something about a small historic part of the town, but this was knocked back by the refusal of the property owners to even respond. Perhaps now is the time to reveal that this project planned to revitalise Lorong Panglima, by restoring it to its original-built state and opening a range of tourism-related attractions. The proposal was based on an option for the owners of an outright purchase or a 21-year lease arrangement. It foundered due to a total lack of interest of the owners who generally could not even be bothered to respond. Maybe the Datuk Bandar and his team will be more persuasive should they ever go ahead with this project.

Incidentally, while on the subject of Ipoh's streets

and lanes, unless you have tunnel vision, rather than the Datuk Bandar's vision of a tunnel, you will have noticed how the buildings continue to deteriorate? It really seems that nobody cares about our city anymore. Empty and derelict shophouses

and rebuilding apparently going forward with no overall design or thought for the future. Surely it is time to call a halt and seriously consider where our city is going.

Perhaps the City Fathers could let us know their thoughts. **WR**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

For jazz lovers: "16th Place Quartet" a group of 4 talented musicians will be performing different genres of music on **May 16 at Jazz & Bits at Mike's Place, Greentown.**

Perak Women for Women Society will be holding a "Nature's Secret for Women" session on Saturday, 23 May 2009 commencing 3 pm. Venue: PWW office 48, Jalan Dato Lau Pak Khuan. Bring food along for a Pot Luck. Call **05-5469715/012-5212480** for details.

Perak Women for Women Society together with Sisters In Islam will be holding a workshop titled "Know Your Rights: Women's Rights Under Islamic Law. Venue: Impiana Casuarina Hotel on Sunday, May 31, 2009 commencing at 9 am. Call **Cecelia (013-4384388)** for details.

PSPA's International Ensemble will be presenting "Moonlight Serenade" a performance by 7 talented musicians playing a repertoire of classical, Broadway and jazz pieces. Venue: Ballroom, Syuen Hotel on Thursday, June 4, 2009 beginning at 8 pm. Invitation by donation only. Call PSPA office: **05-5487814** for details.

Calling all **ACS Old Boys Class** of '79. Reunion dinner on Saturday, July 4, 2009 at Hyatt Saujana, Subang, Selangor. Contact: **Pillai (019-5555585)** or **Moses (012 5018126)** for details.



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THINKING ALOUD**MALAYSIANS OF INDIAN ORIGIN - PART 2****Possible solutions to the Indian dilemma**

The dilemma is that the problems identified in the previous issue and other problems faced by the community are looked at as troubles of the community and not as that of the nation. Consequently attempts at addressing them have been from this angle. There need to be a realisation that they are problems of an integral part of Malaysian society and consequences of not resolving them will be a cost to all.

However pragmatically I do not believe that long term sustainable progress of the community could be achieved through political activism nor do I think that the responsibility of addressing these problems could be left solely to government effort. Demographics and competing interests will prove to be major hurdles. Meaningful progress in resolving these issues and advance of the community can only be attained by some measure of government effort but substantially through self-help by the community themselves. In this regard I consider economic empowerment to be fundamental.

Government Effort

The government effort need be no more than implementing programs to achieve the first limb of the NEP - 'Eradication of Poverty irrespective of race'. As long as all who make up the community are taken out of the poverty zone, further progress could be left to their own efforts. It is no more than implementing a policy that is the government's mission.

A beginning could be made by resolving the stateless problem. All that is needed is political will and it could be solved almost overnight. The cost will be zero.

Also eradication of poverty will not be without benefit to the nation. The consequences of poverty in the form of crime, ill health and other negatives which are now a cost to society would reduce and current social and economic dependents could be transformed into contributors.

Few speak or exert effort for this poverty sector. Those who can, are out of

this zone and their focus is on the 'special rights' that have a direct bearing on their interests. Without a voice and few to speak for them the problem continues.

In this respect what would deliver significant impact would be reasonable accommodation with basic amenities, affordable public transport and employment opportunities. A scheme on the FELDA design would have considerable impact for the majority of the poor Indians.

Hillary Clinton in her 'It takes a Village' warns that if you neglect the well being of your neighbour's child, your child may become the victim of that child. This maxim also holds true for adults too.

Community Effort

What can the community themselves do to raise its members to the level of the other races that make up Malaysian society?

I think the first task is for the members of the community to arrive at the conscious realisation that all their fates are enjoined regardless of their ethnicity, class, caste, religion and social status and it is a common destiny we all share. Ultimately there can be no progress of one sector of the community without the progress of the rest.

The second task would be to identify, organise and empower a secondary elite that would serve as an active medium between the leadership and the wider population. They could be the professionals, NGOs, cultural organisations, religious bodies and business organisations.

The third task would be an audit of the community - its resources in terms of wealth, skills, knowledge, market, its weaknesses and needs. This task could be undertaken by the secondary elite. The information and intelligence gathered from this exercise could form the basis for devising a plan of how the resources of the community could be employed effectively to assist the community as a whole.

And the final task would be to structure a system with a mechanism that could be employed to put the plan into force. Again the FELDA model, that rewards individual ef-

fort and maximises returns using economies of scale through cooperative entities, would be an ideal system for this purpose. The intent would be to attain self-sufficiency as much as possible.

Other strategies that would deliver significant long term positive results would include empowering the women, equipping the youth with a good command of English and skills, encouraging self-employment and establishing a system to enable networking beyond the national borders.

Empowering Women

There can be little argument that women define the future generation. What is the situation today needs little elaboration. A system that enables them to be in the home taking care of their children and at the same time undertake some economic activity that produces an income would be the solution. In this regard there is no necessity to reinvent the wheel. Nobel Prize laureate Mohd Yunus has devised the scheme and all that is needed is its adoption and implementation. I must add that that the system is much more than providing micro-financing.

English Language

The value of this language needs no elucidation. It is all the more critical for a small community. Fortunately a large portion of the community is equipped with this language and it is a matter of transferring this tool to the youth en masse. I cannot over emphasise the importance of this language for this community.

Skills

Demand for skills in all fields is on the increase not only in this nation but worldwide. Plumbers earn more than many professionals in many countries. Aging population is leading to increased demand for nurses and health care personnel. Skills in new fields like environment conservation are assuming greater importance. A global audit could be undertaken to identify what skills are needed now and in the foreseeable future and this information could be used

as a basis for providing a future for the community members. Factors used by developed countries for purposes of immigration could serve as a guide.

Self-Employment

As the world becomes global, outsourcing has emerged as the path to efficiency and productivity. This has generated a host of opportunities for self-employment. What needs to be done is for the identification of these opportunities, organising and parcelling them into work and creating a structure to farm them to individuals.

Networking

Malaysia is a small nation with limited opportunities. As a small country it presents a harsh competitive environment. With competing interests, opportunities for members of small communities will be limited. The community has to look beyond the borders of the nation. The countries that form the

ASEAN group could be an opportunity. The power of networking can be observed in the Indian community, in their dominance in money changing. This can serve as a model for other economic activities.

The Jews in Europe and elsewhere form but a small minority in the countries they reside in. Not all of them are wealthy. Many are poor. Yet seldom do they seek nor receive any kind of assistance from their host nation. Nevertheless, through hard work, cooperation among themselves, and identifying niche opportunities, they have been able to emerge as a force. Their emergence has not been once or twice but several times during the course of history, always exerting an influence quite disproportionate to their numbers. They could serve as a model for the Tamil community not only in this nation but elsewhere where they are in the minority, which is everywhere including their native land.

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MUSINGS ON FOOD

by See Foon Chan-Koppen

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SeeFoon broadens her culinary horizons and discovers Ricky Parlanti

those interested in preparing fine western food.

True Blue Italian

Ipoh is about to expand its culinary horizons when decorated Master Chef, Ricky Parlanti starts giving Master classes on fine dining and the art of preparing gourmet taste treats, Italian style.



Hospitality Asia Platinum Award 2005/2006 for Excellence in Hospitality, Personality Chef of the Year

It was a serendipitous meeting. I was lunching with Bernard Tan, CEO of Kinta Properties, and his family at the Dome Restaurant in Meru Golf Resort and there was his guest, Ricky Parlanti bubbling away with his infectious enthusiasm, talking nineteen to a dozen, sharing his vision of setting up a gourmet restaurant and giving Master classes to

No Pizza Hut and what passes for pasta here, but true blue Italian: pasta 'al dente' served with home-made sauces, melt-in-your-mouth, aged-minimum-36-months prosciutto from his family farm in Italy, lightly grilled peppers, zucchini, eggplant drizzled in the finest virgin cold pressed olive oil, cannellini bean and fresh tuna salad with just a hint of vinegar, onion and parsley frittata, hand-pureed vegetable soups in delectable broths, delicately pan-fried fillets of local fish, and out of this world Tiramisu whipped up in a matter of minutes. This was the taste treat a few of us had the pleasure to sample in a friend's home recently.

Ricky, with his wacky sense of humour, had almost caused a fainting fit for my friend who had invited 18 people home for dinner one evening when he said to her that morning, "Oh, I've got nearly everything we need for tomorrow, just a few more items to pick up!" Then he laughed his wickedly infectious laugh and apologised, saying he'll be over in the afternoon to begin preparations. And this he did with gusto in his pristine white chef's tunic, concocting sauces, grilling vegetables, preparing soup, fish, and serving a magnificent meal with seven antipasto selections, in a seven course dinner, all whipped up in a matter of four hours.



As the invited Master Chef representing the Italian Trade Commission Kuala Lumpur at a culinary workshop in 2006 under the royal patronage of His Royal Highness Tunku Naquiyuddin Tuanku Jaafar

Ninth Generation Chef

Ricky was born into the business, being the ninth generation of chefs in the Parlanti family tree. At the tender age of nine, his passion for food was ignited in his father's kitchen which led to his revolutionising his father's restaurants in Italy, London and Florida, where he worked both front and back of house. Soon after, his zeal spiralled into a professional career that has taken him to Germany, England, North America, The Middle East, India and China, where he held senior positions in a variety of five-star restaurants and many *Leading Hotels of the World* before arriving in Malaysia more than fifteen years ago.

In Kuala Lumpur, he was responsible for establishing the first fine dining Italian restaurant in 1992. He then moved to Carcosa Seri Negara as Executive Chef cum Resident Manager, where his cuisine won numerous accolades and awards, not to mention delighting the palates of many Heads of State and dignitaries including former PM Tun Dr Mahathir Mohammad, Nelson Mandela, the King of Spain and the Emperor

of Japan, to name a few.

Mangotree Restaurant – First 'Open Kitchen'

He designed and opened his own restaurant, The Mangotree Restaurant in 1996 show-casing Kuala Lumpur's first "open kitchen" concept. The Mangotree has been in Malaysia Tatler's Best Restaurant Guide regularly since her inception. He has also been awarded the Hospitality Asia Platinum

Award 2005/2006 for Excellence In Hospitality Chef of The Year and The Best Chef in Malaysia (Expatriate) Award in the Millennium Gold Awards 2001/2002. He was one of the top four finalists for Hospitality Asia Platinum Award 2005/2006 Entrepreneur of the Year. He has on numerous occasions also enjoyed working in front of the TV camera, having teamed up with local celebrity chefs, introducing TV viewers to his recipes.

Ricky is *Vice Counsellor* in the *Confrerie De La Chaine Des Rostisseurs Baillage De Kuala Lumpur*, and also a member of the Ipoh Wine & Food Society. He also dedicates time to young professionals by way of training and apprenticeship programmes with Taylor's University/College School of Hospitality and Tourism

Management, Kolej Damansara Utama Kuala Lumpur School of Hotel Management and Lycee Hotelier D'Occitarie De Toulouse, France, and also sits on the IAP (Industrial Advisory Panel for all the schools) and volunteers as an examiner and lecturer.

Master Classes

Ipohites can soon look forward to learning some tips on preparing fine Western cuisine when Ricky begins his Master classes which he plans to hold at the Dome Restaurant in Meru Golf Resort. Further plans for Ricky include opening his own restaurant in Ipoh and negotiations are currently underway for this.

Meanwhile, Ipohites can look forward to experimenting with some of Ricky's recipes which the Ipoh Echo will be featuring from time to time.

FOOD

CHICKEN RICE



Remember when we did a review on chicken tauge and soup *kuey teow* (Issue 69)? You've guessed it – the white chicken is the same for both. The chicken is simmered and the broth is kept and used as a base for making everything in the chicken rice combo – from the rice, to the chicken sauce and chilli sauce. Chicken fat is added in the preparation of the rice. Some figure-conscious people may opt for white rice instead of the recommended 'chicken' rice. Our Singaporean neighbours apparently serve their chicken rice with separate chilli and ginger sauce. Over here, we usually combine both for dipping. We cannot stress enough that it is imperative to have good sauce. The chicken, if served separately, is garnished with coriander leaves, spring onions and sliced cucumber.

NAME	WHERE	COMMENTS	PRICE (RM)	
NASI AYAM HAINAN 10.30am-10.30pm	75-77, Jln Mustapha Al-Bakry (Clare St), 30300 Ipoh (Off Jln Jubilee)	Chicken & rice (served separately) with soup – chilli sauce very good – soup is good – extra vegetables priced at 5/- per plate (enough for 2-3)	White: 3.50 Roast: 4.00 Rice: 1.20	★ ★ ★ ▲
RESTORAN YAT YAT SENG 6.30am-3.00pm Closed 2 days a month	63 Jln Dato Lau Pak Khuan, Ipoh Garden	Rice with either white or roast chicken & soup – chicken is tender – roast chicken a bit salty – rice is tasty – chilli sauce not spicy but has strong garlic & ginger taste – soup is good	3.50	★ ★ ★
RESTORAN NASI AYAM TRADISYEN HOAY NAM 9.00am-6.00pm Closed 2 days a month	56 Persiaran Bercham Selatan II, Bercham – same street as Public Bank	Chicken rice with plain soup – chicken is tender – rice is tasty but a bit dry – chilli sauce is good & slightly tart – may be due to lime juice – very reasonably priced	3.00	★ ★ ★
RAMLI MEE REBUS* 10.00am-10.45pm	28 Jln Raja Ekram (Cowan St)	Only has roast chicken with rice & soup – chicken is tender – soup is very peppery – home-made chilli sauce a bit sweet, no taste of ginger – white rice cooked with ginger	4.20	★ ★ ★ ▲

* Halal

Our next food review will be MURTABAK

Email your favourite recommendations to: food@ipohecho.com.my

by RICKY PARLANTI

Master Chef Ricky Parlanti's signature series recipes

PENNE ARRABIATA IN SPICY TOMATO SAUCE

(Serves 10)

Tomato Sauce:

1 kg peeled plum tomatoes
20 gm garlic (sliced)
40 gm onion (chopped)
10 gm fresh basil (sliced/chopped)
100 ml pomace olive oil
seasoning to taste

Procedure:

1. Heat oil in pot and brown your garlic and onion.
2. Add tomato and basil, stir and simmer for 35 minutes or until desired consistency.
3. Reserve for later use.



Main Course:

1 kg penne pasta
1.6 ltr tomato sauce
150 gm unsalted butter
100 gm parmesan cheese (grated)
100 gm garlic (chopped)
20 gm basil (chopped)
200 ml olive oil
150 ml white wine (op-

tional)
2 gm dry chilli (chopped, add more for a spicier pasta)
seasoning to taste

Procedure:

1. Cook the penne pasta in salted water (to taste).
2. Heat the oil in a frying pan and brown your garlic and chilli.
3. Deglaze with the wine (optional). Add tomato sauce and basil. Reduce and season to taste.
4. Add pasta and finish off by stirring in butter and parmesan.
5. Serve with love and passion from the heart.

LETTER FROM ULU KINTA

• writer's email: letterulukinta@yahoo.com

DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION

The state government should not waste time on trivia such as auctioning second-hand cars when there are better things to do...



In January 2009, 16 new Toyota Camry cars were registered for official use by the then Pakatan Rakyat Perak coalition government. Three months later, the newly installed Barisan Nasional Perak government decided to auction them off.

If the authorities see this move as exercising its right to govern, then they are mistaken. To a vast majority of Perakians, and others beyond its borders, this act is seen as the Perak government's megalomaniacal desire to stamp its power – by playing Monopoly (the board game) with taxpayers' money.

Staggering Maintenance Cost

Readers may remember that these Toyota Camry cars, costing RM2.7m, replaced the ageing

fleet of Proton Perdana cars, which had cost a staggering RM1m to maintain over the last four years. Proton had asserted that servicing should only cost approximately RM2,300 per car. Incredibly, the state government had been billed several times this Proton estimate.

One senior state councillor had even lamented that his Proton Perdana had been in and out of the workshop for repairs and maintenance, at a shocking RM130,000 in the last four years. One wonders why no one thought it better to buy him a new car.

Thus there exists a curious and confusing state of affairs. How could the previous BN state government exercise poor judgment in permitting a wasteful use of public funds on mere repairs on cars that were consistently breaking down? The sums just don't

tally. Hence, these factors all contributed to PR's purchase of the Toyota cars which are now being auctioned off.

Dato' Seri Dr Zambry claimed that his government was "courteous" and "non-confrontational." He added that Dato' Seri Nizar's interest in bidding for the Camry, registration number AGS10, would mean that he would not be using the car illegally. Moreover, Dr Zambry added, "Even if there is a higher bidder for the car, we will give him top priority out of respect....."

Waste of Taxpayers' Money

True. Governments of whichever political persuasion should act with civility, respect, and be accommodating. However, the BN statements allegedly citing *haram* use and simi-

lar remarks are themselves confrontational as they are unjustified.

The state government claimed that its stand was to 'use only national cars'. Obviously, owning Proton cars is highly commendable, as it projects an image of national pride and brand loyalty. But what is the shameless sense in wasting money on the Camry cars which are now left idle? The Proton cars were known to have high maintenance costs. There is no pride in throwing good money after bad. Moreover, executive councillors using their own cars for official business will be claiming travelling expenses. It is the taxpayer who is footing the bill for car purchasing, maintenance and miscellaneous charges.

Dr Zambry contends that the state will not be making any loss when the Toyota cars are auctioned at a sum lower than the purchase price. How extraordinary! Most cars depreciate in value when they leave the forecourt of the showroom. Only classic cars like the Bentleys, Lagondas and Aston Martins can com-

mand prices higher than what they were originally bought for. If the state government wishes to indulge in its current sideline of reselling new cars for a profit, then they should desist. Running a second-hand car-dealership is none of the state's business.

It is probable that the Toyota Camry cars, like the Democracy Tree, are a painful reminder of the bold actions and popularity of the PR government. To be rid of these symbols would be preferential. So to be seen disposing of them in the most direct and offhand manner would be regarded as an act of pique by some quarters. Hence we are treated to an elaborate and convenient masquerade of advocating Proton cars under the guise of national pride.

Restore Public Confidence

The public response at the May 4 auction was tepid. Only seven offers were received. The papers were blamed for misreporting the dates of the auction period. People were distancing themselves from anything associated with

the political imbroglio. The state had already suffered untold damage and the credibility of those at its helm, was in ruins. Wouldn't it be further damning if the auction was called off because of lack of interest?

The right decision would be to start reusing the Camry cars. Stem the rot in public confidence. Prevent a further haemorrhage in our public funds. The cars have already been purchased so why not reuse them and care for them wisely. The state government's time could be better spent on addressing matters that warrant serious attention like improving the lot of the people in these difficult times.

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PERAK TURF CLUB FETES TUANKU

The Perak Turf Club in commemoration of HRH Paduka Seri Sultan Azlan Shah's 25 years on the throne, organised a befitting celebration with the staging of a 'one-off' Silver Jubilee Sultan Perak Trophy Race at a majestic level. The trophy carried a stake money of RM1 million. The trophy race, run

over a distance of 1,600 metres was opened to Class 1 horses.

When HRH ascended to the throne in 1985 the Perak Turf Club had initiated the Coronation Cup Race. Since then it was an annual affair. The outcome of the Cup Race enables over 50 charitable homes and organisations to receive

several hundred thousand ringgit worth of donations each year.

The 'one-off' RM1 million Jubilee trophy was won by Happy Victory ridden by jockey Samsir. The owner is Beh Chin Peng and trained by South African trainer Kevin Coetzee.

To add a tinge of gaiety to the Jubilee race, an informal 'Best Hat

Attire' contest was organised. There were 3 prizes. Hats were judged on design, colour and creativity. Judges were unannounced and incognito. The winner was Caroline Wong wearing a matching red hat and dress. Ginla Foo came in second followed by Olivia Nicholas in third place.

The night before the Jubilee Cup race, on Saturday May 3 the Club organised a Silver Jubilee Gala Dinner for HRH. Over 900 guests attended. The High Commissioner of Canada was present as were other VIPs together with the racing fraternity and officials.

The star of the night was 'young Elvis' impersonator Scot Bruce brought in all the way from

Los Angeles. He had the guests singing along to the well loved Elvis hits and some even rocked and rolled along the aisles.

Overall a lovely weekend was had by those privileged to attend the events.



Cup Winners (Left to right) Beh Chin Peng, Samsir & Kevin Coetzee



Best hat winners from left to right: Olivia Nicholas, Caroline Wong & Ginla Foo

IPOH FACT AND FANCIES

THE RIVER OF SILT

by HO TAK MING

Ipoh residents were indignant over the Government's inaction to address flooding caused by a heavily silted Kinta River. Ho Tak Ming takes us on a nostalgic journey back to the 1920s. Part one of two..

The Kinta River was navigable to Ipoh until the end of the nineteenth century. Dozens of boats, Chinese sampans laden with rice, salt, salted fish, poultry, eggs, etc., and Malay boathouses loaded with maize, bananas and garden produce from riverine kampongs, were moored near the Hugh Low Bridge. Before the Kinta Valley Railway was built in 1894, when the river traffic was all-important, a dredging appliance on the Kinta River cleared it of snags so as to keep it open for boat traffic. However, after the railway was built and as the boat traffic slowed to a trickle, the work of keeping the river clear was stopped.

Kinta River then had a depth of twelve to fifteen feet. As the river became neglected and dirt began to accumulate, it became shallower. However, it was the numerous tin mines in the Kinta Valley a legacy of the Tin Rush of the 1880s that caused the river to silt up. In 1907, there was a fairly heavy flood

in Ipoh. After another flood in 1913, the matter was brought up to the Government by the Kinta Sanitary Board. No official action was forthcoming.

The first major flood in Ipoh, occurred in October 1918. There had not been a great deal of rain in Ipoh at the time but there was heavy rain up at the source in Ulu Kinta. The first indication that a flood was coming was the sound of surging water heard by shopkeepers in Old Town. They soon found themselves surrounded by a sea of murky water. The flood rapidly rose until it was four feet deep in Station Road. The ground floor of Messrs. Whiteaway, Laidlaw and Co was knee deep in water. Every shop in Old Town was entered by the turbid floodwater. The damage caused to goods was estimated to be over a quarter of a million dollars.

The people of Ipoh were annoyed at the great monetary loss sustained. The Chinese held a protest meeting at the Chinese

Theatre. A delegation was sent to meet the British Resident at the Ipoh Residency but nothing was done. The Kinta River kept on silting, not only with "tailings" but "wash" from the rubber estates, which were being opened up following the rubber boom of 1910.

An even greater flood occurred in 1919. Five years later another flood hit the town.

After the flood of 1924, the Government consulted some experts. Messrs. Thomas and Hornridge, Civil Engineers in Ipoh, recommended that the Kinta River be deviated down the Pinji Valley, a scheme estimated to cost about 3.5 million dollars. The Government was chary of attempting to make a river run where no river had ever run before, and at a great cost. It took a long time to mull over the matter.

Messrs. Thomas and Hornridge also suggested that the flood area of Ipoh be abandoned and mined for tin. According to A.E. Cameron, the Economic



Kinta River today

Mining Geologist to the FMS Government, there were rich tin deposits beneath the town. The firm requested permission from the sanitary board to bore the streets of the flooded areas to ascertain the value of the tin contents available.

"What?" screamed the Times of Malaya, Ipoh's own newspaper. "A tin mine in the heart of Ipoh?"

The board decided not to accede to the request. To mine the flood area of Ipoh would be very expensive

as each shophouse was worth between \$20,000 and \$30,000, and compensating the owners was impractical.

By then, Ipohites were getting really fed up with the Government's indifference. The town had been subject to floods almost annually for the past six or seven years and yet the authorities had gone no further than carrying out "investigations" without any counter measure taken. The Malays called the Kinta River, *celaka punya sungai*.

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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:
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BACK TO NATURE



Students are beginning to get closer to nature nowadays. Besides keeping fit physically, participants are able to establish a meaningful relationship with nature. Mr David Foon, who runs the Gopeng Rainforest Resort and organises holiday camps for students, will be organising a Holiday Camp for school children from June 8 to 10. Foon said the outings are meant to expose young participants to seek outdoor and adventure pursuits while teaching them to cope with life independently. In addition to talks on motivation and nature education, other fun-filled activities include bamboo rice cooking, night walks and spotting insects, jungle trekking and a hunt for the Rafflesia flower (world's largest flower). They

will also search for Rajah Brooke butterflies and to visit *orang asli* and experience their village life. For details, call Foon at 012-5107555 or Janice Heng at 012-5168200. You can also email them at gopengrainforest@yahoo.com or visit www.gopengrainforest.com



The young residents with members of the Millennium Heart Caring Society

When members of the Millennium Heart Caring Society (MHCS) brought along 25 sets of chicken chops for the young residents of Pertubuhan Kebajikan Harapan Baru here, they literally jumped with joy. It has been a while since the children, aged between 3 and 16, have had such a treat. The children, mostly orphans, and some from single mothers are used to simple meals cooked at the home by volunteers. The society also presented provisions like condensed milk, rice and health drinks worth some RM380 for the home. On learning that bed sheets and pillow cases of the children were in bad

condition, the members rushed to the nearest shop to acquire the items, which cost RM700.

MHCS adviser Datin Jenny Lim said the home, at 12A Lorong Pinji, has 25 children, the youngest being a 4-year-old boy. "The children there are well-disciplined. They study on their own following a schedule drawn up for them. I am amazed with the way they carry themselves and how they care for one another", she said.

The home needs contributions from the public to meet its daily needs.

For details, call Jenny at 012-5389989.

VISIT TO OLD FOLKS HOME



After weeks of planning, some 30 members of the Buddhist Club of SMK Methodist (ACS) Ipoh organised a trip to the Simee Old Folks Home. Bringing along gifts bags, fruits and a huge icing cake, the students cheered up its residents by sing-

ing a number of songs. They then spent almost two hours getting to know the old folks during lunch. The club's caring and sharing concept has helped the students realise the importance of extending a helping hand to those who are in need.

The visit was sponsored by Kelab Anak Malaysia Batu Gajah and its patron, Dato Chang Ko Youn commended the students for their benevolence and generosity toward others. He also hoped that more youths will sacrifice time for the unfortunate.

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IPOH IN BRIEF

More pics at ipohecho on line

DATO' DR MAH MEETS WITH LANDSCAPE CONTRACTORS



Executive Councillor for local governments, Dato' Dr Mah Heng Soon, met with landscaping contractors recently. The session was organised by MBI. In attendance was Ipoh Mayor, Dato' Roshidi Haji Hashim and Ipoh Council Landscape Director, Encik Meor Zaidi Meor Abdullah together with 73 contractors. Mayor Roshidi thanked the contractors for "a good job done all this while". Mah thanked the contractors for coming for this two way 'dialogue' session and said that he welcomed suggestions from them which could help improve the overall efficiency of this public service. Mayor Roshidi on his part went further and provided a 'hot-line' phone number which the contractors could dial to air their concerns. The evening ended with a light tea which all the participants partook.

FULL HOUSE



A meeting of all kampong chiefs throughout the Perak Astate saw a full turnout. 817 members of the village development and security committees (JKKK) gathered at the Taman Meru community hall for a briefing together with state Pakatan leaders to protest their abrupt termination effective April 16. The village chiefs were elected to their posts and have received their 2-year appointment letters effective from 1 August 2008 till 31 July 2010. No proper reasons were given for their termination. The chiefs plan to sue the BN government for their early dismissal.

OMPH PARISH FAMILY DAY



The Church of Our Mother of Perpetual Help (OMPH), Ipoh, had a Family Day Carnival on April 26, 2009. After the short opening ceremony at 9.30 a.m., the crowd was treated to a live performance by the St. Michael's Institution (SMI) Brass Band.

Finger-foods such as curry puffs and *nyonya kuih*, as well as Indian and Chinese food were on sale. There was also the Laksa Sarawak. Many were seen flocking to the ice cream and drinks stalls.

There were also other stalls selling handicrafts, costume jewellery, crystal stones, mobile phone covers and organic floor cleaners. Some stalls even sold fresh vegetables, which were brought in all the way from Cameron Highlands.

All the children loved the mini animal farm which had pony rides and a dog show where individuals proudly paraded their dogs. An exhibition of new cars was a crowd puller. There was also a jumble sale with an array of new and pre-loved items – clothes, shoes, trinkets, books, VCDs and the like.

Throughout the carnival, those present were entertained with cultural dances – performed by children and adults alike.

WORLD RED CRESCENT DAY



The Perak Red Crescent celebrated World Red Crescent Day at the third-class maternity ward of the Ipoh General Hospital on Saturday, May 8. The event was graced by the President of the Perak Red Crescent and former mayor, Dato' Ismail Shah Bodin. In attendance were members of the society and hospital staff numbering over 40 personnel. Dato' Ismail gave away goodies and presents to babies born on the auspicious day. Mohd Syakir Abdullah was the first to be delivered. His mother, Puan Norlia Lut 32, from Pengkalan Pegoh, Ipoh, got herself a huge hamper. A total of 20 babies were in the ward when members of the Perak Red Crescent celebrated their society's formation day.

JAZZ..EVELIN SCHAUER



JazznBits, the only live music outlet in Ipoh that regularly features jazz musicians on its stage, had talented Austrian jazz vocalist Evelin Schauer for its April offering. Emotional, honest and singing what she feels with charisma would describe her performance. The flyer advertising the event said a little bit of jazz, a dash of funk and a dash of pop. Well it was all that and a whole lot more. Ipoh looks forward to "a little night music" of this calibre in the future. (Check our announcement page for JazznBits May offering)

IPOH'S NEW BUDGET HOTEL



Looking for a hotel that suits one's pocket can be tedious, as such establishments are few and far between. Ipoh is no exception. Hotels and service apartments built in and around the city serve only the well-heeled and those with money to splash. Cash-strapped travellers and visitors have to forego the opportunity of a comfortable room to rest their tired bodies and souls. With this in mind, local businessman, Toh Chin Yu, has built a budget hotel in Station 18, Pasir Puteh, one that will meet the needs of the budget conscious travellers. The hotel, located behind the Tesco Hypermarket, comes with numerous freebies such as wi-fi, air-conditioning and hot water. The hotel's 20 rooms, of various specifications, are very affordable. It will not burn a hole in your pocket to enjoy amenities normally found in star-graded hotels.

YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



The Ministry of Information, Communications and Culture sponsored roving Youth Symphony Orchestra held its one-day musical recital at the Istana Budaya Ipoh recently. It was one of their pit stops in their tour of the country after a successful performance in Johore Bahru. The ensemble, formed by the ministry in 1983, was to galvanise musical talents from among young Malaysians. It has grown in strength and stature. Today some 60 youthful musicians performed under the tutelage of Mayya Musaeve, the conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra. The one-day performance provided Ipohites with a rare opportunity to witness our young talents at their best. The talented musicians did not disappoint the crowd. They were entertained to songs, music and stage appearance by Nadia of the Akademi Fantasia fame. Some of the well-known musical themes played were from blockbuster movies such as Star Wars, Jurassic Park, Titanic and The Mask of Zorro. Dato' Seri Dr Zambry, his wife, Datin Seri Sharifah and Executive Councillor for Youth and Sports, Zainol Fazli Fahayudin, were in attendance.

GUA TEMPURUNG MOTOR CROSS 2009



The 4th Gua Tempurung Motor Cross Championship ended on a successful note with a larger number of participants this time around. The championship, held on May 9 and 10 in the shadows of iconic Gua Tempurung, was jointly organised by Tourism Malaysia and La Shuttle and rectified by the Malaysian Motor Cross Association. Sponsors for the event were Bukit Merah Laketown Resort, Visco and Cruise GPS System. Mohd Habibullah, 18, representing the Kawasaki Selesa Team from Sungai Buaya, Selangor, thrilled the crowd with his motoring skills manouvering through the obstacles with ease. Habibullah was adjudged the overall champion winning in both the 125 cc and the Open Categories. He took home two trophies and a cash reward of RM2,000. On the first day of competition three events were held. They were the Endurance Open, Endurance Veteran and Classic. The Junior 85 cc, the 12-15 Age Group and Trail Bikes categories were held on the second and final day. Sharima bt Azahar, 14, was the sole female participant in the age group. She gave her male rivals a run for their money. Zainol Fadzi Fahayuddin, Executive Councillor for Youth and Sports, gave away the prizes.

BUDGET HOLIDAYS CLOSE TO HOME

by JAMES GOUGH

The school holidays are 2 weeks away. To help you decide where to take the family, Ipoh Echo is highlighting 2 nearby eco-tourism destinations. They are Felda Residence Hot Springs Resort, Sungkai, and the Gopeng Hills along Sungai Kampar. Interestingly both these sites are located at the Titiwangsa Range.

The Felda Residence Hot Springs Resort is located at Sungkai. To get there turn off at the Sungkai toll, then turn left and another left. After 1 km, look for the 'Felda Residence' sign. The journey from Ipoh should take 90 minutes.



Adeline hut

Managed by Plantations Resorts Sdn Bhd, a Felda company, the park is located within a palm oil estate and the drive in is a pleasant scene of lush greenery.

Situated 200 feet above sea level at the foothills of the Titiwangsa Range the

resort has done a great job of capitalizing on its natural water resources. With hot spring water from under ground and cool water from the mountain springs, it has created a water park that caters for the whole family. The cool mountain spring pool is particularly refreshing.

The hot spring water, however has been put

to multiple uses. Start with a stroll on the board walk which winds along the stream which is the source of the hot water. Temperatures around 60-100 degrees Celsius generate clouds of steam which envelopes you and opens the pores of your skin. The

slight smell of sulphur is not unpleasant and the exercise is most refreshing when visited at sunrise and sunset.

Then take a reflexology walk or just soak your weary feet in 35-degree hot water for total relaxation. Other members of the family can make some hard activity which children love. My favourite activity at the resort though was wading in the big hot spring pool immersed to the neck then coming out to douse myself with a pitcher of cold water before going back into the wading pool for a few more rounds. Mind you I did this at noon and the spa effect was tinglingly refreshing.

This resort also offers private family spas with hot spring pool and Jacuzzi and traditional Malay and Ayurvedic massage. It even has a 3-star hotel and villas for rent. Generally this place has a natural vil-

lage charm packaged with modern facilities. An Ipoh Echo recommendation.

Gopeng On The Range

Gopeng Town may be a site for a museum but the area along the foothills of the Titiwangsa Range is teeming with adventure activities. The eco-tourism treasures here are caving at Gua Tempurung and Gua Candu, white water rafting on the Sungai Kampar, water abseiling or just picnicking by Sungai Jahang, a scenic picnic area. Or allow the *orang asli* to help you track the Rafflesia flower (the largest flower in the world). Better still traverse the trans-Cameron trail (trek from Gopeng to Tanah Rata in Cameron Highlands over 2 days).

Gopeng on the Range has a record 200 visitors staying every week. If one includes the day trippers especially on weekends the figure is much higher.

The main attraction here is white water rafting on the Sungai Kampar. It



White water rafting



The Ch'ng Family

started in 2002 with one operator. There are now 3 operators here.

Another attraction here is Rumah Rehat Adeline which is a cluster of Semai *orang asli* styled huts that just blend in with its jungle surroundings. Adeline Kuo is an early pioneer as well as a native from Gopeng who successfully runs this quaint and rustic cluster of huts. Being a local, Adeline employs staff from the surrounding communities such as the *orang asli* from upper Ulu Groh and local Malay help from Kampung Pintu Padang. Her food is *halal*. Since her resort started in 2002 another 2 operators have opened up next door. Visitors to Adeline's im-

mediately feel at one with nature at her place.

During the recent May Day holiday whole families were seen staying overnight while several camped out along the river. Downriver on the Sungai Jahang, local residents, seeing a good proposition in the offing are now copying the home-stay concept and are erecting dormitories for visitors. Sungai Jahang is mainly a picnic spot on the river.

Overall Gopeng has all the makings of a lucrative eco tourism site. I know so because the tour bus operators from KL have put Sungkai Hot Springs and Gopeng on their tour list.

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