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FLAG OFF AND AWAY THEY GO!!!!



546 cyclists... 138 crew... a convoy of police and 4WDs. 100 miles of Perak eco-terrain to cover... 100,000 man hours of precise planning and preparation . . .

That's what it took to make MALAYSIA'S ONE AND ONLY CENTURY BIKE RIDE the EVENT that aims to put Perak on the World Radar through Cycling . . .

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Name:
Nurul Shatiha Bt Sharon
Occupation:
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Hobbies:
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The quality I admire most:
Strength in character
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CENTURY RIDE PERAK SET TO MAKE IT TO THE GUINNESS BOOK OF MALAYSIAN RECORDS

More pics at ipohecho.com.my

The usually sleepy town of Tanjung Rambutan was abuzz with a sense of anticipation and alive with activity as early as 5:30 a.m. on the morning of July 19, 2009. It was the day of Century Ride 2009, the 100-mile cycling marathon that is a rite of passage for every cyclist worth his weight in salt.

This day will go down in history as the day an interesting record was achieved for Perak, and all Malaysia. On this day, more than 500 cyclists from all over Malaysia as well as internationally, gathered in Ipoh to take on the world famous Century Ride, to date still the one and only to be held in Malaysia.

Taken Malaysia by Storm

Century Ride Perak, organised by Kelab Roadrunners Ipoh (KRI) in collaboration with Jabatan Belia dan Sukan Negeri Perak, is a 100-mile cycling challenge popular in the Western world, but relatively new to this region. Since KRI introduced the event here in 2007, Century Ride has taken the cycling world in Malaysia by storm.

The event has grown in both popularity and reputation, attracting 546 participants this year from Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, Australia, Canada and the UK, the largest number of cyclists ever to participate in any single cycling event of any distance



Suhaimi bin Salim was the lucky winner of the RM10,000 bike frame courtesy of Teschner Technologies! In green is Paul Johnston of Teschner Technologies who came all the way just for Century Ride.

in the country. Quite a feat indeed.

Ultimate Test in Cycling

The credit for having the resourcefulness and sheer passion to organise the first ever Century Ride in 2007 goes unreservedly to Kelab Roadrunners Ipoh (KRI), under the leadership of its President of 22 years, Mr Chong Him Shoong (picture below), himself an accomplished cyclist.

Him Shoong said, "The Century Ride is to cyclists what a



marathon is to runners. It is the ultimate test in cycling and the pinnacle of every serious cyclist's motivations", adding that the catalyst for such an event came from the idea to identify Perak as the host of Century Ride and to promote the state as the ideal cycling destination in Malaysia.

"Perak has wonderful terrain and is every cyclist's dream. There is great potential to develop our state as an attractive destination for people who are keen to take the road less travelled and see more of our country on bike and on foot", Chong said.

"Century Ride has set a record for being the largest single cycling event in Malaysia as we had a total of 546 participants. The advantage of this event is that it is open to the public and it is not a race, but a long distance ride which aims to give cyclists a chance to ride alongside their counterparts from other parts of the world in a peloton.

"The experience is exhilarating, simply unlike any other",

he said, expressing his sentiments as a true lover of the sport, and not merely an event organiser.

Century Ride 2009 was flagged off by Wakil kepada Menteri Besar Perak, YB Zainol Fadzi Bin Paharudin, from the Jabatan Belia dan Sukan.

Perak Calendar Listing

"We are very excited about Century Ride, and will continue to support Kelab Roadrunners Ipoh to actively promote the event. We also plan to list it in the Perak calendar of events from next year", YB Zainol said in congratulating KRI for an event well organised.

The 100-mile event started and ended at Bukit Kinding Resort in Tanjong Rambutan, turning the usually sleepy little town into a hive of activity that weekend. Locals lined the streets to cheer the cyclists on and a carnival-like atmosphere was prevalent.

Loud applause and cheer greeted Ipoh's own adventure enthusiast, student Lydia Tan, 23, when she flew to the finish line in an impressive 4



Lydia Tan

hours 15 mins. This was her first attempt and, even with some training before the event, she still surprised herself with her inspiring timing. How did she do it??

"The entire group was very strong and I just tried to keep up with my group all the way and not fall behind. Even when my legs felt like they were going to break and my lungs were bursting I kept pushing on. KRI did a good job with water stations and support groups over the entire course. I was so happy to see the finish line", she said.

Spirit of Muhibbah

According to Mr Michael Beh, Organising Chairman of Century Ride 2009, the event has been "a truly Perakian effort that has included teamwork from Jabatan Belia dan Sukan Perak, the police force, the fire brigade, the local health authorities, the Information Department, and MBI working hand in glove with the KRI organising committee represented by people from all walks of life".

"This spirit of Muhibbah is the reason Century Ride has been successful year after year", said Mr Beh.

Sponsors

Mr Beh also thanked the Main Sponsors of Century Ride 2009, Pasaraya Ku, U Mobile, My Gopeng Resort, Bukit Kinding Resort, Teschner Technologies, Cycling Asia and Brooks Malaysia, as well as other sponsors including Eastern Decorator, Red Bull, Milo, 100 Plus, Power Bar, Penang 4x4 Adventure Club, Tower Regency, Hovid Pharmacy, and Campagnolo Italy.

Title sponsors are sought to make Century Ride even bigger and better next year. Those interested to sponsor the Century Ride or join KRI, Perak's premier running (and now also cycling) club, may contact Chong Him Shoong at 019-571 7722. More information on this and other events of KRI may be found on the club's website www.ipohroadrunners.org.

Mentri Besar Zambry who was unable to attend, said, "I believe that Century Ride will bring immense good to the state of Perak and to the people at all levels of society through the pursuit of an active lifestyle that is healthy. Sports and the promotion of cycling is in line with a green and sustainable environment."

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PTA FUNDS – A NECESSARY EVIL

Parents have to fork out extra money to maintain schools . . .

Ask any parents with school-going kids what they think of the extras they have to fork out besides the money to buy books, uniforms, shoes and a plethora of other expenses for their kids' education. The answer is obvious. They will baulk at it. The extras I am referring to is the much vaunted *Persatuan Ibu Bapa dan Guru* (PIBG) or Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) funds. Money collected by schools for expenses incurred in sustaining the student population. They are funds which are not provided for by the Education Ministry and are meant specifically for repair works and "others" within the definition of the word "funds". It is a necessary evil to put it succinctly.

Days of Yore

In days of yore such contributions were never an issue, thus those of my generation (Class of 50s and 60s) were spared the inconvenience. Well, schooling was a lot different then. Text and exercise books rated high on our list of priorities. It would set our parents back by

about RM50 per child per year. A princely sum then. However, we were allowed to use our siblings' books, hand-me-down fashion. The only other money required of us was school fees – RM5 per month.

PTA was unheard of then. As such, there was never a need for additional funds. Life was less complicated – no hand phones, no cineplexes, no computers, no MP3s, no I-pods and no Mat Rempits. We walked or cycled to school, regardless of the distance. Our role models were our teachers. We looked up to them. Not anymore. Today students drive better cars than their teachers.

PTA funds have been a thorn in the flesh of the Education Ministry and the Government, to a larger extent. Last year it took none other than the then Minister of Education, Dato' Seri Hishammuddin Hussein himself, to assuage fears of the problem getting out of hand in view of the global economic slowdown.

Minister's Directive

Hishammuddin announced in November 2008 that PTA fees for year 2009 be

collected in June 2009. The ruling got schools in a bind as they had virtually nothing to fall back on. In June this year collection of PTA funds resumed. However, approval must be acquired at the association's annual general meeting. The account must then be audited and a report be submitted to the Ministry. Everything should be above board.

PTA Funds

PTA funds, said Sreethararaj, the former PIBG chairman of La Salle School, Ipoh (2006 to 2008) were necessary as the additional money made the difference between a functional and a broken toilet. "School toilets are most vulnerable. At La Salle School most of the funds go towards repairing and replacing toilet bowls, flush systems and urinals." Boys' toilets were most susceptible to vandalism, said Sree.

Limited Funds

Funds from the Education Ministry are limited and hard to come by, especially for mission schools. So school heads are left with little choice but to tax parents to make up the defi-



ciency.

There is no compulsion, said Sree. "Schools cannot force parents to pay up. Those who can't are required to do so in writing and they'll be exempted." In spite of this, there are schools who "arm-twist" parents to honour their promises and children are being deliberately victimised should their parents fail.

Payment Required

Sivasubramaniam, the Adun for Bentong, has a bone to pick with two schools in his constituency. "How are poor parents to pay when they have more than one child in school?" he asked. "It costs RM122 for Form 1 and 2 students and RM98 for those in Form 3, 4 and 5." Moreover the fees, said Siva, were imposed half way through the school season in June. Siva had

written to both the schools and the Perak Education Department. Obviously, the state assemblyman is unaware of Hishammuddin's November 2008 directive. Schools can resume collection in June 2009.

No Compulsion

An official from the state education department responded nonchalantly when asked. He acknowledged that collection of PTA funds was sanctioned by the ministry. Conditions, as mentioned by Sree, needed to be satisfied beforehand. However, schools cannot compel parents to contribute, he added.

Uncertainty

There is much uncertainty in the air. Some aggrieved individuals have turned to their political representatives for answers. This lingering problem needs to be

addressed in an amicable manner. "But how are parents to know? Some hardly attend any of the PIBG meetings", Sree remarked. He is right. Parents have to play their part, so do teachers. Otherwise DPM Muhyiddin's exhortation that all children be given equal opportunity for access to education will come to naught.

Educating the Masses

And as for mission schools fairness is the only solution. They should have access to funds since they, like other public schools, are fulfilling the government's objective of educating the masses.

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SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR THE NEEDY

Philanthropist Koon Yew Yin has struck again, this time with the magnanimous offer of scholarships worth RM20,000 each to 50 impoverished students to study finance and accountancy in University TAR, Kampar, on the following conditions:

- Each student's family income should not be more than RM2,000 per month.
- Students will be selected more on the basis of their financial need and not merely on their academic achievement.
- Each scholarship is worth RM20,000 which should be enough for each student to cover the cost for the first year foundation course and the first semester of the degree course in finance and accountancy until he or she secures the PTPTN loan. This Government loan is given to all students irrespective of race and financial position who are doing a recognised degree course.
- Students who receive Koon's financial aid are not required to pay back the money or work for him after they graduate. But he wants a promise from them that they will help other poor students when they have graduated and are financially solvent.

U TAR takes in students in January and June every year. Students who are currently doing SPM can submit their applications to U TAR this October with their forecast results to start in January 2010. Needy students who are currently doing SPM or have passed the SPM can submit their applications to:

KOON YEW YIN
yewyin@gmail.com



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THINKING ALOUD by G. SIVAPRAGASAM**THE HANDICAPPED ARE TRULY CHALLENGED**

Imagine my surprise when a professor who heads the department of disability studies in a Canadian University disclosed to me that 12% of Canadians suffered from some kind of mental or physical disability. My surprise turned to concern when he proceeded to explain that the 12% ratio was not special to Canada but a reality that prevailed throughout the world. He further clarified that in most countries, especially in the third world, many disabilities remained unrecognised resulting in the perception that it was not a major social problem.

Though there exists the mind-set of denial, especially in eastern societies, which still consider disability a shame to be guarded as a secret, by and large the problem is one of failure to recognise the disability itself. Compounding the predicament is that even when disability is known there is a failure to diagnose the particular handicap resulting in solutions employed being ineffective. It is somewhat like recognising that the person is ill without differentiating the cause of the ailment as heart disorder or cancer. This has resulted in the vast majority of the disabled living in quiet desperation.

Need for disability studies institution

Recently Yayasan Sultan Idris Shah conducted a workshop spread over nine days designed to, among other things, empower caregivers, service providers and parents of the disabled to recognise specific disabilities and managing them. Approximately a hundred participants attended the workshop. Though efforts of this nature are undoubtedly commendable, considering the size of the problem that plagues our society, they are grossly inadequate.

What is needed is a permanent institution dedicated to generating adequately qualified personnel to serve the needs of the disabled. This would require offering a well-structured, recognised and disciplined course of study in this field. It needs to be promoted as a career with a progressive path. Currently no such institution exists

in this region let alone in this nation and Malaysia by establishing such an organisation could gain recognition as the leader in this field in this part of the world.

Enabling Carers

An institution for disability studies would not only generate a mass of people who could be instrumental in identifying disabilities and provide opportunities for addressing them but it would deliver a path to those involved in providing services to this sector to acquire accredited qualifications and a career path in this profession. Currently most of the service providers learn on the job and not only do they lack recognised qualifications but have little or no opportunity to progress in this field. The institute would deliver carers an opening for acquiring pride and dignity in their vocation.

Dependents to Contributors

Today most of the disabled remain unproductive or at the very least without reaching their full potential. The institution would change this situation. The course of study would, in addition to enabling carers to identify the particular disability, provide them knowledge of the tasks people with a particular disability are able to undertake, allowing them to lead truly useful lives. Technology is so advanced today that there is an answer for almost everything. It will come down to merely matching technology with disability and guiding them to use it. The disabled, instead of being burdens on society could be transformed into useful contributors to the community.

'One Malaysia' Spirit

In the disabled community you notice a unity that you rarely see in general society. The disabled and their parents work and socialise without observing differences in race, religion or culture. This unadulterated unity comes out of a shared suffering arising not only from the disability itself but from the prejudice and discrimination that they in common face in society. This is translated into genuine empathy. General society can learn much

from them about true unity. Since the nation is moving towards a 'One-Malaysia' ideal perhaps the department that is responsible for the administration of this sector should adopt the example set by the disabled community as their culture.

Ignoring Handicapped – Political Folly

It is my understanding that the resources allocated to this sector is insufficient and the discretion allowed to those charged with disbursing the funds limited. Perhaps there needs to be some change here. But change is not going to come without lobbying. Someone needs to organise this group into a force to claim for better support. Whilst they are perceived as feeble, the disabled potentially wield significant political power. Even if 10% of the population is disabled this would amount to 2.7 million and if we add this number to just parents and siblings it would be another 10 million making a grand total of around 13

million or almost half the population – a number no government can afford to ignore.

Perhaps the time is appropriate for the emergence

of a disabled lobby. If nothing else it would provide a platform anchored on an objective that rises above our current obsession with race, religion and culture.

FONDLY REMEMBERED

I met Yasmin Ahmad in mid-1990 when she was in Ipoh directing her film Gubra. Subsequent to that I had occasion to meet her a few times.

A rare Malaysian she was multi-talented, knowledgeable, urbane, confident, bold, articulate, humorous and possessed several other positive qualities that escapes me now. She epitomised each and every quality of the ideal human being.

When you speak to her she leaves you in no doubt that she looked beyond race, colour, creed and culture seeing each person for what he really is and acknowledging it. She was representative of the true Malaysian that we often speak of but hardly ever comprehend.



She was without pretensions and this was depicted on the evening she had completed filming and whilst relaxing in the hotel lounge she took over the piano and entertained all who were there with a few of her favourite pieces.

She is a model that we all should strive to emulate. Her untimely demise is a great loss to the nation.

G. SIVAPRAGASAM

HOMES**KINTA PROPERTIES' 6-BEDROOM
SUPERLINK HOMES – THE FIRST IN IPOH**

Ipoh: Kinta Properties has achieved yet another first in the property market with its recent launch of 34 units of its XXL-sized, 6-bedroom 24' x 85' Superlink Homes at their 650-acre mixed township development Bandar Baru Sri Klebang.

The company's new Superlink homes are part of its winning strategy of building large yet affordable homes on bigger land compared to their competitors. Sri Klebang is located along the 4-lane Kuala Kangsar Road and has been hailed as the next 'Canning Garden', with beautiful homes and parks to complete the scene.

The new XXL-size 2-storey Superlink Homes have 6 bedrooms and 4 bathrooms, and is priced competitively at RM259,800. Most other terrace houses available in the market have only 4 bedrooms. The homes feature a modern tropical architectural design, with an efficient layout that maximizes usage of space. There is no need for any further renovation as it comes complete with

a wet kitchen and laundry area. The developer has also provided enhanced specifications such as 3-phase wiring, auto gate and home alarm system, and larger sized floor tiles. For the first 10 purchasers, Kinta Properties is offering an additional RM12,000 worth of freebies in the form of free legal fees, stamp duty on transfer and early bird discounts. All homes in this development are facing North and South only.

Sri Klebang is an integrated mixed township complete with commercial centres, shops, a community clubhouse and schools. A 13-acre piece of land has also been earmarked for the construction of the new Poi Lam Primary and Secondary Schools which will open in 2012. The XXL-size Superlink Homes are located within walking distance to the schools.

A public driving range and tennis courts are now in



CEO of Kinta Properties Holdings, Mr. Bernard Tan, explaining the benefits of the new homes

operation at the township. The community clubhouse featuring a swimming pool and other leisure amenities will begin construction by 2010. Membership to the clubhouse is given to all property buyers. There is also an 8-acre piece of land earmarked for the construction of a hypermarket.

About 7,000 homes will be developed over a course of 10 years, with an estimated population of 35,000 people in the township upon completion. Visitors can view a variety of show homes at its Show Village open daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays and 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekends.

MUSINGS ON FOOD by See Foon Chan-Koppen



SeeFoon is giving her mandibles a break and refreshing her palate for this issue. Here is a snippet of news she picked up while in rehabilitation for excessive 'Foodie'ism'.....

Headed from the grapevine recently that Master Chef Ricky Parlanti is definitely opening his restaurant in Ipoh this month. Negotiations have been concluded and agreements inked with

Meru Valley Golf Resort for him to take over the Dome restaurant in Meru Valley, beginning August 1." Hitherto only accessible to members, the restaurant will now be open to the public. If the

quality of food at his old restaurant in Bangsar the MangoTree is anything to gauge by, Ipohites can look forward to a taste sensation that puts us shoulder to shoulder with our international culinary brethren in the bigger cities of Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Singapore. The Ipoh, already known as 'Foodie Heaven' to many in S.E. Asia, will not only boast wonderful stall food but also soon hold its own with

a choice of world class restaurants for the visitor and local resident alike.

Leisure and golf members can look forward to receiving their own MangoTree card which will entitle them to a 10% discount on ala carte prices and drinks. So the current coterie of dedicated golfers need have no concerns about being displaced or pay higher prices.

The menu will be Italian influenced but

Ricky is bending over backwards to accommodate local tastes and will be including local dishes so that the all taste buds can be satisfied.

So for our current Western restaurants, Indulgence, Citrus and ItaliaMia, make room for the MangoTree at the Dome! Here comes Ricky Parlanti. And those not currently members of Meru, start your membership applications.

HAWKER FOOD CHINESE ROAST PORK

There aren't many things more delicious than a good roast – be it chicken, beef, lamb, pork, etc. Chinese roast pork (aka 'siew yoke') is no exception. Roasted with its rind (skin) and seasoned with salt, pepper and five-spice powder amongst other ingredients, methods of roasting vary and are closely guarded secrets – especially for the more popular stalls. Good 'siew yoke' is succulent, tender and the crackling, crispy but not hard; best eaten while still warm. It is not uncommon to see people enjoying a plate of 'siew yoke' with a glass of beer or vice versa. For this tasting we tried the part mid section below the ribs referred in Cantonese as *fah lam*. It has a good portion of meat, some fat and crackling. All four tastings are equally good, so it was just a matter of preference.



NAME	WHERE	COMMENTS	PRICE (RM)	
ROAST PORK (mobile stall) From 1.30pm Off 2 days a month	In front of Simee Market, Simee. Also at Ipoh Garden East at around 4.30pm	Very tender & tasty – may be over salted for some people. Crackling (skin) very crispy		★ ★ ★ ★
RESTORAN FIRST KWONG CHOW	Lorong Taman 11, Taman Pertama (First Garden)	Tender & succulent – crackling a little bit on the hard side		★ ★ ★ ★
AH THIM (mobile stall) from 2pm	Menglembu Market carpark, Menglembu 012-5197470/ 019-5621553	Meat tender. Crackling less crisp	Approximately 10.00 for 300 g	★ ★ ★ ★
ROAST PORK STALL From 12pm Thursdays off	Pusat Makanan Majestic (behind the old Majestic cinema), Jln Dato Tahwil Azar (Osbourne St), New Town	Tender & crackling very crispy		★ ★ ★

Our next food review will be **LUI CHA**
Email your favourite recommendations to: food@ipohecho.com.my

LETTER FROM ULU KINTA

JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED

Puan Norma was in a state of shock when she found out she did not have diabetes. One would have thought she'd be relieved. But what was more shocking was that she had been prescribed medicine for her so-called diabetes for the past few years. This revelation had been uncovered during a short stay in hospital, when her daughter went through the pills her mother consumed daily.

How many of us actually try to obtain more information from our doctor or physician, or come prepared with questions on a visit to the clinic or surgery? Very few of us actually dare ask the doctor or surgeon what ails us. Most people are content to leave everything to the doctor. Their lives are left entirely in the doctors' hands.

It is true that the doctor is responsible for treating us when we are ill. But we have an important role to play too. Just like safety in the workplace or home, maintaining our health is our own responsibility. The doctor may have the knowledge and the skill when it comes to treating our illness. But in Puan Norma's case, some doctors lack the attitude and may abuse the position of trust they hold in the doctor-patient relationship.

Worse was to follow for Puan Norma. Not only had she been diligently taking the medicine for her 'diabetes', and visiting her doctor every six weeks whether or not she was ill, she had also been wrongfully diagnosed as hypertensive and had been happily consuming the cocktail of pills prescribed for her. Thus, her daughter had opened a can of worms and may have saved her mother's



life and a fortune in doctor's fees and repeat prescriptions.

Many elderly people can recall an era when most doctors were friendly and sympathetic and spent time with their patients. Nowadays, much of that compassion has been replaced by commercialism. A quick clinical diagnosis is usually accompanied by curt behavior.

A doctor's cost-effectiveness is dictated by time spent with the patient. Time costs money and valuable time spent with a patient means reduced profits for the clinic. Thus short cuts and as little time as possible spent with the patient is the order of the day. Ultimately, it is the quality of patient care that is affected.

Maybe Puan Norma should have asked more questions of her doctor. But how many of us are courageous enough to question the professional integrity of the person in whom we have entrusted our medical care? Puan Norma had neither the skills nor the knowledge. How was she to know she should have sought a second opinion? It is a question that has probably plagued some of us too. We risk offending our doctor and probably damage whatever doctor-patient relationship we had.

When Puan Norma's daughter asked, in depth, the circumstances relating

to her mother's condition, the doctor was both defensive and evasive. His retort was "Where were you these past thirty years when I was treating your mother? She has not complained about her treatment. She wouldn't understand even if I explained." Not content with being dismissive and insensitive, he continued. "I have been practicing for the past fifty years. I am never wrong."

At the end of this frustrating session with the doctor, Puan Norma's daughter was magnanimous enough to apologise for any misunderstandings she may have caused. She explained that her concerns stemmed from her mother's hospitalisation which had revealed none of the conditions he had been treating her for.

True to form, he displayed more of his condescending and arrogant behaviour and refused to accept her apology. When he bumped into both daughter and mother a few days later, he did not want to acknowledge Puan Norma and rejected her greetings. So much for his lack of bedside manners, this man simply had no manners.

So, the next time you need to seek medical treatment, try and find a doctor who has a good bedside manner. It has an important bearing on the quality of care you receive.

YMM

Recipe

MASTER CHEF RICKY PARLANTI'S SIGNATURE SERIES RECIPES

SALMONE CON FINOCCHIO E CAPERI

Fillet of Salmon in a Capered Dill and Fennel Cream Sauce

(Serves 10)

1.6 kg	salmon fillet (cleaned, trimmed)	20 g	yellow bell pepper, fine diced
500 g	fresh fennel, sliced	20 g	green bell pepper, fine diced
200 g	white onion, sliced	200 ml	fish stock
40 g	fresh dill, chopped	200 ml	pomace olive oil
100 g	baby capers	20 g	dill sprigs
250 ml	white wine		seasoning to taste
300 ml	fresh cream		
20 g	red bell pepper, fine diced		

Procedure:

1. Pan fry salmon in pomace olive oil. Reserve in a warm place for later use.
2. In the same pan, sauté onion, fennel and capers.



3. Deglaze with white wine, add fish stock and cream and let reduce. Further. Add dill. Season to taste.

4. Place the cream fennel mixture in centre of plate. Top with salmon. Garnish with diced bell peppers. Top with a dill sprig.

5. "Serve with love and passion from the heart"

LETTERS

We are reprinting some of our reader's comments from our online paper. Go to <http://www.ipohecho.com.my/> to read more. Why not subscribe online and get the Ipoh Echo in your email inbox and read the latest happenings in your community even before the paper arrives on your doorstep?



IPOH ECHO COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

I write to you to compliment you and your organization for the effort you have committed to, in order to bring up to date news to the community.

People as far away as I am in Australia, can access and download current information with regard to the events and happenings in Ipoh and surrounding areas, virtually as they appear or occur.

Myself, first served in Malaya as it was then known, 1955-1957 with the Australian Army. In July 1957 my wife to be (nee D.E. Silva of Brewster Rd) and I, married in St Johns Church and we returned to Australia end October 1957.

Upon discharge from the service early 1960 I returned to Ipoh, to re-join my wife and child who had returned a few months earlier.

The period 1960-1970 saw me employed by Raub Aust Gold Mine Pahang, Tambun Mining

at Tambun and Gunong Rapat sites and Jardine Waugh.

During this period of time we, my wife and I, both renewed and made many friendships in the Ipoh area.

Since our return to Australia in 1970 we have maintained contact with those of our friends who have moved to Australia and family members of those families who remain in Malaysia/Singapore.

Quite a large number of our friends here have been guided to the Ipoh Echo site and they download each edition, for those not conversant with 'the net' I download copies and circulate same.

It is a joy to watch the expressions on their faces as they read / leaf through and also to hear the incredulity in their voices as they find items of interest.

Please keep up the good work and remain assured that 'the Echo' is alive and well in Perth Western Australia. Thank you.

**Garry A. Burgoyne
OAM
Australia**

From The Ipoh Echo Website...

OUR MEN IN BLUE - WHAT ARE THEY GOOD FOR?

If you ask this question in a coffee shop the answers would be an embarrassment to the PDRM! If asked in the Ipoh Echo (issue 78), there may still be some useful things they are good for but sad to say very few indeed!

Another pertinent question to ask - have you spotted a walking policeman recently in your housing area? Answer will always be a "NO"! Where have they gone? They have been given motorcycles and patrol cars! Have you seen a motorcycle police patrol or a patrol car in your housing estate? "Well once in a while, but usually stopped outside a food stall or in front of a coffee shop." Yes, Ipoh lacks visible police presence!

Have you made emergency calls for police assistance lately? "No, I'd rather call my relative or friends first", would be the usual answer. Why? "They are here faster than the police", would be the common answer. Slow to

react and lots of fuss when they come instead of going for the criminals, they go for the ones reporting the crime! The hours one has to wait to get a report completed is sickening after the shock of being robbed!

These are the common perceptions of the Ipoh public of our men in blue! Organised crime is on the rise, gangs exist but it is nice to ignore these and blame things on vermin of society - the drug addicts! What should the public do? Take basic simple precautions! Be alert always and inform your neighbours and the police of strangers lurking around your area. Have good rapport with your neighbours. Install good locks and light up your front, side and back of your house (a few extra ringgit of electricity may save more in the end). Install an alarm system as most thieves avoid houses with alarms if they can find easier victims. Install a break proof lock system in your master bedroom that members of your family can hide in safely when the need arises. When you

report to the police take note of the following: time you called them, time they arrived, number of their patrol car, their names and ID number. Get copies of the report. Follow up on your report within the time they specify giving details of all those who attended to you, especially the name of the officer who took your report at the po-

lice station. Tell everyone including the press, blogs, etc. of what happened! The more people know the better.

So have a good time preventing crime with our boys in blue doing the least!

**Victor Chew
July 16, 2009**

Letters Cont'd On Page 7

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MORE LETTERS



THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NAME IN MALAYSIA

I do not agree with your opening statement "Undoubtedly among the three main races that reside in Malaysia, the Chinese are by far the most successful in business than the Malays and the Indians" (Ipoh Echo issue 78).

1. With the exception of Public Bank and Hong Leong Bank all other banks are controlled by Malays.
2. The Malays have the most if not all the licences or permits to assemble cars and operate all the big and

essential businesses such as water and electricity.

3. The Malays control most of the top 20 listed public companies.

4. The Malays control the biggest company called PETRONAS and almost all the petrol service stations are being operated by Malays and all the construction works must be carried out by Bumiputera contractors.

The Indians and the Chinese are most successful in doing small *kacang putih* businesses.

Koon Yew Yin
July 20, 2009

AFFIRMATIVE ACTIONS

Koon,

The poor Malays in the kampong are still poor just like their parents were before. It's only a handful of those well-connected bumis (Umnoputras) who are at the top of the apex.

I don't blame you for your 'blinkered' view. The NEP was good but over time it was high-jacked by none other than the very party that claims to champion the Malays. It's

social engineering gone awry due to the follies of a few. The mere fact that these affirmative actions have to be extended and rehashed goes to show the effectiveness of NEP. It's not the policy per se but the people behind the policy.

As for selling *kacang putih*, this has been the domain of the Indians since time immemorial. Please acknowledge their skill in this line of business.

Mr T
July 24, 2009

CULTURE IN BUSINESS

If Mr Koon really believes that the Malays are gifted businessmen then he should be celebrating. Malays form 60% of the population and in a matter of time it will be 70%. The commercial ability of these numbers will certainly power this nation to prosperity benefiting everyone including Mr Koon.

But I often hear Mr Koon griping that Malaysia has fallen behind many nations that were on par or behind this country and predicting an ominous future for the nation. If the Malays were business marvels as Koon seems to suggest then they would have controlled all the businesses since time immemorial offering people like Mr Koon little or no opportunity to amass the wealth he has.

I feel Mr Koon has either missed the thrust of my article or has deliberately elected to ignore it, choosing to digress to his favourite topic to deliver his pet sermon. Mr Koon needs to stop putting the Indians together with the Chinese. They are in different classes and classifying them together confuses the issue I was highlighting. It will be more accurate

to categorise the Indians with the Malays. As I walk around the city it is the Indians and the Malays I see being engaged in menial labour, working as drivers, odd job labourers and performing unskilled or semi-skilled tasks more often than not for *kacang putih* business owned by the Chinese. I seldom see any Chinese engaged in these tasks and if they do it would be as self employed or owners of the business.

Mr Koon should not deride *kacang putih* businesses for it is the main driver of the majority of economic activities in this nation creating wealth for large sectors of society in the variety of ways. The point of my article is that the Chinese have a tradition of entrepreneurship which together with their clan social culture has enabled them to begin and operate *kacang putih* businesses, often successfully building them into conglomerates. This talent which internalises values of hard work, thrift, patience and tenacity remains elusive to the mass of Indians and Malays. While it is true what Koon says about major businesses being owned by Malays I think he will admit that these business giants are owned or controlled by a very tiny percentage of the Malay population. The majority

of the Malay populace are engaged in government service or employed in grind work in the private sector. Few are owners or operators of small and medium scale businesses or 'kacang putih' businesses as Mr Koon will put it.

Finally, I must point out that in my article I speak of capacity for creating wealth through commercial activity not custody of wealth. But even in this regard the wealth of a community, racial group or even society as a whole

needs to be seen in terms of its spread amongst its members. If the wealth remains concentrated in one or a few it is misleading to attribute that wealth as the group's wealth for in reality it has no impact whatsoever on the lives of its members. However tribal mindset misleads simpletons to take vicarious pride and the foolish to suffer irrational pain.

G. Sivapragasam
July 25, 2009

SPORT

BRINGING PERAK CHESS BACK TO NATIONAL LEVEL

The Perak International Chess Association or PICA is looking for sponsors in their goal to bring Perak Chess back to National level. Under the new leadership since March this year, of President Chan Swee Loon, Perak's national Master in 1975, PICA has been actively working with the Malaysian Chess Federation (MCF) and with JPN via Unit Sukan.

To this end, they have organised a Swiss Managers course attended by over 20 PICA and JPN officials in order to hold National-rated events, worked with independent chess tournament organisers, and held their first National-rated tournament

in Batu Gajah. They also sent their players to FIDE tournaments, flagging off their first busload of young Perakian chess players on the 17th of July.

They are currently seeking a sponsor for an event on August 16 at Syuen Hotel. Committed sponsors include Syuen Hotel for the venue, Unit Sukan for the publicity to its MSSPK players and Tenby Schools in line with their philosophy of broadening young minds, have sponsored part of the costs. They now need a sponsor for the prize money of RM4,000.

For more info visit: <http://www.perakchess.blogspot.com> or call: 016-5117308.

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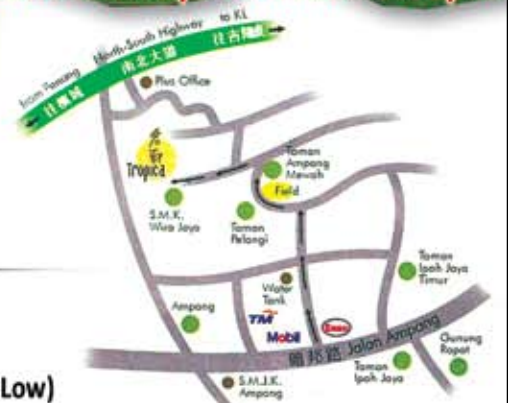
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YOUNG PERAK

by PETER KHIEW

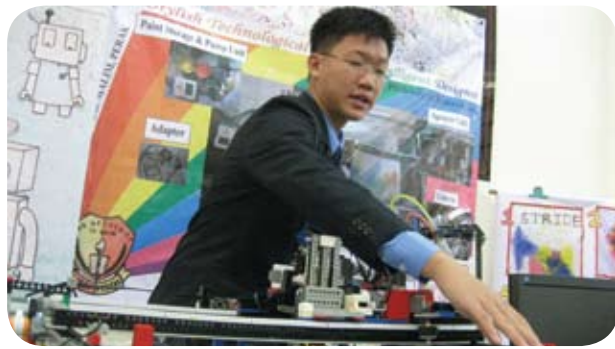
Teachers and students from schools are invited to write about their respective institutions of learning. E-mail articles to: ipohecho.pk@gmail.com

2009 NATIONAL ROBOTICS COMPETITION

State-level (Perak)

The state-level National Robotics Competition (NRC) was held for the fifth consecutive year, this time at SMK Pengkalan Hulu, located some 200 km from Ipoh. A total number of 198 schools (primary, lower primary and upper secondary schools) all over Perak sent their students for a purpose – to raise interest in Science and Technology, preparing them to international quality standards in order to face global challenges.

For the category of Robot Energizing, upper secondary school students were required to program their robots to carry coal, bio-fuel and solar cell to the respective power stations. The assignments were not easy. The robots must be programmed to take certain designated



Upper secondary open

routes and to avoid obstacles, in this case, uranium.

Under the Robot Planting category for Lower secondary school students, they were required to carry three types of plants to the designated gardens within 120 seconds. Primary school pupils, under the Robot Recycling category, were assigned to program their robots to carry three types



Primary regular

of waste at three different spots, one by one, to designated recycle boxes, also within 120 seconds.

The competition witnessed eager participants who turned up enthusiastically with their teacher mentors, some who arrived by buses from schools in Teluk Intan, Taiping, Slim River and Kuala Kangsar.

It has undoubtedly helped students build a solid foundation in mathematics, science, technology, design and ICT through hands-on experience or investigation. Besides, training students to work together to solve challenging problems in a spirit of co-operation and collaboration, the exposure has also enabled students to develop logical and systematic thinking as they plan and implement programs through the programming of robots.

CHEER 2009 NORTHERN CHAMPS

More pics at ipohecho.com.my

I was in KL and had to see our Ave Maria Convent cheerleading teams Titans and Embers in action for the Grand Finals of Cheer 09' at the Putra Indoor Stadium, Bukit Jalil. Stepping into the stadium was electrifying. Everyone was screaming for their teams. You could feel the energy.

The 2 teams did Perak proud. Team Titans were the Champions of the Northern Region as well as the 4th placing on National Level for Cheer '09. Titans also won the 'Best Dressed Award'. This is their fourth time winning this award, the other years being 2003, 2004 and 2005. For Ember, they took the 2nd Runner-up of the Northern Region.

Fong Yoke Wah, the captain of team Titans said that they had been training all year round. Intensive training began 4 months



Team Titans in action!

earlier. Their shout out was "Titans Reign Supreme". Fong had been trying to instil 'True Confidence' in the girls during the months of training and on the day of the competition the team was calm and relaxed. Getting there was "very very hardwork". A local daily reported that their performance was "almost flawless".

Team Ember was only formed in February. However they have been

practicing vigorously since then just for the competition. Ember executed the moves astonishingly well. Their movements were sharp and accurate to the timing and rhythm of the song.

Principal Pn. Cheng's presence was noted among the supporters cheering the teams on. Ave Maria Convent has done a great job of grooming winning teams and Ipohites are proud of the effort.

JOANNA GOUGH

MALAYSIA'S FIRST POLYTECHNIC IS 40 YEARS OLD.

More pics at ipohecho.com.my



PUO Director Mohd Jayus (l) and Hj Mohklis Jaafar (r) starting the festivities

Ungku Omar Polytechnic celebrated its fortieth anniversary on July 21 recently. The polytechnic was started in 1969 by the Ministry

of Education and was assisted by an allocation of RM24.5 million from UNESCO/UNDP. The polytechnic started with a pioneering group of 300 of

which 28 were local lecturers with 14 volunteers from Canada, America, Japan and Germany. It was first located at the Kinta Teachers College at Dairy Road and moved to its present premises in 1973. Its skill training courses catered to the technical and commercial requirements of a growing country producing an employable resource for the private and public sectors. It was the first polytechnic in the country and has been used as a benchmark for all future polytechnics. Since its inception 53,811 have graduated from its doors. Always upgrading, it currently has 15 handicapped students enrolled in its course in civil engineering.

THE LIST OF WINNERS:

Primary School – Open Category Results

Gold Medalist : SJKC Hua Lian 3, Taiping
Silver Medalist : SK Convent, Teluk Intan
Bronze Medalist: SK Seri Besout

Lower Secondary School – Open Category Results

Zone C – Perak

Gold Medalist : SMK Methodist, Tanjung Malim
Silver Medalist: SMJK Ave Maria Convent, Ipoh

Upper Secondary School – Open Category Results

Gold Medalist: SMK Methodist, Tanjung Malim (F3)

Silver Medalist : SMK Tun Saban, Pengkalan Hulu (F1)

Bronze Medalist: SMK Gunung Rapat, Ipoh (F6)

Lower Secondary School – Robot Planting Results

Gold : SMK Sultan Abdul Aziz, Teluk Intan
Silver : SMK Sultan Tajul Ariffin, Manong
Bronze: SMK Clifford, Kuala Kangsar

Upper Secondary School – Robot Energizing Results

Gold : SMK Bukit Jana
Silver: SMK St. George, Taiping
Bronze: SMK Menglembu, Menglembu

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DEALERS / AGENTS Enquiry Welcome!!!

IPOH IN BRIEF

More pics at ipohecho.com.my

'POLYAEROBICS'



Politeknik Ungku Omar, Ipoh, organised an aerobic competition recently as part of the Ministry of Higher Education Wives Club's (PUSPANITA) sports programme. This inaugural sporting event, held at the polytechnic's playing field, involved nine other polytechnics from across the country. Numerous activities were held during the one-day carnival. There were ample food to savour, games to play and knick knacks to buy. Even the bosses were not left out. A game of golf was organised for the ten principals at Meru Golf and Country Club. Other sporting events are in the pipeline. A bowling competition to be organised by Politeknik Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah, Shah Alam, is scheduled for October.

PRIMETIME
GOTONG ROYONG

Mayor, Dato' Roshidi Hashim (2nd from left), launched Ipoh's primetime Gotong Royong on Wednesday, July 8 at the city's main market. Some 60 people consisting of council staff and members of the local traders' association were present at the launching which began at 8 p.m. The Gotong Royong, said the mayor, was an on-going programme aimed at cleaning up the city. It would be held once every three month. Roshidi reminded traders and those patronising the market to ensure the cleanliness of the market area. A clean environment would benefit Ipoh in many ways, he remarked.

A JOURNEY OF
CONTINUOUS CARING

KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital (KPJ Ipoh), and The Perak State Government successfully created a new record for the longest spring roll 'popiah' in Malaysia recently. With the theme 'A Journey of Continuous Caring', they chose 'popiah' as a healthy snack choice for healthy living. The initial target to achieve was 1798 metres, the length of Sultan Azlan Shah Airport runway. As a gesture for future extension of the runway, the Perak Exco members extended the length of the spring roll to 2,000 metres. A total of 200 personnel from KPJ Ipoh led by the General Manager, Tn Hj Ahmad Nasiruddin Harun, nurses and support staff took part in this feat. Approximately 18,000 pieces of spring roll 'popiah' was prepared in three hours to accomplish this record and the following ingredients were used for the preparation: 18,000 pieces of popiah skin using 250 kg flour; 250 kg turnips, 378 kg bean sprouts, 40 kg dried prawns, 40 kg groundnuts, 135 kg fried shallots, 20 kg bean curd, 50 kg onions, 60 kg carrots and 10 kg spring onions.

FAREWELL DINNER



The Department of Arts and Culture Perak held a dinner recently to bid farewell to two of its senior staff. Deputy Director 11 Samsuring Meli is posted to Pahang and is replaced by Abdul Hamid Abdul Aziz. Saliza Hj Sallehan will leave for Penang. Her replacement is Nur Ayzlinda Abu Bakar. Director, Ramli Salleh, thanked the two senior officers for having contributed towards implementing the department's policies. He hoped they would do the same at their new places of work before presenting them with mementoes. The dinner ended with a cultural dance, a fitting tribute to the two officers.

JOINT INSTALLATION
OF OFFICE BEARERS

A joint-installation ceremony for newly-elected office bearers of seven Lions Clubs in Ipoh was held on Sunday, July 5 at Syuen Hotel, Ipoh. The ceremony was graced by HRH Raja DiHilir, Raja Jaafar bin Raja Muda Musa (left) and HRH Raja Puan Muda Perak, Raja Nor Mahani bt Raja Shahar Shan. Kenneth Saw, the District Governor, in his opening remarks reminded members of their commitment to serve the community without expectations of rewards. For the 2009/2010 term the following were elected presidents of their respective clubs: Kannasen Govindaraju, Lions Club of Ipoh Host, Francis Wong Kam Kin, Lions Club of Batu Gajah, Yong Sow Ngor, Lions Club of Ipoh City, Teoh Chin Wah, Lions Club of Kinta, Chua Kang Ming, Lions Club of Ipoh Evergreen, Simon Phang, Lions Club of Ipoh Metro New Century and Sakuntala Rajadurai, Lioness Club of Ipoh.

HUGH LOW BRIDGE
IS COMING DOWN

The Hugh Low Bridge spanning the Kinta River along Jalan Iskandar Shah (Hugh Low Street) is scheduled to be demolished in mid August. To replace the 4-lane thoroughway will be a two-lane temporary Bailey bridge which was erected in mid July by PWD with the assistance of the Taiping based 1st Squadron Royal Engineers Regiment.

The original bridge was first constructed of wood in 1890 and was subsequently replaced with a metal bridge in 1900. It was widened in 1930.

According to Dato' Dr Safray Kamal Ahmad, Director PWD Perak, the new bridge is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2010.

So for the next 17 months Ipohites had best plan their journey when going into old town. A slight inconvenience but one necessary for the long term.

A MICHAELIAN ORIGINAL



"The Warlord of Terror" is the title of this year's school play being offered by St Michael's Institution Ipoh to be staged at the SMI school hall from August 14 till 16.

The play is an original written by SMI old boy Ian Chee Lihann, son of former SMI teacher Timothy Chee. Timothy has been directing plays at SMI for over 40 years and is also directing this year's offering.

The play's storyline takes us to a village in China where a Warlord has turned into a fierce wild leopard. He needs the blood of a virgin girl in order to assume his human form. When he kidnaps a village girl she is rescued by a monk. A basic plot filled with intrigue, excitement and lessons on compassion.

What makes the play this year exciting and a 'must see' is that it is original and all from home grown talent, an achievement for which Ipohites may feel a sense of pride. Written, directed and produced all by Michaelians, even the music which is selected from popular Chinese melodies has had its lyrics redone in English by Ian.

An annual school play no doubt but one with so many firsts. Could this be the first of more original plays to come?

Tickets for the show are priced at RM100, RM50 and RM20. The school hopes to raise RM100K from the show which will go towards the renovation of the science laboratory and toilets.

IPOH FINE ARTS
SOCIETY AGM

The Ipoh Fine Arts Society (IFAS) held its 18th Annual General Meeting at Pakeeza Restaurant on 18 July 2009. President Mrs Vasantha Sethuraman (seated 4th), in her welcoming speech noted that the society had organised various Indian Classical Music and Dance Concerts in the past 2 years. IFAS concerts feature well-known local and foreign artists. It has been well received for the quality of the performances.

The patrons of the society are: Dato' S. Karunanithi and Dato' R. Thambipillay (seated 2nd from right), with Dato' Dr M. Majumder (seated 3rd from left) as advisor.

Membership is open to all above 18. Email: smoorthyramasamy@gmail.com or Sethuk4@yahoo.com for details.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Discount on MBI parking fine. A 30 per cent discount on parking fine will be given to those who make their payments at the customer service counter at the foyer of the MBI building, Jalan Sultan Abdul Jalil.

Mayor Roshidi Zone visit programme: August 5. Zone 12 (Buntong/Silibin/Teluk Kurin) assemble at Buntong Community Hall. August 12. Zone 21 (Lahat/Bkt Merah) assemble at Bkt Merah Community Hall. August 19. Zone 16 (Pekan Baru/Tebing Tinggi/ Pasir Pinji) Pasir Pinji Community Hall. All programmes start at 9 a.m.

An Approach to Urinary Incontinence. A public forum jointly organised by Fatimah Hospital and Yayasan Teratai. Saturday, August 8 commencing at 2 p.m. at Conference Room (4th Floor) Fatimah Hospital, Ipoh. Admission: Free. Call Cecilia at **013-4384388** for details.

Gabungan NGO Perak, a coalition of about 60 Malay, Chinese and Indian groups is calling for a press meet on 9 Aug 2009 at 11a.m. in YMCA to launch a survey on the Perak crisis and wants to get the opinion from 100 NGO's on what they think should be done.

Perak Consumers' Association. Awareness programme on current consumer issues and complaints. Saturday 15 August 2009, 2.00-6.00 p.m. at: St John Education Centre (opp. LAP), St John Road. Enquiries: Ms R. Suguna (**017-5095255**); Mr S. Saravanapavan (**016-5412951**) or Office: **05-2534058**.

Y's Men's Club Ipoh Installation Dinner. Friday, August 28 at 7 p.m. at the Royal Ipoh Club. Call K. Letchimanan at **012-5381939** for details.

Perak Malayalee Association Youth Disco Nite. Saturday, August 29 at 7 p.m. at Ipoh City and Country Club. Call Mrs. Uma Ganesh at **012-5449463** for details.

ACS Ipoh Alumni and NUTP 4th Sports Meet. Games: July 31 to August 2. SMK Sam Tet (Volleyball-Men), SMK Perempuan Methodist (Volleyball-Women and Netball), SJK(C) Sam Tet (Volleyball-Women) and Ampang Bowl, Ipoh Parade (Bowling). Call **05-807266** for details.

ACS Ipoh Alumni and Fellowship Dinner. Saturday, August 29 commencing at 7 pm at Hee Lai Ton Restaurant, Ipoh. Call Liew Sin Choy at 013-5218871 for accommodation and Chooi at **016-3845120** for dinner. **Fellowship Charity Golf.** Sunday, August 30 at Kinta Golf Club, Batu Gajah. Tee-off at 8 a.m. Call Chow at **019-5701378** for details.

PRESTAVEST Crematorium & Memorial Park

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COMMUNITY NEWS

It was double surprises for the residents of Infant Jesus Asrama Bintang. First, it was a knock on the door by a man who came in a van. Person-in-charge Sister Henrietta conveyed the good news that a buffet dinner had been arranged by members of the Old Michaelians Association (OMA) that evening. Kitchen staff took a day off and the entire home community together with their host enjoyed an evening of good food.

OMA president Mr



Adrian Tsen, who is also the benefactor of the home, said the get-together has been an annual affair for the association members

who just want to mingle and enjoy fellowship with the residents.

Asrama Bintang, in existence since 1914, is a residential home for 23 women with intellectual, visual, physical and hearing impairment and emotional difficulties.

There are 3 Infant Jesus sisters and 3 staff

manning the home now. It provides basic education, artwork, drawing, house chores, gardening, craft-work, pet rearing and other activities to its residents.

After dinner, chairman of plantation-based company, Riverview Rubber Estates Bhd, Ms Juliana Manohari Devadason offered a second surprise. The company, in a gesture of love and compassion, presented RM2,000 to the home.

For details, call **05-2426389**.

GUOLIN QIGONG



Persatuan Guolin Qigong Malaysia, Ipoh Chapter, organised a party recently at SRJK Wan Hua, Menglembu to celebrate members who have sur-

vived cancer for 5 years and above and to encourage those newly diagnosed to combat the disease.

A total number of 55 members who had been

under remission from 5 years to 27 years went on stage proudly to receive their bouquets of red flowers amidst cheering from their family members and friends. After the presentation, two songs 'Put on Your Smiling Face' and

'Combating Cancer Song' were sung to promote the fighting spirit, positive thought and perseverance in the process to regain their health. Guest and members were treated to a sumptuous buffet lunch and lucky draw.

Those interested in learning qigong can contact the following people:

Ipoh/ Menglembu:	Lim Peik Wan	017-4694081
	Low Kok Kheong	012-5196215
	Neoh Foong Lian	017-5059338
Langkap :	Ng Guak Teng	012-5064072
Teluk Intan:	Tan Soo Wah	016-5579815
Sg. Siput:	Chen Moi Leng	016-5566490

PERAK'S FIRST TOY LIBRARY

PTP I-Play Toy Library is a pioneering concept in Ipoh. This is the first library to loan toys to the public. These toys, donated by Yayasan Emkay of MK Land and managed by Persatuan Taska Perak are rented to the public, at a yearly membership fee of RM100.00. The rental fee is RM20.00 per box, for 2 weeks, which comprises 10 to 14 good quality toys under individual themes. It caters to children from babies to 8 years, childcare

centres, kindergartens and pre-schools, and also to parents who cannot afford to buy their children different toys. The library brings toys fortnightly to An Ning orphanage on Gopeng Road and participates in many public events to raise the awareness of its presence in Ipoh. A seminar 'Maximizing the Learning Potential of Children' was held recently with Mrs Puspita Sivan, founder and director of Parent-Teacher-Child Learning Schools,



Singapore, who spoke on early childhood education. Fifty-four participants made up of parents, teachers from nurseries, primary schools and kindergartens attended.

Their office is located

at: 481-A Jalan Pasir Putih (near Mun Cheong Restaurant). For more information, contact: Linda Ding Swee Ling - **05-3111908/012-5339178**, email: lindading59@yahoo.com.

SOROPTIMIST IPOH LAUNCHES HOME ASSISTANT SERVICE PROJECT

Be Pampered by SIHA . . .

Soroptimist International Ipoh (SI Ipoh), which was chartered earlier this year, has launched its first service project in keeping with its aim to improve the lives of women in the local community.

With the acronym of SIHA (Soroptimist International Home Assistant), SI Ipoh has begun training of a group of women looking to supplement their income by becoming home assistants. Under the expert tutelage and management of Sheila Hari who runs a maid service agency, SIHAs will clean, iron and if required cook for the harassed housewife or working mother and her family.

Using an appealing logo of a maid with the promise of 'Be Pampered by SIHA', the service will be a welcome relief for homes without a full time live-in maid.

Recruited from the ranks of single mothers or women needing to supplement their household income, SIHAs are trained in the strictest fashion and are well drilled in the art of cleaning and housekeeping as well as simple cooking skills. All SIHAs are Malaysian nationals and their participation in this service project is purely on a voluntary basis (they are neither employees nor agents of SI Ipoh). All SIHAs will come with ba-



sic cleaning equipment and cleaning agents and commissions will be in blocks of 4 hours. Management of SIHA is by SI Ipoh, part of the largest worldwide serv-

ice organisation of women at their best working to help other women to be their best. It is a non-profit organisation registered with the Registrar of Societies (Malaysia) and therefore, except for a nominal administrative fee, all of the paid fees for the service go directly to the SIHA.

Families using SIHA services will not only be relieving themselves of some of their onerous household chores but also supporting SI Ipoh in their service commitment to the community.

For more information please call: Sheila at **016-5266629** or email: siha.iph@gmail.com.

MEANDERING WITH MINDY



Coco's Café and Restaurant

This café's red interior is an awesome ambience and yet is peaceful and relaxing. With comfortable seats, this is one of the places where you can go to chill out after a hard day's work. With snacks, Asian,

Western and fusion dishes, this place offers something for everyone. Their special Coco's Nasi Briyani, served with green curry chicken and prawn sambal and their succu-

lent grilled lamb shoulder with your choice of sauce are dishes you definitely don't want to miss. For those who just want a cool drink in the hot weather, there are all sorts of ice blended juices and thirst quenching mocktails. For

reservations, call **5486678**, or just drop by Coco's at: 44, Medan Ipoh 1B, Medan Ipoh Bistari, 31400 Ipoh.

Tropikaya Lifestyles

Hidden in one of the corners, and less than 2 months old, Tropikaya offers a fashionable range of women's clothing. From jackets to shorts, this shop has something for the classy, the quirky and the conservative. Open from 11a.m. to 6.00 p.m. (except



on Mondays) the apparel here at Tropikaya's is definitely reasonable, and with their best buy plus 50% racks, one can definitely find something to suit all tastes and budgets. Call **5456126** for more information or visit Tropikaya at: 2 Jalan Medan Bistari

1C, Medan Ipoh Bistari, 31400, Ipoh.

Korean Yee Won Restaurant

One of the few Korean restaurants in Ipoh, Yee Won has Korean BBQ that tantalizes the palate. Non-fattening and yummy, BBQ sets are easy and fun to cook. Their fried prawns, cold noodles, ginseng chicken soup and Korean style pancake are also dishes that are not to be missed. With their



Korean style tables and friendly, hospitable staff, this is one place you will want to return to again and again. Their number and address is: **5465779** and 6, Jalan Medan Ipoh 1C, Medan Ipoh Bistari, 31400 Ipoh, respectively.

OPINION

THE QUESTION OF IPOH TOURISM

Ipoh Echo Issue No 77 raised two important points relating to tourists visiting Ipoh and Perak. The first was based on the idea that the new Firefly flights, Singapore to Ipoh, will bring in international tourists, keen to savour the delights of our city and its surrounds. The article reminded us that, despite recent claims that our infrastructure is superior to that of Penang, we have a serious shortage of acceptable taxis and buses to cater for tourists and those that we have are unsuitable for people used to being transported efficiently and in comfort, both in Singapore and further afield.

The article went on draw opinions from both transport and tourism

authorities none of which disputed the bare facts that Ipoh is just not yet ready to receive significant numbers of tourists on a regular basis. However, they had held or would be holding the inevitable meetings to resolve the situation.

The second article related to the disastrous and dangerous bus service from Penang in which it is thought both local and overseas tourists might risk their lives to visit our city. Written in a light-hearted tone the underlying message was quite clear; the organisation was unsatisfactory; the bus needed maintenance; the driver did not consider the safety of his passengers; and the published schedule and drop off points were not adhered to. A sorry tale

indeed.

Overall with reports like these most tourists would think twice about visiting Ipoh in anything else but their own car.

But there is another question that needs to be asked about Ipoh and tourism. Assuming that our visitors arrive safely and can find a taxi or are part of a planned tour, what on earth are they going to do? Haji Rahmad had the answer when he said, "Ipoh is a product by itself. It has food, heritage buildings and cave temples." Of course, all of that is absolutely true, but as they stand today they do not constitute a worthwhile tourist haven. Taking them in turn, yes we do have food and some of it is quite famous although many

would say overrated. The question is how does the lone tourist determine good against bad and will the tour guide choose quality or quantity?

Turning to the heritage buildings the obvious place to start would be the Darul Ridzuan Museum where the history of Ipoh is displayed – in Bahasa Malaysia! Then they could move on to see St Michael's Institution and the Royal Ipoh Club from afar, before crossing the Padang to catch a look at the renovated Railway Station, the outside of the City Hall and then to the J.W.W. Birch Memorial Clock Tower, surrounded as it usually is by hawker stalls and the dreadful garbage left lying around. Perhaps they should then

make for the historic Lorong Panglima with its long history of opium dens, brothels and concubines, passing the old FMS bar and restaurant (unfortunately closed for restoration). But have you seen Lorong Panglima (aka known as Second Concubine Lane) lately. A glance at the photograph will demonstrate that it is simply not ready for international tourists – and probably never will be. So much for our heritage buildings!

But of course we do have cave temples, plenty of them, but having managed to either get on the correct bus or bribe a taxi driver to take them (for meter always broken lah!) what will the tourist find? The answer is

simple, a very fine cave temple, but probably with an attendant who only speaks one of the Chinese dialects, no informative documentation and a shop selling souvenirs at highly inflated prices.

Also mentioned in the previous articles was the Lost World of Tambun, but with a superior Sunway Lagoon not far from Kuala Lumpur. Will that really draw international tourists to Ipoh, when there is so much to see in KL and Putrajaya, as well?

So to return to the question posed in Ipoh Echo Issue 77, "Is Ipoh Ready for the International Tourist?" From the above the answer seems to be a resounding "No!" But what do you think?

WR

FLASHBACK



Chin Ah Wah is an old timer from Kg Simee. He has witnessed many historic events during his youth and has placed them on record. This extract is taken from his diary.



OPENING OF KG SIMEE COMMUNITY HALL

February 20, 1954, was an auspicious day for residents of Kg Simee. From a distance, the Kg Simee Community Hall looked grand with three flags fluttering on the flag staffs in front of the hall. They were the Union Jack, the Federation of Malaya flag and the Perak flag. The building was painted white and was draped with colourful streamers, crepe paper and flowers. Emblazoned on the fence were large Chinese characters made of paper and decorated with jungle

leaves and wild flowers. At 4.30 p.m. VIPs and guests streamed in and were ushered to their seats in the spectator stand in front of the hall. Two detachments of uniformed personnel were on parade. The left detachment consisted of police personnel and members of the British Red Cross. The local home guards unit made up the right detachment.

The hand over ceremony soon began. The British Adviser, who was the guest of honour, gave his speech. It was trans-

lated to Chinese and was delivered over the public address system for the benefit of the mainly Chinese audience. The key to the community hall was handed over to the home guards commander by the police sergeant on parade. The sergeant marched forward, halted, saluted and handed over the key to the officer with military precision. It was a simple yet poignant ceremony which was witnessed by the curious villagers.

The two detachments then marched past the

British Adviser who took the general salute. The police detachment exited by the left gate while the home guards by the right gate. That signalled the end of the ceremony. We then moved into the hall and took our seats. Mr Clauson, the Officer-in-Charge of Chinese Affairs, addressed us in Cantonese. He reminded the villagers that the emphasis of good governance rested on the willingness of the people to cooperate with the colonial government. The British Adviser followed

with a lengthy speech on how the different races in Malaya could work together to build a powerful nation like the United States of America. Students of Chung Tack School sang a few songs to mark the finale.

The visitors then left the hall and soon after it was invaded by children who greedily helped themselves to the leftovers on the tables. Their number was so huge that only the lucky ones got to taste the cakes, cookies and drinks. The villagers were still in a

joyous mood. They started to sing and I joined in the fun. It went on till late in the night. We urged two of the home guards instructors to sing but they declined saying that they had lost their voice while training the home guards. I saw my teacher, Mr Norris, busy taking photographs with his camera. I offered him a seat but he declined. He seemed thirsty so I gave him a drink. He thanked me profusely and left with a smile still visible on his face.

CHIN AH WAH

On Sunday July 12 at approximately 1700 hours Firefly flight FY3456 touched down at the Sultan Azlan Shah airport in Ipoh. The flight was delayed by 50 minutes. According to a Firefly official the inaugural flight is usually late.

However no one seemed to mind. Not the VVIP's, the health staff or even the 3 cultural groups on the tarmac to greet the first arrivals direct from Singapore. This was a happy occasion as it was the first of 4x per week international flights from Singapore to touch down at the airport. It also marked the revival of air services at Ipoh Airport.

The passengers were greeted on arrival by cultural dancers and garlanded with flowers by Dato' Hamidah Osman Senior State Executive Councilor for Tourism and Dato' Dr Mah Hang Soon Senior State Executive Councilor for Local Transport.

Among the arrivals was a group of Singaporean travel agents and media who came for a familiarization tour of Cameron Highlands, Pangkor Island and Ipoh City.

First Outbound Passengers

The first passenger to board Flight FY3547 to Singapore was senior citi-

zen Mr Lim Ah Soon a Singaporean. He was followed by the Tan family with their baby daughter Dawn. Also seen boarding the flight was Perak FMM Chairman Dato' Gan Tak Kong, Perak MICCI Chairman Lim Si Boon, Dato Dr Mah Hang Soon and Dato' S. Veerasingam, Perak Indian Community Advisor.

Tourism Potential

Ipoh Echo had the opportunity to meet up with the Singapore tour agents and media over dinner hosted by local agent Parlo Tours. Overall both the agents and media expressed optimism that Ipoh and Perak has a strong potential to attract the Singapore tourist. These include Pangkor as a laid back destination with clean white beaches and a lovely natural setting and Cameron Highlands for its cool weather and steamboat dinners in the open.

In Ipoh, the area that interested them was Old Town which was 'nostalgic especially the area around the Railway Station'. The other area that had captured their interest was the Gopeng Nature Resort which is a potential eco tourism attraction.

Said Jonathan Meur who writes for Asian Geographic magazine "Gopeng Resort has a lot



to offer, the Rafflesia flower, white water rafting and even caving all in one spot. And it is close to town and the other attractions around Ipoh".

Food Glorious Food

Naturally, the one topic that all found most memorable was Ipoh's food. Everyone loved the dinner at Mun Cheong Restaurant that night especially the *yin yeong* prawn (steamed head and fried body). "You can find similar cuisine in Singapore but the taste here is much better", said travel executive Pauline Loo of Commonwealth Travel. Mary-Anne Soh of Asia One News described the dinner at Mun Cheong as 'exquisite'.

Both the ladies and their counterparts skipped the hotel spread the next morning to explore Ipoh's

local breakfast. Pauline loved the fried *koay tiau* and iced white coffee while Soh enjoyed the dim sum saying the *wu kok* (fried taro dumplings) here has a 'lovely texture'.

One restaurant that took everyone by surprise was Indulgence which was described as "unexpected", meaning the quality level and degree of sophistication which they had not anticipated for Ipoh.

Rating

Overall the familiarization

FIREFLY HAS LANDED

Cultural Greeting for First Firefly Arrivals

More pics at ipohecho.com.my



Singapore travel agents and media at a dinner sponsored by Parlo Tours at Mun Cheong Restaurant

tour was rated positively. "Perak has a diversity of landscape for different activities catering for the honeymooner to the thrill seeker. It also has a lot of interesting cultural attractions" said Meur. Travel agent Liew Chee Voon of AD Travel feels that Ipoh is a potential destination for the Singaporean tourist. However he mentioned that we should look into and improve our metered taxi service.

Firefly's Managing Director, Eddy Leong too feels that Ipoh has strong potential. In fact he revealed that Firefly will be applying to have daily flights to Ipoh. "If all applications are approved the daily flights should start by the last quarter of this year".

Daily flights and more tourist arrivals! Can Ipohites look forward to a very Merry Christmas this year? I'm keeping my fingers crossed.

Firefly's Future Plans

JAMES GOUGH



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