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NEWS

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IPOH ECHO

Wishes all our readers a

Happy Deepavali



What does one Malaysia mean to me?

With so much being bandied about 1Malaysia, Ipoh Echo took to the streets and asked people of different ethnicity and different ages what 1Malaysia meant to them. Last issue featured comments from those born after Merdeka. In this issue we feature comments from those born before Merdeka.



Independence means a lot to people of my generation. I have gone through thick and thin and had experienced colonisation firsthand. First the British, then the Japanese and finally the Communist terrorists. When the country gained its independence there was much jubilation. Although life was hard initially, efforts by a people-friendly government ensures prosperity

continued on page 7

SURVIVORS OF THE TIN ERA



1980



Meng Seng Engineering then and now

How some foundries are faring 20 years after the collapse of the tin industry

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WONG KEE CHEONG MAGGIE WANG MEI JIE MAHINDRA VIJAY MARISA SHANTHINI MELVIN CHOONG WAI CHUN MONG GWO HUEI NEOH LEAN WERN NG WEI CHENG NG WENG KIN NICHOLAS TEOH HAO SHENG NOEL LAM YAT MENG YEE MEI YI OSCAR CHONG YOUNG QI PAK HO YAN RISHI SHANKER SANKER SATEESHWARAN SANKER SHANU PREEYA SIEW MEI FONG TAN JING WEN TAN YOKO YAN TAN ZHER YUNG TUNG WAI HENG

Open for New Intake Now

Reinventing and Moving Up the Value Chain – Keys to Survival

The tin mining industry that started in the late 19th century had brought prosperity not just to the miners that operated the mines but also to the supporting service industries. These would include the foundry and engineering establishments, which in turn was supported by the hardware and spare-parts shops.

At the turn of the 19th century, mining for tin was a labour intensive affair and it became a problem for the miners when there was a labour shortage. With the onset of the gravel pump the Kinta Valley saw an increasing use of western technology. A mine which used a gravel pump, a monitor and a hydraulic elevator was classified as a hydraulic mine as a large water supply was required for its operation.

The gravel pump would 'suck up' gravel in which tin would be mixed with sand, mud and water and transported to *palongs* where the heavier tin would be segregated from other light minerals which are then swept away with the tailings.

The gravel pump introduced in 1906 had 449 in operation in 1925. By 1963, 87% of the Chinese tin output came from grav-



before the collapse of the tin industry. Most were located along Lahat Road up till Lahat and Pusing village.

The majority of these foundries offered the basic foundry services of producing metal castings and making parts using ferrous or non ferrous alloys. The common alloy processed then was cast iron.

Indeed, back then when one drove along Lahat Road to Menglembu one would see rows of workshops on both sides of the road. That sight gradually faded away when the demand for tin declined in the mid 80s. The workshops have gradually been interspersed by furniture showrooms and even *nasi kandar* outlets.

One foundry that is still in operation till today is Chun Kung Engineering (CK), its premises still located along Lahat Road. It began its operation manufacturing gravel pumps and water pumps for the tin mining industry. Its Managing Director Lam Kar Weng is the third generation that is still managing the business. Seeing that it was over dependent on the tin industry "we began designing pumps for palm oil mills way back in the 70s". Today its core business is manufacturing industrial pumps and has 200 models of different types in production.

Another foundry that has evolved to greater heights is Yoon Steel. The company was founded in 1937 by Loke Chee Pun and moved to its current site at Kuala Kangsar Road in 1964. Its Executive Director is Jimmy Loke Yoon Chee also a third generation foundry owner.

A glaring difference with Yoon Steel is it has always broken away from the norm. When it moved to its current premises it began servicing the tin dredge community. The wear parts used on dredges were manufactured using

1980. When the tin industry collapsed, its owner Liew Chee Ming looked to the palm oil mills for business and took on whatever orders it was handed. Through innovation and sheer grit the company is now a Turnkey Contractor manufacturing palm oil mills throughout the peninsula and east Malaysia.

A common trait of these companies is all of them plough back their profits to upgrade their equipments and improve their facilities to enable them to take on new and

challenging jobs at any time.

Yoon Steel is currently expanding and upgrading its facilities in anticipation of their next upturn. "This downturn isn't going to last forever. Besides prices are depressed so it is a good time to expand", said Choy.

For these companies, unlike so many others that folded up with the tin industry, they capitalized on what they knew best. They sought new markets that utilised similar technology,

innovated, automated and grew along with the new customers and to greater heights.

As one 3rd generation interviewee stated, "We just reinvented ourselves and moved up the value chain. If we sat still we'd be dead by now". So the tin may be gone but the support and servicing businesses have moved on to greater heights. Testimony to the tenacity and creativity of the Perakian people.

JAMES GOUGH

TAMAN PENGKALAN TIARA LAKE PARK



Chan Choon Yen won the lucky draw grand prize of a fully automatic Toshiba washing machine at the Tiara Lake Park "Get to Know Your Neighbour" event. Chan's brother received the prize from TI homes chairman, Chong Heng Kiong (right) on his behalf.

The Tiara Lake Park in Taman Pengkalan Tiara is the first in Ipoh built to incorporate new themes of safety and security.

According to Total Investment (TI) Homes managing director, Tan Fun Kwai, 49, the Tiara Lake Park road planning is unlike any other in Ipoh.

"The large area allowed us to design and build the village with novel ideas such as the 'S' curve", said Tan at the opening of the show village in Pengkalan.

"The roads are built around curves to slow down speeding vehicles without the use of too many road bumps".

"We have even included a bicycle and motorcycle lane on the roads around the housing area", he said.

For the first year, TI Homes will provide security guards without a fee

to help safeguard the residential area. Selected medium range terrace houses as well as all the semi-detached houses will also be equipped with security alarm systems.

"Security is an important factor in today's world, where crime is fast rising. We included this service to promote the safety of the area and eventually we hope that the residents will form their own committee to maintain it", said TI Homes executive director John Chong.

The developers consider these measures to protect the residents' homes as part of their corporate social responsibility.

The 261 acre plot is designed to emphasize the greenery and peace of nature. There is a 79-acre lake built in the heart of the urban village that heightens the ambience.

Of the 230 units completed in phase one, only 30 units are left.

ISTA KYRA SHARMUGAM



Mr Choy Toong Seng,
GM of Yoon Steel

el pump mines.

The final western innovation introduced to the tin industry then was the bucket dredge or tin dredge. The first tin dredge was started by Malayan Tin Dredging (MTD) at Batu Gajah in 1913. By 1952 there were 39 dredges, all operating in the Kinta Valley.

As with all mining activities there was a lot of wear and tear on the mining equipment. Hence the equipment required regular maintenance. Gravel pumps needed to be replaced regularly and this gave rise to the foundry and engineering industry in the Kinta Valley.

According to FOMFEIA (the Federation of Malaysian Foundry & Engineering Industry Association) Secretary Lai Weng Keong, there was an estimated 100-200 foundries and engineering workshops in operation

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

SUNWAY COLLEGE IPOH BEACH PARTY (Halal Event)

Theme: Hawaiian Rave, 23rd Oct 2009, 6.30 p.m. to 11 p.m. at: Lost World of Tambun. Organised by SCREAM – Student Council Representatives of Sunway College Ipoh. Tickets: Public – RM50 Sunway students – RM25. Highlights: Belly dance performance, exciting games, BBQ dinner, free dip at the hot springs, music and dancing. Add-on: Free salsa lessons. Attire: Beach or swim wear, casual and fun.

Contact: Emily Soon – 016-5969300 or Ivan Goh – 012-5168835.

A TIMELY RESPONSE

Fathol Zaman Bukhari

Confusion over figures would not have happened if they are made simple and comprehensible to the media...

Basis of Comparison

Kudos to Puan Normala Latiff, the Public Relations Officer of Ipoh City Council, for having responded to my discourse on revenue collection in Ipoh Echo Issue 80 (August 16-31, 2009). Her letter alludes to the following:

"The basis of comparison is incorrect as the figures compared are between that of August 2008 and June 2009. It should be between June 2008 and June 2009. Assessment rates bills are issued twice a year. The difference between August 2008 and June 2009 is huge because June is the end of first half while August is beginning of the second half."

"Action by MBI to paste warrants on the premises of errant house owners has the desired impact as opposed to what is claimed in the article. Owners of these vacant properties have approached the council with the warrants to settle their dues. This is indicative that the action is effective. The council too has initiated legal actions on owners who refused to respond in spite of the warrants. This is the standard procedure prior to litigation."

"The number of defaulters in Bercham for years 2008 and 2009 is almost identical because

of the increase in the number of property owners who settle their dues on a yearly basis rather than half-yearly. The figures, however, are computed on a half-yearly basis resulting in the almost identical number."

Comments

Ipohites, on the whole, appreciate the efforts taken by City Council to recover its monies as the council needs funds to manage the city. It is no mean task to administer a city of over 600,000 if the council has to play a cat-and-mouse game with rate payers.

Confusion over figures would not have arisen if they are made plain, simple and comprehensible to readers and the media. Since the report is in Bahasa Malaysia making sense of the gobbledygook takes plenty of effort.

Ipohites have an aversion for council meetings as they are a drab affair with little to cheer. Why not make such meetings more appealing to the citizenry? Suggestions have been made in the past to have meetings after office hours and to loosen restrictions on attendance and dress code. But they have fallen on deaf ears.

Doubts will not be created if the council is prepared to go the distance



Sultan Iskandar Bridge under construction

by being open and honest. And the mayor can make his walkabout less frequent if this cardinal rule is observed.

Full-Board Meeting

Some of the matters discussed at the September Full-Board Meeting held on Thursday, October 1st, 2009, are the following:

***Revenue Collection.**

Property owners owe a sum of RM55.52 million to the council in unpaid assessment rates at end of August 2009. This amount represents an increase of RM2.71 million (5.14 per cent) over the corresponding period in August 2008. Those who have difficulty in settling their outstanding bills can do so in instalments. They can appeal to the council for consideration.

***Abuse of Privilege.**

Some tenants of MBI-owned flats such as

Buntong Harmoni, Kinta Heights, Sungei Pari Towers and Waller Court are known to have rented out their flats to others at a profit. They charge between RM200 to RM300 a month higher than the amount they pay the council. This is a gross abuse of privilege and the council will act to root out the problem. Eviction notices will be served on these errant few and they will be told to move out. The vacant flats will then be given to the 'illegal' tenants.

***Assessment Rates.**

There has been much confusion over increased assessment rates of late. The confusion arises because property owners who have been paying their assessment rates based on an empty lot have now to pay rates based on the rental rates of buildings built on the vacant plot. The change in rates led some to

believe that a revision has been made by MBI when no such revision was made in the last 15 years.

***Telco Towers.** The proliferation of telco towers in Bercham is a cause for concern by residents living in this suburb. However, a test conducted by a team from Universiti Tenaga Nasional on August 20th found that the level of radio frequency radiation was much lower than the approved international limits. Such assurances, said the mayor, would not allay fears in residents of the dangers posed by radiation. The council needs to adopt a more proactive approach and be more transparent. An independent survey is most appropriate rather by a party with vested interests.

***Dengue Menace.**

The dengue menace continues to plague the city. There are 924 reported cases within Ipoh between January to September 19th, 2009. The council will continue with its efforts to contain the disease and implores residents to keep their compound clean. A total of 372 compounds worth RM8,750 had been issued over the said period. However, these compounds were never served on the offenders. They were let off with just a verbal warning, said the mayor. Some

of the worst affected areas are Taman Merry, Kg Tersusun Tasek, Medan Klebang Restu, Taman Utama, Taman Indah Sakti, Kem 2 Brigid, Taman Sri Cempaka, Taman Ramai and Balai Polis Buntong.

Overpriced Bridge

There has been much speculation and debate on the cost of the new Sultan Iskandar Bridge along Jalan Sultan Iskandar (Hugh Low Street), presently under construction. The bridge is estimated to cost about RM10 million. A conservative estimate, calculated at RM3,000 per sq metre of bridge, does not reach RM3 million. And if the cost of 'beautification' were to be factored-in it would not even breach the RM5 million mark. Can the Perak Public Works Department explain the princely sum?

Road Resurfacing

MBI is on a spending spree squandering much needed funds on road resurfacing. Some RM30 million has been set aside for this ongoing project about town. Do these roads really need a makeover? Some are still in good condition. Ironically, roads in high-end suburbs are preferred over those in poorer neighbourhoods. Why the double standard?

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THINKING ALOUD by G. SIVAPRAGASAM

‘THE NATION’S MOST ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY CITY’
– A VISION FOR IPOH

If Ipoh is to progress it needs recognition. Recognition requires a specific value that distinguishes it from other cities. This begins with a vision of what it wants to be acknowledged for and a mission to realise it. There was a time when Ipoh was known as the cleanest town. But over the years the reputation has dimmed and to regain something lost is next to impossible. Something new is needed to deliver impact. A garden city could have been appropriate but this tag has been acquired by too many cities. I would like to suggest a tag that is associated with an issue that has emerged as the most critical in today's world – the environment. My proposal is that we plan and achieve acknowledgement as the most environmentally friendly city in this country.

Improvements

However, before we proceed to this level we need to get our basics in order. In this respect, I believe we have made a great deal of progress in the last year. Until a year ago, for several years it was my routine every morning to walk around the whole city. Though the City appears sizable it takes only an hour to go round the whole of the inner city's commercial and administrative district. During the journey I used to note unlit street lights, missing manhole covers, wires hanging out of lamp posts, clogged outlets to the drainage system, walkways in dis-

repair and road shoulders overgrown with grass and shrubs. Recently when I made the same journey I was pleasantly surprised to note substantial improvement. The streets have been paved, grass has been cut, trees and shrubs have been trimmed and the city looks cleaner and neater.

The mayor must be complimented for bringing this change. Since taking office he has obviously been going around and directing these improvements. However not all the defects have been addressed and there still remain pockets where problems are visible. Perhaps the public should be engaged to assist the city authority to take progress to another level. A system could be created whereby volunteers are given the opportunity to identify faults and notify the authorities.

Steps to Take

As for our ambition to be an environmentally friendly city, the general rule is simple: identify all activities that pollute and damage the environment and take steps to reduce or eliminate them. It may not be possible to achieve this overnight but the following steps could be the right direction.

Transport: Private vehicles are the biggest polluters of the environment. We could reduce this by making the city pedestrian friendly and improving our public transport system.

The inner city is well provided with pedestrian walks. But there many sec-

tors where they disappear. With a little effort and some resources this deficiency could be addressed. The whole city could be linked with walkways with pedestrian crossings at appropriate locations. Covering the walkways would significantly increase pedestrian traffic at all times of the day.

The public transport system that serves the City is perceived as the poor man's transport. The system must be upgraded so that everyone can use it. An electrical tram system would make a major difference. It would not only be pollution free but would encourage all sectors of society to use it.

Waste – Management

of waste is a major expense of the City. The cost is growing. It is a matter of time before we run out of space for landfill dumpsites. Landfills also pose a current and potential danger. If the sites are not properly lined there is leaching could pollute the ground water system. Recycling and burning are the only viable alternatives.

Recycling needs to be introduced on a large scale. It could begin with bins that allow separation of waste at source. The present system of allowing rubbish bins for each household needs to end. Large bins could be placed in strategic locations in the residential areas that enable waste to be separated at disposal enabling collection for recycling.

Households could be encouraged to turn kitchen



waste into compost which could be purchased by the authority for use in public parks and gardens.

An incinerator could be established to burn all that cannot be recycled. The incinerator that is built could be one that is designed to generate marketable energy.

Activities related to recycling and conservation could be introduced as an extracurricular activity in schools so that an environment conscious culture is cultivated.

Blend with nature:

Currently the roads of Ipoh Inner city serve as thoroughfares for vehicles travelling from one end of the city to the other. They do not support the businesses located in the inner city resulting in many main street shops being closed and the remaining ones devoid of customers. On the other hand the City's Shopping Malls are busy and crowded. The reason for the difference is that whilst the shopping malls deliver a pleasant and vibrant atmosphere, the inner city delivers a depressed feel.

However, it is possible to revive these businesses by transforming the inner city into a mall-like environment. This could be achieved by reducing the road size and restoring the old shop houses. The space that is generated by the reduction of two lanes can be devoted to trees, pedestrian walkways and features that enhance the experience of the shopper. In time businesses will locate themselves there. Such a revival can be observed in many parts of the world.

The objective is to create a cityscape with plants, attractive signage, fountains, well-maintained buildings, public art, street performances, etc., that delivers residents and visitors an experience.

A city park within the inner city – The feature that identifies Ipoh is the limestone outcrops. We need to select an area with this feature and create a park, something in the nature of the botanical gardens in Penang. Gunong Ciroh could be a city feature with the surroundings landscaped with water. The previous government obtained the services of a consultant to provide a proposal for the creation of a park in the Gunong Rapat

massive. This could be implemented. The existing parks and gardens could be upgraded and better managed to make it more user friendly at all times of the day.

Conserve our natural heritage: Ipoh has more than its share of rivers but all of them have become open sewers. They need to be cleaned and activities that pollute the rivers forbidden.

Steps could be taken to conserve our limestone outcrops, karst formations, limestone cliffs, caves, fauna and flora.

Action could be taken to preserve our remaining rain forests that survive in the outskirts of the city and declare them as protected areas.

Preserve Our Buildings

Preserve our built heritage: Several buildings in the city are poorly maintained. They reflect a poor and depressed image of the city. The situation also does not encourage redevelopment or restoration, as restoring one shop house does not enhance value if the neighbouring houses remain in disrepair. Commence a campaign to put all the units in order. If owners of private buildings do not comply – action should be instituted against them.

Buildings and even clusters could be declared as heritage sites and restored by providing incentives. Panglima Lane (Concubine Lane) which is steeped in history could be revived by restoring the buildings and devoting it for business activities that reflect our rich past. Ancient industries that are fast disappearing (cane craft, sign board making, bamboo blinds manufacturing, etc.) could be located here.

Local Agenda 21

Local Agenda 21 is a programme that provides a framework for implementing sustainable development at the local level. It aims to build upon existing local government strategies and resources (such as Corporate plans, vegetation management plans, and transport strategies) to better integrate environmental, economic and social goals.

This could serve as our guide to realise the vision.

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MUSINGS ON RETIREMENT LIVING

by See Foon Chan-Koppen seefoon@ipohecho.com.my



Nestled in a house within the green hills of Tambun Heights, Bob and his wife Avril live a life of peaceful contentment amidst the sights and sounds of nature.

This British couple is among the increasing number of people in the global village who are deciding to make Malaysia as their second home in their golden years under the Malaysia My Second Home Plan.

For the McCleods their choice was Ipoh, Malaysia's Most Liveable City

And this is where Bob and Avril McCleod call

home.

"Ipoh is the perfect place for us as it has all the comforts we need while also being far from the madding crowd," says Bob, lounging comfortably in the traditional sarong and a loose cotton shirt in his beautiful detached property on a hill.

Well-acquainted with Malaysia, Bob had lived and worked in various parts of the country, in plantations and quarries, particularly in the northern region of the country.

"When we decided to live here under the Malaysia My Second Home programme, we considered various places including Seremban and Kuantan, where I first landed with the British

Continuing where she left off on Ipoh as a Retiree's Resort in issue 82, SeeFoon shines the spotlight on retirees who have taken the plunge and made Ipoh their Malaysian Second Home. Second in a series of 3.

McCLEOD'S MALAYSIAN PARADISE

Nearly 60 years ago, a young British soldier, fresh out of school, set foot in Malaya – and so began a love story between Bob McCleod and Ipoh Malaysia, which he now calls home.



Infantry. Ultimately, the limestone hills of Ipoh and the lifestyle it offers beckoned and won the day."

Bob and Avril found the perfect house on a one-acre piece of land

on an exclusive secluded hill slope in Tambun surrounded by the limestone hills for which Ipoh is famous. Surrounded by trees and shrubs, the house is an open, airy, comfortable home, with a sizeable patio opening out to the sloped terraces of the garden.

Every so often, they head out to the city centre for a bit of shopping and stopovers at their favourite local restaurants and eateries.

Avril is also actively involved in the local chapter of the Malaysian Nature Society while Bob is a member of the Malaysian Veterans' Association.

"Ipoh is really an ideal place for those looking for a quieter retired lifestyle, especially after a frenetic pace during the working years", Bob says adding that the fact Malaysians are multi-lingual and can communicate in English is a big plus point.

"And where else would you be able to buy a house like we have and live in relative comfort – with live-in help at that – on retirement funds?"

As for the weather, this English couple absolutely

delight in the warmth sunny days, compared to the cold and often rainy climate back home in England.

Bob and Avril love every part of their lives in Ipoh. From the warm weather and hospitality of the people to the tranquillity and peace and the wide choice of food and not to mention the much cheaper cost of living as compared to the bigger cities such as Kuala Lumpur or Penang, and even in their home country.

They also appreciate that the city is also well-equipped with excellent medical centres which offer quality healthcare services through its numerous consultants and experienced practitioners.

For living the good life in a city, with all the comforts of modern living at a fraction of the cost you would pay anywhere else, together with the peace, security and tranquillity of a small town, Ipoh is the destination to head towards in Malaysia.

"We constantly tell our friends how amazing life is here for us. Ipoh has been our home for 8 years now, and the provisions under the long stay visa programme by the Malaysian government is just the perfect icing on the cake for us!" says Bob, "And as far as we are concerned, Ipoh is home".

HAWKER FOOD

NYONYA KUIH

Those of you old enough will remember the 'kuih man' selling Nyonya Kuih and laksa. Carried on his shoulders and balanced on a bamboo stick, was a red and black tiered bamboo basket lined with banana leaves where the delicious and very colourful assortment of kuih were placed and carted about. (It was quite amazing that a charcoal stove was brought along to keep the laksa gravy hot.)



There are some common ingredients in Nyonya Kuih. Fresh coconut milk custard with a filling – kuih kochi santan or as a topping as in kuih talam – the bottom green layer is made from green pea flour and extract of fresh pandan leaf (screwpine). If it's green it's probably pandan. Caramelised grated coconut is used as fillings or toppings as in kuih ketayap and pulut inti; when mixed with Gula Melaka (brown sugar) makes a lovely oozy filling for onde-onde. Glutinous rice goes very well with coconut jam (kaya) – as in the blue marbled pulut tai tai. Ang koo (aka birthday kuih) comes in red and green – the filling is made from fresh green beans. Baked bengka ubi (tapioca), radish cake, kuih sago lapis, seri muka and yam cake (Wu Tow Ko), kuih lapis, kuih kosoi, rempah udang, are but a few more.

NAME	WHERE	COMMENTS	PRICE (RM)	
QUAT HUAT AUN 39 Lintasan Perajurit 10, Ipoh Garden East Tel: 5462585/ 012-5285485	Stall #21, Anikaselera, Ipoh Garden.	About 15 varieties. Almost all are good.	0.60-0.70	★★★★
-	Kedai Buah Ban Soon Heng, 55 Jln Lau Pak Khuan, Ipoh Garden. Kedai Buah-Buahan Hing Won, 3 Lrg Cecil Rae, Canning Garden.	Less than 10 varieties but texture and taste are good.	4.50 per pack of 10s	★★★★
RESTORAN WAH PAN Khoo Siew Bee 016-5487791 or Lee Vinni 016-5487792	Jln Leong Sin Nam, New Town or Res.: 36 Psrn Wira Jaya Timur 40, Tmn Leow Yan Sip	About 10 varieties. The taste is about average but the rempah udang is quite nice.	0.50-0.70	★★★
PUSAT KUIH & KEK KHOO ENG CHEE 8am-9pm Sundays off	44 Jalan Tokong, New Town Tel: 012-5192054 or 05-2534386/ 2547140 (Res.)	More than 10 varieties. Taste is average.	0.40-0.60	★★★★

Our next food review will be MEE REBUS & PASEMBOR
Email your favourite recommendations to: food@ipohecho.

Living an Active Lifestyle

As avid bird-watchers who have traveled the globe in pursuit of their hobby, the surroundings of their home are just ideal as the trees also form a haven for birds.

The couple spend their days in Ipoh enjoying relaxing times in their home out on their patio, meeting friends at the Royal Ipoh Club and dining on delicious international cuisine, cooked at home by their live-in help.



by MARGARITA LEE

STEAMED MILK PUDDING

Ingredients:
500 ml milk
2 eggs
3 tbsp sugar
3-4 slices ginger (optional)

Method:
1. Simmer milk and ginger in a pot. Add in sugar and bring it to boil.
2. Turn off the heat and stir the mixture until 20-30% cooler.
3. Beat eggs and stir in slowly.
4. Sieve mixture into ramekins.
Note: If there is foam in the mixture, please remove with a spoon.
5. Cover each ramekin with foil. (My little secret to make extra smooth pudding!)
6. Steam for 25 minutes.



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LETTERS

We reprint 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?

THE STATE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN IPOH

On 5th October 2009, I had to take the bus back to Kuala Kangsar from Ipoh because I had left my car for repair in Ipoh. I took the 5.45 p.m. General Bus company new pink bus (plate number given). As we left the station there was a traffic jam in Ipoh and also the city was beginning to get a heavy downpour.

Because of the massive traffic jam building up along Jalan Kuala Kangsar, I knew immediately when the driver took a diversion from the rush hour traffic that he will be a rogue driver. This is a very common practice for most Malaysian bus drivers. A deplorable one at that.

He was driving recklessly, stopping at bus stop abruptly and at one point moving the bus before the passenger alighted. As we approached Chemor, he was driving fast and making the corners as if he

was on the Sepang circuit to catch up with Jensen Button. And somewhere near Salak Baru he was merely inches away behind a slow lorry. I was praying that the lorry will not make a sudden brake or the result would be bloody for all his passengers and him.

Alhamdulillah as the Muslim says, we arrived at Kuala Kangsar bus station in one piece. I dare say that I am a good traveller be it on a train, bus, car or plane but this particular journey had caused me, nausea and headache till I got home.

What I am getting at here is the mentality of Malaysian drivers especially our public transport drivers, who have no inclination or the mentality to put passenger's safety first while performing their duty. As far as I see it, their attitude is, "I'm in control behind the wheel and you shut up".

It is so different in most advanced countries. Using the public transport is a joyful experience. But

to go back to our Ipoh pink bus, which I like to call the 'pink hell bus', I wonder if the bus company have a proper selection of its drivers. The amount of wear and tear the drivers are going to give to the minted pink buses will cost them astronomically. No wonder many bus and coach companies are closing shop.

I also maintain that to a certain extent, the fault also lies with the JPJ and the traffic police. Seldom do we see the authorities apprehend these rogue drivers and bus companies. And we are also familiar with the news of bus drivers being prosecuted for drunk driving, traffic offences and drug use among others.

This year Ops Sikap is a good testimony of the state our nation when it comes to road accidents. Until such time that Malaysians learn to be responsible and careful road users we will never ever be in the same league of other countries.

ygbenor

TIN GALLERY

As an expatriate with Permanent Resident status who has lived in Ipoh for a little over ten years, I am a staunch supporter of the Ipoh Echo, indeed I have religiously collected and stored every copy and often enjoy going back into the past and re-reading the articles. In doing so it is evident that heritage and tourism (or the lack of) crop up very regularly. What is more they are often linked as would be expected, for heritage can be a big money spinner, bringing in millions of tourist dollars, pounds, yen and the like. However, it seems to me, on the outside looking in, despite all this talk about tourism and heritage nothing positive actually happens. Indeed it could be argued that more and more of the local heritage is fast disappearing as memories fade, traditions are forgotten and buildings disappear under the bulldozer.

Your Issue 83 was no different in as much as on the back page was the ar-

ticle by Jerry Francis, proposing that, there should be a 'Gallery of Pioneer Miners' to complement the newly built Tin Gallery. This, he is certain, could be funded by the tin mining associations, their members and families. He also proposed a well-organised package tour to take in all the aspects of Kinta Valley's mining heritage. These are sound proposals, which surely should be supported by all who live here, for we would all profit once they were in operation, as would our children and children's children.

So can we look to the mining community, local philanthropists, the city council, the state government and all those other agencies involved in heritage and tourism to spring into action? Well, for Ipoh's sake I do hope so, but I must confess to a feeling of doubt for again in the Echo there have been positive vibes for a Memorial to be placed at Green Ridge, to commemorate those who died in the Battle of

Kampar, the rebuilding of the Yau Tet Shin octagonal market (or Pasar Bulat), the need to improve the Ipoh Museum, the preservation of the Tambun rock paintings, protection of the limestone hills, Gopeng as a hometown heritage site, the list is endless, but as far as I am aware little or nothing has happened.

Now far be it for me to interfere in local affairs, but I must confess I am on the side of sensible preservation of all types of heritage and therefore would be delighted if the miners and others prove me wrong on this occasion and actually come up with the 'Gallery of Pioneer Miners'. But may I respectfully suggest that, better still would be a larger 'Gallery of Mining' telling the story of the Kinta Valley and its mines with a special section on the pioneers, for a small tin gallery on one site and a separate pioneers gallery on another, may not provide the tourist draw Ipoh needs.

Ian Anderson

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements must be sent by fax: **05-2552181**; or email: **announcements@ipohecho.com.my**, by the 9th or 23rd of every month in order to meet deadlines. Announcements by phone will not be entertained. Ipoh Echo reserves the right to verify any announcement before it is published.

Perak Lawn Tennis Association is organising the ITF International Junior Championship Grade 4 (Under 18). 12th-18th October 2009, 8.30 a.m. at Majlis Bandaraya Ipoh Tennis Courts. For further information contact: Lee Kam Boon (Hon. Secretary) - **012-5122190** or email: **pita_perak05@yahoo.com**.

Kechara House Ipoh Study Group: free talk by Dr Chong Wei Min on 'Qualities of Dharma' on 18th October 2009, 2.30-4.30 p.m. at Wisma Tan Sri Chong Kok Lim, 15B Jalan Che Tak, Off Jalan Yang Kalsom, Ipoh. For further information contact Dr Ming at 012-2841009 or Mr Ngeow at **016-6052996**.

Ipoh International School will be holding an OPEN DAY for its A-Level programme. 24th October 2009 (Saturday) 9.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m. at Ipoh International School, No. 9, Jalan Watson, 30350 Ipoh. Tel No: **05-2538530**.

Soka Gakkai Malaysia Perak Branch is hosting the 'Touring Exhibition of Chia Hoy Sai's Artworks - The Differing Faces of South East Asia' at: 160, Jalan Pegoh, Taman Lapangan Ria, Ipoh, from 23-25th October 2009; 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. daily. Admission is Free. Call Goh: **012-5102917**.

Mind Science Association of Malaysia (Ipoh Circle) free talks on Mind Power at 5.45 p.m. 24th October 2009 at Restaurant Lido Florex, Jalan Dato Onn Jaafar, Ipoh. (1) 'Power of Words' by Mr Ng Thian Watt, (2) 'Power of Thoughts' by Dr Zailani Begum Bt Md Ibrahim. Dinner at 7.00 p.m. at the same venue. Please call Ms Wong: **017-5732879** or Joachim Hui: **017-4686136** for details.

Teknik Menjawab Soalan SPM 2009 class organise by Kinta Indian Association at KIA, 7, Jalan Gurduwara, Ipoh on Sunday, 25th October (8am to 4pm). Subjects: Bahasa Malaysia, English, Moral Education and Mathematics. Admission: Free limited to 50 students. Call Mr. R. Muniandy at **012-5262411** to register before October 20.

Meru Patchwork Society will be organising a CHARITY BAZAAR on Sunday, 1st November 2009 from 10.00 a.m. - 2.00 p.m. at Meru Valley Resort. Homemade patchwork and a few Christmas items for sale. Proceeds will go to charity. Call Jess - **012-5192008** for info.

Perak Community Specialist Hospital (PCSH) Antenatal Class. Saturday, 7th November 2009, 2.00-5.00 p.m. at PCSH Conference Room (Level 1). Free admission, light refreshments will be provided. For more information, please contact Ms Tham at **05-2548918 / 2545594** (Ext. 179) or Ms Selenia Yee at **012-5061515**.

Alzheimer's Disease Foundation Malaysia (ADFM) - Perak Branch organising a Memory Walk at: Taman Sultan Abdul Aziz (Polo Ground), Ipoh, on 8th November 2009, 8.30-11.00 a.m. Dress code: white T shirt. Gifts only limited to first 300 registered participants. Please call Korina - **016-5608147**.

NASAM (National Stroke Association of Malaysia) Food & Fun Fair to be held on Sunday 15th November 2009 at: 8 Lorong Pinji, Off Jalan Pasir Puteh, Ipoh. Delicious food, handicrafts, jumble sales, and interesting games. For info contact Julianna at: **05-32110879**. (9 a.m.-5 p.m.).

ISPCA (Ipoh Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Perak) will be holding a Family Day Carnival on Sunday 22nd November 2009, 9.00 a.m. at SJK (C) Yuk Choy, 195 Jalan Iskandar Shah. There will be a Food Fair, Walk-a-Dog, Obedience show, Dog Fancy Dress Parade, and Children & Competition. For info contact: Dr Goh at **05-545 5933**.

Alcoholics Anonymous meets every Thursday evening from 7.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. at YMCA Ipoh. For more information call: Peter **019-5743572** or Matthew **017-3508361**.

PERAK JUNIOR TENNIS TOURNAMENT

We refer to the letters from 'An Irate Spectator' in issue 80 and 'Another Irate Spectator' in issue 83 on the Perak Junior Tennis Tournament held recently.

Though we believe that both the letters are written by the same person, the PLTA would respond as follows:

(i) All players have notice of the stoppage of play for the opening ceremony as it was stated in the Fact Sheet and Entry Form; (ii) Prior to the commencement of the game, it was announced that play would be stopped for the opening ceremony.

Datuk M. Kavyeas and our Vice-President Dato' Daniel Tay have contributed immensely to the Perak Lawn Tennis Association. The honour was accorded to Datuk M. Kavyeas on

the basis of their contribution.

Many parents have congratulated the organising committee on the running of the tournament. Our officials certainly do not look forward to the children of such irate parents participating in tournaments organised by PLTA.

Lee Kam Boon
Hon. Secretary, Perak Lawn Tennis Association

It is difficult to understand why a publication of two letters appearing to be so personal in nature is allowed. The Secretary of the Perak Lawn Tennis Association told me that there was a briefing before the commencement of the tournament that there would be an interruption of play during the tournament. Then the reasons for an interruption of play were further explained by me personally to 'An Irate Spectator' on the day his

son was involved in the tournament.

The guest of honour (Datuk M. Kavyeas) has contributed much to the Perak Lawn Tennis Association. Otherwise, he would not be given such an honour by the Association. An Irate Spectator and Another Irate Spectator appear to be the same person or closely related if they are not.

I appeal to you and An Irate Spectator to please help me continue my work as Vice-President of the Perak Lawn Tennis Association.

Dato' Daniel Tay
Vice-President, Perak Lawn Tennis Association

EDITOR: With the publication of these letters we consider the discussion of this matter closed. With reference to the two previous letters published, we wish to state that they are from two different irate spectators.

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271 Jalan Gunung
Rapat Taman
Ipoh Jaya. | |
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17 Jalan S A Lingam
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continued from
page 1

for all. However, of late there has been much deviation from the path laid by Tunku Abdul Rahman. Mistrust among the races has taken centre stage. 1Malaysia, therefore, is a timely wake-up call for us all to return to the path of righteousness.

**RAMLAH BINTI
ANJANG ABDUL
RAHMAN, 82**
Great-grandmother



Upholding the Constitution and all that it stands for.

Ridding corruption in the Judiciary and the Civil Service.

Treating all races fairly, with dignity and respect.



The slogan 1Malaysia seems so remote and holds no meaning to the Orang Asli community. We are never consulted on anything that involves the nation and have remained marginalised ever since. The only time the Orang Asli were sought after was during the Emergency when

our allegiance was courted for reasons of security. Our ancestral lands were taken away from us without the benefit of consultation and compensation. Are we going to suffer further under the guise of some catchy slogan? I feel the government needs to address this identity problem first before making promises it has little desire of fulfilling. What is the use of 1Malaysia when the ultimate aim is to enrich just one race?

**YOK SERENGKUP
A/L NIKI, 70**
Ex-member Senoi Praq
Battalion

Creating a climate where no one race has an undue advantage over another.

Making decisions based on individual merit and not as a result of bias or prejudice.

Recognising the advantages and benefits of a diverse work force.

Developing an environment free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

Dismantling the social, personal and psychological barriers that keep the races apart.

Opening the gates of opportunity and where everyone is given the op-

portunity to walk through those gates.

NOEL D'OLIVEIRO, 67
Retired Teacher



My 1Malaysia is a little united nation. Here, her citizens live



Malaysia is a beautiful country with a multiracial population. Before Merdeka, people were friendly, united always, each of them gave

harmoniously side-by-side, sharing the bounty of the land.

The re-engineering efforts of our Government have clearly produced some good results except that we need to de-emphasise on race and stress more on 'nation'. Every citizen is born equal and the last election has told us that we must be treated equal. Then, unity and oneness can voluntarily evolve.

The Japanese and the Emergency have painfully tested us. Our Malaysian society has survived. The last election is a grim reminder that more genuine all-round efforts are required to make 1Malaysia a more solid reality!

CHIN AH WAH, 72
Retired Teacher

a helping hand to one another. There was not much development and the environment was clean and green.

Now Malaysia has developed and is still developing tremendously and people have changed. The younger generation is more materialistic and individualistic. In those days we knew everyone in our neighbourhood but now people hardly speak to their neighbours. However we still have our 'Rumah

Terbuka' tradition. This gives us a chance to get together despite our hectic lifestyle. Fifty-two years of independence, we should always remain united with SATU MALAYSIA spirit burning within us no matter what comes. Unity is our strength and together we unite as 'One Nation' (1Malaysia).

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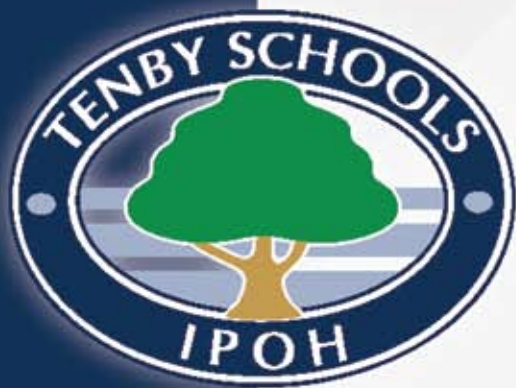





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“The most important

The 25 students also received RM1,000 each in a token of sympathy from Yayasan Perak.

**ISTA KYRA
SHARMUGAM**

So at lunch, like in most curry houses in Ipoh, one has to settle for rice to soak up the luscious gravies, here at Ipoh Padang Curry House, one can opt for *capati*, *roti canai* or *thosai*. And speaking of luscious gravies, the Kampong Mutton RM6.50 (fresh slaughtered goat from the proprietor's own goat farm) is juicily tender with a gravy that is one of the best that the Echo team has tasted in all of Ipoh. Similarly with the Kampong Chicken curry RM6.50, redolent with well blended spices (another of the proprietor's well kept secret blends), fiery yet bearable for most palates. Regular mutton

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And the best treat of all? No after effects from an overdose of MSG! Plus one can eat in air-conditioned comfort.

SECK



Banana leaf meal with rasam & payasam (L). Clockwise with rice: chicken curry, mutton curry, chicken with dried chilli, bayam curry; petai & prawn sambal (in plate), fried ikan kembong, 3 vege, fried fish & papadum

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IPOH IN BRIEF

More pics at ipohecho.com.my

CRAZY LITTLE THING CALLED LOVE



Beginning in 2004, as a series of sketches to highlight issues affecting marriage and family relationships, touring theatre company, Footstool Players developed a full-length performance (110 minutes) entitled, 'Crazy Little Thing Called Love'. They gave their penultimate performance at YMCA Ipoh playing to a packed hall. The performance from the cast of six was, true to life, funny, emotional and nothing short of moving. Consisting of 2 Acts and 13 sketches, depicting love, courtship, marriage and family relationships, there was laughter and there were tears. Jointly organised by St Peter's Church and YMCA, the play transcends religion and race, as the values and sentiments portrayed, depict Malaysian culture. The sketches poignantly showed that real love brings great joy and also great sadness. Where one does not keep score, that family is the core of one's existence and come what may, relationships still matter a great deal! Look for Footstool Players at: www.footstoolplayers.com and on Facebook.

TAIPING PEACE INITIATIVE



The Taiping Peace Initiative celebration was held in conjunction with the International Day of Peace at the Taiping Sentral Mall with an exhibition of posters and pictures, recently. Coordinator Beh Yang Toh called on people to work together to promote peace and raise awareness on the goal of peace.

Attendees included the Honourary Advisor, the Territorial Chief of Larut Matang and Selama Dato' Seri Dr Hj Wan Mohamad Isa Bin Dato' Seri Wan Ahmad, Taiping Member of Parliament YB Nga Kor Ming, state legislators, and the Polish ambassador to Malaysia, HE Eugeniusz Sawicki.

Dato' Seri Dr Hj Wan Mohamad Isa Bin Dato' Seri Wan Ahmad said that individuals or groups should spare no effort in promoting the peace agenda, while HE Eugeniusz Sawicki expressed willingness to become ambassador of peace for Taiping.

CLUB'S SOCIAL NITE



Kelab Bakti Gunong Kledang (KGBK) Ipoh, a Malay-based social club dedicated to the uplifting of the Malay community, organised a social night at Clearwater Sanctuary Golf Resort, Batu Gajah, recently. The event was attended by a plethora of Malay luminaries, which included former federal minister and MB of Kedah, Tan Sri Sanusi Junid, and other 'greats' from the community. Among them was former CEO Putrajaya Holdings and current COO Northern Corridor Economic Region, Datuk Ir. Mohamad Othman Zainal Azim, who is also a member of KGBK. The club is now 32 years old and has grown from strength to strength. It has been on the forefront of the local social scene by being a generous donor to charities and the underprivileged.

LAUNCHING OF DA MA CAI STUDENT AID 2009 PROGRAMME



The launching of Da Ma Cai Student Aid 2009 programme was held in Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Cina) Perak. In his address Yin Yee Yuen, CEO of Pan Malaysian Pools Sdn Bhd, said that for this year Da Ma Cai has allocated RM1.1 million to be given to 350 schools nationwide which would see 11,000 needy students each receiving RM100 cash to purchase school supplies. This is the 19th consecutive year the programme has been organised and to date 172,000 students have benefited from the financial aid of nearly RM18 million that was disbursed.

Deputy Education Minister YB Datuk Dr Wee Ka Siong who was the chief guest, said his ministry was supportive of corporate responsibility programmes which provide young Malaysians, opportunities to pursue quality education.

Datuk Dr Wee Ka Siong was presented with a Mock Cheque and he handed cash envelopes to the students and representatives of the schools which were recipients of the aid.

71st MICHAELIAN REUNION

They say a quiet reunion is not a reunion. True to the saying, the Old Michaelian Association dinners held annually are always boisterous affairs.

Each year, old Michaelians who had left 10, 25, 40 and 50 years earlier are called on stage to receive their OMA certificates from Brother Vincent Corkery.

This year was no exception with one difference: there were two ladies in the line up. Maureen Lim and Patricia Oei who did their Form 6 at St Michaels, joined other old boys who had left 50 years ago. Noted in this lineup of old boys was Michael Yeh and Noel D'Oliveiro.

Amongst the celebrants at the reunion were other old boys from the LaSallian institutions of St George Taiping, St Paul Seremban, St John Kuala Lumpur, St Xavier Penang and St Francis Malacca.

The 50s old boys later led the choir in singing the school song which literally shook the Red Crescent Hall not once but three times. The night carried on with a sing-along of golden oldies like 'Congratulations' and 'Que Sera'. The old boys also sang 'When Irish Eyes are Smiling' for Brother Vincent.

Music for the night was contributed by old boy Joe Chin who has been playing at OMA dinners for several years now. The old boys ended the annual event that night in high spirits as only a good reunion can do.

FIRE DESTROYS CAR



CPO PERAK'S OPEN HOUSE



CPO Perak, DCP Dato' Pahlawan Zulkifli Abdullah, held a Hari Raya Adil Fitri open house at his official residence on Saturday, October 2nd. The function was well attended by invitees which included heads of departments, captains of industries and members of the public and the press. Stalls filled with local delicacies, cookies, *lemang*, *ketupat* and *rendang* spread along the edges of Zulkifli's residence. The crowd was spoilt for choice and helped themselves to what they preferred most – *lemang* and *rendang tok*. While they feted, the police musical band entertained them with its repertoire of music and songs.

SYMPOSIUM ON LIFE



A symposium on breast cancer, organised by Pantai Putri Hospital Ipoh, was held at Syuen Hotel on Saturday, October 2nd. Aptly named the 'Ribbon of Life Symposium' after its universal identity, the forum was aimed at creating awareness in the public on the disease which afflicts a good number of Malaysians. Participants, numbering over a hundred, included nurses, care-givers and members of the public and NGOs. The symposium is an extension of the campaign on heart diseases and the on-going campaign on breast cancer. Discussions centred on the forms of heart diseases and breast cancer, their impact on sufferers, detection and recovery methods. Stalls providing information relating to heart diseases and breast cancer were set up in the hallway. This provided a touch of gaiety to the whole show.

Dr Dilshaad Ali, CEO Pantai Putri Hospital, reassured the media that his hospital was committed to the eradication of the disease and would, in the months ahead, proceed with its awareness campaign in all districts in Perak. "It's part of the hospital's responsibility to society, in particular Perakeans," he remarked. Meanwhile, Pantai Putri Hospital will continue to provide mammogram tests at a discounted rate to all its walk-in customers.

A staff of a banking institution in Ipoh had a rude shock when told that her car, parked at the Greentown car park, was on fire. Chen Yoke Peng, 51, could do nothing to salvage her prized possession – a green Toyota Corolla. "I came to know of the fire after the incident had happened", she exclaimed. When she arrived at the scene all she saw was a burnt-out shell of her once proud possession. The fire was doused by members of the Fire and Rescue Department who rushed a fire engine to the scene. Two other cars parked nearby were saved by the timely arrival of the firemen. Fortunately, no lives were lost. The owner of the private car park was unavailable for comment. Investigation is underway to determine the cause.

COMMUNITY NEWS

MATURE TREE CUT DOWN BY MBI



A mature tree whose base diameter is about 4 feet was cut down by MBI along Jalan Hassan near Tarcisian Convent School. Normally MBI men trim the branches of trees along roadsides. However, in this case the tree was chopped down. I am not an arborist, but visually the stump looks healthy. There is so much talk of greening the city; but in reality this is what happens.

The Mayor has been saying that no tree shall be cut without his approval and house owners are reminded that they do not have the right to cut down mature trees without the approval of MBI. Can MBI give valid reason for chopping this tree?

A. JEYARAJ

CAR PARK GETS A FACELIFT



The car park for the public in Hospital Raja Permaisuri Bainun (Ipoh General Hospital) has been tarred with gradient to enable rain water to flow away. Directions and parking bays are properly painted. Previously the parking area consisted of gravel, sand, mud, stones and concrete slabs with plenty of potholes. After a shower the whole area became soggy with pools of water.

The public is grateful to the authorities for upgrading the car park. Culprits who park their cars indiscriminately must be fined. All law abiding citizens would support this.

A. JEYARAJ

MGS GRADUATION NIGHT

Graduation Night – Disney Masquerade. This subject dominated the minds of SMK (P) Methodist students, for days before the grand occasion on October 2nd. Form 5 students scouted the streets of Ipoh and raided almost every boutique available. Some went shopping with friends, and some with their parents. Who in their right mind would deny the requests of the smiling, happy faces of the soon-to-be graduating young women?

When the night of October the 2nd descended, excitement filled the hearts of the Graduation Night committee members. The heat was on, as they prepared the ballroom of Tower Regency Hotel for the event. After the final preparations at around 7 o'clock, a few early arrivals were already waiting outside the ballroom. Half an hour later, the corridor outside the ballroom was flooded with colour. The girls made an entrance in reds, blues, greens and

pinks. All came with their masks adorned with sequins and feathers. Some heart-attack-inducing outfits were the highlight of the night. Long trains and shawls sent some unlucky students sprawling and tripping but no casualties were reported.

When the girls were finally allowed into the ballroom, they were greeted by the committee members who had dressed up as different Disney characters. There was a pirate, a mermaid and not to mention the witch. The occasion began with the customary speech from headmistress, Mrs Lee Hock Hin as she walked around the hall greeting different students and teachers.

After dinner, it was games time for the girls. They had to make the longest paper chain, search for items in the scavenger hunt and construct stable straw structures. As the girls settled down, the Form 4 committee members presented their self-choreographed dance. Finally,



5 Finalists For Miss Graduation Night

the event all the girls had waited for... Graduation Night Queen Pageant! 20 girls were selected by the teachers as they assessed them according to masks and costumes. After a series of tests, only 5 girls were chosen to enter the finals.

The night ended with the prize-giving ceremony to the girls who had won the games played earlier and crowning

of the Graduation Night Queen, Liew Shi Yun – Head Prefect of SMK (P) Methodist Ipoh 2009.

The Graduation Night curtain fell at 10.30 p.m. and the Cinderellas were picked up by their respective carriages. No dainty glass slippers were left behind but everyone took pleasant memories with them.

SPEAKING UP



Ipoh Toastmasters International which sponsored SMK Gunong Rapat Gavel Club, played host to visitors from Toastmasters District 51 of Penang recently. The visit coincided with the club's monthly speechcraft programme. The student members displayed their oratory skills, presenting topics in the English language. The programme, initiated by

Peter Bucher (Pak Peter) of Ipoh Toastmasters International, was aimed at instilling confidence in the student members to speak in public in English. Presently, there is only one Gavel Club operational in Ipoh. The Ipoh chapter hopes to have more such clubs to spread the gospel but is hampered by financial and personnel constraints.

THE FAIR PARK TRAGEDY

Could we have prevented it?

The tragedy of two people being buried in their car while waiting at a traffic light along Fair Park Road has certainly got Ipoh town folks asking questions about safety and the right of citizenry for basic protection from mishaps of this nature.

In the incident which happened on October 2nd around 10 p.m., a row of shop houses undergoing demolition collapsed on

four vehicles that were waiting at the traffic lights. The row of shop houses was located on a double-lane road 50 metres before the traffic lights.

In view of the tragedy, following so soon after the collapse of the Jaya Supermarket incident in Kuala Lumpur in May, which was also undergoing demolition, the local authorities will have to ask themselves if they are be-



The collapsed shop lots

ing proactive enough and stringent in their inspections of demolition and construction sites.

While all the reports from the relevant depart-

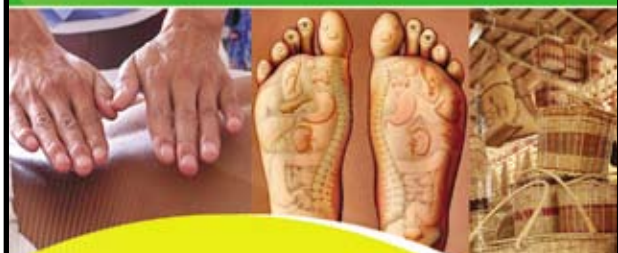
ments are being compiled let us hope that their findings from this tragedy will help prevent further mishaps in the future.

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KAMPONG TALES



Similar to many other cultures, there is a local tradition concerning the buying and wearing of new clothes during the Ramadan period, no doubt for the ultimate glorification of man and beautification of woman at Ramadan's conclusion – the wondrously celebrative Raya.

Graciously, and in the utmost earnest, Ma, Pa, Abalong, Abangah and Adik troll off to the local boutiques and, after many false starts gain fresh attire. Refreshed and revitalised, they then reappear bedecked in all their haute couture grandeur to *balik kampung*, in the season; descending upon their relatives to consume the sumptuous fare provided, and arrive in their truckloads devouring all in their path, like carousing human

locusts.

This annual titivation does not stop at the mere enhancement of human anatomy. Dowdy houses are cleansed until they ping, as are husbands, and a general tidying atmosphere envelopes residents as time inevitably slides towards the feasting days of Raya.

Inexorably caught in the spring-cleaning furore, we endeavoured to take a second, and then a long startled third look at our sieve-like gazebo. Noting the increasingly tatty nature of the gazebo roof, in our wisdom, we vowed to make amends and sought out a weaver of attap, to return our garden retreat to its former halcyon glory.

This endeavour proved to be slightly more difficult than we might have imagined. This is despite the obvious fact that we are ensconced in the rural splendour of the Perak countryside and, in our imaginings, potentially surrounded by numerous makers of a myriad crafts.

In our innocent city-eyed naiveté, what we could not have known was that attap weaving is

GARBIN THE GAZEBO



rapidly becoming a dying art in rural Perak. Too many fresh faced young people, desirous of complex hand phones and ever-newer cars, prefer to work in factories, call centres or whatever employment they can discover to help them exist in the city, rather than learn the inherent beauty of traditional crafts.

There are fewer and fewer craft makers, with only the aging older generations practising those specific arts and trades. In a very short space of time the makers, and the crafts they and they alone hold the secrets to, will be gone, and part of the national cultural heritage will die with them.

So, jumping into our aging jeep, we travelled the winding old road to Sahom, to talk to the resident Semai kampung men

about re-thatching the gazebo roof. They declined, intimating that they had no readymade attap sections.

In desperation, we visited the contractor of a local rainforest retreat, with wooden holiday lodges roofed in attap, close to Gopeng, – but no luck. Eventually, after much pleading, the retreat manager referred us back to a woman we had already approached – a Makcik known for her meticulously methodical, but laboriously slow work.

Girding what may or may not have been our loins, we re-visited the industrious Makcik, carefully counting the damaged attap before departure, and settled on a figure of 60 lengths of attap – fifteen per side. Luckily, and to our immense joy and delight, Makcik was able to

spare 60 lengths of attap, but no more.

Makcik was working flat out (for her) to fulfil a large order – intended for the Semai villagers in Sahom, who, seemingly, no longer make their own attap roofing, and for which they had already paid.

We employed two local enthusiastic and energetic boys to strip off the old, tattered, attap and to begin renovating our gazebo with the fresh, newly woven attap. It was only when the boys started on the second side that we realised that our attap lengths were too short. The boys had to use twice as many lengths on each side. Then we came to the dawning realisation that sixty lengths were only going to cover two sides of our four-sided

gazebo, and that we needed twice as many as we had thought – so, back we trotted to Makcik.

Makcik sat squatting on a small wooden stool, attap in hand. She carefully explained that no amount of extra financial inducement would be able to make her part with the attap lengths she had promised to the Semai villagers, and, as Raya was approaching, she would not be making any extra until after the holidays. We were crestfallen.

First Raya came, as did our guests.

The gazebo remained half dressed, waiting for the energetic boys to return, and waiting for Makcik to weave the remaining lengths of attap.

Yusuf Martin is an Englishman, now snugly settled in the kampung bosom of Perak.

His writings can be found in *The Expat*, *Senses of Malaysia*, *The Malaysian Insider* (online) and his various blogs on the internet.

His short stories and essays have been published in anthology volumes by publishers such as Silverfish, MPH and Matahari, while his voice has been heard on BFM radio and his girth witnessed on NTV7.

ADVENTURE

GOPENG WHITE WATER RAFTING

by ISTA KYRA SHARMUGAM

Just 26 km from Ipoh city, tucked away in the quiet town of Gopeng, lay a little adventure in the form of a rushing river and mystical caves that were once proud communist conquered hideouts.

It was an easy 30-minute drive via the North-South PLUS highway to Gopeng, then another 15 minutes drive along a curvy, narrow road, guided by strategically placed signboards that led to Adeline's Rest House.

Adeline Kuo, 49, founded the place in 2004, in efforts to help the Orang Asli or indigenous people that lived in the nearby village, Ulu Geruntum and Ulu Guruh.

"All our huts are made of bamboo and built by the Orang Asli in the area", said Adeline's son, Ian Lean, 22. "We built the huts one by one over five years, and today we have about 16 huts that can house up to 150 people at a time", he added.

The great river is Sungai Kampar, and the rafting is approximately seven to eight kilometres down the length of the river. Adeline's main guide, Jamahuri Ahmad Japilos, 27, or 'J' as he prefers to be called, has five years experience as a guide in the area. According to J, there are three guides with Adeline who are certified in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and



White water rafting down the Kampar River

first aid training which he claims is renewed every three years.

After a short briefing on the regular safety measures, J summed it in two words.

"Don't panic."

For those who cannot swim, the experience of falling into the strong current might sound terrifying. As J puts it, "You may swallow some water and

eat some sand, but if you keep your calm and resist panic, you are most likely to float and be rescued".

Before we got on the raft, an inflatable boat, we dunked ourselves in the icy cold water to get 'comfortable' as well as overcome the sudden shock at the unfamiliarity of falling overboard.

There are altogether 15 rapids along our rafting



Bamboo huts made by the Orang Asli

route. One of the very first rapids occurred along a broken dam. We were required to row our way through the powerful flows which did little to ease our efforts in directing the boat. The tallest and highest rapid is at 3 metres, nicknamed the 'Double Decker' was quite frightening as the raft tilted almost vertically down the river. One stretch aptly named 'Triple Pleasure' involves three rapids in close succession which gave the ride a roller-coaster thrill. I had the 'good fortune' of being thrown overboard in the white water twice, however, apart from little bumps and bruises; I survived and emerged from the experience a happy camper.

At a spot where the river was calmer, J allowed us to swim and frolic. The current was strong and

as compared to the usual time of about two and a half hours.

Tips for White Water Rafting In Gopeng

You're going to get soaking wet, sandy and muddy so:

- 1) Opt for well-worn comfortable shoes.
- 2) Wear comfortable and unrestricting attire to ease physical movement.
- 3) Wear your spectacles instead of contact lenses to avoid contamination from the river water.
- 4) A towel and fresh change of clothing would keep you from freezing after the river ride.
- 5) Leave your hand phones and wallets and other valuable items in the car; although you may be provided with a waterproof bag, the method is not foolproof.

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MY SAY



by
JERRY FRANCIS

This is the message the Ministry of Health is passing on to the public as a warning during the rainy season. There are over 30,600 cases, with about 70 deaths, in the country since January 1st to last month. Perak alone has about 2,430 cases, making the state the third highest after Selangor and the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya.

The number of cases nationwide is expected to increase by the end of the year. Yet, how many of us will take the warning seriously?

Generally, Malaysians are very complacent. They are not concerned until they or their loved ones are affected. What has been troubling me is to see residents in a neighbourhood feel that as long as rubbish is not thrown in their vicinities, they and their families are safe.

As a result many of them are seen daily throwing rubbish outside their housing estates and creating over 20,000 illegal dumping grounds within Ipoh City.

Even those in the affluent areas have been seen dumping rubbish indiscriminately. I had personally confronted two residents disposing rubbish at an illegal dump, and who

JOINT EFFORT NEEDED TO COMBAT DENGUE

Don't Just Fine Households, Punish Local Authorities Too

"Dengue is endemic to Malaysia. The number of Malaysians infected with dengue and succumbing to it is much higher than influenza A (H1N1)"



Aren't these items, including discarded toilet bowls, contributing to breeding aedes mosquitoes? Who is responsible for their removal?



An illegal rubbish dump in the so-called affluent area of Ipoh Garden

on seeing me armed with a camera, walked away embarrassed, without argument.

The fact that these illegal rubbish dumps are breeding grounds for aedes mosquitoes are not their concern. Yet, they will readily blame the local authorities whenever there is an outbreak of disease in their areas. They failed to realise that a mosquito-borne disease, such as dengue, can reach their neighbourhoods too.

The people must realise that their health and environment are vital. Therefore, if residents take care of their surroundings, everyone will be living in a cleaner and healthier environment.

Of course, the relevant health enforcement agencies and local authorities are not completely innocent. They too have their weaknesses. I could take scores of snapshots as

evidence of the authorities' failure to enforce health regulations or clear clogged drains and ensuring pools of stagnant water, particularly at construction sites and at abandoned buildings and vacant premises, are cleared. They need to show a good example by carrying out their responsibilities before conducting house-to-house inspections for mosquito breeding grounds and impose fines on those households found

breeding mosquitoes.

Any effort directed at fighting dengue must have everyone – residents, local authorities and relevant departments – put their hearts and minds together to show their serious intent. Otherwise, no matter how many anti-dengue campaigns are held or how big the increase in fines against premises found breeding aedes, there will be very little impact to effectively control the disease.

Even the move to set up task force teams in every district in the state on a search and destroy mission of mosquito breeding grounds can only be effective if the people are vigilant.

And, while owners of premises are being fined for allowing aedes to be bred in their compounds, the local authorities too should be punished if they fail to clear clogged drains and ponds of stagnant wa-

ter in public places where aedes are found. There must be no practice of double-standards when combating dengue.

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PSPA MASQUERADE PARTY



The Perak Society of Performing Arts

staged a 'Spectacular Masquerade Party' at Casuarina Impiana Hotel recently. It was a fun filled and action packed evening and not a minute passed without an exciting presentation, Broadway show, mask competition, singing and dancing.

A Broadway performance of CATS was presented by City Ballet Academy followed by Latin dances from My Dancesport

Studio passionately performed by Derek Yeap and Ng Jing Wen and the Salsa sizzled with Gerald Goh and Jessica Lee.

Drama was provided by Charles Pooley as the Phantom of the Opera as he danced with Natalie Yeoh as Christine. The PSPA singers brought their mellifluous voices to the party with Shu Wern Sze and Gavin Tang singing 'The Prayer' and Alan Low and Sylvia Wong performing 'What I did For Love'.

The Mask Competition was won by Rachel Deacon, a student at the International School, with strong competition from 9 other finalists.

The highlight of the evening was the spectacu-



lar fashion show of wedding gowns as the audience oohed and aahed at the wonderful display of haute couture from The Wedding Station paraded by 'Miss Malaysia Models'. A bit of whimsy had the audience sit up when a model showed a wedding gown made up of small balloons (see pix below).

DJ and Emcee K.T. Pillai kept the banter lively and guests danced the night away to the invigorating beat of DJ Pillai and the music machine. Well done PSPA!



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