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Your Community Newspaper

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ISSUE 87

December 1-21, 2009

PP 14252/10/2010(025567)

NEWS

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NEXT!!

Issue 88

20-page Bumper Issue
22nd Dec 2009-15th Jan
2010

CALLING DIRT VIGILANTES!

Look around and judge it yourself. Do you see the piles of rubbish everywhere? It has been estimated that there are over 20,000 illegal rubbish dumps scattered in the city, a ratio of about 35 residents to one dump.

Therefore, as a community newspaper, Ipoh Echo is bound by its commitments to embark on a cleanliness campaign in the city with the co-operation of YOU, the residents.

We will focus on a dirty spot and its location in each issue. Photographs of illegal rubbish dumps, unhygienic places and as well as clogged drains will be published.

In most cases the city council cannot be blamed for the existence of illegal rubbish dumps. The dumps were created by irresponsible residents in their respective neighbourhoods, and operators of small lorries who collect waste from one location for a fee and dump it at another for their convenience.

Many attempts have been made to clear the dumps, but within a few days they start to build up again.

There is no way the city council can overcome the situation, **unless** and **until** everyone co-operates and keep their surroundings clean, enabling all to live in a healthy environment.

Don't show the "tidak apa" attitude, but "kita boleh" to achieve the goal of keeping the city clean. Let us all become "dirt vigilantes" and protect our city from being swamped by rubbish. Send us photographs of dirty spots and information of their locations; we will ensure publication.

Let us together create a Clean Ipoh.



continue Clean theme on
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Celebrities Clean Kinta River



The Leo Project Team

When Daniel Kok, the Leo Club President of Sam Tet School Ipoh was organizing their school project, Eco Week 2009, he had no inkling that it would attract the attention of Malaysian celebrities.

The weeks eco-activities included clean ups in school and town, seminars and quizzes. However it was the 'Keep Our Sg Kinta Clean' project that caught the attention of local actor and TV host Baki Zainal.

MCG2

Baki is also the founder of MCG2 or Malaysian Celebrities Go Green a month old group whose objective is to create awareness about the need to preserve Mother Nature. Baki explained that MCG2 was started when he went to a local neighbourhood waterfall with his nephews where they took an hour to clean up the mess before they could picnic.

"I am so happy that

there are students organizing green activities. Mother Earth needs our attention and MCG2 is ever ready to create that awareness".



Wincci's contribution

The other co-founders of MCG2 are Azizi Zakaria, 18, singer and teen ambassador for the National Kidney Foundation, singer and radio DJ, Dina and Miss Malaysia/World 2008/2009 Soo Wincci who had rushed back from her Taiwan performance just for the Kinta river clean up.

All the 4 founding

members of MCG2 are equally passionate about going green.

Soo Wincci explained that "the 4 of us alone won't be able to clean up the entire river. However with our presence here we can create the awareness to support such projects and that can make a difference".

Both Dina and Azizi too share the same sentiment, that of awareness of the environment. As Azizi explained, "if my fans start using less plastic bags well I've got their attention".

Huge Response in Facebook

Leo District Chairperson, Alan Thoo highlighted that the celebrities awareness effort had attracted 1,700 members after it was posted on Facebook. "We hope to garner 10,000 members before the end of the year", he added.

For the group this Kinta River clean up project was their first

project together.

Schools Participation

The other schools that participated in the morning clean up were Poi Lam High School, St Michael's Institution, Yuk Choy School, Ave Maria Convent and St Benedict's Convent Batu Gajah.

After a short briefing the Leo students and celebrities collected their green garbage bags, slipped on their cotton gloves and proceeded with the clean up. Within a short span of time the group and quartet had collected over 20 bags of 'clean up'.

Other than the clean up the group planted trees along the river bank. This Eco-Week 2009 is an excellent Green project with potential long term benefits.

An excellent awareness effort by the Sam Tet Leos for which Ipoh Echo is glad to participate in.

1 State....1 River



Dato' Abdul Razak Dahalan

Little did Baki and his group of artistes realise that the Kinta River was also selected for the '1 State 1 River' project by the Perak Director Drainage and Irrigation Department since 2005.

This programme is to ensure that our rivers stay clean with a class 2 water quality index beyond 2015.

Additionally it is to implement an integrated river basin management system and preserve it as a valuable asset ultimately making them a source for natural recreation parks.

The Kinta River that flows through Ipoh town has its source from the Main Range at Ulu Kinta, Tanjung Rambutan and flows 100 km through 4 Districts before it joins the Perak River at Kampung Gajah, Perak Tengah.

Eleven tributaries link up to the Kinta River, some of which are the Pari, Pinji, Buntong and Kampar Rivers and its river basin covers an area of 2,500 sq km.

The main function of the Kinta River is for water supply and the Kinta River Dam located at Ulu Kinta has the capability to supply 630 million litres of water daily to the Kinta Valley.

Water Quality

The method to determine the health of a river is to identify its Water Quality Index or WQI. The Water Quality Index of the Kinta River currently is rated at Class 3/ 76 or medium.

There are 5 index categories. Class 1 > 92.7/ excellent, Class 2 (76.5-92.7) good, Class 3 (51.9-76.5) medium, Class 4 (31.0-51.9) bad and Class 5 (< 31) very bad.

According to Dato'

Abdul Razak Dahalan, Drainage and Irrigation Director for Perak, his department's goal is to "achieve the Class 2 category by the year 2015".

Dividing the river into three sections, findings revealed that the second section from Ipoh to Batu Gajah was classified high. The first section from the source to Ipoh was low while section 3, Batu Gajah to the Perak River was classified as medium.

Pollution Sources

The report identified 9 sources that contributed towards the pollution in section 2. Some of these sources were from: a) the industrial zones of Tasek, Ipoh and Bercham, b) the rubbish disposal site at Bercham, c) effluents from treatment plants, d) the wet markets at Tanjung Rambutan and Super Kinta, e) soil erosion and solid particle discharge from property development and construction sites, and f) domestic wastes.

With the data in hand the department initiated their corrective actions.

Remedial Measures

Factories generating the contaminants will now have to treat the waste properly before being released to the river. The Department had also installed rubbish traps along the river to trap rubbish before entering the river and installed Bio-Effective Micro-organism

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SPEAKING TO AN AUDIENCE

Fathol Zaman Bukhari

The disinterest shown by Malay students is a cause for concern. It's a psychological shortcoming born of fear for the unknown...

Gavel Club

It takes courage to speak in front of a crowd, especially one that is hell-bent on picking your mistakes and heckling should you fumble. Definitely not for the faint-hearted. Oratory skills are acquired and like everything else are perfected through constant practice and exposure.

Toasters International is "a leading movement devoted to

making effective oral communication a worldwide reality." The existence of a local chapter here in Ipoh has helped many to realise their dreams of being an effective speaker. Besides instilling in them confidence and poise when engaging listeners, it also helps expand their social networking. The movement has become a beacon of sorts for those who wish

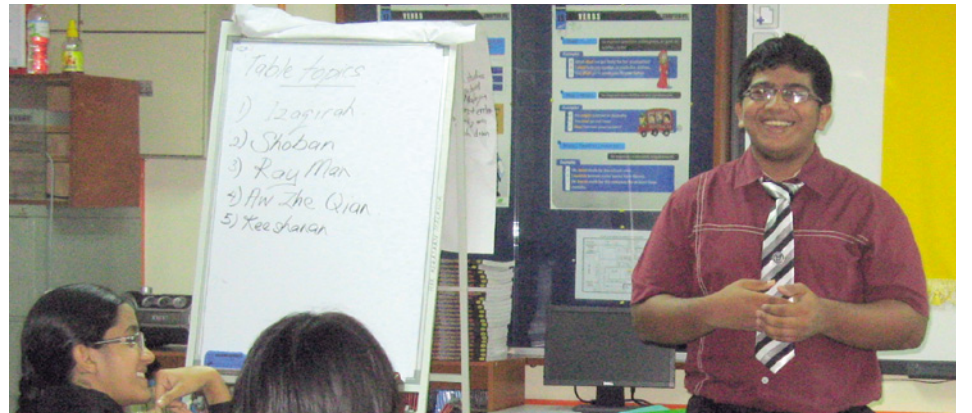
to leave a mark in public speaking.

The desire to expand beyond the horizons prompted Puan Nur Aida, Senior Assistant (Language) SMK Gunung Rapat, to do the unthinkable - establish a Gavel Club, the only one of its kind in the city. Peter Bucher (Pak Peter), an active member of the Ipoh Toastmasters was instrumental in helping to set up the junior club in the school. Kudos to Puan Nur Aida for her foresight.

Gavel Club SMK Gunung Rapat was formalised in April 2009 after obtaining its registration number from Toastmasters International Incorporated in California, USA. It has grown in strength. Membership has quadrupled over the months. It now boasts an intake of 40 students. Still a mere fraction of the school's population of 1300. Meetings are held on Wednesdays of the first and third weeks of the month.

No Political Will

"Overall, the response has been encouraging," said Nur Aida who doubles as the advisory teacher



Briefing by Sergeant-at-Arms, Ranveer Singh

of the club. Her concern, however, is the small percentage of Malays, which form barely 30 per cent of the total number. "The Malay student population in the school is huge but their representation in the club is abysmal," she lamented. Chinese and Indians are the majority and this is evident from the composition of the club's working committee.

The disinterest shown by Malay students is cause for concern. It is a glaring psychological shortcoming born of fear of the unknown. The problem, however, does not affect urban Malays as much since they get to speak the language frequently with

their non-Malay friends. Those living in the rural areas tend to be less receptive. Associating English with the Christian faith is a common excuse even during my days in the kampung. Socio-economic gap is another contributing factor. These problems are not new but no serious attempts have been made to overcome them. Demands by nationalistic elements within the ruling party further complicate the issue. And like all things else, the lack of political will has a telling effect.

I was invited to attend the club's 11th meeting on Wednesday, November 4, 2009. The normal toastmasters format was observed throughout.

Members are picked to speak on a range of topical subjects and are judged on content, grammar, pronunciation, relevance, timing etc. Even the number of "ers" one utters is counted.

Practice and Exposure

Standard varies from speaker to speaker. It is obvious that those who have a solid grounding in English speak better than those with limited exposure. The old adage that practice makes perfect holds sway. Speakers such as Cheong and Shukei are impressive. They can hold their audience with ease.

Tarvinder Kaur, a Form 4 student from Tambun, who sits on the interim committee as vice president public relations, speaks fluent English and has the potential to succeed. And so are the rest on the committee. "The transition from fifth to fourth formers will be smooth", Nur Aida predicted, alluding to the soon-to-be takeover by the juniors. This allays her fears of a leadership vacuum when the fifth formers leave at the end of the year.

Constraints

The benefits gained from gavel clubs are enormous, therefore, more clubs should be established. However, funding and manpower constraints are high on the need list of the Ipoh Toastmasters Club. This is something which Pak Peter and his associates have to deal with and fast.

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- Passionate about conservation

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continued from page 2

(EM) Treatment Ponds at the General Market, Super Kinta Ipoh and at Tanjung Rambutan market.

At the Ipoh Rubbish Dump, Bercham, the Department had initiated a Waste Management Flow also using the Bio-EM methodology.

At the start of the project in 2005 the Kinta River was classified as Class 3 with a reading of 67. By 2008 the quality index had improved to Class 3 with a reading of 76.

New Targets

Hence the department is now setting their sights

to target Class 2 status (76.5 - 92.7) specifically Class 2B. Class 2B is classified as good but not yet satisfactory for body contact (swimming).

Another one of the objectives of the project is to introduce recreational activities on the river. An Inflatable Rubber dam is being installed below the bridge along Jalan Sultan Idris Shah, next to the Goddess of Mercy Temple projected to be completed by March next year. The purpose for the dam is to increase the depth of the river by 2 m for a stretch of 700 m upriver starting from the bridge at YMCA to enable recreational activities to be undertaken.

Next Challenge

The next challenge that the Department is facing is how to maintain the quality of the river once it has met its desired target.

The Department has already initiated community awareness programmes mainly with schools and is planning to have talks with the responsible agencies, NGO's and the general public.

Awareness Enforcement

The Department is of the opinion that enforcement is a major aid to maintaining river quality. As an example controlling the volume of solid particles being discharged by land development work can

help significantly.

For the long term though the department has its work cut out for it. This is just the fourth year of the project.

By comparison, the cleanup of the Singapore River, a length of 11,000 metres from its source took 10 years to get cleaned up. The Kinta River at 100 km in length and with 11 tributaries should be a gargantuan effort.

The Drainage and Irrigation Department has identified all factors to achieving a clean river. Hence all that needs to be done is being done. It is a matter of time when the Department achieves its goal.

The Kinta River was conduit that linked Ipoh and the Kinta Valley to the rest of the world. Reviving its potential sooner would give our state tourism office another adventure product to market.

Hopefully in the not too distant future we might be able to take a river boat ride from Teluk Intan right up till Gunung Cheroh just like the early pioneers did. That would be something to look forward to, wouldn't it?

JAMES GOUGH

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PUBLISHER

Ipoh Echo Sdn Bhd
(Regd No 687483 T)

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Konway Industries Sdn Bhd
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THINKING ALOUD

by Mariam Mokhtar

I mean no disrespect to anyone in the recent Kampar tragedy, but there are some for whom a safe crossing across the river is a daily and dangerous struggle.

It is not that they haven't asked for help. They have. But not many bothered to listen.

'They' are the forgotten few. Decades ago, they helped us rid the country of communists. During peacetime, they collected valuable jungle produce for our consumption. We once found them curious objects, worthy of anthropological study. Today, they are conveniently used to inflate numbers in proselytization. In an earlier era, they were hunted for slavery. Sadly, they are still hounded. Until recently, they had a 'voice'. Who are they? They are the Orang Asli of Perak.

In Perak, the Orang Asli live in 248 villages, in the forest fringes or the interior. Half these communities are moderately developed; the rest, remain undeveloped. Malaysia's Orang Asli population, around 147,000 (2003),

has a high poverty rate (80%) with a sizeable (35%) hardcore poor. The literacy rate is low (43%), the life expectancy is only 53 years and their infant mortality rate is high.

True Malaysians

They are the true, original Malaysians but don't enjoy all the benefits, opportunities and incentives. We take for granted everyday things like clean running water and electricity. Not them. Besides, they have little or no access to opportunities in health, education, infrastructure, skills training and business.

They are considered an inconvenience. Only a few, like the nomadic Jahai and Batek, take advantage of the seasonal forest bounties for their livelihood. When it suits the authorities, the Orang Asli are moved on – first, their ancestral lands are confiscated; second, they are resettled. Then, when someone, or some company strikes a lucrative land deal, in road building, logging, mining or a housing project, they are again shoved. That the Orang

THE SILENT AND GAGGED TASKFORCE

The power tussles in Perak mean the Orang Asli are again ignored.



Asli are nomadic is only an Urban Myth.

Conversion Targets

Each different group has its own language, culture, and occupation. Coastal Orang Asli are mainly fishermen; those living in forested areas, practice hill paddy cultivation, hunting, fishing and gathering. We are repulsed that they practice animism. Since the mid-1800s, they have been targeted by the Catholics, the Methodists, the Bahais and lately, the Muslims. Missionaries, regardless of the cloak worn, and whichever book of God they subscribe to, consider the Orang Asli as lost souls.

Recently, Kelantan en-

ticed its Muslim preachers with RM10,000 to marry an Orang Asli woman, in efforts to propagate Islam. This idea was first launched in 2006 because of dissatisfaction with the conversion rate. Interestingly, the offer included free accommodation, a four-wheel-drive vehicle and a fixed monthly allowance of RM1,000.

This financial inducement is morally wrong and objectionable. How does one differentiate between the sincere attraction for the religion or otherwise? What will stop the proliferation of bogus preachers? This marriage of convenience is not made-in-heaven and should the Orang Asli spouse wish to

abandon Islam, for whatever reason, she will find it an impossibility.

Why not leave them alone? We have grabbed their lands, denied them their rightful place in society, withheld their social and political dues, removed their identity, culture and language, and now we want to own their souls too? We transplant them into unfamiliar surroundings, then conveniently blame them for giving in to vice, violence and drugs.

Perak's Efforts Must be Revived

Fortunately, Perak is free of such underhand, tainted bribes.

In 2008, Pakatan Rakyat formed the Orang Asli Taskforce. However, the power tussles in Perak mean the Orang Asli are once again ignored. Revive this Taskforce. Seriously empower them. Engage them. Encourage them in decision-making. Return their dignity. And reinstate their distinctive identity. It is time we acted with humility, rather than drag them into obscurity.

SPORT

RHYTHM IN THE GYM

by ISTA KYRA SHARMUGAM



Vera and her students strike a pose for the camera

Have you been keeping a secret wish of becoming a graceful gymnastic star? Your wish just might come true without

stepping a foot out of Ipoh.

Vera Andreeva, a Russian rhythmic gymnast coach, vouches for the physical and health

benefits that come with the sport for girls of all ages, shapes and sizes. According to Vera there is more to the sport than extreme bends and contortions. "Rhythmic gymnastics training gives a girl poise, grace as well as good motion reflexes."

Vera's burning passion for the sport is evident in the way she describes it as an art in itself. "The girls learn to tell a story with their body, using nuances of dance, flexibility as well as emotions."

The 31-year old has been coaching our Ipoh girls since 2003. Trained in rhythmic gymnastics since

she was just eight years old, Vera has seen her glory days in the Russian National Team. "It is elements of ballet, theatre and music rolled into one that makes the classes fun for the girls as well develop their sense of discipline and creativity."

Currently Vera conducts lessons in the gymnasium opposite the Sungai Senam Police station. "It's not always about high-performance training, although it would be great to discover potential talents", said Vera.

Some may find rhythmic gymnastics rather daunting; especially the

way the girls twist and bend their bodies, however, Vera assures that training is conducted gradually and not forced upon the students immediately. "It's a great way to maintain health and have some fun at the same time."

Those who want to make their secret dreams come true can visit Vera during lessons at the Diving and Rhythmic sports gymnasium just behind the DBI Sports Complex. Classes begin at 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. on weekdays, 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturdays and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sundays.

DESTRESS WITH MUAY THAI



If you like to punch, kick and box your stress away, Muay Thai may just be your sport.

According to Fitness instructor and martial arts expert, Shum Chiew Mun, "When you train in Muay Thai, there's little time to think about anything else".

Shum is an avid martial arts enthusiast trained and mastered in various self defense fields including Tak Kwan Do, Muay Thai, kickboxing and Eskrima, a form of Filipino martial arts.

He describes Muay Thai as the simplest and

most straightforward form of self defense.

"There are not a lot of steps to remember, as opposed to Tae Kwan Do or Karate. It's very freestyle," said the 38-year-old.

Discovering Muay Thai five years ago, Shum first trained with a Malaysian Muay Thai expert in Kuala Lumpur before heading to Thailand himself to be properly ordained in the art. He spends two weeks in Thailand, three times a year to refresh and update his Muay Thai training.

"We used to run between 5 and 10 km, training 6 hours a day," said Shum of his Thailand experience.

Upon his return to

Malaysia, Shum felt a need to promote the sport, especially in Ipoh. "Muay Thai training is no nonsense. It's all about training and training hard," said Shum.

However Shum is quick to defend the sport, "It's very practical and flexible. If you put in the work it's also a great weight loss method."

"I always tell my students not to force themselves to train. You have to love and enjoy it, only then will you see results."

For those who may be interested in the sport as a form of workout instead of self defense, Shum has designed a less strenuous fitness plan.

"I can modify the training to suit the client's

needs," said Shum amidst his students sparring away at each other, of which some are women, even a 48 year old housewife.

When asked the reason behind his passion Shum had few words to say.

"I was born to be a martial artist," said Shum before naming his father's love for karate and Bruce Lee movies as big influences.

The Tae Kwan Do black belt of the third degree teaches Muay Thai in a few places, and you may find him at the Martial Arts and Fitness Academy in Bandar Baru Tambun between 8 and 9 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

MUSINGS ON FOOD

by Yusuf Martin



Craving Marmite

course, gravy. Real gravy that is, just like mom used to make, with real Oxo cubes and real Bisto powder, not just brown coloured cornstarch water.

When the desperate longing is upon you, it is worse than any other addict's cravings. Only that object of desire, that Shepherd's Pie, and no other, will satisfy the hunger for the familiar – that comfort food from your home country. It could, of course be anything from anywhere. I am not suggesting that expats from China, Australia or even Japan would suddenly have a deep desire for Shepherd's Pie, 'cause that would be silly.

A friend, who once taught English in Malaysia for a few years, returned to England craving Marmite. It was, he said, the only thing to console him. It was the one item seemingly unavailable to him, at that time, in Malaysia. He said that Malaysian food was out of this world. He positively doted on the delectable Dosa and went nostalgically nutty over noodles, but, despite having some of the best food in the world – in Malaysia,

This fortnight, See Foon passes the baton to Yusuf Martin who from his kampong perch in Perak, yearns – not for Marmite – but for Shepherd's Pie...



the one thing he really wanted, the only thing to salve his craving for 'home', was Marmite.

To each their own, and I have not had that particular problem. To me Marmite was always a take it, or leave it, item. These days Marmite is found quite easily in places like the Cold Storage, along with Vegemite, Bovril and similar sticky salty items which tease my palate not one iota.

As the sunny, sultry year progresses to October, then November, autumn, in all its yellow leaf dropping finery, seems to be missing. There is no mass fall of multicoloured leaves, no sharp, crispy crunchy frost underfoot as Guy Fawkes Night/Bonfire Night (November 5th) comes fleeing past. No foil wrapped, soon to

be buttery, potatoes roasting in glowing ashes - no blackening chestnuts wafting their welcoming mouth watering scent, either.

Sometimes, the delightful Malaysian semi-permanent tropical sun, perpetual heat and rapid rainstorms are unable to console the secret, yet rampant longing for exactly the opposite. That yearning, feeling of longing for home, ebbs and flows, like some reluctant emotional tide on a gigantic ocean of thought and feeling. Every now and then, that, which you so desperately sought to distance yourself from becomes the very thing that will quench your dearest desire - cold, damp, grey winter skies; having to wear 3 or 4 items of upper clothing; being chilled to the very bone with Jack Frost nipping at your ears, and a run of mucus dripping from your ever bluing nose.

It is, without the shadow of any kind of doubt, the fault of the ever-present calendar. A quick glance to one side of my computer revealed a Halloween, which had been creeping eerily forward, then gone. A Bonfire Night, its incum-

bent Autumnal festivities burning rapidly on, bringing forth remembrances, and irrevocably skipping to times long since past; to other incidents, almost lost in memory which may, or may not, have actually happened, but seem lodged in this wistful, romantically dreaming mind.

Of course, the reverse is true too.

On cold, damp, grey Autumn days in England, as you pull your top-coat around you for just a little warmth, and finding all there is eat (that's halal) is a limp, drab Döner kebab, bearing only the slightest resemblance to the original Turkish dish, with meat obviously made from Bata's cast outs - your thoughts fly to the far away equatorial sun. Never mind that the actual sun is a few thousand miles away, and your feet are currently wet and in danger of becoming frozen, it is then, in that moment and in your most nightmare of scenarios, that you crave the satisfying food of home, and mom.

Cowering from the English weather, wondering if the sun will ever shine, it is then that even

the most pathetic watery Primrose Hill Penang Laksa, or near nauseating Northern London Nasi Lemak would be enough to satisfy your irrational craving for home sweet Malaysian home. But not Marmite.

For all you expatriates out there, who were weaned on Mom's Shepherd's Pie and occasionally find yourself drooling for a taste of good ole England, you can savour it at the following restaurants:

Citrus Wine & Dine
38-46, Laluan Ipoh Perdana, Ipoh
Tel: 05-545 1010

Maria's Restaurant Cafe
No. 60, Persiaran Greentown 1, Greentown Business Centre, Ipoh
Tel: 05-2424133

Secret Recipe
Kinta City, Syuen Hotel, Jalan Lau Pak Khuan

See Foon

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<http://english-n-countrydecor.blogspot.com>

YAU YU ONG CHOY

Cuttlefish on its own is pretty tasteless. Combine it with blanched kangkong (water spinach), smother both in tasty sauce and you have Yau Yu Ong Choy. Unlike squid, which can be quite chewy, cuttlefish is tender and also crunchy (not in the same sensation as nuts but in a softer, more elastic sense). The sauce is curry-like thickened with ground peanuts – much like sate gravy with the addition of chilli sauce according to taste. When it comes to the sauce, we prefer one where it's not too much like curry or too much like sate sauce. The good stalls will serve mainly the young succulent tips of the kangkong plant as older parts can be quite fibrous and best left to temple tortoises who are equipped with stronger jaws!



NAME	WHERE	COMMENTS	PRICE (RM)	
LOW KWAN 11.30am-6pm Tuesdays & Wednesdays off	Stall #38 Stadium Perak	Gravy more curry like and has a nice fragrance.	From 5.00	★★★★★
KERANG-ROJAK-SOTONG KARI MEE-LAM MEE (Night) Thursdays closed	Aneka Selera, Ipoh Garden	Peanuts sprinkled on top. Gravy flavourful but not very spicy.		★★★★★
KEDAI KOPI KONG HENG (Day only) Wednesdays closed	75 Jln Bandar Timah (Leech St), Old Town	Nuttier but tasty gravy. Has less cuttlefish.		★★★★★
FOOD COURT (night)	Off Jln Ng Soon Teik, Silibin	Normal tasty gravy.		★★★★★

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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 or email: ipohecho@ipohecho.com.my to write in. The views expressed in these letters are not necessarily shared by the Editorial Board. We reserve the right to refuse or modify the letters we publish.

HOW ONE CAN WE BE?

Get off my lawn!

"...youngsters today haven't the ability to comprehend..."

Whattttt???! What is there to understand? Where are the in-your-face, incontrovertible, cold, hard facts on which they could base comprehension? Apart from the noisy Internet (nice PDF newspaper, btw) some people are going to great lengths to hide all the facts so that nobody can know anything with sufficient certainty on which to base comprehension! And which generation facilitated that or stood idly by while it came about?

I think you're being a little hard on the 'youth of today', who are almost certainly – hand-phones and even less exercise aside – *exactly* the same as the youth of yesterday! Let us all hope, despite the lateness of the hour, that their uninformed choices fortuitously put those of their forebears to shame.

Sean

November 03, 2009

JAPANESE GARDEN

I tend to agree with the writer that a facelift has been giving to the Japanese Garden at DR Seenivasagam, which is one up for MBI. But what ever happened to the general public going there for healthy air and relaxation. What happened to the cafeteria? Security is lax. It's time more activities be held at the grounds of DR Seenivasagam. This would liven the area so to speak.

K. Sagadevan

November 01, 2009

I remember spending lots of hours in the park during my younger days. I am really glad someone is doing something about this. Keep it up!

L. Perreau

Texas, USA

November 13, 2009

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF MISS ECHO?

May I know the purpose of having a Miss Echo every month? How did they apply to be Miss Echo? Seems like they spring out of nowhere. What makes them qualify to be Miss Echo? What are they supposed to contribute to Ipoh? Pardon me for saying this, at first glance, I thought they were advertising themselves simply because there was no other information on what they did/or do in Ipoh or rather, for Ipoh Echo.

Cilane

November 11, 2009

I find the comments by 'cilane' at best, curious, at worst objectionable. I have no clue how the girls qualify to be Miss (or Mrs) Echo, so maybe 'cilane' may wish to contact the Ipoh Echo's office to find out the criteria for entry. By saying that Miss Echo has no contribution to Ipoh or that they were self serving is rather condescending. It also sounds as if 'cilane' is a bit of a 'misery-guts'.

To have pretty girls on the front page of the Ipoh Echo is akin to a breath of fresh air, or the sun appearing on a gloomy day. And isn't it nice to know that there are lots of girls with ambition in Ipoh. If the truth be known, some guys might want to see more than what the Ipoh Echo offers as acceptable viewing (cf. page 3 girls of The Sun (UK)).

Me? I would like to know if Ipoh Echo has provision for a Mr. Echo – it would be fun to see if Ipoh has men to match the charm, good-looks, confidence and ambition of Miss Echo. Now, there's a challenge.

Yam Mckendrick

November 15, 2009

We can certainly rise to that challenge. Now, will any potential Mr. Echo volunteer to be put on the front page by either calling us at the Echo office or emailing us with a photo? All submissions will be given due consideration.

Editorial Board

ADVERTORIAL

By PETER LEE



ESPECIALLY FOR YOUR LOVED ONES

should have..." statements we can avoid would be to ensure we have written a WILL. By writing a WILL, you are able to appoint your EXECUTORS and GUARDIANS for children who are minors. Sometimes loving parents assume that if they pass away, their parents or even their brothers or sisters would automatically be the guardians of their minor children. Sadly, this is a false assumption. They have to be appointed before they can act. If no guardians are appointed under the WILL, then guardians will have to be appointed by the Court by application.

Under the Guardianship of Infants (Amendment) Act, 1999, the mother of an infant child is given equal rights with the father on matters relating to the custody or upbringing of a child. With the amendment, a parent can actually appoint some-

one to be a guardian for the child who is a minor and also to act jointly with the surviving parent. This helps to allay the fears of those who cannot trust their spouse/ex-spouse for whatever reasons to bring up the child alone.

Wouldn't it be extremely important if we can plan for the future to protect our children and avoid the "I should have..." situation? Therefore, why not take the first step to protect your family by writing a WILL?

Peter Lee is an Associate Estate Planning Practitioner (WILLS & TRUST) with Rockwills International Group.

He is also an Islamic Estate Planner providing Wills & Trust services for Muslims. He can be reached at **012-5078825** or at excelsec@streamyx.com.

感恩園

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Perak Community Specialist Hospital (PCSH) Free Health Screening in conjunction with their Health Awareness Campaign. Saturday, 5th December 2009, 10.00 a.m. - 2.00 p.m. at Tesco Pengkalan (opposite information counter). Free screening for: Blood Pressure Check, Blood Glucose Test, Body Mass Index, Diet Counselling and Health Consultation & Counselling. For more information, contact Ms. Juliet Choo at **05-2548918/2545594 (Ext. 110) or 018-571 3955**.

PSPA Humour Workshop for Aspiring Humorists/Comedians. Saturday 5th December 2009 at YMCA Ipoh, 9.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. with coffee break. Cost per participant: RM25 (includes handout materials and refreshments). This is an interactive workshop covering topics such as discovering one's style of humour, writing comedy, how to deliver a funny speech, crafting a humorous speech for contests, starting up as a stand-up comedian, etc. Workshop facilitator: K. Loghandran. For tickets, contact: Pak Peter **019-5743572** or T.K. Cheah **017-4873980**.

Toastmasters International Ipoh. Humour Workshop by renowned K. Loghandran of Monti & Logi fame. Workshop for aspiring humourists, comedians and those wishing to inject humour into speeches / presentations. Attendance limited to 50 on first-come-first-serve basis. Date and Venue: Saturday, 5th December YMCA Ipoh from 9 am to 1 pm. Admission: RM 25 inclusive tea break. Call Cheah **017 - 4873980** / Pak Peter **019 - 5743572** for details.

Perak Eco Adventure '09. Challenging nature, 2-6 December 2009 – 186 km, 28 hours. Pulau Banding – Royal Belum, 2nd December, 7 a.m.-3 p.m.; Taiping – Kuala Sepetang, 3rd December, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sungai Kampar – Gua Tempurung, 5th December, 7 a.m.-3 p.m.; Pasir Salak – Pulau Pangkor, 6th December, 7 a.m.-2 p.m. For further call **05-5291002** or go to www.perakecoadventure.com.

Perak Family Health Association is organising a 2-day seminar on 'Marriage & Family'. 12th & 13th December 2009, 9.00 a.m.-5.30 p.m., at the Tower Regency Hotel. Registration fee of RM120 per person inclusive of lunch, tea-breaks and Certificate of Attendance. Registration is only valid with confirmation of payment. Closing date: 30 November 2009. For enquiries: **05-5477849/5467633, 016-5264233, 016-5248233**. E-mail: ppkp681@streamyx.com.

Persekutuan Taekwondo (WTF) Negeri Perak is organising a Perak Remaja Championship and Perak Close Championship in SMK Sam Tet, Ipoh, 12-13 December 2009, 8.30 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. For enquiries, contact Master Liew Sang: **012-5181513**.

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COMMUNITY NEWS



The rivers that cascade down from the Main Range are slowly but surely attracting the right crowd of conservationists.

Over at Gopeng along the Kampar River there are already three eco-resort camps. And now starting in December the Kinta River will have its first eco-resort.

Called 'The Roots' it is located 12 km away from Ipoh at Tanjung Rambutan on the banks of the Kinta River.

The resort's owners, Bridget Hedderman and Peter Witzigmann, both dedicated conservationists developed the resort with minimum impact to the surrounding environment.

The accommodation at The Roots fea-

tures four tree-top suites built on stilts right on the banks of the Kinta River. They are designed around the trees whereby the tree branches are a unique feature of the interior. The balcony overlooks the river and features a Jacuzzi with which to relax and take in the scenic rain forest.

In the garden by the river is a long bar with gazebos and barbeque pits next to them. There is also a swimming pool which is filled with filtered river water.

The Roots is part owned by Ecofieldtrips Pte Ltd of Singapore, a 10-year old company devoted to teaching young people about the environment by taking them on field trips.

When Bridget, a marine biologist and Ecofieldtrips Director, first

THE ROOTS

An Eco Resort on the banks of the Kinta River

saw this place in May this year, she was fascinated by its scenic beauty. "I immediately knew that this place would be ideal for my students", she said. True to her vision Roots was ready within 6 months.

She was introduced to the place by her partner Peter. Bridget, who also runs a resort at Tioman Island with Peter, says "The Roots is a better resort because it has so much more environmental resources to offer her students".

"Perak" exclaimed Bridget, "has so much to offer. You have the limestone hills with its impressive cave systems, Orang Asli communities, white-water rafting and the Matang mangrove swamps. At Pangkor Island we can teach about marine biology".

"Even Ipoh town with both its elegant and decrepit shop houses and colonial mansions can make for a great lesson for history students to learn about this once thriving city of tin. This place is an un-

matched combination of adventure, history, culture and nature exploration, an unforgettable educational experience", she enthused.

Officiating at the opening of the resort was State Assemblyman for Hulu Kinta, Dato' Rusnah Kassim who said that she was impressed with the eco-resort, "I am so happy that we have a resort here in Tanjung Rambutan. At least now we have another icon that we can be associated with".

With the opening of the resort it appears that Ipoh with its surrounding attractions is finally getting the recognition that has eluded it for so long. Well better late than never.

The Roots, Batu 10½ Mile, Jalan Chemor, 31250 Tanjung Rambutan, Perak
Tel.: 05-5335411
Email: the rootsmalaysia@gmail.com
Web: www.throots.com.my

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THUNDEROUS WELCOME



The thunderous beats of the 24-Chinese season drum greeted a delegation from SMK Raja Permaisuri Bainun on arrival at the SMJK Yuk Choy in Ipoh on November 10th. The drummers were from the school's Ipoh Chin Woo Club.

Yuk Choy was playing host to 25 students from SMK Raja Permaisuri Bainun under the Education Ministry's Student Integration Plan for Unity (RIMUP) programme.

The students from both schools, who were drawn from various backgrounds, were integrated through sport, cultural events and community based activities.

Puan Arbayah Daud, secretary of Raja Permaisuri Bainun RIMUP, said it was an im-

pressive welcome accorded to them by the teachers and students of Yuk Choy.

The programme was officiated by the Principal of SMJK Yuk Choy, Capt. Chan Weng Kwai. "Under 1Malaysia concept, the programme is for our students to interact and gain a better understanding among various races in our country", he said.

Capt. Chan added that the bond between the students from both schools had since grown stronger. Besides having a football coaching clinic conducted by Perak State Football Association, students from both schools were hosted to a lunch in the school hall and entertained with music from Chinese musical instruments by SMJK Yuk Choy Chinese Musical Club.

PILOT PROJECT ON ORGANIC FARMING FOR IPOH STUDENTS

Students of a number of secondary schools in Ipoh are being introduced to organic farming, composting and environmental protection under a pilot project of the Ipoh Rotary Club. It is being sponsored by the CIMB Bank Foundation.

The project will be held in three stages. Stage one – is to visit an organic farm, stage two – is a seminar conducted by trained personnel on the technical aspects of organic farming, and stage three – on setting up the farm.

According to the project's chairman Dr. Tan Teong Heong, the aim is to educate the students on sustainable agro-free farming using canteen green wastes and organic compost.

The techniques of composting and environmental preservation and protection will also be taught. He says it is one of the club's community service projects.

The first school to participate in the project is SMK Raja Perempuan Ipoh. About 1,200 students from the school are expected to benefit from it.

Recently about 50 students from SMK Raja Perempuan went on a field trip to an organic farm, Green Wish Vege Garden in Chenderiang. They were accompanied by Ipoh Rotary Club's president Mr.



Wu Chee Thutt, CIMB's area retail manager Encik Mohammad Harith Abdullah and representa-

tives from the school.

On arrival, they were briefed by the farm owner, Mr. Kenny Ng. It

was followed with a tour of the farm and a lecture about composting, starting with harvesting IMO (Indigenous Micro-Organism) from the forest with cooked brown rice and ending in the final compost mixing with cow-dung or goat-dung.

After a hearty vegetarian lunch, the group left the farm and visited a nearby Orang Asli Settlement to distribute some food, used clothing and shoes before returning to the city.

太平山莊
Prestavest Memorial Park
Taiping 太平
Alor Setar 亚罗士打

Lot 8517, Jalan Taman Semarak, Pokok Assam, 34000 Taiping, Perak.
Tel: 05-8076688, 05-8076868 Fax: 05-8066868
Email: pmpt@tm.net.my

BOOK

THE TRADITION. THE LEGACY. THE FUTURE. A MILESTONE LASALLIAN PUBLICATION

"The publication is very well produced with the photographs, and for those who are students of the LaSalle brothers, it should bring them many fond memories, for they are the products of such callings." ~ President S.R. Nathan, Singapore.

Media Masters Publishing, an Ipoh-based publishing firm, is proud to present its latest title, 'The Tradition. The Legacy. The Future.' a book which portrays the Lasallian schools' history over the past 157 years in Malaysia and Singapore.

In the Foreword to the newly released 'The Tradition. The Legacy. The Future.' – a revealing chronicle of eight key Lasallian schools in Malaysia and Singapore – reference is made to three primary objectives that spurred its publication.

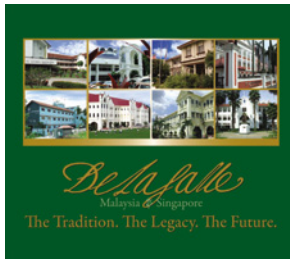
Firstly, it was intended as a "gesture of gratitude to the Brothers and teach-

ers who made learning an everyday adventure".

Secondly, it was planned as a celebration of a legacy "which imbued us with the great belief in education and how far it can take us in the world".

Finally, it was to be an invitation for Lasallians – both students and alumni alike – to think of "what else we can do to preserve an educational philosophy that goes beyond the mere recitation of facts and figures and the glow of straight As".

Without question the book has succeeded in attaining these goals and, indeed, in carrying its task to even broader perspectives.



Published by an Ipoh-based firm, the title is essentially a Lasallian initiative. The Foreword was written by Dato' Lim Keng Kay, the eldest of the six Lim brothers behind the book project – all of them products of the St Michael's Institution, Ipoh.

The book comes with an impressive hard back, coffee-table format. The

text is strongly supported by extensively researched archival photographs, a number of them, along with charts and plans, published for the first time.

Significantly, the book has arrived at a particularly critical moment for the regional Lasallian movement which is currently working towards reorganisation within a strengthened multi-national framework.

When 'The Tradition. The Legacy. The Future.' was launched in Kuala Lumpur recently the local Lasallian Brotherhood regarded it an important milestone for their organisation. But there was far more behind this accept-

ance than the book's fortuitous appearance on bookshelves.

For while the Brothers had generously opened their document and photographic archives to the authors, at no point did they exert, or even seek to exert, influence on how the historical research underway would ultimately be interpreted or presented.

The result has been a both broad-based and balanced appraisal of events from the mid-1800s onwards which must surely rank as the most accurate and dispassionate of its type undertaken thus far. The glad moments are

there. And so, too, are the sad.

As such – and as the book's cover jacket points out – 'The Tradition. The Legacy. The Future.' should emerge a significant keepsake in the private collection of every Lasallian.

'The Tradition. The Legacy. The Future.' is available at the LaSalle Centre Ipoh, Meru Valley Resort, the Ipoh Echo office and all leading bookstores in Malaysia. A fixed portion from all sales of books will be channelled towards Yayasan DeLaSalle in Kuala Lumpur. For bulk orders, call Horizon Books at 03-92210928 or email horizon@wismaytt.com.

BUSINESS NEWS

BAN ON IMPORT OF USED SPARE PARTS WILL AFFECT TRANSPORT SYSTEM

Memorandum claims thousands will also lose jobs



The proposal to ban the import of genuine used spare parts of motor vehicles will seriously affect the transport system of the country, as 70 per cent of the vehicles on the road are in need of them.

The Perak Indian Chamber of Commerce (PICC) stated this in a memorandum sent to the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak, Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhiyuddin Yassin and other relevant cabinet ministers recently.

Its president Mr. B.K. Kumar said in a press statement that the memorandum was prepared by a special committee formed by PICC to look into how the proposal, which will come into effect in June 2011, could affect the 65-year-old automotive spare parts and components business in the country.

According to the memorandum the ban would also affect other industries such as fishing, manufacturing, agriculture and plantations.

The used spare parts business in Malaysia had grown from getting parts of local scrapped vehicles to importing used parts from scrapped vehicles from Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Europe, USA and other developed countries.

Ipoh A Potential Hub?

The companies involved in the business are providing employment to thousands of Malaysians directly and indirectly. Ipoh is the centre for the Indian used spare parts dealers.

The memorandum stated that Malaysia could become a hub for used spare parts in this region. Already an open market had been created, covering countries such as Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Africa and Middle East.

Only usable and good condition used parts are imported and sold much

cheaper compared to the imported original genuine parts. They are 80 per cent reliable to use.

As such a lot of foreigners are coming to the country, especially Ipoh, to buy their imported used spare parts and thus generate revenue for the hotel industry.

Other than fulfilling their customers' needs they are also playing an important role in reducing local currency flow abroad since original genuine parts are very expensive. So, importing them according to local demand will cause the flow of our currency to jump five to ten times.

The memorandum added that therefore if the ban becomes effective, the business which has been laboriously built by the locals for decades will be taken over by some neighbouring countries. Thousands of people will then lose their jobs and as well as the government losing its revenue from import and sales tax.

The sudden shortage

SINGAPORE MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION DELEGATION TO IPOH

The Singapore Manufacturer's Association recently came on a whirlwind tour with a 20-strong delegation to explore business opportunities in Perak.

The group, consisting of food manufacturers, food service suppliers, business consultants, industrial park developers Sembawang Corp and Ascendas, and engineering consultants, were initially given a briefing on the investment climate in Perak by the State government and met the local business community in a business matching head-to-head organised by them.

Their subsequent tour saw them visiting the Perak Techno Trade Centre and the Sri Iskandar Technical Park, Pengkalan Foundry

and Industrial Park, the Perak Skill Development Center, the Meng Seng Foundry, as well as Meru Golf Resort where the Perak housing developer's theme of Work, Play, Live, Eat in Perak is epitomised to the hilt.

While being briefed on all the business opportunities in Perak, someone in the delegation got wind of the shoe-making cottage industry with its 400-strong members and insisted on a familiarisation which they had.

While here, they were hosted to dinner on the first evening by MB Dato' Seri Zambry and the second by Lim Si Boon, President of MICCI both at their private residences. The visit was a first for

many in the Singapore group and the whirlwind two days created quite a stir for some who saw things that were off their business radar and created a great deal of exposure for Perak. Talks are now underway to start a Business Council to develop trade between Perak and Singapore which should lead to more investment moving into the state.

As a result of this new flurry of activities, rumours are flying that Firefly will soon be adding yet another flight to its current daily one by next year. This should augur well for business development in Perak.

SFCK

COMMUNITY NEWS

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT ACT FOR PERAK

....not another 'Indah Water' charge for rate payers please.

On November 12th Perak DAP Publicity Secretary and Canning Assemblyman YB Wong Kah Woh highlighted the state government's intention to appoint a federal appointed company, E-Idaman Sdn Bhd to manage solid waste services for the state.

Under the Act, all public cleansing management services such as the cleansing of public roads, public places, drains, hawker centres, illegally dumped solid

waste and even grass cutting, would in future go under the purview of the Solid Waste and Public Cleansing Management Corporation.

Section 30 of the Act states that charges for solid waste and public cleansing services can be imposed on any occupier, owner and Local Authority. This prompted Wong to voice his concern that the rakyat might end up paying for 'additional services' besides their annual assessments;

similar to what the rakyat are paying to Indah Water currently.

Apparently the Act has more hidden issues of concern. Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Zambry Adbul Kadir, in a media statement dated November 9th said he would not be signing the contract with E-Idaman, scheduled for December 1st "until various issues which involve the general workers at both the district and municipal councils have been ironed out".

of used spare parts will trigger a higher demand for original genuine parts and encourage the suppliers to

provide lower grade imitation parts, which have shorter lifespan. And this

will lead to other maintenance problems.

JERRY FRANCIS

IPOH IN BRIEF

More pics at ipohecho.com.my

FATIMAH HOSPITAL FIRE DRILL



The fire alarm was triggered off at the fourth floor of Hospital Fatimah, but there was no panic or rush to get out of the hospital. The patients were calm. The others, including the nursing staff and doctors, went about with their daily routine.

Anyone, who happened to walk in at 3 p.m. on November 11th would have been momentarily shocked. However they were immediately told that it was just a "Fire Alarm & Evacuation Drill" to test the fire procedure response as part of the hospital's safety and health staff training exercise.

A small 'fire' had occurred at Ward 4C. The location and site chosen was to test the hose reel and fire

extinguisher arrangements as well as the efficiency of the evacuation process. The participants of the mock fire were nine non-ambulant, three ambulant, seven nurses, two non-nursing staff and a visitor. One of the non-ambulant even played the role of a patient needed to be rescued by BOMBA.

The objectives of the fire drill are:

1. Staff's knowledge and implementation of important evacuation procedures.
2. Safety of in-patients, out-patients, staff and the public.
3. The public's cooperation and reaction under such a situation.
4. The necessary safety measures to be undertaken.
5. Smooth liaising and co-operation with the Fire and Rescue Department.
6. The working order of equipment and facilities available.

Y'S MEN'S CLUB CELEBRATE WITH ORANG ASLI



Y's Men's Club of Ipoh recently organised a Deepa Raya for sixty residents and their children at the Orang Asli Transit Health Centre, Batu 8, Tambun, Ulu Kinta. Food, drink and other goodies given and the Club's members distributed used clothes and rations.

Organising chairperson, Lady Y's Man Chanika Letchimanan said that this is a good occasion to celebrate Deepa Raya with the residents to promote goodwill all round. Club President, Y's Man Tan Eok Chye in his address said that this is a *muhibah* event and in line with the 1Malaysia concept. The Centre's representative, Rohani Bt Mat

Jusoh, who is the nurse in attendance, expressed gratitude for the Club's caring spirit. There are five more such centres in Perak namely at: Sungai Siput, Grik, Tapah, Sungkai and Slim River.

Doctors from Hospital Raja Permaisuri Bainun regularly check the residents at these centres and those in serious condition are referred to a government hospital. These centres are well maintained and run by the Department of Orang Asli Affairs. The Club's next project will be the Christmas Fellowship at the residence of the four handicapped brothers at Taman Desa Rishah, on 20th December 2009.

LIONESS CLUB PLAYS HOST



The Lioness Club and Lions Club of Ipoh jointly hosted a Deepavali celebration at Sekolah Rendah Tamil, Gunung Rapat. A hundred pupils were treated to a lunch and Deepavali goodies. Those who took part in games and competitions were given story books as gifts. The Presidents of the two Clubs, Lion G. Kanneshan

(standing far back) and Lioness Sakuntala Rajadurai (2nd row, 2nd from right), said "every year their Clubs celebrate Deepavali either in schools or orphanage homes to bring cheer to the festive season". Also present was Lion Wong Lean Fatt, Zone 12 Chairman (2nd row, extreme right).

PERAK TV LAUNCH



Another initiative to becoming a well-informed society.

Perak Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Zambry Abdul Kadir on November 14th launched Perak TV, a joint-venture project between K-Perak and media infra structure company Simfoni Maya. With the launching of Perak TV, the state has become the first in the country to have its own private digital television network.

In his speech Zambry explained that the goal of Perak TV is to reach out to the *rakyat* to keep them informed of relevant policies and economic activities thus enabling them to be a well-informed society.

Educational information and the activities of NGO's will also be aired. Advertisements to promote Perak products will

be encouraged.

Perak TV operates using Indoor Digital Media (IDM), an IP-based platform of narrowcasting (as opposed to broadcasting) which enables the operator to focus on local news and events customizable for specific audiences.

Simfoni Maya will also "establish a broadcasting centre at PTTC Ipoh to coordinate its maintenance and content streaming network before the end of the year", confirmed its CEO, Latt Sharizan Abdullah.

Three hundred LCD screens will also be placed at strategic locations throughout the state in order to get the message through. This will be completed before the first quarter of next year.

JAG

THE SPLENDOUR OF XINJIANG



A foot-stomping, non-stop splendour of Xinjiang cultural beauty was the highlight of an evening at the Royal Perak Golf Club recently. The performers donning rich and colourful costumes performed a repertoire of dances, songs and instrumental music which enthralled the audience from start to finish.

PSPA, the Perak Society of Performing Arts outdid themselves in organising The Splendour of Xinjiang, together with the MCA Ipoh Timor branch.

MCA's objective for the project was to promote cultural and inter-relations amongst the community as well as to raise funds to 'brighten up the lives' of the needy and underprivileged in Perak.

The troupe performing that night was from the Xinjiang Song and Dance Ensemble, a multi-ethnic

group of artists from this autonomous region of the Peoples Republic of China which spans an area over 1.6 million square kilometres and shares its border with Tibet, Russia, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Hence the performers had a mixed Bollywood/Russian and Caucasian appearance. Similarly too was their music which had traces of Indian, Chinese and Arabic tempo while their dances featured Russian influences. Incidentally the entire troupe is Muslim.

The troupe had earlier that day been taught the tune 'Rasa Sayang' and they performed it that night to an appreciative audience including guest of honour Dato' Seri Zambry Abdul Kadir who described the show as "simply wonderful".

JAG

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION



Dato' Yeoh Kian Teik (pic, centre) celebrated his 84th birthday in Mun Choong Restaurant in Pasir Puteh recently. Looking very bright and perky, Dato' Yeoh was joined by his wife Datin Janet Yeoh (pic, in green on Dato's left) and a large group of friends and fam-

ily for the auspicious occasion. Daughter, Datuk Michelle Yeoh unfortunately was away in France on business and wasn't there to share in the happy occasion. But a phone call from her half way through the proceedings made her Dad's face light up.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

TAMAN FALIM RESIDENTS ANXIOUS OVER TELCO TOWERS

In response to the complaints made by residents of Taman Falim, Dato' Lee Kon Yin, Head of Perak BN Public Complaints and Services Bureau, arranged for a meeting with the residents to hear their problems. Manjit Singh, 55, spokesman for the residents said that their problems started when a new Telco tower was installed about 3 months ago and including this, there are 6 big towers in the area. It was installed at night without their knowledge and after the installation many resi-



Dato' Lee (centre, long sleeve), with the residence, note Telco Tower above and behind building

dents are complaining of headache, uneasiness and feel their houses are hot. Dato' Lee said that he

would find out from MBI whether the towers are legal and if not request MBI to remove them. If they are legal he would request for the radiation levels to be measured and if they exceed the safety limit, action would be taken.

Meanwhile, he will request MBI not to issue licences for installation of Telco towers in residential areas. He will also suggest that various operators share one structure.

A. JEYARAJ

RESPONSIBLE CONSTRUCTION

What one construction company has done to ensure safety at its construction site.



Front facade propped up using steel trusses

On October 2th this year the collapse of the row of shop houses at Fair Park that took 2 lives was a sad tragedy that touched the hearts of many in Ipoh.

Moving forward, Ipoh Echo took a quick drive about town and

noted construction being carried out on 3 shophots at 182 Jalan Sultan Idris Shah (Brewster Road). A close look revealed that only the front wall was left standing while the rear of the lot had been totally demolished.

Ipoh Echo approached its owner, Tin City Hotel

Sdn Bhd and was subsequently briefed by a spokesman for the company on the safety measures that had been undertaken by them.

The original site consisted of 3 lots of shop houses, all 3 stories high. The owner wanted to preserve the front facade for heritage reasons. The rear has been demolished to make way for a 7-storey 24-room boutique hotel to be named Tin City Hotel, complete with a mechanical lift to park 12 cars and a swimming pool on the rooftop, slated for completion in 24 months time.

Several safety steps were implemented by its owner.

Segregating the front



Crack gauge

facade from the rear of the building was done by literally 'cutting a gap between the front and the rear'. By doing so the front would be spared any vibrations that would destabilise its structure when the demolition of the rear was taking place.

Once the rear of the building was removed the front facade was secured by steel trusses which were then anchored to the neighbouring adjacent buildings.

To monitor move-

ments at the adjoining buildings a 'crack gauge' was attached to determine if existing cracks are widening.

Specific monitoring points were identified on the adjacent walls to determine if any shifting had occurred.

All the monitoring points are checked daily for movement.

Micro piling method is being used to construct the structures as this method has less vibrations.

As the spokesman took me through the various safety precautions it was assuring to note that there are companies here who are genuinely serious about safety.

JAG

MBI'S PROMPT CLARIFICATIONS



THUMBS UP

Syabas! Ipoh City Council for the prompt response to our reports in the October issues of the Ipoh Echo. It shows that the city council is sensitive to public complaints and would efficiently and quickly respond to them.

Keep up with the good works. Ipoh Echo may now and then rely on you to clarify more queries or complaints from members of the public.

Council's public relation officer Puan Normala Latiff had sent two statements to clarify the reports published in the October 1-15 and 16-31 issues.

Responding to the first report 'Innovative

or Plain Shoddy', she said that the road mentioned in the report is not under the jurisdiction of city council but the PWD. She had therefore referred the matter to the PWD.

The report was about how a road-sign on the alternative route to government offices was erected with a used rubber tyre as prop along Jalan Dato Onn Jaafar.

On the second report under the heading 'Mature Tree Cut Down By MBI', Puan Normala claimed that the tree chopped down by the city council near the Tarcisian Convent along Jalan Hassan was a "dead tree".



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ECO TOURISM

When Chan Yuen Li introduced the white-water rafting on Sungai Kampar in Gopeng six years ago, she could already foresee the potentiality of the former tin mining sub-district in Perak being included in the international adventure map.

Today, the outdoor adventure company, Nomad Adventure Sdn Bhd of which she is a director, has won a reputation as introducing the best river in Malaysia for recreational rafting, making Gopeng one of the top adventure destinations in South East

Asia.

It is also the first and only Malaysian outdoor adventure company to be awarded an ISO 9001:2009 certification. However, not contented with their achievements, the company on its own created GOPENG PEANUT SEARCH (GPS), the first ever mountain bike orienteering event ever to be held in Malaysia – a popular mountain biking format overseas.

It took the participants on November 15th through a total of 80 km of mountain bike trails of various

terrains whether it was the hills around the vicinity of Gua Tempurung at the foot-hills of the Main Range or the sandy and scenic rides around ex-mining ponds.

“We are introducing Malaysians to this new type of biking event where participants are provided with a map to choose their riding route to suit their ability and level”, explained Yuen Li. “This ‘Pick and Mix’ format has proven popular overseas hence we have now introduced it here.”

The competition format has 15 checkpoints

along its route. Points are allocated between checkpoints based on the severity of the terrain covered. Contestants have to ‘punch their score cards’ at each checkpoint. The minimum number of points required is 200 and has to be achieved in 6 hours.

Asked what made her to come up with the idea, Yuen Li replied it was in line with the government’s call to promote domestic and eco-tourism.

More than 150 mountain bikers participated in the event which was divided into 3 categories, Men’s 18-40, Veteran Men’s +41 years and Women’s 18 and above.

Participant Henry Wong, 56, from Ipoh described the mapped trails as “exciting”. “It is up to you to choose and strategize your route and you will enjoy your ride. Overall the trail is very good and has nice scenery”, he said.

A similar sentiment was shared by duo Nah Tiong Lian and Loh Kin Yan who drove from Kuala Lumpur with their ‘regular’ mountain bikes in tow. They participated as they wanted to do something for the weekend.

“We don’t practice so we selected the routes just to achieve 200 points



Nomad Director Chan Yuen-Li (with cow horn)

and basically had a great time”, said Tiong Lian.

The adventurous ‘discovery’ has enabled Gopeng Town to be branded with an Eco-Tourism label and has given the town a new lease of life.

Now, whether or not she realises it, Yuen Li’s passion for adventure has extended the boundaries of this eco-tourism destination beyond the banks of the Kampar River and further up the Titiwangsa Range and the sandy ex-mining lands.

For now though she anticipates the ‘Gopeng Peanut Search’ will be a regular fixture on the mountain biking event cal-

endar in the country.

Has she started another trend? The next few years will tell.

JAMES GOUGH

JOB

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OLD BUILDINGS

Waiting to Topple Over?



Condemned Building at Jalan Idris Shah and Jalan Raja Aziz junction

Being a city that has prospered over a century as the centre of the tin mining industry in the Kinta Valley, Ipoh is like most cities having its share of old buildings that can come down at any point of time. However following the abolishment of the Rent Control Act in 2000, many of the buildings particularly those shop-houses in the Old Town and New Town sectors were demolished and rebuilt.

Others, especially mansions once belonging to some of the rich-and-famous tin miners, were renovated and are now occupied by banks, offices, restaurants and clubs. But, the rest of the old premises within the city centre have become 'eye-sores' and as well as posing a danger to passersby. There are those damaged by fire and abandoned, and those vacant, dilapidated and structurally unsafe, where wild plants grow on the roofs and between cracks on the walls.

The city is therefore confronted with a difficult task of keeping such buildings from not only becoming

offensive to both sight and safety, but as well as being nests for rodents, snakes and insects.

Mayor Datuk Roshidi Hashim said since last year a total of 26 notices had been sent to the property owners to demolish and redevelop their premises, which have been damaged by fire or were structurally unsafe. Another 1,058 notices were served during the same period to property owners to clean-up their premises. Fines amounting to RM17,750 were collected from those who failed to comply with the notices.

There are other registered owners of various premises, who the city council could not trace to

serve the notices, such as the one at the junction of Jalan Idris Shah and Jalan Raja Aziz. As such the city council could only erect makeshift partitions around the building for public safety.

What about other dilapidated buildings with pieces of wood and broken roof tiles hanging precariously? Even walking along the pavements or five-footways under those buildings can be dangerous as the debris could fall at any moment.

Is the inability to trace the registered owners of these premises the last resort? And beyond that, is the city council powerless and can only wait for the buildings to crumble?

Therefore, the recent incident where two men were killed when a concrete wall of an old block of shop-houses being demolished, fell on a car at Jalan Fair Park on October 2, is a valuable lesson to be learnt. Since there are several abandoned and dilapidated buildings in the city, the findings and guidelines of the inquiry must be seriously taken into consideration to help prevent such mishaps in the future. The city council also needs to re-examine its existing guidelines on demolition of buildings and enforce them strictly.

Apart from abandoned and dilapidated buildings, there are also many vacant premises, filled with bush-

es and *lalang*. The authorities must initiate action, including taking back the land, because they have been left idle for too long.

In 1994, the city council, which was then under Datuk Bandar Datuk Ismail Shah Bodin, took a very serious view of the matter as neglected properties were not only an eyesore but also cause for inconvenience and heartache to the neighbours. Hundreds of owners were issued with notices to clear their land of overgrown bushes. Those who failed to comply; the council engaged contractors to clear the properties and charged the cost into the owners' assessment.

This followed numerous complaints received by the city council from residents living next door to the vacant properties. They felt that living next to such properties makes them uneasy as one never knows what creepy crawly may make its homes in the tall grass. Furthermore such areas could also be breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

Among the culprits are financial institutions, government agencies and privatised companies which own buildings and land in the city, including abandoned projects. Some financial institutions have repossessed houses and land pledged as collateral for loans. They seem not in a hurry to sell off the

properties to recover the balance of the loans. They are probably waiting for an opportune time to sell the properties and recover the loans with interest.

The situation is being made worse by those who have been allotted housing lots under the planned kampong scheme but have

yet to build their houses. The state government is empowered to take action, including repossessing the housing lots for failure to build their houses within the stipulated two-year period. In fact, the state government had repossessed a few.

MBI REVIEWS BUILDING REGULATIONS

Review held in response to the collapse of the Fair Park shop-houses

MBI is currently reviewing its regulations regarding construction work being done on existing buildings whether for upgrading purposes or for demolition.

In a statement to Ipoh Echo MBI explained that the exercise is in response to the collapse of the row of shop houses at Fair Park on 2nd October 2009 which claimed 2 lives. The purpose of the review is to prevent a recurrence of the tragedy.

Some of the actions taken so far are a review of the current regulations and formulating a detailed guideline to monitor safety at construction sites. The review will allow for enforcement of safety regulations at the

sites. These regulations will ultimately involve all parties in the construction industry throughout the city.

For demolition of buildings 'Special approval' has to be obtained before any work can commence.

MBI's long term strategy is to create a Special Department to evaluate, examine and come out with a policy regarding old buildings. MBI will adopt a balanced and effective review of old buildings as it is said to be a 'sensitive' issue.

A meeting of the review was held recently and the new rules are anticipated to be implemented before the end of the year.

Also see page 10



Dilapidated shop-house along Jalan Idris Shah

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