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**A HAPPY & PROSPEROUS
CHINESE NEW YEAR**

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PP 14252/10/2010(025567)

An Eventful
Evening with
The Indomitable
Karim Raslan..



Pg 3

Seefoon Uncovers
A Cornucopia
Of Delights
At Impiana Hotel



Pg 5

But The
Word
"ALLAH"

By N.H. Chan

Pg 12



IPOH'S HOME GROWN BPHG



What began as a small lab inside Perak Community Specialist Hospital PCSH (in those days known as the Perak Chinese Maternity Hospital PCMH) in 1982 has blossomed into a national chain of primary care centres that is now the largest employer of medical doctors outside of the government and the largest chain of laboratories and diagnostic centres in S.E. Asia.

continued on page 2

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READY TO CONQUER THE WORLD OF HEALTHCARE

Home grown BP Healthcare Group is proud of its Ipoh small town origins. Now a conglomerate with 44 labs and 30 Diagnostic centres spread throughout east and west Malaysia the group is looking forward to the opening of its new headquarters in Glenmarie, Shah Alam, Selangor. This new building has collaboration with the International Medical University, the opening of these facilities will provide the university's medical students with a hands-on training facility and will soon see BPHG becoming a big player in the medical arena.

Founder Dato' Beh Chun Chuan is surprisingly modest about the group's growth and achievements,



Reuben Poh, Director IT & Communication

as a non-profit institution. The Beh Hin Mei building named in honour of his father in PCSH on Kampar Road, was donated by Dato' Beh to house nine resident clinics as well as the laboratory and radiology centre which he initiated. From these humble beginnings, the BPHG em-

and hospitals". Using the analogy of hypermarkets and convenience stores, Dato Beh likens his BP diagnostic centres to the 7Eleven's of healthcare while the hospitals are the Giants or Tesco's.

Operating mainly as a laboratory since 1982, BPHG opened its full fledged Diagnostic Centre in 2004 and has not looked back since. Today, BP Diagnostic Centres will provide all the medical services an average person may require except for operations and hospitalisation. This includes radio-imaging and many other diagnostic facilities and services. They were the first local laboratory chain to be accredited with ISO 15189, an achievement of which Beh senior is justifiably proud. This accreditation assures them fully capable of performing 6 major laboratory scopes with 135 test parameters making BP Clinical lab the chain offering the widest range of recognised tests in the country.

When asked if they represent a competitive threat to existing pharmacies, clinics and even the hospitals, Dato' Beh said, "We do not claim to provide the extensive services of a full-fledged hospital but we do provide a quick and easy service to the stand-alone clinics and doctors in private practice. And patients can come to us to consult with our medical specialists after their screening."

Lower Costs for Consumer

In a comparison chart flyer of the services offered by BP versus independent labs, hospitals and GP clinics, BP came thumbs up on 39 services offered, with hospitals coming in a close second. They claim a turnaround time of 1-2 days for test results and their non-hospital setting results in personalised attention,

pire has grown exponentially, fuelled by patient demands for affordable primary healthcare.

One Stop Health Checks

Elaborating on the concept of primary healthcare, Dato Beh summed it up with, "Most people don't know what that means so I tell them, we have one-stop health checks! We cater primarily to healthy people who come in for their wellness diagnostic tests. And we have resident physicians who give advice to the patients on the results and make recommendations and prescribe medicines when necessary. When we detect any condition requiring surgery or outside of our primary health scope, we refer them to other specialists



New Diagnostic centre in Cheras, KL

waving aside any attempts on this writer's part to shower him with accolades, preferring instead to defer to his son Chevy to whom he deflected most questions.

Humble Beginnings

He was forthcoming on the historical details though, revealing that as a medical microbiologist he had his first laboratory in the Perak Chinese Maternity Hospital, working closely with its hospital Chairman, the late Tan Sri Dato' Lee Loy Sing, one of the primary supporters since its founding. PCSH's mission originally was to provide low-cost medical services to the lower income classes in Perak as well as doing 'charity' in providing charitable medical services



Where it all began

more efficient service, a cosier more comfortable environment and a minimum risk of contracting infectious diseases especially in times of epidemics such as the recent H1N1 alert. Their doctors who are permanently based in the respective centres are specially trained in performing diagnostic tests, health screening and consultation. Their number of centres and bulk purchasing of drugs, equipment and test kits, as well as staff trained to multi-task, result in lower operating costs which are passed on to the consumer.

The majority of their clientele comes from the corporate sector and many are multi-national with companies signing for pre-employment, Occupational

& Safety Health and Annual health screening packages for their employees.

New Services

Not content with being the largest diagnostic chain of centres in Malaysia, Dato' Beh and his son Chevy together with relative Reuben Poh Yeong Han, have added Hearing Solutions to their ever increasing repertoire of services, offering a whole range of hearing devices complete with the equipment and technology to test for hearing loss. Dental services is next on their list, providing the basic services for dental hygiene as well as for more sophisticated procedures of crowns and implants.

Their IT (Information Technology) services which began as a support

function for their own labs and diagnostic centres, have now become a full-fledged subsidiary business – BP Business Solutions—a MSC-status company providing IT solutions to private medical clinics, assisting them in streamlining their operations and increasing their efficiency. These can include digital solutions to recording bio data and biometric tests to determine family and medical history as well as streamlined patient visits and history.

BP Healthcare Group has come a long way since its humble beginnings as a laboratory attached to the Perak Chinese Maternity Hospital and has made Ipoh proud of its home grown origins. With the new headquarters coming up in Glenmarie, Shah Alam, Ipoh Echo wishes the group much success in its expansion and hopes that its founding family will always remember its small town affiliation.

By SEEFOON CHAN-KOPPEN



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An Eventful Evening with The Indomitable Karim Raslan....

“You’re being short-changed. Get KL to pump in money into Perak and not somewhere else”, said renowned writer and regional analyst, Karim Raslan, to the Who’s Who of Perak at a dinner recently. Karim was delivering a talk entitled, “Ipoh, the Soul of Malaysia” at Syuen Hotel, Ipoh on January 15. It was Karim’s second appearance as a guest speaker at the Perak Academy forum. The first was in March 2003, a rare honour indeed for someone who is an Ipohite by definition but a KL-ite by default.

“They like to dismiss my views as something incoherent coming from a Mat Salleh celup”, Karim remarked in jest. His reference to his mixed Malay-English parentage helped bring down the invisible barrier separating speaker from listeners. And once rapport was established there was no stopping this very charming and articulate English-speaking gentleman from connecting with his audience.

The subject, in all honesty, was a misnomer as Ipoh is definitely not the

soul of Malaysia. Based on what transpired that evening a more appropriate title would have been, “How to bring back the shine to Ipoh”. Karim acknowledged that the title was a little off the mark. Having steered the audience back on to the right track, he chided them for failing to make demands from the new BN-led state government. “Make your politicians work, otherwise it’ll be business as usual.”

He recalled candidly his youthful days watching horses racing on the turf club track across his house in Thompson Road. “The ground would shake as horses and riders passed by.” It speaks volumes of his attachment to Ipoh.

Karim felt that the history and rich heritage the city possessed had not been fully optimised to bring in tourist dollars. “There’s Old Town, tasteful colonial buildings and limestone hills. Pretty sights to soothe the eyes and fill the coffers”, he enjoined. He blamed the business community for not doing enough to harness these opportunities. When told



that privateers were not entirely blameworthy, he responded by imploring them to get the authorities over to their side. A little cajoling would do the trick, he insisted.

The introduction of air flights from Singapore and Medan, Karim reasoned, provided the connectivity required in bringing money-eyed foreigners into Ipoh. Health tourism was another sector to be explored as medical facilities available here are at par and much cheaper compared to KL



and Penang. “Although many may not want Ipoh to be a haven for retirees and the sickly, Ipohites have to accept the fact that these people have money to dispose.” And with disposable income comes economic activities which the city is so deprived. “Try to find ways to bring the people back to the City”, Karim exhorted. He was right Ipohites are overtly concerned for their personal well being rather than the economic wealth of their



city. A paradigm shift is necessary to change habits and perceptions. And time is of the essence.

The “Allah” issue inadvertently drifted into the discussion. It was to be expected as the eager listeners were keen on hearing Karim’s take on UMNO’s handling of the situation. “There’s a sense of paranoia”, said Karim believing that the ruling party has lost all sense of direction. “UMNO is making PAS look so sensible.”

Karim was in his element and the audience

was thrilled to bits. It was one eventful evening for all those who came to listen and for the movers and shakers who were there that evening, it might be wise to take heed of Karim’s admonition in his blog in Malaysian Insider imploring Ipohites that:

“There are so many opportunities for Ipoh to reinvent itself, and it needs to choose one, focus on it in order to reclaim its original vitality.”

The state’s leaders must be put on notice. They must turnaround the city and state or they will be ejected. There can be no compromise: being a nice guy just ain’t good enough. Dynamism and energy are required if Ipoh is to regain its “groove”.

Finally, Ipoh is yet another example of a multi-racial city (not unlike Kota Kinabalu and Kuching) that’s achieved a serene and harmonious balance. KL-ites tend to sniff rather contemptuously at the provincial capitals and yet the brilliance of multi-racial Malaysia is locked in these sleepy towns. We need to remember this before it’s too late.”

~ Malaysian Insider Jan 23

COMMUNITY NEWS

YB WONG KAH WO, ADUN CANNING (DAP) URGES POLICE TO TAKE ACTION



At least 5 similar cases of assault of which the most serious case was the death of an aging woman has happened in Ampang and Taman Cempaka in the past 3 months. In all these reported cases, the Police have failed to arrest any suspects. YB Wong Kah

Woh (pic left), ADUN Canning, in a press statement, raised questions as to why the police have been so passive in their investigations and why have they not carried out regular patrols in the area.

The modus operandi of the gang of 4 motor-

ists appear the same in all cases, the latest victim being Mr. Lee Kong Leng (pic, right), 85, who was on his way from Ampang to Taman Cempaka on January 21 at around 7.05 a.m. The group wielded parangs and set upon Mr Lee who defended himself with his arms and was fortunate to get away suffering some cuts and bruises.

Wong went on in his press statement that if another case should occur, the responsibility must rest fully with the police if no action and preventive measures are taken.



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VIOLENCE AGAINST A PLACE OF WORSHIP IS A SIN OF THE HIGHEST ORDER

The attacks on the two suraus (Sura Silaturrahim at Kg Sabak Awor and the Parit Beting Surau), just like the spate of attacks on the places of worship since January 8, must be condemned by all Malaysians.

I fully agree with the President of Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism. Rev Dr Thomas Philips who said in a statement today that any violence against a place of worship was a sin of the highest order.

Though such incidents of attacks were minor aberrations (to borrow the words used by the Prime Minister) they have tarnished Malaysia’s international image and could jeopardize the nation’s racial harmony and national unity.

Hence, at a time when the extremists are out to destroy harmony and incite hatred, Malaysians must continue to display tolerance and pray for peace.

Most important of all, the police must swiftly bring to justice all the extremists who have committed the despicable and unforgivable acts of violence.

Home Minister Hishamuddin Tun Hussein had a few days ago said the situation was under control and not serious. He should know that Malaysians have taken his assurance of “under control” to mean “no further incident of attack on places of worship”.

Media statement by M. Kula Segaran, MP Ipoh Barat and DAP National Vice Chairman in Ipoh on 25th January 2010

Mariam Mokhtar

THINKING ALOUD

A FALSE IMPRESSION

LET'S NOT JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER

The first involving the Ipoh Echo's writing competition, typified how a book should never be judged by its cover. The second concerning the police dialogue with the Lim Garden residents, entertained the possibility that the organisers could pull together to turn the idea on its head.



Echo's Writing Competition

First. Each entrant in Ipoh Echo's writing competition, which limped along and ended with a whimper, deserves to be congratulated for entering into the spirit of the competition. So what melted the mettle of the vociferous parents, and teachers, who castigated the way English was being sidelined in our schools? They strangely went silent. Why didn't they encourage their offspring and charges, to enter? They should have put their money where their mouths were. Winning, would have ensured money into their pockets!

Brainy Beauty

But, the best accolade was undisputedly reserved for Jessica Lee Jiun-Xiu, the Junior Section winner.

She graced the front-cover of Ipoh Echo's Issue 85. I recall the ungracious comments of a reader (November 11, 2009) who wondered why there was any need for a 'Miss Echo'. The contemptuous remarks were that these

girls rarely contributed to Ipoh and were merely advertising themselves. Thus, wasn't it wonderful for Jessica to have won? She willingly entered, had her story assessed fairly and foiled the stereotypical 'air-head' predictions reserved for attractive girls. Her triumph proved she had brains to match her pretty face. May she excel in her future studies, and photo-calls.

Police and Resident's Dialogue

In the Lim Garden dialogue, it was disingenuous of the authorities – the Rukun Tetangga organisers and police – to attribute failure to the residents.

We don't know if sufficient publicity existed before this meeting. One Ipoh Echo reader even complained that she was unaware about this dialogue. Was she one of several or many?

We were told that 900 leaflets were distributed. So did each household receive one or were piles stacked unnoticed in shops,

somewhere? Were leaflets left in community places like church halls, suraus, temples, clinics, schools? Were banners placed at the entrance of the arterial roads into Lim Gardens, or on school fences? Was the meeting arranged at a time compatible with working people, mothers and school children? Did the residents have much advance notification? It is equally important to invite teenage schoolchildren, for their contributions to combat juvenile crime and street gang culture.

Visible Police

Ipohites live in constant fear, with previous requests to beef up security, or respond faster to crimes, falling on deaf ears. People want a highly visible police presence, not more police car-patrols which react only when summoned. They want more foot soldiers instead of faceless CCTV footage. It is the friendly face of the regular policeman on the beat who will reassure vulnerable residents and act as an effective deterrent to would-be criminals.

The comments of a frustrated Ipoh Echo reader, relating his experience at the police station only mirror our sentiments. To quote another, "So what now... a dialogue session with residents on how to curb crime??? Why not a dialogue session among themselves on how to really take the rakyat's reports



Jessica Lee – Ms Echo & Writing Competition Winner

seriously and catching the perps for a change."

Resident Apathy or Police Inactivity?

When we become victims of crime, we demand professionalism and performance. Instead, we get indifference or inactivity. Is it any wonder, the residents reacted as they did? Alternatively, the poor attendance could be construed as a form of passive objection, to display disapproval at the poor police execution of their duties.

Are the attendances at other residents' association dialogues just as dismal? Were these because of lack of planning, or our apathetic nature?

I sincerely hope that this is not another ploy to blame the residents for being disinterested in their neighbourhood.

It would harm our society if sections of our community failed to engage, or work harmoniously together with those providing essential community services.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Volunteers needed for non-invasive MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) Research to see the difference in the size of various sections of the brains between people having memory problem comparing with people without memory problem. Needed 58-88 year-olds with no major medical problems like increased blood pressure, increased cholesterol, diabetes, heart attack, and stroke. MRI done free of charge. (Normal price RM700.) Call Assoc. Prof. Dr. Esther Ebenezer at UniKL, Royal College of Medicine Perak, **05-2432635**.

Perak Lectures "The Conquest of Happiness" by Mr. Koon Yew Yin on Friday, February 26, Syuen Hotel, Ipoh, commencing at 7.30 pm. For details call: Perak Academy – 05-5478949 or Wai Kheng – **016-5518172**; Fax: **05-5496675** or Email: contact@perakacademy.com.

World Champion Lion Dance Performance by the 31-time world champion Kun Seng Keng Lion and Dragon Dance Association from Muar, Johor, at Bandar Baru Sri Klebang's Parklane Residences launching ceremony on Tuesday, 16 February 2010 at 10.00am. In conjunction with the launch, there will also be horse and carriage rides and face painting for children, appearances by the "God of Prosperity", and activities for the whole family. Call 012-5008018 or 019-5133315.

Feng Shui Outlook on 2010 Talk by Feng Shui master Professor Thong Ka at Bandar Baru Sri Klebang's Parklane Residences Show Homes on Wednesday 17 February 2010 at 11.00am. Prof. Thong will provide tips and guidance based on a person's zodiac signs for 2010 and will also be giving away limited copies of his book and providing personal Feng Shui consultation. For information, call Jacky at **017-5045689**.

Perak Women for Women Society (PWW) Research/survey on domestic violence. For more information please contact PWW's office at 52, Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah, or call **05-5469715**.

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MUSINGS ON FOOD

by See Foon Chan-Koppen



Ever since the change in ownership at Impiana Casuarina, General Manager Gerard Sta Maria and his team have been busy making changes and creating a quiet revolution in the food and beverage outlets of the hotel. Soon Ipohites will have another exciting venue to gather for lunch, tea, cocktails or dinner and taste the creations of Chef Ricky Parlanti.

Food and Beverage Manager Daniel Thexeira and Ricky together with the marketing team under Anthony Kong have put together a cornucopia of delights, to tease, tempt and tantalize palates in the coming year of the Tiger. To be staged in all their food and beverage outlets, the special taste temptations will see them serving high tea in the Garden Terrace, with their signa-



A selection of olives

ture dish of Cucur Udang or prawn fritters taking centre stage while in the lobby area, where ample seating awaits the visitor, whether waiting for a guest from the rooms above or just coming in from the heat for a cool respite, one may order from the snack menu for both oriental and western titbits. The



CHINESE NEW YEAR RECIPE

Ingredients:

200g sliced raw fish (salmon or jellyfish)
100g radish shredded
100g carrot shredded
100g cucumber shredded
100g pickled papaya, shredded (qua yin)
10 pickled leeks, shredded (or sweet onion pickle)
100g pomelo wedges, peeled and separate the sacs (or grape fruit)
50g spring onions, shredded
10g red sweet ginger pickle
10g white sweet ginger pickle
1 tsp shredded kaffir lime (limau perut) leaves
1 shredded red chilli

20g coriander leaves
1 tbsp lemon or lime juice
1 tbsp brandy
20g sesame seeds, toasted
30g peanuts, toasted and ground
¼ cup of garlic oil + 2 tsp sesame oil
150g crispy chips (fried wonton skin)

Sauce:

300g plum sauce
3 tbsp hoisin sauce
1 tsp pepper
1 tsp five-spice powder
3 tbsp honey
3 tbsp lemon juice
Combine the sauce ingredients in a small saucepan. Bring to a low simmering boil. Leave aside to cool for later use.

By Margarita Lee

Chinese New Year Raw Fish Salad (Yee Sang)



Method:

1. Prepare all ingredients and arrange on a big round serving plate
2. Mix raw fish with lemon juice and brandy.
3. To serve, pour the sauce over the Yee Sang and sprinkle with five-spice powder.
4. Add a sprinkling of sesame seeds, roasted peanuts and crispy chips or fried wonton skin.

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An array of the Hi-tea delights

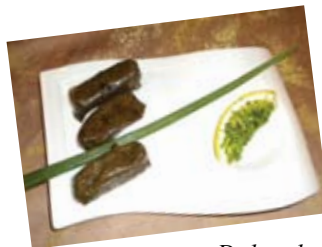
with the great choice of bread rolls bread sticks, pita and crispy flat bread. Additionally I could dip the various breads into the tapenade (an olive mousse which is quite impossible to buy in these parts), sun-dried tomato pesto or simple balsamic vinegar and olive oil dips which are placed at each place setting.

The main courses were generous with a choice of roast rib-eye of Beef, roast chicken stuffed with vegetable or baked fish in pastry. Of the three, my preference was for the fish which was salmon.

Provincial Dinner

The set dinner menu was more elaborate, beginning with a delectable parcel of lobster and crab in filo pastry served with a tangy wild mustard relish which imparted just the right touch of zest to the seafood inside the pastry. Following this was the tomato cappuccino with braised mushroom, wafting a hint of rosemary – definitely a soup that left me clamouring for more.

A lovely touch at this point was the blood orange granita (like a sherbet but courser ice crystals) with Campari which unlike a lot of other restaurants, was not overly sweet and just tart enough to cleanse the palate. Following this was the choice of main course



Dolmades

consisting of beef fillet, cod, or baked ricotta and spinach crepes. I was torn



Bread platter

as to what to select for the main course and settled for the beef fillet, served on a bed of bell peppers and sweet basil which was melt-in-mouth tender. Meanwhile, as the portions were generous, and the ricotta and spinach crepes did beckon, I promised myself to return next time to check out these savoury crepes which we don't find too often in Ipoh. Dessert comes with the menu and that varies according to the whim of the pastry chef who is a master at his craft. At RM48 nett, I can cer-

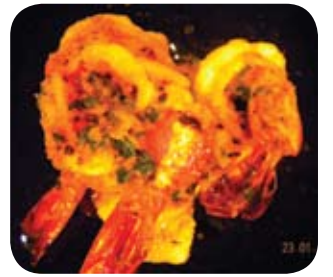
tainly vouch for the dinner's value in these inflationary times.

Tapas – A Touch of Mediterranean

What really caught my fancy though was their introduction of the Tapas menu from 6.00-7.00 p.m. Served in the Bistro, this 'happy hour' will see them offering a choice of 6 Tapas a day from a selection of 16 with a free flow of house wine like the 2005 Semillon-Sauvignon Blanc (The Source by Salena Estate) or 2006 Shiraz Cabernet (Kari Bay) for RM35 nett. Teetotallers may enjoy the same Tapas for RM12.00 nett with tea or coffee.

The selection of Tapas is unusual for Ipoh, ranging from Lebanese Hommus (chick pea mousse), Turkish

Babaganouche (aubergine or brinjal mousse), Greek Dolmades (vine leaves stuffed with rice), Mexican Salsa, Polpetas (like our sate, grilled skewers of meat with a vinaigrette sauce) Guacamole (avocado and tomato dip), Blue Cheese and garlic dips, garlic butterfly prawns, fried calamari (squid) and a few other Mediterranean-style appetizers. With the free flow of wine for one hour, I reckon its great value for money and I'll be spending a few after work evenings indulging and imbibing at the Bistro in the future.



Garlic Prawns

HOMES

Kinta Properties Holdings Sdn Bhd is setting a benchmark in providing quality lifestyle project.

Located on 650 acres of freehold former rubber estate land along Ipoh's Jalan Kuala Kangsar, the Sri Klebang development has attracted a good take up rate with almost all of its available units of detached, semi-d and link homes sold out to-date. The development is now in its second phase, with current offerings comprising detached homes in Parklane Residences, a 24-hour guarded community, and 20' x 75' link homes in the South Precinct.

According to Kinta Properties CEO Bernard Tan, the group is focusing on the quality of design, construction and surrounding environment in keeping up with the strong demand for such homes in Ipoh.

"As an example, we recently sold out all our 6-bedroom XXL size 24' x 85' link homes within one month of the official launch. We offered a premium product that was not available in the market with quality finishes and extra rooms. As a developer, we understand that people's expectations grow as societies become more affluent. By building quality homes that are finished well and practical, homeowners will find our designs ideal for their modern lifestyles. We aim to be a market leader in providing such quality homes in Ipoh",

KINTA PROPERTIES SCORES IN LIFESTYLE PROJECTS



Tan said. Come Chinese New Year, Kinta Properties will be launching 21 units of detached homes in its Parklane Residences precinct, under phase 2Ciii. Already, interest has been encouraging as there are choice units facing a lush 3-acre ecopark. Not only are the homes priced affordably, but are finished with quality fittings such as a solar water heating system and booster pump, 2' x 2' porcelain tiles, a home security alarm system and more. There is also an emphasis on other eco-elements such as natural light and cross ventilation. For the first ten purchasers, Kinta Properties is offering an early bird rebate of RM10,000 on their property.

The Parklane Residences precinct boasts of a perimeter fencing surrounding the development, complemented by a team of security guards, and will feature CCTVs with photo beam sensors.

"The big difference with Sri Klebang is that we are a master-planned development and not just an

ordinary housing project. There are open spaces with eco parks aimed at bringing back the birds and butterflies, and amenities like schools, shops and a clubhouse, are all within walking distance. There are eco-elements like solar panels for hot water and ample walkways to encourage a healthier lifestyle."

To date, Kinta Properties has completed and delivered about 1,300 units of residential and commercial property. About 5,000 homes will be developed over a course of 10 years, with an estimated population of 35,000 people upon completion. The developer has slated elaborate celebrations for the 16th and 17th of February with a lion dance performance by world champion Kun Seng Keng troupe from Johor, a Feng Shui talk, horse and carriage rides and face painting for children.

Sri Klebang's Show Homes will be open throughout the Chinese New Year. For more information, visit www.sriklebang.com.my, or call **012-5008018** or **019-5133315**.

LETTERS

We reprint some of our reader's comments from our online paper. Go to <http://www.ipohecho.com.my/> to read more. 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.

IPOH'S POLO GROUND NO LONGER A PERAK ICON WE CAN BE PROUD OF

I take the opportunity to congratulate Sandra Rajoo, first prize winner (Senior category) of the recent Ipoh Echo writing competition. Her article, titled 'Ipoh's iconic Polo Ground', which was published in issue 88 of Ipoh Echo (22 December 2009 - 15 January, 2010), was not only well written but also evoked sweet memories and fond recollections of an idyllic Polo Ground of days gone by.

Indeed, a public community park should be a haven for rest, relaxation and recreation for the

Brash, the street that flanks Polo Ground, and once a upon a time, a quiet and pleasant residential boulevard. Loud music, noise, traffic congestion and litter compound the problem for park users and residents alike.

Not only does the unsavoury sight of these hawker stalls ruin the beautiful landscape of the park, they also cause massive traffic congestion when motorists stop by the road to patronize the stalls. By setting up their stalls on the car park spaces along Persiaran Brash (parking

to, not compromised.

Indeed, hawkers there have turned the entire once peaceful residential suburb into a 'glutton street pasar malam' of sorts, with stalls offering everything from *laksa* to *rojak*. Several stalls even operate through the night, encouraging unsavoury nocturnal activities in the park. Don't get me wrong. I am a big fan of hawker food and pasar malam. But there should be a proper place and an appropriate time for these, and a community park is NOT one of the places, at any time.

And no self-respecting local council should allow it. If the local council is wary of being unpopular with the hawker community, the council must be prepared to risk losing the respect and support of the rest of the community.

I have heard that even royalty, including HRH Sultan Azlan Shah, who walks at the Polo Ground every morning, has been so disgusted by the state of affairs at the park (filled with litter, trash, etc.) that he ordered the hawkers to be relocated. But in no time at all, the pack of them returned with a vengeance, defying even the Sultan's orders, and being allowed to get away with it somehow.

In fact, I was a frequent user of the park for many years, jogging there every evening until the situation at the park went from barely tolerable (about ten years ago) to totally unbearable (about five years ago). In 2005, I stopped going to Polo Ground altogether.

How I long for those golden days of yore when Polo Ground was really as Ms Rajoo describes it!

Please, Majlis Bandaraya Ipoh, it is a gross injustice and disservice to the community of Ipoh to sweep the problem under

that is designated and allocated for park users), these hawker stalls comprising vans, tables and chairs deprive motorists of precious parking space. The scene during the park's 'peak hours' (6-8 a.m. And 5-7.30 p.m.) is one of total anarchy, with motorists parking their cars anywhere they care (even at the front gates of houses along the road), traffic choking the entire street, and a devil-may-care attitude by hawkers and motorists.

Left unchecked by the authorities, the hawkers seem to have grown in strength and confidence as the stalls there increase in size and number with time. Obviously, business is thriving at the Polo Ground. But surely good business is not a good reason for Majlis Bandaraya Ipoh to allow illegal hawking activities to be carried out at the Polo Ground. Rules should be adhered



whole family. Alas, the Polo Ground of today is a far cry from Ms Rajoo's lovely descriptions.

I'm not sure when Ms Rajoo last paid a visit to the park, but if she did so today she would find to her dismay and alarm that the Polo Ground has since degenerated to such a degree that it is no longer the sanctuary that it used to be in the 1980's and before. And the situation is gradually and surely getting from bad to worse unless the authorities take immediate measures to arrest the problems.

Originally designated a 'No Hawkers' zone, the park vicinity today is nevertheless infested with hawkers who sell their wares with blatant disregard for park rules nor basic decent respect for the environment. They operate out of vans, setting up stall around the clock, complete with tables, chairs, and umbrellas, all along Persiaran

PLASTIC BAG-FREE DAYS



YB Kula shaking hands with mayor Roshidi after the meeting

MP for Ipoh Barat M. Kulasegaran recently led a 'delegation' of State Assemblymen and ex-councillors to the office of Ipoh Mayor Dato' Roshidi Hashim to request him to start a "Plastic Bag-Free Day" in the city on Saturdays.

"Ipoh City should take the lead in Perak to reduce environmental harm caused by the usage of plastic bags. If Ipoh residents are aware of the harm caused by plastic bags they would support to reduce its usage" claimed Kula.

Plastic bags are made of polyethylene, a petroleum by-product. Its production contributes to air pollution and energy consumption. When it breaks down and degrades, toxic substances leach into the soil and enters the food chain.

Kula highlighted the efforts that had been initiated by Penang which started their campaign last July making every Monday a plastic bag-free day. This year the campaign will be extended to 3 days per week.

For Selangor, effective this year, every Saturday

will be a plastic bag-free day.

Kula also produced the minutes of MBI's Full Board meeting held in August 2008 where he had earlier brought up the issue regarding the use of plastics and its impact on the environment.

Mayor Roshidi in his response stated that MBI has plans to initiate a campaign this year and he had stated so during his New Year's message earlier. However, he said, all activities can only be kicked off once the new batch of councillors are appointed.

RESPONSES FROM OUR READERS

The use (and abuse) of plastic bags is like drug addiction. Many a shopper can't do without the shopping, oblivious to the fact that it will be dumped inconsiderately and hence choke our rivers and waterways and contribute to air pollution when burnt.

I have been plastic bag free since the year 2007 when my family use and reuse all manner of plastic bags and refusing bags at the local hyper-stores, or accepting only when needed.

I am sure the 1 or 3 days per week will, in

time to come, eventually lead to an outright ban in order to educate consumers and to wean them off the bad habit. Say YES to Mother Earth by saying NO to Plastic bags!!

Aaron Ong
23 January 2010

In 2009 we visited Rwanda, a third-world African country that has suffered massive genocide within the last 15 years with millions men, women and children, even tiny babies murdered, houses burnt, crops destroyed etc.

This is a country that still suffers dramatically from their recent past, coupled with no proper

water supply, electricity or public transportation and yet, one of the first things their new government did was to ban plastic bags, making them completely illegal countrywide. And the ban works. They followed this up with other eco-friendly legislation which has made the country one of the cleanest I have ever been in and certainly cleaner than here.

So why do we not grasp the nettle and ban the use of all plastic bags outright instead of playing with one day and three day bans. That just leads to confusion.

Ian Anderson
23 January 2010

the carpet and let these hawkers have their way. Do something about the pathetic situation before

it is too late and our beautiful Polo Ground goes to waste... literally!

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KAMPONG TALES



DRIPPING FROM THE KEG OF TIME

It has been an odd year, a back and forth year, an uncertain but wonderful year.

In this past inequitable year, I shook warm hands with the local newspaper the Ipoh Echo, beginning an exciting new quest into the various New Years and beyond – with thanks to a certain generous woman, who has a penchant for antiquities and food.

2009 was also the year when Perak Academy, Perak Heritage Society and the oral history project all welcomed this mining pool wanderer, battered jeep and all, and entered my aging father-in-law's voice into posterity.

This was the exceptional year when Gopeng got its very first museum – with grateful thanks to some very determined people – it was also the year when Gopeng nearly lost some of its old water pipe, amidst all kinds of wrangling and stubborn materialisms. It was in this fragile, unsettling year, that the last remaining tin dredge began to tilt on its base, threatening its previous stability, and stared into a distinctly unknowable future. It was a year in which rogues, bent on mischief elsewhere in Perak, sought to profit from collected historical artefacts.

As the last few dregs of the year were dripping from the keg of time, I was to recall that this was the year of my introduction to the still, quiet, tranquil wonders of Papan, and its fading beauty. Dodging Batu Gajah and its seller of the most remarkable mee rebus, I travelled, in my jeep, through lanes and roads to discover an

altogether different type of feast, in the sumptuous museum at Papan. Although off the normal beaten track, the Papan museum is firmly wedged in Perak history as an historical site, with dedication to the war hero Sybil Kathigasu.

Ultimately, for me, it was a bookish year. It has been a year when several Perakian authors became published nationwide, and one book retracted. A year when I attended launches of books galore, yet encountering no book as illuminating, as a chunky, silver coloured tome explaining Ipoh and its shining history, from the age of tin. This welcome launch came prefaced with a fascinating, evocative lecture, and a thought-provoking stroll down memory lane, amidst friends.

In many ways, it has been a glorious year. These twelve months have been the time in which I have listened to celestial music, produced by a cerebral local artist, and have vibrated to the stringed beat of Malaysian culture and her musical traditions. This has been the most extraordinary year, when I have met with artists, musicians, actors, directors and a whole host of very talented people – discovering, meanwhile, a distinct lack of acting ability within myself.

Ultimately, it has been another year of challenges. It has been a dizzy year, of ladders and cats on hot roofs. A time when I finally conquered my longstanding fear of heights, by extracting said cats from said roofs, and briefly considered a fresh career dressed in red and white, slipping down chimneys.

It was a most remarkably wet year, of floods, and children fishing in streets, hoisting immature black tilapia into convenient containers, running, or



Out With The Old

rather wading, back to their doting mothers, full of glee and, of course, fish.

Trailing towards the year's nadir, it has been, literally, a rubbish year. That is to say a year's end concerned with rubbish, trash, garbage, waste. There, sitting on my galvanised wire fence, above roaming predator height, one full week after my wife had placed it there before leaving for her job in Kuala Lumpur, was our rubbish.

Each increasingly fragrant day that dawned I thought, "Well, they'll pick it up today, surely, just to clear it up before Christmas, they will, won't they, yes of course, says I, they'll never leave it over Christmas", but, how wrong can one man be? It was approaching Christmas morning, when I realised that yes, the rubbish collectors would, indeed, leave our rotting discarded stinking, fly ridden over Christmas, because, well, they had.

Normally my sympathies would have gone out to the loaders of rubbish, the heavens of waste and potential fathers of Lonnie Donegan, but the stench was getting beyond bearable and the feral dogs braver and braver by the day.

The kampong gossip



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factory slipped into gear to deliver a myriad, and one, reasons why the rubbish collection had ceased. Arguments with bomohs, striking private labourers, dismantled waste truck – stories abounded.

Next door Pakcik, oracle and news vendor to the kampong, informed my wife, upon her return after one week of working in Kuala Lumpur, that the rubbish truck, was just that – a rubbish truck, and had been towed away to be fixed.

A fitting climax to another remarkable year, some might say, and they would be right – let us see what a fresh year holds.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

TAMAN LAPANGAN SSI'S OWN SECURITY PROGRAMME

Taman Lapangan SSI's Own Security Programme Taman Lapangan SSI (State Secretary Incorporated) located at Pasir Putih recently had the honour of having the Perak CID Chief, SAC II Dato' Zuraidi Ibrahim officially open their new Security Service Programme.

The housing estate consists of 115 houses. The estate had two months earlier formed a committee where the idea to contribute towards hiring security guards to enable 24 hours security control was mooted. Eighty occupied hous-



2nd from right, SAC II Dato Zuraidi. Next to him is Residents Chairman En Zaidrul Bakri

es in the community have contributing RM30 per month.

The monthly contributions go towards hiring security guards who provide 24 hours patrolling of the neighbourhood. The participating houses will be provided stickers for their vehicles which will serve as an added security measure.

Zuraidi in his speech to the residents reminded them that every city in Malaysia had daily reports of crime and that included Ipoh. The residents of Taman Lapangan SSI in setting up their Security Service Programme had "shown good initiative".

The programme is good and should be a model for other housing estates around the City of Ipoh.

Chairman of the residents Committee, En Zaidrul Bakri, thanked the residents for their support of this project. Zaidrul also thanked the house developer Mr Khor for donating a Security Pondok (hut) for their security personnel.

As for Ong Beng Hoo and Dr Palaniyappan, both residents at the housing estate, they like the programme. "Hopefully it will stop crime from

taking place in the neighbourhood", added Palaniyappan.

JAMES GOUGH

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COMMUNITY PROGRAMME

Sixty six students from the Mutiara International Grammar School (MIGS), Ampang Jaya, Selangor underwent orientation training at the Outward Bound School (OBS) Lumut recently. In the course of their brief stay they participated in a community programme organised by OBS. It came in the form of a visit to Sekolah Semangat Maju, a school for intellectually disabled children in Sitiawan. They spent time sprucing up the school compound. Armed with lawn movers, brooms, paint and brushes the



Visitors bearing gifts. Mrs M.Vani on extreme right

youngsters set about their task of giving the school a new lease of life. They did this with enthusiasm and efficiency much to the

delight of the school principal, Mrs. M. Vani. The students, mainly children of expatriates working in the Klang Valley ranging



MIGS students clearing undergrowth

in age between 10 to 11, got to see how children of their age and with mental disabilities cope. It was an eye-opener. Shirazdeen Adnan

Shah, MIGS Head of Pastoral Care and Student Affairs, who accompanied the students, told Ipoh Echo that the training and

expose were part of the school's curriculum. The visitors donated RM500 worth of educational toys to the school.

MIGS students painting school fence.



READING SHELTER FOR THE UNDERPRIVILEGED



Mother Teresa's Reading Shelter with the motto "You can make a difference in a child's life" was launched about five months ago and is located at 112 Persiaran Sungai Pari 19, Buntong Dua. The shelter is open for underprivileged students irrespective of race, colour or creed. The aim is to educate children who are marginalised and vulnerable in the spirit of hope, love and acceptance.

The shelter has a library with collection of books mainly for children consisting of fiction and text books. There is a big

collection of reference books for students. There is a common reading room and separate rooms for conducting classes and private study room for students to do their homework.

During Saturdays, the shelter conducts 3R Programme for students from an orphanage. From February the shelter will be conducting "My School" programme to help non-school-going children, especially from orphanages. This is for children who are deprived of schooling opportunities due to incomplete documentation such as a Birth Certificate.

All facilities are provided free and financed by donations received from well wishers. The shelter needs volunteers to carry out its activities. The public can also help by providing books, stationery items or cash donations.

The shelter is open seven days a week. As the response from the students is poor what is needed urgently is word-of-mouth publicity so that more parents are aware of its existence and bring their children to make use of the facilities. Those wishing to help can contact Lucy Joseph **017-5699262**.

ADVERTORIAL

CARING FOR THAT 'SPECIAL CHILD' TILL ETERNITY



Jeff and Maggie, a couple in their mid 40s have a son aged 10 with Down's syndrome. They have always provided him with constant care and the attention required as most parents would do for their children. However, they are always worried about who will take care of their son when they pass away.

Both of them have always discussed issues such as choosing a suitable guardian for their child and if they cannot find a suitable Guardian, which nursing care centre can provide for his basic needs, which includes medical attention and special education. There is also the issue of providing sufficient funds for these expenses and most important of all to manage their assets so as to continue to pay for the child's expenses.

After a few rounds of discussion, Jeff and Maggie decided that they needed a trustee to be responsible for their assets and to pay for their son's expenses. At the same time, they will also appoint a Protector. They will choose one or two people they can trust to be the "PROTECTOR". A "PROTECTOR" is chosen to act as watchdog for the beneficiaries and also as an advisor to the trustee. With such matters clarified, then they could consider setting up an "INTER VIVOS TRUST" (commonly known as LIVING TRUST) to ensure their issues are addressed so as to be able to fulfil their wishes.

Setting up such a "TRUST" will involve four parties. The 1st party is the "SETTLOR" (Jeff and Maggie who will jointly create the trust). The 2nd party is the trustee who should be an established and reputable TRUST COMPANY, like Rockwills Trustee Berhad, that is able to offer their expertise, knowledge, accountability and most importantly, continuity. The 3rd Party is the "PROTECTOR" as explained earlier. The 4th party is the "BENEFICIARY" who is the son. When the four parties are in place, then Jeff and Maggie have to inject some cash or to assign life insurance policies into the "TRUST" for funding. Thereafter, they can list down all these parties involved together with their instructions for distribution in detail in the TRUST DEED for the TRUSTEE, PROTECTOR and GUARDIAN. This is what I would refer to as CARING FOR THAT 'SPECIAL CHILD' TILL ETERNITY.

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 is based in Ipoh and can be reached at: **012-5078825/05-2554853** or excelsec@streamyx.com.

IPOH IN BRIEF

 More pics at ipohecho.com.my

ROTARY CLUB – SECONDARY SCHOOLS SCHOLARSHIP AWARD



The Secondary School Scholarship Awards 2009/2010, each worth RM100, were presented to 136 students from secondary schools in the Kinta District of Perak on January 14.

The presentation ceremony was held at SMK Main Convent. The Kinta District Education Officer, Said Manap, presented the awards to the students. Present were Rotary Club of Ipoh President Mr Wu Chee Tatt and Ms Loh Wei Seng, the Principal of SMK Main Convent. The scholarship fund was started in 1971 by 12 participating schools by entrusting RM5,000 each which was matched on a Ringgit-for-Ringgit basis by the Rotary Club. Each school is entitled to RM1,300 annually for distribution in the form of scholarships.

The selection of the scholarship's recipient is based on the student's scholastic ability and financial needs.

One of the recipients, Choong Hui Yean, who spoke on behalf of all the recipients, thanked the participating schools and the Rotary Club of Ipoh for the award, “which would be put to good use for their education and other necessary fees”, adding that the care and concern shown by Rotarians is a “fine example of community service towards the plight of needy students and in line with the spirit of 1Malaysia”.

OUR LADY OF LOURDES CHURCH CELEBRATES PONGOL



A large crowd of parishioners and friends gathered at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Silibin to celebrate Pongol festival organised by the cultural group of the church recently. The president of the group, Mrs. Annakkili Rasiah, said that the church has been celebrating pongol from the early seventies and during the past few years it has been done on a grand scale.

The function started with lighting of the kuthu vilakku, lamp, followed by making the pongol. The festivities included cultural shows by children of the parishioners. There was a display of silambam, a form of martial art using bamboo staff. There were song and dance performances consisting of bharatham, a form of classical

dance, kolattam, a dance using sticks and kummi, a dance clapping hands to a rhythm. The aim is to promote and preserve the cultural heritage of the Tamils.

Mr. K. Balasubramaniam, former headmaster of St Michael Institution gave a talk on the significance of pongol. Trophies were presented to the performers of the cultural show.

DEDICATED TEACHER

The deeds of Mrs. Renuga Vijayakumaram from Kerala, India, are not quantifiable. Her dedication towards ensuring the continuity of the Malayalee language, culture and tradition is being recognised by none other than the Perak Malayalee Association (PMA) itself. Renuga, her expatriate husband and their two children have been in the country for almost five years. The time spent here is not wasted on idle pursuits. Rather it was time well spent on teaching children of the Malayalee community in Ipoh, Malayalam, the language of the Malayalees. Her students' command of the language had improved by leaps and bounds. She was also the motivating factor behind many PMA-organised seminars, forums and workshops. Her presence provided

STATE GOVERNMENT TO KEEP THE DREDGE



“Yes, we are going to keep the dredge”, said Dato’ Hamidah Osman (Pic), the Senior State Executive Councillor for Tourism, when enquired by Ipoh Echo at Taiping to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the Taiping Peace Initiative on Wednesday 20 January.

Dato' Hamidah stated that

discussions have been held over the last few weeks on the topic and generally the mood is to “keep the dredge”.

"I have asked for a technical report on how to preserve the dredge. Besides preserving the dredge we must also ensure that it is safe and will last for the long term. We plan to seek assistance from mining consultants on how best to preserve the dredge."

The heritage dredge T.T No. 5 is located at Tanjong Tualang and is in danger of sinking. Its pontoons need to be repaired but the company managing the dredge Century Mission Sdn Bhd does not have the funds to undertake the repairs.

Undoubtedly this is welcome news to heritage minded citizens. Ipoh Echo which is currently running an online poll on whether to preserve dredge has so far received positive responses to preserve the dredge. JAG



*Mrs Renuga receiving a letter of commendation from
PMA President*

legitimacy to these events. Renuga and her family are moving to Melbourne, Australia. A fitting farewell was organised by PMA for Renuga recently. Association president, K. Letchimanan Nair presented her with a letter of commendation. The association will soon move to its new site in Medan Istana, Ipoh. Renovation works at the new site are on-going.

FZB

[illegible]

SMJK AVE MARIA CONVENT WINS FOR MALAYSIA



The Malaysian Team of St John Ambulance Malaysia consisting of 7 students and 2 teachers all from SMJK Ave Maria Convent Ipoh, kept the Jalur Gemilang flying high at the Lincoln University in Christchurch, New Zealand at the International Youth Festival 2010.

They were placed 2nd in the Team First Aid event, and a team member, TAN CHIANG TIENG, placed 3rd in the Individual First Aid event. Malaysia was overall 3rd in the Worldwide First Aid Competition, placed ahead of countries like England, Wales, Australia, Germany, Hong Kong and Singapore. The host country, New Zealand, was the overall champion, winning the Commonwealth Shield followed by Canada.

Reporting from New Zealand by email was Tan Pei Nee, Teacher Advisor, St John Ambulance

Malaysia, one of the two teachers from SMJK Ave Maria Convent, who accompanied the team.

A 'Handing Over of the Malaysian Flag' ceremony was held on 22 January at the school hall. Present at the ceremony was the Deputy Director of the State Education Department, Tuan Hj Muhamat Roli bin Hj Hassan and St John Ambulance Malaysia (SJAM) State Commander Dato' Hj Zainal Abidin bin Hj Abdul Kadir.

Encik Muhamat Roli in his address said he was proud that the entire team representing the country at this international event were from Perak. St John State Commander Dato' Hj Zainal Abidin had similar praise for the school adding that SJAM Perak was the first in the country to go international. "This would not have been possible if not for the efforts

made by the school."

According to the Principal of Ave Maria Convent, Mdm Chen Chiu Hiong, a total of RM40,000 was raised to enable the team to attend the festival with support coming from the Parent Teacher Association, parents, teachers and other supporters.

Last June the school had participated in the Malaysia Singapore First Aid and Home Nursing Competition held in Singapore. Six of the team members that participated in Singapore went to New Zealand.

Principal Chen's vision for the school's students attending international events is to provide them the exposure of competing on a global level thus enabling them to gain confidence and be positive contributors to the school and community in future.

A Tribute to Audrey Fong



Audrey Allshorn came to Ipoh in 1963, all the way from Wales, when she married Fong Soon Leong, an Ipoh native. Since then, she was known as Audrey Fong, a popular and charismatic figure amongst the expatriates, as well as the locals here, for her iconic contributions to Tenby Schools Ipoh. She was a teacher

at ACS Ipoh before joining Tenby School in March 1968 as the Principal. As an educationist, Audrey touched many young lives, many of whom are now successful professionals in their respective communities. They are proud of their Tenby School heritage, and this is probably owed to Audrey's own pride of her Welsh heritage, serendipitously linked with Tenby School's origin. (It was named after Tenby in South Wales, the founding Principal's home town.)

According to her former colleagues, Audrey was always a friend more than anything else. She was a great mentor and made it a point to be involved every step of the way, and was always concerned with the welfare of her staff. Ever encouraging and support-

ive, she took genuine interest in the education of children, as reflected in her support and contribution to the school, through her assistance in reading and drama programmes, even after her retirement in August 1996. Having served the school, its pupils and parents with dedication for a magnificent 28 years, Audrey remained a much respected figure in the school community.

Audrey passed away on 11th January 2010. Audrey will be sorely missed at School Productions, Sports Days and Staff Dinners to come. It will be difficult to forget an icon such as Audrey Fong. She will always be fondly remembered by all at Tenby Schools Ipoh.

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DIRT VIGILANTES

POOR RESPONSE FROM RESIDENTS



Response to Ipoh Echo's call on the residents of the city to be 'dirt vigilantes' by sending in photographs of dirty spots and information of their locations for publication seem to be poor.

Why is it so? Are the residents willing to live in a dirty environment, rather than to play a part in keeping the city clean?

If this is a case of 'tidak apa' attitude, we cannot

blame the Ipoh City Council for not doing something about the cleanliness of the city. Certainly, the City Council will not be able to do it alone; it needs the co-operation of everyone.

Remember, Ipoh was once a clean and beautiful city with a pro-active local authority. Can we bring back the image? Do we have the will and determination to do so?

First of all, the City Council needs to get rid of the thousands of illegal

rubbish dumps and embark on a beautification plan. Meanwhile, Ipoh Echo will continue with its cleanliness campaign by focusing on dirty spots and locations around the city in each issue.

At the Wah Keong Park, the situation is no different from other locations in the city. Illegal rubbish dumps are everywhere.

Come on Ipohites. Do your bit. This is YOUR city too.



MBI'S RESPONDS TO IPOH ECHO'S NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

It is heartening to note that City Council is paying heed to the news highlighted by the Ipoh Echo. Here are some of the responses we received:

a. "No Chime, No Time" – IE 86 pg 10.

"MBI will conduct maintenance works on December 10".

b. "Hazardous Road Junction" – IE 87 pg 12.

"The road junction is located in an area outside of the council's jurisdiction. We have redirected the complaint to the Perak

Water Board for action".
c. "Calling Dirt Vigilantes" – IE 87 pg 17.
"MBI has cleaned up the mess on January 5".

Thank you MBI, Ipohites appreciate your taking action.

COLLECTION OF GARDEN REFUSE FOR THE EAST ZONE (ZON TIMUR)

For a Collection Schedule of garden refuse for East Zone (Zon Timur) for February 2010, log on to our website:

<http://www.ipohecho.com.my>



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COMMUNITY NEWS

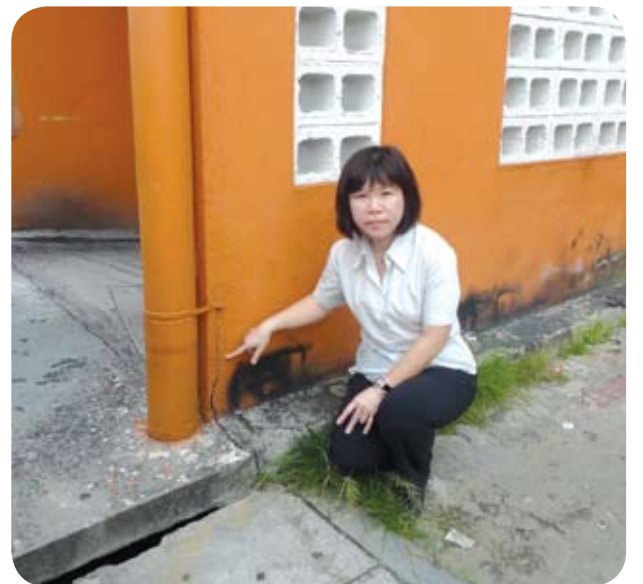
CRACKS CAUSE CONCERN

Three property owners along Jalan Dass in the city have lodged police reports due to cracks which have appeared on the ground behind their premises.

They alleged that the cause of the cracks was due to ongoing construction of the Host Hotel's project along Jalan Veerasamy, which is on the opposite side of their back lane. Construction works started seven months ago.

Ipoh City Hotel manager Ms Yau Sau Kuan claimed the cracks had moved approximately 7 inches up the beam located at the entrance of the underground car park at the rear of the building. This was a cause for concern shared by the other complainants.

The developer of the hotel project when contacted said he was not aware of the police reports. However, due to the close proximity of the existing buildings to the construction site they had anticipated that complaints would be forthcoming and used the Bore Piling method, which reduces



Ipoh City Hotel Manager Ms Yau showing the crack going up the beam

vibration and noise, instead of the conventional dynamic piling method.

Additionally they initiated a Dilapidation Survey Report. This survey report, using photographs and attached notes, records the structural condition of surrounding buildings before commencement work. It is a precautionary measure undertaken in the event of claim for damages.

He assured the complainants that the company was "sincere". "We are open to discussion to solve these issues. Please approach us", he added.

A check with the Ipoh City Council revealed that the council had not received any complaint from the owners of the premises in the location. The project is a joint venture between the council and the Developer.

JAMES GOUGH

ARTS & CULTURE

"LET THE CLASSICS COME ALIVE"

On 16th January 2010, the classics came alive at the The Dome Restaurant in Meru Valley Resort in a musical performance by British violinist Sebastian See-Schierenberg and Ipoh-born pianist, Lee Yin Hwa, who were splendidly complemented by Spanish concert presenter Susana Galván.

Susana's entertaining and flamboyant presentation, which included some fascinating and even scandalous facts about the lives of crazy composers, eccentric musicians, and other unbelievable stories from the classical music world, was a breath of fresh air to what one would normally expect of a classical music recital. According to Susana, what made their maiden trip to Ipoh so special was that it is actually the hometown of Sebastian's mother.

Sebastian, who is of Chinese-Malaysian and German descent, is no stranger to Malaysia, having taught and performed at the Malaysian Philharmonic Music Chambers and Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra respectively. Susana had served as the Director of Education at the British Council and even shared that it was in Malaysia that



L-R Sebastian See-Schierenberg, Lee Yin Hwa & Susana Galván

Sebastian and her met and eventually got married! Yin Hwa, a well-known musician, is glad to be back in Ipoh as he currently serves as a member of the piano faculty at UCSI and UM in Kuala Lumpur.

A violin master class was held earlier that day for students of Tenby Schools Ipoh by courtesy

of the performers. They look forward to any opportunity to bring their recital and master classes to Ipoh again as they had a great time here. The event was jointly organised by Tenby Schools Ipoh and Meru Valley Resort Berhad.

YEUN YIN FONG

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COMMUNITY NEWS

ORANG ASLI VILLAGE HEADS FETED BY ZAMBRY

Chief Minister of Perak Dato' Seri Zambry bin Abdul Kadir played host to 176 Tok Batin (Orang Asli village chiefs) at his official residence on Tuesday January 26.

Perak, with a registered population of 54,600 Orang Asli scattered throughout the state is the second largest after Pahang. The main clans found are the Semai, Temiar, Jahai, Lanoh and Kensiu.

In his address Zambry welcomed the guests as 'Orang Kita' or Our People, a term commonly used among the Orang Asli. Zambry also announced the appointment of a Special Officer, 57-year-old Panjang Ali, a Semai from Kg Tangkai Cermin, Sg Galah, Tg Tualang, who will be attached to his office to oversee Orang Asli issues such as poverty, land and education. He added that an al-

location of RM1 million over and above the current allocation has been made, as the state government's commitment to the community.

The event held at the chief minister's residence was the first time for the community and the turnout was overwhelming. Of the 1,400 attendees, 1,200 were of Orang Asli origin. The organiser for the night JHEOA (Orang Asli Affairs Department)



had indicated that they had originally planned for an 800 head count and arranged transportation accordingly. However a lot of the Orang Asli ar-

ranged their own transport to the event with some being ferried by their local assemblymen. Apparently being invited to the event was very important to the

community as those that were excluded had called to express their disappointment.

JAG

BUT THE WORD "ALLAH" IS A WORD IN THE ENGLISH DICTIONARY

By N.H. CHAN

If you look for the word "Allah" in any English dictionary you will find it there and it will read something like this:

Allah /al-luh/ noun the name of God among the Muslims.

I find the above in a little Oxford English Dictionary. If you are using Collins English Dictionary you will also find the word "Allah" there and it gives this meaning of the word:

Allah n. Islam. The principal Muslim name for God; the one Supreme Being. [C16: from Arabic, from al the + ilah God; compare Hebrew eloah]

These two English dictionaries give the same meaning for the word "Allah". Since it is a word in the English Dictionary, it clearly shows that the word has been adopted as an English word; it means "a Muslim name for God". But the Collins English Dictionary even supplied the etymology of the word in the English language. "C16" stands for sixteenth century. The etymology says that the word "Allah" came from

the Arabic phrase, *al Ilah* which means "the God". The dictionary explains how a word with a foreign origin came to be adopted in the English language.

The Collins English Dictionary shows that the word "Allah" has been adopted in the English language since the sixteenth century and it means in English, "the Muslim name for God". If you use the word in English in another connotation then you have misused the word. Since English is not our mother tongue it is not unusual for Malaysians to misuse English words.

I do not advocate the misuse of English words if one were to speak or write in English. If you must use this "sensitive" English word – this English word appears to be 'sensitive' to some myopic people – like Allah, do ensure that you use the word in its correct connotation.

However, I am not surprised that many Malaysians do have a tendency to misuse English words. But, it is unthinkable for anyone to suggest that we should be penalized for misusing an English word which is a foreign word to us Malaysians. If the word



Dato' N.H. Chan

'Allah' is in a sentence written in English then it is an English word.

For those of us who would like to know how an Arabic word "ilah" or phrase "al ilah" which sounds like – English writers have to rely on sound as they do not write Arabic – the original Arabic *al Ilah* has found its way into the English language, see The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology, Edited by C.T. Onions, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1979 reprint, which reads:

Allah the deity among the Mohammedans. XVI. – Arab. allah, for al-ilah, i.e. al AL- [al- Arab. def. art. al the], ilah god = Aram. elah, Heb. eloah (Early forms in Eng.

Writers are Alla, Allah, Ala, Allough, Alha.)

"XVI" stands for sixteenth century. So that this tells us that the etymology of the word "Allah" in English has been used in the English language since the sixteenth century. In Arabic it is "al-ilah" meaning "the God". In Aramaic, it is "elah". In Hebrew, it is "eloah".

If you do not already know, Arabic is the language of the Arabs who is one of a branch of the Semitic race. Aramaic pertains to the northern Semitic languages. And Hebrew is a person belonging to the Semitic race descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Jewish; their language. Source: The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology.

Also in the same Dictionary of English Etymology you will find:

Semite Hebrew, Arab, Assyrian or Aramaean, regarded as a descendant of Shem (Gen. X); see The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology.

'Gen. X' stands for the book of Genesis, chapter 10 in the Old Testament of the Bible.

So that we now know that not even the Arabs or

the Jews would pronounce the word for their God as 'Allah'. The Muslim name for God as pronounced by the Arabs is 'al-ilah'. The Jews would pronounce the name for their God as 'eloah'. The word 'Allah' in English (as seen in any English dictionary) is a mispronunciation of both the Arabic and the Hebrew word for God.

Monotheism is the belief that there is only one God. It is not the preserve of the Muslims only. The Jews (Judaism) and the Christians also believe that there is only one God.

Monotheism began with Abraham.

A heathen – according to the dictionary – is a person who does not acknowledge the God of Christianity, Judaism, or Islam. A non-believer of monotheism is an infidel.

A pagan is a person who holds religious beliefs other than those of the main world religions. For example, paganism includes such religions as Hinduism and Taoism.

Idolatry means the worship of idols. I believe the Hindus and the Taoists believe in idol worship.

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