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YBU: Empowering The Poor Shows Positive Results

by James Gough



Fatimah Fadzil



Yayasan Bina Upaya or YBU, which was founded under the Trustees Act in October 2009 began its operations in March 2010 with the goal of improving the living standards of low-income households through its *Microcredit Financing Programme*. Ipoh Echo which originally carried a report on YBU's activities in 2010 (December 16, 2010) recently met with its Chief Financial Officer Hairul Anwar Mohamed Noor to get an update.

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Gawri a/p Manisagaran



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Interest Free Loans Coupled with Stringent Vetting Paying Off

According to Hairul, since its inception, YBU has so far provided assistance to 989 recipients with RM13.5 million of loans disbursed. Interestingly it is currently compiling a booklet of 100 of its successful recipients who have managed to improve their livelihood.

By any standard a success rate of just over 10 per cent in just over two years is already a good measure. According to Hairul, an added bonus is that over 50 per cent of its borrowers service their loans on time each month, 10 per cent service their loans months in advance in anticipation of rainy days while another 10 per cent settle their loans outright way ahead of the repayment schedule. Considering that the customers are the underprivileged, this healthy cash flow is a revelation.

Empowered Recipients

Fatimah Fadzil, 53, is a single mother selling fried curry puffs. In 1999, when her husband died due to a traffic accident she was forced to fend for her three children on her own. She tried several jobs but the pay was small and it was difficult to make ends meet. She approached a welfare body earlier but was told that as she was still young and could still work to support herself.

Fatimah later joined a single mother's association, *Nur Kasih*, and was encouraged to venture into the curry-puff business. She manually produced 150 curry puffs per day, which catered to food outlets. Fatimah operates out of her Ashby Road flat.

Two years ago she was approached by YBU to participate in their single mother programme called Ladies Uptown. Subsequently, to increase her production capacity, she obtained a loan from YBU and purchased two machines, a flour mixer and a pastry kneading machine which have the capacity to make up to 1000 curry puffs a day. Currently she makes 300 curry puffs per day which she supplies to individuals, food outlets and government departments.

Fatimah took her microcredit loan from YBU in 2010. Her repayment period is 60 months but anticipates on settling her loan much earlier. Two of Fatimah's children are still studying. Their needs have been taken care of. Generally she is comfortable, her livelihood has improved and her only concern is that she has to work every day to fulfil her customers' orders.

Gawri and Indian Rice

Gawri a/p Manisagaran, 27, operates an Indian rice food stall at the Candy Bar coffee shop in Simpang Pulai which offers 10 varieties of dishes daily. Previously she operated daily along the Simpang Pulai to Pengkalan main road for almost two years in her own stall before shifting into the nearby coffee shop. With her YBU microcredit loan, Gawri purchased more items for her shift to the shop and realised a doubling of her turnover almost overnight.

Gawri is married and has two children. Her husband works in KL and comes home once a month. She recently purchased a Perodua Viva and anticipates she will be able to settle her YBU loan before its full period.

YBU's Microcredit Financing Programme

What sets YBU apart from other credit facilities is its microcredit system. Loans, based on Islamic principles, are interest free and do not require collateral or a guarantor. The programme is multiracial and is open to all communities and anyone can apply. For the two ladies mentioned above, there was no way a bank would give them a loan without a secure collateral in hand which they couldn't provide. However, with YBU's microcredit financing programme, Gawri and Fatimah were given an opportunity to improve their livelihoods and they have seen the results almost immediately.

The programme enables community members to apply for loans for working capital in economic activities such as opening a food stall, or increasing output of existing small businesses.

Loan values range from RM1000 to RM20,000. Eligible applicants must be between the ages of 18 and 60. According to Hairul the loan repayment period is for a maximum of 60 months and the repayment value is mutually agreed on between YBU and the recipient.

Stringent Vetting Prevents Delinquent Loans

The goal is to provide loans to the very needy and ensure the loans fulfil their objective



Hairul Anwar Mohamed Noor, YBU's CFO

of empowering the recipient. Hence the vetting of each application is very stringent to ensure the loan does not become delinquent. All applications will also be cross checked against the government's welfare database such as *e-Kasih* to identify if previous loans had been provided.

Applicants fill an application form available at its office or on its website after which YBU will send its team for an on-site visit to vet the applicants.

Successful applicants, before receiving their loans, are called to the office and are given a motivational talk on the need to grow their existing source of income and improve their overall livelihood for the future. Subsequently too, the officer overseeing the loan will monitor the applicant for three months after disbursement, after which another department monitoring debt collection will take over.

"All this monitoring is necessary to ensure the recipient will successfully improve their livelihood and meet the objective of the programme. By being successful their self confidence improves. For a poor person the responsibility to repay the loan is very important and more so for a Muslim," explained Hairul.

YBU would like the successful recipients to be more productive and does offer them a second loan should they want to expand their businesses. However,

many have turned down the offer saying they are now able to take care of their families "which indicates that their livelihood has improved".

The data of successful applicants will subsequently be updated to the government's *e-Kasih* database.

Over the last two years YBU has compiled its own database of underprivileged citizens. This is done by its squad of volunteers or *sukarelawan* numbering over 3000 throughout the state currently. Generally the poor are ashamed to share their problems hence the job of the volunteer is to vet and identify suitable candidates.

Poverty Eradication Programmes

Besides its microcredit financing programme, YBU had initiated other activities to distribute its economic benefits. These include:

Housing Aid programme which refers to their housing assistance to construct new homes as well as upgrade and repair homes including those damaged by natural causes. The purpose of this programme is to enable a comfortable and quality living environment for the poor. Since its inception there have been 596 beneficiaries.

Adoption Programme. This programme applies to primary students in Year 5 and 6 to be entitled for financial assistance including tuition fees. To date a total of 113 students have been put under this programme of which 56 students obtained between 2 to 7As in the recent UPSR examination.

Higher Education Programme. This year YBU participated in an MOU with two institutions of higher learning, Quest International University of Perak (QIUP) and ITP (Perak's Institute of Technology) to provide potential underprivileged student places at their institutions.

Federal Government Interest

YBU's multi-pronged activities towards addressing and improving the livelihood of the underprivileged in the state have "captured the interest of the Federal Government who are contemplating implementing it nationwide," said Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr. Zambry Abdul Kadir during YBU's second Symposium on Capacity Building held during the middle of this year.

Based on testimony from the recipients and interviews with YBU officials, the multi-pronged strategies being implemented do address the issues of poverty by empowering the recipient to improve his livelihood. Hence it works. As a YBU executive expressed "when the plan works, the recipient's face beams with self confidence".

Further testimony of this can be noted from the recipients making their repayments on time.

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From the Editor's Desk

• by Fathol Zaman Bukhari

Hadi Awang for Prime Minister

And if I were to make a choice between the devil I know and the angel I don't, I'd willingly choose the angel...

Delegates at the Pan-Malaysia Islamic Party's (PAS) 58th Muktamar (General Assembly) in Kota Baru on November 17 were amused when a member proposed party president Dato' Seri Abdul Hadi Awang for the post of Prime Minister if the Opposition wins the 13th General Election.

Hairun Nizam, from the PAS Ulama wing, told the crowd of over 1000 delegates that PAS members should not lobby for other leaders to hold the post, claiming that Abdul Hadi was the "best person" to lead the nation.

Hairun's suggestion and the resounding support from party delegates contradict the stand taken by the Pakatan Rakyat leadership, which has repeatedly endorsed its *de facto* leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim for the post of Prime Minister.

At the pact's mammoth *Himpunan Merdeka Rakyat* rally in the Sultan Muhammad IV Stadium, Kota Baru on November 16, DAP adviser Lim Kit Siang reaffirmed this stand, declaring that PR parties DAP, PKR and PAS were united in selecting Anwar to replace Umno's Datuk Seri Najib Razak should the pact wrest federal power in the next general election.

"Anwar will be the seventh prime minister, not the sixth," he told the tens of thousands gathered in the stadium.

PR parties have to repeatedly reaffirm their endorsement of Anwar as prime minister-designate to deflect criticisms from their nemeses in Barisan Nasional (BN) that they were unable to achieve consensus on numerous issues, the post of PM being one.

MCA President Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek said that the Opposition was unfit to rule the country due to the numerous conflicts among the pact's three parties. He pointed out that while some leaders have touted Anwar as prime minister, some have also said that the opposition leader was not the only qualified candidate for the post.

Kota Belud Member of Parliament, Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan, said in his blog that Hadi Awang stood a fair chance of being appointed the Prime Minister. Rahman theorised,

According to Article 43(2a) of the Malaysian Constitution, the Yang DiPertuan Agong shall appoint Prime Minister a Member of the House of Representative who in his judgment is likely to command the confidence of the majority of the members of that House. I believe PAS knows BN just can't stomach Anwar Ibrahim as the Prime Minister.

What does that mean then?

It means that, if PAS demands for vote of confidence in the Dewan Rakyat to show who gets the biggest support or confidence to be the Prime Minister; and if BN MPs, particularly Muslim MPs, vote in favour of PAS, then it is possible that the PAS candidate will be the next Prime Minister and not Anwar.

The statement by firebrand Hairun Nizam is to be expected, as he is from the fundamentalist wing of the party whose stance on religion is entrenched. All said and done, the fact that a lone delegate had uttered the unexpected, followed by a loud chorus of approval, did not mean that Hadi Awang would be the next Prime Minister.

PAS's Muktamar is almost like UMNO's General Assembly. The propensity of delegates to go over the top in their oratory discourses is to be expected, considering the



pleasure such moments bestow on the speaker.

The mitigating factor is of course the eventual outcome of the general election. Whichever party or a coalition of parties wins will form the government. It does not matter if it were Barisan Nasional or Pakatan Rakyat. What matters is the welfare of the *rakyat*. The *rakyat* holds the trump card and they are the ones who will decide whether a change is necessary or not.

I feel, after 55 years of Independence, the *rakyat* can no longer be taken for granted. We should not be held to ransom forever. A two-party system may be the best option for us now considering the many misdeeds that have been committed by members of a coalition whose only interest is the perpetuation of its legacy and its grip on power.

And if I were to make a choice between the devil I know and the angel I don't, I'd willingly choose the angel. And pray that the angel won't eventually turn into yet another devil.

"The best thing you can do is the right thing; the next best thing you can do is the wrong thing; the worst thing you can do is nothing." – Theodore Roosevelt

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EYE HEALTH – Sleep

Ipah Echo's EYE HEALTH series continues with Consultant Eye Surgeon Dr S.S. GILL talking to us more about SLEEP and the eyes.

A good night's rest may not only affect your mood the next day, but also your eyes. Sleep is a way to rejuvenate and refresh not only your body but also your eyes, "recharging" them for the day ahead. When you don't get sleep, your eyes will feel tired, just like how the rest of your body may feel, says Dr Gill.

Sleep is often taken lightly but in fact, it is no laughing matter. People these days are often on the run, having to meet various targets apart from the numerous chores to do in a day. Due to this increased number of work hours, the number of sleep hours is reduced drastically.

It is no secret that the lack of sleep is a cause for a great number of illnesses. Generally, the eyes (and the body too) need at least five hours of rest. When there is inadequate time for the eyes to revive, they will not be able to work to their full potential. A shortage of sleep can also worsen symptoms of dry eye and a person may experience discomfort, light sensitivity, itching, redness, or even blurred vision sometimes.

We spend about one-third of our entire lifetime sleeping. This is not wasted time because from the moment we slip into sleep, a whole cascade of events takes place involving the brain, eyes, immune function, hormones, skin, respiratory system and digestive system. In fact, it plays a crucial role in how energetic and healthy the other two-thirds of our waking hours can be.



Dr. S.S. Gill
Resident Consultant
Ophthalmologist,
Hospital Fatimah

PHASES OF SLEEP

In a typical sleep cycle, there is a pattern of alternating REM (Rapid Eye Movement) and NREM (Non-Rapid Eye Movement) sleep throughout the night in a cycle that repeats itself approximately every 90 minutes. NREM takes up about 75% of the total time for sleep and the other 25% is by REM sleep. You can recognise when a person goes into REM sleep when you see the eyes twitch, with quick movements back and forth under the shut eyelids. Both types of sleep are necessary for optimal health.

NREM SLEEP

When a person first falls asleep, he or she goes into the NREM sleep initially. This sleep phase has four stages from 1-4. In stages 3 and 4, there will be a deep sleep and this is when there is most restoration of the body and to the eyes. During this phase, the blood pressure drops, breathing slows down, muscles become relaxed, repair of the body including the eyes occurs, hormones like growth hormone are released and our energy gets restored.



REM SLEEP

After about 90 minutes, a person goes into REM (Rapid Eye Movement) sleep. Most but not all dreams occur in this phase. Our bodies become relaxed and the muscles are turned off. This is the time that there is provision of energy to the brain and body. REM sleep can last from five to 30 minutes. REM sleep rejuvenates a person.

After the REM sleep phase, the NREM sleep phase starts all over again. The 90 to 110 minute cycle of these two phases repeats about four to six times every night. Most adults would do well with 7 to 8 hours of sleep a night with an adequate number of NREM and REM phases. Rarely for some, they may only need as few as 5 hours or as many as 10 hours of sleep each day. Whatever it is, make sure you have enough sleep because it is the time the body and the eyes get rest, undergoing repair and detoxification. Even animals need sleep to rejuvenate!

For more information, call Gill Eye Specialist Centre at Hospital Fatimah (05-545 5582) or email: gilleyecentre@dr.com.

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Dream Come True for Rubber Estate Girl

When her mother, a rubber tapper from the Harcroft Estate near Sitiawan, was badly hurt whilst collecting latex, Ano Rao knew what her ambition would be; but her dreams were only fulfilled two decades and four children later.

Despite the best efforts of the medical staff at the Ipoh Hospital, Ano's mother suffered a stroke and was bedridden. She was only 29-years old. At the end of the 10-year legal wrangle with her mother's employers, RM8000 compensation was awarded, half of which covered the lawyer's fees.

On receipt of the money, Ano and her father found that they had been shortchanged by RM500. She accompanied her father to see the lawyer in Ipoh and their persistence and patience were rewarded, when after hours of waiting the lawyer met them.

They told him, "RM500 is a lot of money for us." The lawyer apologised for his chief clerk's error, then reimbursed Ano's father. Ano was impressed with the lawyer's conduct and his chambers. Her mind was made up: "Wow. This is nice. One day, I must become a lawyer."

Ano is now an International Human Rights Lawyer, practicing in London. Her other responsibilities include being on the Advisory Panel for Health Protection Agency in the UK, the Advisory Council of Britannia Hindu Temple Trust and the Executive of the Hindu Council.

When were you born? Where were you brought up?

I was born in 1963 and grew up in Ladang Pundut. My primary schooling was at the "Our Ladies" Convent in Sitiawan. I did my Form Five at the Methodist High School in Taman Kok.

And your family background and ancestry?

My father was a fishmonger, but later became a grocer; my mother was a rubber tapper. My grandparents were indentured labourers, brought by the British from Andhra Pradesh, in 1913.

My maternal grandmother worked as a rubber tapper in the Harcroft Estate, which had a big rubber processing plant for the latex collection. Both grandfathers were toddy tappers. My parents grew crops behind our home, mostly for sale, but they gave some of these vegetables to the very poor.

What shaped your ambition to become a lawyer?

I spoke good English at school, liked writing compositions and father used to encourage me in my studies. With my mother's accident, father took out a case against the Ladang Pundut estate. It was a lengthy trial; the whole family suffered.

The visit to the lawyer in Ipoh, to resolve the compensation issue, helped focus me and formed an impressionable and lasting image for a 14-year old. In the air-conditioned room, I remember staring at pictures of the lawyer in his silk wig and black gown, the bookcases containing thick law books, the case files on his desk, the oil portraits of English judges, the big executive chair and the coat stand from which hung the lawyer's gown.

When did you obtain your law degree?

I had an arranged marriage soon after my Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) and we moved to Seremban for my husband's work. After 10 years as a court interpreter, he was accepted to read law at a university in London, but was refused study leave. So, I encouraged him to resign and told him that I would support him.

In 1985, we left our firstborn with my parents and went to London. To make ends meet, I worked in a supermarket and also in a fast food shop. I attended night classes at Birkbeck College, University of London.



THINKING ALLOWED

• by Mariam Mokhtar

My husband graduated in 1992 and in 1996, I received my law degree from London's Guildhall.

How did you end up being a Human Rights lawyer in England with access to the UK Houses of Parliament?

In 2007 I heard about a prominent Malaysian Indian lawyer being jailed and it was my dealings with the temple work in London which prompted me to become a Human Rights Lawyer.

How do you juggle family and work life especially in England, where the support network of family or the convenience of maids, is not readily available?

There was an eight year gap before I had my second child. Later, my mother provided much needed support, when she came over for a year, to settle my eldest child into life in England.

Did your grandparents tell you stories about Malaya's struggle for independence?

I was told that during WWII, several estate workers were taken away to work on the railway lines for the Japanese. Many died and our community had a high proportion of widows.

As a Human Rights lawyer, what do you think of the human rights movement in Malaysia?

Malaysia's human rights record is very poor. There is discrimination, a lack of understanding, no mutual trust nor a shared vision. Race relations are poor and equality does not exist. The judiciary needs to be independent. It appears that Britain is more tolerant and multicultural.

What worries you most when you visit Malaysia? What makes you happy?

Meeting friends, family and former classmates is a joy for me. Sadly, many familiar places no longer exist and people from the estates are scattered. The places which represent our history are gone. And with that loss, the community has also disappeared.

What are your hopes and dreams for Malaysia?

We are in the 21st Century and future generations must learn to avoid conflict. We need to improve race relations and strive for equality. We need good reforms to unite everyone.

Will you live and work in Malaysia?

After my graduation in 1996, the family returned to Malaysia. We attempted to open up a law firm in Sitiawan and Ipoh, but were told we needed a Malay partner. My biggest worry was the children's education. I also wondered if they would be refused scholarships or places at university. There were unfair discriminatory policies for house purchases. In the end, we left.

Have you a message for young Malaysians?

Success in life means you must learn to be persistent and work hard. You also need to stand up for your rights. To have hope, and faith in god are important. If I can do it, so can you.

Malaysian Choral Eisteddfod 2012

The recent 10th Malaysian Choral Eisteddfod (MCE) outreach programme and International Competition 2012 held here was a "great success" said its founder and Director Ms Susanna Saw at the end of the 3-day event. The event was organized in collaboration with the *Perak Society of Performing Arts*.

For the uninitiated the word Eisteddfod (*ahy-steth-vod*) is music terminology where artists, poets or musicians of their artistic craft get together for their annual competitive festival.

There are two components to the festival, the Choir Competition, where choirs showcase their talents and compete in a competition and the Choral Festival workshops which are conducted with international and renowned guest tutors. The event concluded with a concert for the closing ceremony.

Indeed the mood at the closing ceremony on the final night was exuberant and all the participants exuded a genuinely joyous presentation during their performance as further testimony of the



success of the event "where singers are able to transform an event into a magical and glorious experience".

A total of 16 choirs took part in this year's festival originating from KL, Selangor, Perak, East Malaysia and Singapore.

The international jury comprised of Branko Stark from Croatia, Francis Liew from Singapore and Dr Yap Jin Hin from Malaysia.

The event was divided into two categories, children and youth where the more experienced choirs were seen sharing their knowledge with the newer choirs enabling all participants to have an enlightening experience said Saw, the event's Director. Similarly juror, Yap, too described the event as being "very spontaneous throughout the 3-day event".

The Youth Mixed Voices Category was won by SMK Seafeld while SJK (C) Chung Cheng was the champion in the Childrens Choir category.

After the event was over the choirs joined to sing a lively number, *Sin Jay Jay*, the Zulu tribal song which had everyone singing and clapping along.

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MUSINGS ON FOOD



By See Foon Chan-Koppen

Photos by Ginla Foo

seefoon@ipohecho.com.my

SeeFoon gets tongue Thai'd in Bercham

Thai food is known for the 4Ss: Sweet, Sour, Salty and Spicy mediated by an artful combination of herbs and aromatic gingers that lend to this cuisine its unique characteristics.

While I have a predilection for sour, salty and spicy, it is a rare find to discover a kitchen that will not bow to the local penchant for added sugar and tempers its dishes and delivers food that is not syrupy sweet as I'm finding in many restaurants that purports to serve Thai food.

So thanks to my foodie friend Ginla Foo's peripatetic wanderings in search of new and interesting good eats, finding **Sabay** (which means comfortable and relaxed in Thai) that serves authentic Thai food without the heavy handed addition of sugar was a real treat.

Authentic Thai Food

The restaurant is only five months old, an airy and clean 'coffee-shop style' restaurant helmed by a Thai lady Sujittra Yeap in the kitchen. Sujittra is no stranger to the restaurant business, having run one for the past 15 years with her husband in another location in Bercham. Hence on the night we went, the place was populated by regulars who come here for her authentic Thai food.

We started with the green mango salad, tart, tinged with adequate sweetness, spicy and appetising – RM8.



Then followed two of Thailand's most ubiquitous dishes, the **Green Curry** and the Tom Yam soup, the quality of which is my usual yardstick for measuring how good a particular Thai kitchen is.

The **Tom Yam soup** arrived piping hot, chock-full of herbs – galangal, lemon grass, kaffir lime

leaves, cauliflower, mushrooms and broccoli and fresh-tasting prawns. It was spicy, tangy and not sugary which was a real bonus. Slurping and blubbing their way through, my guests found themselves yearning for more – RM18.

The steamed fish which arrived on a steamer platter still bubbling over, was a very fresh Garupa. In typical Thai style, the sauce was laced with pickled lime, tomatoes, lemon grass, and lengkuas. The meat was firm and sweet with the herbs lending their special flavours to the sauce which we scooped up and drank like soup – RM33.

Next came their **Sakura pork** (raised without antibiotics, hormones or beta-agonists) spicy sliced pork sauteed with long beans and flavoured by a very special Thai ginger called 'Kha' which is not available locally and need to be sourced from Thailand. Milder with a thickish sauce, the meat tender and succulent – RM12.

Their **fish cakes** had to be some of the best I've ever tasted. Called 'Tod Mun Pla' this dish is found on most Thai menus in Thailand and the recipe varies from one to another. The ones in Sabay were of the rustic kind, not shaped in patties to perfection but rather just hand-formed in irregular shapes, with chopped long beans and kaffir lime leaves being the predominant flavouring. They arrived springy and resistant yet soft



enough and pliable with a smooth mouth feel – RM12.

The final dish was what looked like a green vegetable omelette which to my surprise, turned out to be **Cha-Om** the climbing wattle or Acacia shoot which is touted to have health giving properties and widely eaten in Thailand but never seen in Malaysia – RM10.

Apparently Sujittra goes to Haadyai once a month to pick up her Thai supplies, which is what lends her food the authentic Thai taste. Add to this

her willingness to make certain Thai specials which are not on the menu (not that there is a printed menu, all the recommendations are verbal) provided the ingredients are on hand, makes this one Thai restaurant I will return to over and over again.

Sabay Thai Food

#2-1 Laluan Tasek Timur 15, Taman Mewah Bercham, Bercham.

Sugittra Yeap: 016-545 8617 or

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Open: 12pm-3pm; 6pm-9.00pm

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RECIPE

By Pauline Chang



Long Beans in Miso Paste

(Suitable for vegetarians)

Ingredients:

300g Long Beans
2 (long) Brinjals
2 Tbsp Miso Paste (mashed)
Oil for frying
Tomato slices for garnishing
Chilli – sliced (optional)

Method:

- Cut long beans and brinjals into short lengths.
- Deep fry in hot oil until half cooked.
- Remove from oil and place on absorbent paper.
- Leave some oil (2 Tbsp) to fry miso paste until dissolved.
- Garnish with tomato slices.



HAWKER FOOD

By VWSL

Pisang Goreng



Pisang Goreng (*Goreng Pisang*) or deep-fried banana fritters, whichever way you say it, is one of Malaysia's favourite tea-time snacks. Usually sold at roadside stalls, there are mainly two kinds of batter – Chinese or Malay. Chinese batter is crispy whilst Malay batter makes a crunchier texture. Some customers even ask for extra bits of crunchy fried batter. While both are best eaten hot, the Chinese batter tends to get soggy faster as it cools. A much sought-after banana (but not easily available) the 'king of bananas', *pisang raja*, makes ideal banana fritters. Other popular and easily available bananas are *pisang awak*, *pisang abu*, *pisang nangka*, etc. Whatever banana is used, the keys to a good *Pisang Goreng* are a ripe banana, a crisp batter and that it must be eaten just fried or while still warm.

A few recommendations:

- **Stall at the car park in Greentown Nova (next to KWSP) facing Jalan Greentown**
Pisang nangka and *pisang abu* – *pisang nangka* nice and ripe
Opens from 11am; closed Saturdays and Sundays.
- **Stall at corner of Lengkok Canning and Jalan Canning Estate (near 7-Eleven), Ipoh Garden**
Lovely *pisang abu* best eaten just fried.
Opens from 2.30pm; closed Saturdays and Sundays.
- **Stall at Laluan Perajurit 1 (off Jalan Perajurit), Ipoh Garden East**
Pisang awak and *pisang abu*.
Opens from 1pm everyday except Friday.
- **Stall at Bulatan Cherry (Off Maxwell Road/Jalan Tun Abdul Razak) opposite Maxwell Corner Mini Pasar**
Pisang abu – the batter stays crispy longer.
Opens everyday in the afternoon from 2pm.
- **Stall at Lorong Taman 11, Taman Pertama**
Pisang abu. Opens everyday from 2pm.



News Roundup

Mr Olympia Launches Supplements in Ipoh



Ronnie Coleman, eight times Mr Olympia from 1998 till 2005 was in town recently to promote his brand of body building supplements called the “Ronnie Coleman Signature Series”. The launch was held at the ‘Muszle Warrior’ Gym at Pasir Puteh, owned and operated by Ms El Lye who also happens to be a bodybuilder.

Coleman, 48, said he took up bodybuilding as a hobby and has been at it for 36 years. Admitting that he has been endorsing other brands of supplements for 15 years, he decided over a year ago that he would create his own line of supplements and he would “make it better than anyone else’s”. Today, Coleman’s supplements are sold in 95 countries around the world and its sales revenues for the first year was USD15 million.

Also present at the launch, in addition to the regular gym members, was Ms Tess Lee from Taiwan. Lee, who participates in female bodybuilding competitions in Taiwan, said that Lye was her online trainer for almost two years and this was her first time meeting Lye in person.

JAG

Pangkor International Development Dialogue



Some 250 delegates attended the first Pangkor International Development Dialogue (PIDD) held in Impiana Hotel. The event was jointly organised by Institute Darul Ridzuan (IDR), University Pendidikan Sultan Idris, University Technology MARA, Seri Iskandar, University Technology Petronas and University Sains Malaysia. In his welcome address, Dato’ Seri Dr Abdul Rahman bin Hashim, CEO, IDR said that the dialogue was aptly themed as Socio Economic Transformation for the People. There were 15 renowned speakers including four from overseas who are experts in their fields. This is the first of a series of dialogue sessions which are to be held annually.

In his keynote address, MB Dato’ Seri Diraja Dr Zambry bin Abdul Kadir said that this prelude conference seeks new directions on the issues of sustainable development to enhance the socio-economic transformation of the people as well as strengthening the overall position of Perak within Malaysia and International contexts.

Zambry added that Perak rose to prominence more than 160 years ago with the discovery of tin in Taiping and ushered in an era of industrialisation and the state became the economic epicentre of the country. Until the collapse of the tin industry in early eighties, Perak contributed 50 per cent of the GDP of the country. With the collapse of the tin industry, growth declined and development ground to a halt. The state government has taken proactive measures to migrate from an agro based economy to a knowledge and technology based economy.

The MB informed that the growth rate of the state was below the national average. The government and private sectors must work together and increase the growth rate to the national level.

AJ

Parkinson’s Disease

With everyone stressing over common diseases such as heart attacks, cancer, diabetes, and many other more well-known negative medical conditions, little attention has been given to lesser-known conditions like Parkinson’s disease.

The public forum organised by the Malaysian Parkinson’s Disease Association held at the Syuen Hotel in Ipoh, had a surprising but pleasantly high turnout. The forum, a first for Ipoh, was organised to create awareness and understanding about Parkinson’s disease among the sufferers, caregivers and the public. It is hoped that with more knowledge on the symptoms and signs, early medical intervention can be sought.

Professor Dr Lim Shen-Yang, a Parkinson’s disease Specialist and Consultant Neurologist with UMMC and UMSC, took the time to explain the misconceptions and trials and tribulations of this disease common to sufferers and support teams such as medical staff and caregivers. He also touched a little on the latest developments and inroads being made for the better understanding and treatment of the disease. Lack of funding is one of the main challenges faced by those working feverishly to create a better future for these sufferers. Dr Tan Ai Huey graciously translated the gist of Professor Lim’s presentation for the benefit of the non English-speaking crowd. Mr Tarun Amalnekar who is a Physiotherapist and Lecturer at the Masterskill Global College in Ipoh was also present to contribute valuable insight into the workings of this disease and therapies used to enhance sufferers’ lifestyles and abilities to cope. Mr Tarun emphasized the need to exercise regularly, to benefit both body and mind. Also present were Ms Lau and Mr Samuel Ng who both generously shared their personal experiences with this debilitating disease. Their courage and perseverance is a testimony to living a full life, in spite of the disease.

Most sufferers attest to the onset of this disease being both silently gradual and usually without clear signs. However, from a medical standpoint there are signs that can be observed because this disease is degenerative and attacks the central nervous system. These signs would include shaking, rigidity, slowness of general movement and difficulty with walking and gait. Later signs would include cognitive and behavioural problems with dementia commonly occurring in the more advanced stages of the disease.

Actor Michael J Fox, boxer Muhammad Ali, professional cyclist and Olympic medallist David Phinney are among the more famous personalities that suffer from Parkinson’s disease. These individuals have done a lot to create awareness about Parkinson’s disease.

Serena Mui

Foundation Mission Fulfilled



Yayasan Bina Upaya Darul Ridzuan’s (YBU) mission to assist the poor and the marginalised is not confined to Perak alone. The foundation’s outreach programme breached international boundaries when members of the Perak Media Club visited Narmada, a village in West Lombok, Indonesia recently. Narmada is within striking distance of Lombok’s capital, Mataram.

The 18-strong Perak media team had just scaled Indonesia’s second highest active volcano, Gunung Rinjani on this popular Indonesian Island chain east of the Lombok Strait. Led by the Prime Minister’s Press Secretary, Datuk Akmar Hisham Mokhles, the team stopped by the Al-Ikhas Orphanage which housed 35 orphans to deliver goodies and a message of goodwill from Yayasan Bina Upaya Darul Ridzuan.

On hand to receive the visitors was orphanage manager, Muhammad Jailani Nur. An elated Nur told the gathering crowd that the gesture was exceptional. “We’ve been in existence since 1978 and this is the first time we received guests and gifts from Malaysia.” Nur was appreciative of YBU’s altruism and heaped praises on the foundation and the press club members. “It’s truly remarkable and thoughtful of you to do so,” said Nur.

The visit to the orphanage was part of the climbers’ week-long mission to plant the Perak flag on top the 3,726 metres (12,224 ft) high volcano. Apart from the successful ascent, the trip was also to promote Perak in conjunction with Visit Perak Year 2012.

RM



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Lifestyle

Social Networking – Live @ Barbeza

Joanna Gough

Many things come out from sitting down having cocktails, especially when three ladies and one man are concerned. The thing about drinks is that it brings out the happier/stronger more boisterous side of anyone. And in that group of people, everyone started talking about their love lives. So at Barbeza the story of “How it was difficult to meet anyone in Ipoh”, emerged.

“As an expat, it’s difficult to meet a decent man here” said the 29 year old who had never had a boyfriend. The Indian doctor who is just back from Russia’s Medical University had no friends left in Ipoh and is bored waiting for his posting. Regardless of age from 21 to 50, it was difficult to socialize in Ipoh city or to meet anyone new.

So in 10 minutes we found a solution to this problem: “Let’s try speed dating”. Planned for October 12 and 13, Barbeza sponsored the venue and even concocted a special drink to support the event: Cupid’s Arrow. A zing of passion fruit, vodka and citrus. A light refreshing drink to make anyone feel alive after a hard day’s work.

The event’s marketing and promotions were supposed to be small. Kept to only three days before the event and to 1200 flyers for door to door offline marketing. The reason for the conservative marketing was to maintain an intimate and cozy environment in a conservative society. If the hype was too big, people might feel even more shy. Giving out the 1200 flyers to banks, law firms, engineering companies in particular areas, we reached a small registration of 10 people – 6 men and 4 women. A decent number with a few calls preferring to walk in than to register online.

By Wednesday, the registration had increased to 15 people, having more men than women by a ratio of 3:1. The phone calls were mostly men enquiring how the event would function and for how long, etc. Some men had straightforwardly called to ask how many women were registered. The inclination of our two age groups were also that many 30 to 35 year olds preferred to attend the younger age group rather than the older one. In comparison to the rest of the world, Ipoh’s social standards were the opposite of the norm.

Wednesday night, SpeedDating Ipoh was contacted by a Facebook fan page “All About Ipoh” to see if they could share our poster to the 22,000 liked audience on their Facebook page. Needless to say, as it was already the eve of the event and it looked really last minute, we didn’t think that people would take it seriously. Usually in online marketing, last minute events never get positive feedback. What more in Ipoh. So we figured, why not?

However, to our amazement, in 2 to 3 hours the shared poster garnered more than 40 shares instantly and from there, people started tagging their friends and saying, “Finally!!! Ipoh is moving forward!!!” People wanted to go. It was exciting and there was adrenaline pumping.

Phone calls started coming in.

Thursday – Day of the event: Text messages flooded the contact number. People were calling all day. And I as the organizer, was setting up chairs and name cards around the room. I was texting and answering calls as well. The day was busy.

The event was set for 7pm – NO ONE showed up

For some obscure reason, the hype had failed to turn into attendance. Bartender Lips and I sat down and talked. It was puzzling, as even his customers were excited to hear about the speed dating event happening. Whether men or women. There was a sense of excitement to it.

Eight-ish pm. As time went on, men in shorts and slippers started peering into the shop, peeking to see what’s going on. Some were in sports shoes, low jeans and un-ironed shirts. You could tell that they were there for the event, but just looking to see if anything was going on. Nothing was happening, so they left rather than to find out more. The event was a failure but I was determined to find out why.

A cross analysis of Ipoh’s speed dating event with managers from KL, Singapore and Google’s America sites showed that at any speed dating, there will always be more women than men. Always. It was more difficult to attract men as they were less sociable and

macho-male egos would prefer to do it “the old fashioned way”. Women, would attend these events to have a good night socializing and have free drinks. City standards also have shown that people in speed dating events were more inclined to lean towards older age groups than the younger age group.

Ipoh has it’s own identity

A track back to the Facebook media showed that people moved in groups. The ‘Shares’ showed that people were tagging their friends as they got excited going through the media. That’s when I realized that Ipoh’s social environment had no western influence. Ipoh moves in circles and not straight lines. From youngsters to adults, no matter what race, people move in groups. This could be a result of Ipoh’s strong family centric society.

After the event as the days went by,

I, as organizer was still receiving text messages from people about the speed dating event. People wanted to know when the next speed dating event was going to be held.

I realised that there was a basic need for socializing in Ipoh that needs to be fulfilled. It wasn’t only the singles. It was the whole city, the 20 year olds, the 45-year-old women, 67-year-old businessmen, married couples, the accountants, 18-year-old college students, etc. There is a hankering to socialize and if it wasn’t dating, it must be for friendships and (non-intimate) relationships. I then created SpeedyChatz.

SpeedyChatz is a Facebook Group page www.facebook.com/groups/speedychatz where people join in the chats by making fast introductions to who they are, what they do, hobbies, interests and sometimes pure nonsense talks. Depending on personality, you would see it differently. A late 30s lady had claimed that the group made her feel so young and alive. A 50-plus lady decided that it’s too young for her. All in all, the page is clear. People go there to introduce themselves and to find like minded people who enjoy doing interesting and remarkable things.

As the economies of scale allow it, Ipoh people don’t have to be only from Ipoh, SpeedyChatz seems to have been picked up by some Melbourne Ipohites. The chats become more Australian centric but common interests still unites them. For the men it was food and for two ladies who are now in talks of a collaboration, network marketing. A good way of doing business is through communications, ‘chatting’ seems to help.

UTP students too have picked up on the hype and we’ve got our foreign students sharing their interests from places like Tehran, Iran. Some enjoying ballet, others cooking and one who is a translator for the internationally renown Khan Academy. Educationalists, students, stockbrokers, investment bankers, etc. – everyone ‘chats’. The evolution of this group page now sees that people are making new virtual friends and as organizer, my next move is to take this socializing offline, into reality to unite the city.

Scheduled for December 7, SpeedyChatz brings out people to get to know each other for the fun of it. Meet 20 to 40 friends in one night and sit down to talk to them for 4 minutes. Keep in touch through Facebook. Laugh, have fun and win tickets to go around town, watch movies and travel. We’ll also be giving out tickets to Swedish House Mafia’s Concert held January 18, 2013 at Sunway Lagoon Surf Beach.

It’s always better to party in a group than alone. Join Us. Call Joanna Gough@+60165177295 for further enquiries.



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Children's Holiday Fun

Susan Ho

The school holidays are finally here. Searching for school holiday programmes and holiday fun for your children? Here's what Ipoh has to offer throughout the month of December.

Cheers Club registrations are still open at all AEON Shopping Centres. Cheers Club is open to kids aged 6 to 14 years old and they provide back-to-nature activities during school holidays. They get to learn how to protect our local flora and fauna. Sign up now and receive an exclusive New Cheers Club Member Welcome Kit (T-shirt, cap, bag, notebook with pen & membership card) for free. A non-refundable one-time registration fee is charged at RM20. It is usually conducted during the months of June and November but it has been postponed to December this year. For more information, please call AEON at 1300 80 3535 or drop by their website at www.aeonretail.com.my.

ITKing is providing a 1-day and 2-day camp for children ages 7 to 15. The Robotics 1-day camp teaches students to assemble a robot while acquiring problem solving skills. This is a great opportunity for students to get exposed to technology, engineering, creativity and teamwork.

- ITKing Ipoh Garden South
Time: 10am-5.30pm
Dates: Dec 03, 04, 05, 06, 07; 17, 18, 19, 20, 21
- ITKing First Garden
Time: 10am-5.30pm
Dates: Dec 10, 11, 12, 13, 14; 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

Children learn by creating digital games in the animation 2-day camp at ITKing. Students will be exposed to both animation and game creations. With an extremely fun learning environment, students would acquire abstract programming concepts and teambuilding skills while working together to produce their first digital game.

- ITKing Ipoh Garden South
Time: 10am-5.30pm
Dates: Dec 19 and 20
For further information, kindly contact:
- ITKing Computer Training Centre (Ipoh Garden South)
No. 35A&35A-1, Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah Utara, Taman Ipoh Selatan, 31400 Ipoh.
Tel.: 05-5487601 or 016-5011956.

D'Artiz Studio Dance Academy will be having a Holiday Junior Dance Course for kids below 12 years every Sunday at 12-1.30pm in December. It is to let the younger generation understand the Hip Hop culture and create positive knowledge towards it, to develop a good and healthy lifestyle. During classes, they would boost their confidence level, musicality and creativity and realize their hidden talents. They will also learn to work as one as they perform in a group. The fee for the one month course is RM65. There will not be any registration or advanced payment.

- 20A Off Jalan Ng Soon Teik, Taman Pertama, 30100 Ipoh.
- 1F 22, Persiaran Bercham Selatan 20, Glamour Square, 31400 Ipoh.
- 19A Tingkat 1, Persiaran Batu Karang, Taman Kolej Perdana, Kampar.
- For more information, contact: Nicklaur Kok 010-3772361.



Community

NASAM Perak Walk For Health

A beautiful sunny day and the enthusiastic support of the public, helped to make the NASAM Perak Walk for Health 2012, a resounding success. Families and friends turned up to support the stroke victims and the NASAM organisers to achieve the goal of creating a heightened awareness of Stroke Disease. One in every six Malaysians is at risk of experiencing a stroke and it is documented to be the third highest common cause of death among Malaysians. Dr Barry's message of living a healthy lifestyle with lots of exercise, healthy eating habits and keeping stress levels



under control was the theme encouraged to live by.

The generosity of various sponsors also helped make the event more exciting with giveaways, gifts, prizes and health checks. The event was flagged off as scheduled and many stroke victims participated in the challenge to walk around the grounds. It was heartwarming to witness the public and loved ones cheering and encouraging the stroke victims in their quest to make the challenging walk. There were some curious onlookers from other events and those out for their Sunday exercises, who eventually participated in showing support for the stroke victims by joining in the walk too.

The show of solidarity and commitment towards this awareness campaign was evident in the smiling faces of those participating in the event. The supportive and caring side of the public was evident as they came out to participate; walking alongside the stroke victims and helping them feel good. The Su La Chin group in their bright red t-shirts was also there to support the stroke victims and help to contribute to the awareness campaign.

The event ended with prizes given out to the stroke victims to acknowledge their enthusiastic participation. There was also a lucky draw and a short speech given by Ms Irene who is an integral part of the NASAM "family" thanking everyone for their support and participation.

Serena Mui

Sport

Rugby: Ten-a-Side U-15 National Competition

The recent National 10-a-side U-15 Rugby Tournament held at Sekolah Tunku Abdul Rahman (STAR) organised by the Perak School Sports Council under its organising chairman Tuan Hj Mohd Idris b Hj Ramli, was a super event.

Hitherto referred to as “a game of hooligans played by gentlemen” this description should conjure up an image of how the game is played. Players pulling shirts, tackling legs and other teammates then piling on top of each other just to get hold of the rugby ball.

The last time the event was held at the school grounds was 31 years ago. Back then too, STAR was the first winner of U-15 championship. This year’s tournament saw a total of 32 school teams participating, 18 of which are boarding schools.

The champion for this year’s event was Sekolah Datuk Abdul Razak from Negeri Sembilan while the runner-up was SM Sains Selangor. Perak’s STAR, despite putting up a spirited performance throughout the competition, took third place.

MSSM’s (Majlis Sukan Sekolah Malaysia) technical chairman Raja Idris Raja Ali complimented the good organisation of the event and similarly too for the logistics, lodging as well as the venue.

For those interested in rugby, take note that the Under 12 and 18 National Championships are scheduled to be held at the STAR grounds next year during the first term school holidays.

JAG



Nine-a-Side Hockey Invitation-2012



This invitation was extended to schools and clubs in Perak but with a condition that no Sports or Project schools were allowed to participate, which extended to players who have represented the Perak Combined Schools, Perak or Malaysia.

This provided others a chance to excel and show off their individual skills and talents in this sport. Overall a total of 16 teams had registered with one late pullout from an Ipoh team.

The major sponsor for Kelab Sukan 30-50 Ipoh Junior Hockey Development Programme is Action Sports Foundation, a HongKong based company. The CEO/Founder, Mr Ahmed Khan took time off from his busy schedule to attend the event and he was very pleased with the turnout and the support from the teams in making this event successful.

However, despite having been invited, the relevant sports bodies in Ipoh did not turn up; nor was there anyone to spot the budding talents being showcased for future selections.

The finals ended in a draw after extra time and the match ended with sudden death penalty strokes resulting in the Pythons defeating the Mambas 1-0.

Kelab Sukan 30-50 Ipoh together with sponsor, Action Sports Foundation, organised a 9-a-side Hockey Invitation-2012 at the Stadium Sultan Azlan Shah Ipoh recently.

Perak Muhibbah Challenge Trophy

For the seventh year running, KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital and Winner Sports Enterprise jointly organised the 3-on-3 *Perak Muhibbah Challenge Trophy*. The two-day badminton tournament, pitting teams consisting of members of different races, was held at the SJK (C) Yuk Choy, Ipoh hall recently.

The tournament, with a prize of almost RM50,000 in cash and in kind, attracted nearly 480 players, making up 159 teams, from Perak, Kuala Lumpur and Penang. This overwhelming response was the best in the history of the game and is the most successful privately-organised badminton tournament in Perak.

There were seven categories, namely Open Mixed, Novice Mixed, Men’s Novice, Women’s Novice, Junior Novice, Junior Veteran and Senior Veteran. Open Mixed was a new category this year. Age-group categories will be introduced next year.

The objective was to encourage more people to play badminton for a healthier lifestyle. The organisers hoped more sponsors would come forward in the future. They too hoped that the Perak Sports Council would provide the much needed support and recognition.

Emily



Community

Deepavali Open House Attracts Large Crowd

Perak hosted the National-level Deepavali Open House held at the open field of Infoternak, Sungei Siput on Saturday, November 17. The occasion was graced by none other than the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak himself.

Prior to the mammoth event the Prime Minister visited three Indian families in Kampong Ramasmy which is located within Ladang Dovenby near Sungei Siput. The three, who had fallen on hard times, were Subramaniam Seniapan, Loghanathan Raman and Supammah Ramaya. Najib gave RM1000 to each family, a hamper containing daily necessities and a plaque to denote the auspicious occasion.

At the launch of the open house, where some 25,000 revellers were present, Najib reminded the crowd of his

commitment to raise the living standards of the Indians in tandem with his much-touted transformation programmes. He alluded to the generous allocations for social services in Budget 2013 as a guide. Najib called upon them to uphold the spirit of “Numbike” in order to boost public confidence in the government.

The crowd helped themselves to the huge spread consisting largely of Indian delicacies. While they ate, crooner M. Daud Kilau belted some of his favourite dangdut oldies. This was interspersed with songs and dances by local Indian performers.

Among the dignitaries present were Chief Minister Dato’ Seri DiRaja Zambry Abd Kadir and two federal ministers, Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim and Datuk Seri G. Palanivel.

RM



Property

Klebang Set to Grow

Klebang looks set to develop into *Ipoh 2* somewhat similar to *Seremban 2* in Negeri Sembilan. A portion of this thriving Ipoh suburb, along Jalan Kuala Kangsar, appropriately named Precinct 8, is now being earmarked for development by Team Keris Berhad, a leading Ipoh property developer.

The good news is the willingness of Team Keris Berhad to increase the size of the precinct's green lung from the mandatory 10 per cent to 15 per cent. To show its commitment to a greener Ipoh, in conformity with Ipoh City Council's motto, "*Bersih, Hijau dan Membangun*" ("Clean, Green and Progressive"), a tree-planting ceremony was conducted by the developer on Wednesday, November 21. The ceremony was graced by the mayor, Dato' Hj Roshidi Hashim and Team Keris Berhad's Executive Chairman, Dato' Lee Seng Hee.

"I am certain Klebang will be attractive to both investors and dwellers, as it is located in an ideal spot which is easily accessible," said Roshidi to reporters after the tree-planting ceremony and the launching of a showhouse. "The developer's

keenness to enlarge the size of its green lung is exemplary."

Precinct 8 will be served by three shopping malls, some international-class restaurants and other amenities befitting its stature.

On the issue of the contentious Kuala Kangsar-Meru road, the mayor said that the road will be built once problems relating to land acquisition are resolved. "Presently, three of the five landowners have agreed to a settlement. Hopefully, the remaining two will accede in due time."

RM



Community

Brothers in Dire Straits

The two Othman siblings from Gerik never anticipated that life in the land of plenty could be so difficult. Born to parents from a rural background they never knew what lay beyond their run-down hovel in Kampong Perah, Gerik which had been their home since birth.

Elder brother Muhammad Faizul Othman, 16, suffers from cerebral palsy, a non-progressive, non-contagious motor condition that inhibits physical development, especially body movements.

The teenager has been bedridden since birth. "He was born premature," said his mother, Shamsiah Wahid, 44. "The difficult childbirth had affected his nervous system and was the primary cause of his condition," she recalled.

Younger sibling Muhammad Mokthar, 9, was diagnosed as diabetic two years ago. Othman's eight other children are fine but being at the bottom of the social ladder, they face a bleak future.

Othman Mohammad, 58, is a daily-rated worker at a rubber-processing factory in Gerik. He makes about RM30 a day, which is barely enough to sustain his family of 12.

"Medical expenses for my two sick boys are high," he told Ipoh Echo. "Muhammad Faizul requires disposable nappies, milk and solid food. This sets me back about RM600 a month. Muhammad Mokthar needs periodical insulin injections to keep his illness in check."

The RM300 Othman receives monthly from the state welfare department helps defray the cost of maintaining the spastic boy but it is grossly insufficient. So the father has to supplement his income by working harder in the village. "But the jobs I do are so unpredictable.



When it rains I am out of work," he lamented.

Yayasan Bina Upaya Darul Ridzuan (YBU) was informed of the Othmans' plight. During the course of the foundation's programmed walkabout in Gerik recently, volunteers descended on the village in numbers. Hairul Anwar, the Chief Financial Officer of YBU led the volunteers in cleaning and sprucing up the Othmans' house. The exterior and interior were given a new coat of paint. Weeds around the house were removed and overgrown shrubs were trimmed. The presence of renowned television personality, Cat Farish, a YBU volunteer, provided colour to the event. Hairul gave some much needed aids, including a cash donation, to Shamsiah Wahid.

"The fact that we're prepared to come this far amplifies the foundation's commitment to eradicating poverty in Perak," exclaimed Hairul.

RM



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.

Purpose of Baby Hatch

One of the many problems plaguing our society today is abandoned babies. If we fail to address this social menace, I fear it may one day transform into a new culture thus paving the way towards total disaster.

"Baby Hatch" is not something new. It has been in existence for centuries. It was common during medieval times. It was known as "foundling wheels" where women could leave their "unwanted" children in secret instead of killing them.

The main reason why newborns are abandoned is because they are born out of wedlock. Today, baby hatches are intended to be used by mothers who are unable to bring up their babies and do not wish to divulge their identity.

In India and Pakistan, the purpose of baby hatches is to provide an alternative to female infanticide, which occurs due to socio-economic factors.

Whatever the reasons are, I am totally against it, as it is inhumane. What has happened to human values? Parents and teachers must play their roles in instilling good values in children. Public must be made aware of the cruel act and stringent laws be enacted to punish the perpetrators.

Even animals take care of their young. They do not allow others to touch them. What a shame to call ourselves human beings, in the first place.

It is heart-wrenching to see pictures of abandoned babies left to die in toilets and rubbish bins. Reported cases may just be the tip of the iceberg. Many go unreported while some are given away illegally for adoption.

With the making of baby hatch mandatory at hospitals (private and public) by the Health Ministry and the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, it is hoped that the number of abandoned babies will be reduced significantly.

R. James Ratnam

President Love and Welfare Society Kinta, Ipoh

Corrections Required

Re: Your published Report headed "Dato' Brother Vincent Corkery..." has three unacceptable errors which I require to be corrected

I am writing to you especially at the bequest of my former Literary Agent (now retired) who, having looked after me for several decades, still keeps a caring and watchful eye over my professional life, from the U.K.

I refer to the identification of myself as a "Socialite", thereby negating a half century's hard work, global recognition and even considerable admiration, in at least over half a dozen Creative Disciplines. Any one of which would, more correctly and appropriately, have identified me. So, I find "Ipoh Socialite" to be damaging.

'SOCIALITE' is the label for one whose prime identity is that of someone being seen prominently and frequently attending Society's gatherings...but who, clearly has no other more valid identity. Whereas, I am a prizewinning author, journalist, composer, singer, culinary expert, prize-winning documentary maker, etc. I request a prominent and immediate correction

I note that a very recent reference to me in the Ipoh Echo, dignifiedly and simply referred to me, just by name. That was wholly acceptable.

Two more errors in that same feature, however, also need correction.

Re: my father Dr M.E. Tiruchelvam, FRCS. He was not a Dato' as stated by your report. Far more significantly and importantly, he was Malaysia's and Singapore's first specialist, in any field of medicine or surgery, way back in the 1920s. He was also the first 'Malayan', in 1946, to break the jealously guarded 'glass ceiling' for top jobs strictly reserved for "Whites Only" by the British, when he was appointed State Surgeon, in 1946. After this, many restrictive barriers in other areas, too, came tumbling down.

He was the chairman of the Board of Governors of St Michael's Institution for close on three decades – and not just as an ordinary board member as reported by your paper – "with a very significant impact on its aims and functions", as expressed by Brother Vincent, in his speech.

Kindly correct all errors.

Sharmini Tiruchelvam

Calling All Change Agents in Ipoh

Joanna Gough

TED.com is an Annual Conference of Technology, Entertainment and Design that began in Monterey, California (1990) and is now described as: "The Gathering of Exceptional Individuals, all with the ability to make a difference", says Don Levy, Senior Vice President of Sony Pictures.

"TED consists of a series of talks given by 'Big Thinkers' discussing 'BIG Ideas' and is attended by many of the world's leading scientists, academics and business leaders" says the BBC. Prominent names paying tribute, describing and praising the idea of Ideas. This IDEA of TED is to celebrate great speakers, thinkers and doers – people with ideas that are passionately held and clearly put out.

"Ideas Worth Spreading"

TEDxIpoh is a non-profit event created in the spirit of TED's mission: Ideas Worth Spreading. Focusing on brilliant individuals residing within the city's Borders, it aims to connect these people on an intellectually stimulating platform (with the general public) to enhance the very way in which we live our everyday lives and to push the human race forward. Three brilliant speakers from Ipoh, will touch the very core values of Ipoh City's people and show us the astounding capabilities of who we really are.

BESKAL: Journey of a Bicycle Bag

First talk will be on *BESKAL: Journey of a Bicycle Bag*. This idea was created 10 years ago by a teenage boy from SMK Dato Megat Khas who could not afford the extra RM15 to put his bicycle on the school bus. BMX Extreme Games Rider, Nik Mohd Misuarie made a bag in which to carry his BMX Bicycle. By putting the bicycle in a bag, it cuts the extra charge of RM15.

The idea has now re-emerged from PORT, Ipoh as a business and Nik has just returned home from competing as Malaysia's representative at *The World Creative Business Cup* held in Copenhagen with the ranking of Top 8 Businesses to Watch Out For. The talk will focus on how this Bag is going to change the lifestyle design of corporate structures and urban cities around Asia.

TEDx Ipoh

x = independently organized TED event

Date : 13th December 2012
Time : 7pm (Registration)
Venue : Sekeping Kong Heng
Jalan Bandar Timah, Old Town, Ipoh

LIKE our facebook page
www.facebook.com/tedxipoh
to Register for the event and
be further updated on Ongoings

For Further Enquiries, contact
Ina Tajuddin @+60165572474
Joanna Gough @+60165177295

I Am a Brand

Second speaker: Director of Institut Darul Ridzuan, Roslan Abdullah, comes from in-depth experience with names like Coca-Cola, Levis, Petronas, MAS and many more. His talk, I Am A Brand: shows the essence of people and how each and every individual in this city is a brand that directs the way Ipoh moves. Our economy depends strongly on who we are and how we carry ourselves. The branding that we exude in the city does not depend on external factors but on ideas, and ideas stem from People. And that's how you build a city – 'You build Yourself'.

All About Choice

Howard Lee, founder of Prospect strongly believes in turning Ideals into Ideas. Coming from Poi Lam Primary School, Howard's life changed when a priest in London opened doors for him by giving him a space in a school in the UK. At the age of 10/11, he chose the independent life to go to the UK. While abroad he grew up in a grey seaside town while working in the kitchens of asian restaurants from age 14, before slowly moving into the corporate world. Having been exposed to the globalized world from such a young age, on coming back to Ipoh in 2008, he was shocked to find home to be a city of dead ends. Howard Lee's passion is CHOICE because he chooses to believe that people have choices in life. Howard Lee believes in the greater possibility of creating choices and that anyone is able to live the life they want with the capacity of the human mind and that you can change the world you live in.

Three brilliant minds from three respective industries making decisions for the greater good of Ipoh.

Ipoh is changing and very fast; and *TEDxIpoh* is the platform that is connecting all changers. So if you think you'd like to create change, come and join *TEDxIpoh*.

Date: December 13

Time: 7pm [Registration Opens] 8pm [Talks Begin]

Venue: Sekeping Kong Heng, Jalan Bandar Timah, Old Town, Ipoh.

Facebook Page: <http://www.facebook.com/tedxipoh>

Seating is limited. Please email joannagough@gmail.com to register/book seats or call Ina Tajudin@016-5572474 or Joanna Gough@016-5177295 for further enquiries.

News Roundup

Retrieval Medicine Course

Some 170 medical and non-medical personnel attended a four-day Retrieval Medicine (Air-Ambulance) Course organised by *Society of Aeromedicine Malaysia* at the Royal Malaysian Police Air Wing Unit Training Base, Sultan Azlan Shah Airport. The participants included doctors, paramedics, nurses, pilots, aircrew, police and fire and rescue personnel. There were participants from Singapore and Brunei as well.

Mayor, Dato' Roshidi Hashim who officiated at the ceremony said that the society had carried out two charity and medical missions over the past year. He was glad to note that the society is planning to carry out a Road Safety Campaign since fatalities on the roads are of concern.

Col (Dr) Mohammad Razin Kamarulzaman, President of the Society, in his welcome address said that aero-retrieval medicine or air ambulance service is not a new practice in Malaysia, but the level of service provided is not uniform and needs improvement. The programme is conducted with the assistance of Careflight NSW, Australia. He added that with this programme, standardised air ambulance services can be provided for the patients.

Datuk Dr Nordiyana Hassan, Perak Health Department Director, informed that a Flying Doctor service team is being set up and will be operational from early next year. It will serve the needs of about 6000 Orang Asli living in the interior of Perak, Pahang and Kelantan.



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