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February 16-28, 2015

PP 14252/10/2012(031136)

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ISSUE **206**

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Wishes all its patrons
Happy Chinese New Year
2015

Are You Sure It's Organic?

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Iconic Falim House
to be Preserved

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2015
Year of the Goat

IPOHecho

Wishes Our Readers
A Happy & Prosperous
Chinese New Year

Chinese New Year: A Look into Customs and Traditions

By Yvette Yeow

“**G**ong Hey Fatt Choy!” will soon be all that you hear as the month approaches one of the most important festive celebrations for the Chinese all around the world. The month of February marks this year's *Festival of Spring* or better known as Chinese New Year. And with just a few more days remaining before the celebration, Ipoh Echo would like to bring its readers on a brief tour of the customs and foods served during Chinese New Year.

Continued on page 2



Respectful Rituals and Specialty Dishes Join Hands in 15 Days of Celebration

Although the origin of Chinese New Year is lost in the mists of time, it is commonly known amongst Chinese that it started out with a terrible mythical monster who preyed on villagers. The lion-like monster's name was 'Nian' which is also the Chinese word for 'year'. A wise old man counselled villagers to use the colour red and firecrackers to chase away the *Nian* and this is now a significant part of the festival. On the anniversary of the date, the Chinese recognise the 'passing of the Nian' known in Chinese as *guo nian* which is also synonymous with celebrating the new year.

Chinese New Year celebrations lasts 15 days, with each day having its own significance with its own different customs and celebration methods. The first day of Chinese New Year is for the welcoming of deities or gods. It is a tradition to light firecrackers to ward off evil spirits. Vegetarianism is also practised on that day for longevity, especially amongst Buddhist families and to seek pardon and forgiveness from their gods. The second day of Chinese New Year is known as *Hoi Nin* where family and friends would go around visiting each other, continuing throughout the 15 days.

The seventh day of New Year is also known as *Yan Yat* which means everyone's birthday. Raw fish and porridge is usually eaten on that day to symbolise continuous wealth and prosperity. One of the famous dishes for that day is tossing the *Yee Sang* where family members and friends would gather around a table with their chopsticks ready to toss the dish and the higher you toss it the higher your luck would be throughout the year.

The eighth day of the celebration is an important day especially for the Hokkien Chinese. It is the day where all family members would come together for another reunion dinner and pay their respects to the *Tian Gong*, or the God of Heaven, at midnight. Hokkiens would prepare a table full of food as offerings to the *Tian Gong* showing gratitude for his blessings.

The fifteenth day of the Chinese New Year marks the last day of the celebration and is also known as the *Yuan Xiao* festival or *Chap Goh Mei*. On that day, rice dumplings such as *Tang Yuan* (glutinous rice balls served in a sweet soup) are eaten. It is also a day celebrated by singles seeking a romantic partner, much like the popular Valentine's Day. Single ladies would usually write their contact number on a tangerine and toss it into a river, while men would collect them and eat the oranges. The taste is an indication of their possible love: with sweet representing a good fate while sour, a bad one.

'Ang Pau' or Red Packets

Another symbolic custom of the 15-day celebration is giving out *Ang Pau* or red packets. Family members or friends that are married are required to give out red packets to those who are younger and single. The tradition of giving out red packets was a practice of giving out blessings and luck; it is also customary and polite for the receiver to wish the giver a happy new year and a year of happiness, health and wealth before accepting the red packet. A simple practice known as *Cham Cha* is also carried out amongst some

Chinese families when giving and accepting red packets. *Cham Cha* is an act of presenting a cup of tea to the elders before accepting the red packets. Usually the *Cham Cha* ceremony is carried out in the morning of the first day of Chinese New Year as an act of respect towards the elders.

Traditional Foods of Chinese New Year

Food also plays a big part in Chinese New Year celebrations, and Ipoh Echo has had the opportunity of speaking to Madam Foong Yoke Wah, who is a brilliant cook and quite an expert when it comes to Chinese New Year cooking.

"Chinese New Year has always been such a joyous celebration for me. I especially love it when everyone would



just travel back to Ipoh for the reunion dinner, and we could meet and talk about anything over good food. One of the main dishes for our family during the reunion dinner is the *Fat Tiu Chiong* (literally translated as 'Buddha Jumps over the Wall') also known as 'Buddha's Temptation'. This dish is one of my late father's favourites and is also the most complex of all dishes made during the dinner. It consists of up to almost 10 ingredients including chicken, Chinese mushrooms, bamboo shoots, abalone, pork, fish maw, scallops, sea cucumber and shark's fin, and requires a lot of work requiring two days to finish," she emphasised.

According to her family's recipe, the broth of the 'Buddha's Temptation' is required to be prepared a day before. A whole chicken and pieces of pork would be boiled for a strong broth. Some of the ingredients found in the dish would also have to be prepared beforehand, such as the abalone, shark's fin and sea cucumber. These ingredients have to be cleaned and cooked until it softens up before adding into the broth. Sometimes this process would begin up to a week before. Slices of ginger would also be added into the broth to prevent any fishy taste.

'Cham Cha' or Tea Ceremony

"Our family also practises the *Cham Cha* ceremony on the morning of the first day of Chinese New Year. My children especially would present me a cup of tea first thing in the morning and would wish me a prosperous new year before accepting their red packets," she added.

Madam Yoke Wah also shared with Ipoh Echo some of her favourite dishes that were once prepared by her family for the reunion dinners. One of her favourites was the arrowhead cooked with chicken. The dish is a much lighter dish compared to the 'Buddha's Temptation' that is rich in protein and calcium. It is also a very simple dish tossed in a frying pan with finely cut arrowheads, chicken cut into cubes and mushrooms.

Rice cakes and other confectionery such as pineapple tarts and *Kuih Kapit* ('love letters') are also presented as snacks for guests during their visits. Chinese believe that food should always be offered to their guests and that it is impolite to have insufficient food when your guests are present. However, snacks are varied depending on the religious practices and regional ethnicity of the Chinese family. Tangerines are also offered to guests or treated as gifts during visits.

Caution in Celebration



Chinese New Year is a rich celebration filled with different customs and traditions that are distinctive and uniquely Chinese. From age old traditions such as giving out *Ang Pau* to recent practices such as tossing out tangerines on *Chap Goh Mei*, the new year celebration is most certainly a festival to look forward to. Before going on a shopping spree or being caught up with last minute decorations, Ipoh Echo would like to urge readers to be careful on the road. Be it long distance travelling or a short trip to your local department store, always be

cautious when driving as accidents are more prone during festive seasons.

Ipoh Echo wishes all a happy prosperous Chinese New Year and do remember not to overeat!



Foong Yoke Wah

• From the Editor's Desk
By Fathol Zaman Bukhari

My wife lamented that her cousin and classmate had died of pancreatic cancer too early in life. She was in her early sixties and is survived by her two daughters and a bedridden husband. The cousin's untimely demise, which went unannounced, riled my wife further and she blamed herself for not checking on the poor woman although she was aware her cousin was in poor shape.

I listened attentively while she poured out her regrets. The cousin was a close friend having grown up together and attending the same school in Ipoh. I did not say much, as it would be improper of me to interject while someone was in mourning. I could only offer my sympathy, and having done so said, "It's her destiny, my dear. You've to come to terms with the loss."

Well, I am not about to preach the goodness of being a dutiful husband at the beck and call of one's wife. It has nothing to do with what I am about to discuss – the uneasy relationship between the media and Ipoh City Council. The similarities are there. It has much to do with human failings, prudence being a major factor.

Since Dato' Roshidi Hashim retirement as mayor of Ipoh in November 2013, the once cordial relationship between the media and Ipoh City Council took a plunge. It reached an all-time low when media representatives boycotted the Council's functions by giving them a wide berth. The absence of news coverage and reports on Council-sponsored activities in the media became so bad that Syahrizal, Roshidi's former public relations officer, had to be recalled to take on the job of the Council's PRO.

Sharizal has been on the job since the early 1990s. This Kedah-born guy is a natural-born PRO as he loves people. You cannot be a good public relations man if you don't like people. Unfortunately, his superiors are not and that includes the chief honcho in the Council.

The present mayor, Dato' Harun Rawi, has openly admitted that he prefers to be

Coming To Terms With Reality

Having undergone this rather awkward situation, those helming Ipoh City Council should be more circumspect in their dealings with the media...



"the man in the background" leaving his officers to do the talking. Whether this is the preferred way, I shall leave it to your better judgment. The downside of adopting this posture is the immeasurable goodwill Harun stands to lose. And being a mayor, the loss is irreplaceable.

So a truce was called. Syahrizal played a pivotal role in regaining the lost enthusiasm. He created a new WhatsApp group known as 'MBI & Media' which is more proactive in nature. He got all of his former media friends into the group. His pleasant disposition is the reason why newsmen are ever willing to rally around him.

A lunch with media representatives was held at Pakeeza Restaurant on Thursday, January 29. Food is a convenient medium for dialogue and the choice of Pakeeza, noted for its delectable northern Indian cuisines, was welcomed by all. Over 60 reporters and photographers attended and the year-long impasse was resolved, more or less.

I was given the honour to speak on behalf of the local media. And this was what I said:

"The relationship between Ipoh City Council and the media is made in heaven. It's not something superficial and neither is it artificial."

We have to coexist, we have to support one another and we cannot live in isolation.

One administers, the other propagates. That is the name of the game. It's about giving and taking, whichever way one sees it.

It should never develop into a love-hate relationship where one party benefits while the other suffers. And one maxim I used to recant is, 'good or bad publicity is publicity nonetheless'. I rest my case."

Having undergone this rather awkward situation, those helming Ipoh City Council should be more circumspect in their dealings with the media. Things would not have reached such heady levels had the mayor exercised some wisdom and come to terms with reality.

In The Name of My Father's Estate

Episode 38 • by Peter Lee

While in Dave's (Lawyer) office, John Lee (Lee Sr's eldest son and Co-Administrator) and Connie (Lee Sr's second wife and Co-Administrator) managed to resolved the payment to Connie and her children's entitlement of \$250,000 and \$111,111 respectively from her husband's portion of his joint bank account with his first wife, Mrs Patricia Lee in ZNA bank, Singapore. In return, Connie agreed and signed all the share transfer forms together with the sale and purchase agreement for the sale of her share entitlement, in three family companies, that belonged to her husband's first family. Once this was settled, both John and Connie left Dave's office. While on their way out, John said "Connie, can we go somewhere to discuss about the three properties which are jointly owned between my father and mother. "Okay, where shall we go?" was Connie's response. Dave said, "There's a quiet cafe a few blocks away from this office. Did you drive here?" "I took a taxi," said Connie.

Dave then suggested that Connie come with him to the cafe in his car to which she agreed. As they travelled there, John said, "Connie, I hope that you and your children will renounce your entitlement to my father's ownership of the three properties jointly with mum because it's going to be very messy later on if these properties are going to be owned by three more persons, that is you and your children. My siblings and I are renouncing our entitlement rights to these properties and giving them back to mum."

Connie paused for a moment and said, "John, I could renounce my family's entitlement to these properties but what kind of price will your family offer me to do this?" John said, "Since you are receiving your family's entitlement to the rest of father's entire estate, I was thinking that you could renounce it for free." Connie was annoyed for a moment and said, "John, come on...you mean your family can't offer me anything for this?" John responded with some irritation, "Connie, let's be reasonable. This is pittance compared to the rest of father's estate which you are going to receive. So, all I ask of you is to just give these properties back to my mother. Anyway, I haven't spoken to my mother about the price because I was asked by my mother to convey her intention of asking you to let go of these properties."

Upon hearing this, Connie was even more annoyed and kept quiet for a few minutes while they were caught up in traffic. Suddenly, Connie developed a severe headache and said, "John, I don't feel well" grabbing John's hand. She asked for her medication to which John said, "Where is your house?" Pointing her fingers to the right, she responded, "Third road right after all the shop houses along this main road." As soon as they arrived at Connie's house, John helped her into her house as she looked like she was going to faint. Once John settled her on the couch, he asked, "Where is your medication?"

To be continued...

Peter Lee wishes all readers a happy Chinese New Year!

Peter Lee is an Associate Estate Planning Practitioner (Wills & Trust) with Rockwills International Group. He is also an Islamic Estate Planner providing Wills & Trust services for Muslims. He can be reached at: 012-5078825/ 05-2554853 or excelsecms@gmail.com. Website: <http://www.wills-trust.com.my>. His Book "To Delay is Human but to Will is Divine" (96 pages, RM28) is available at his office: 108 (2nd Floor), Jalan Raja Ekram, 30450 Ipoh; Rashi Mini Market (019-510 6284), 37 Jalan Perajurit, Ipoh Garden East; S.S. Mubarak, Jln Sultan Yussuf; Ipoh Echo and at all major bookstores.

EYE HEALTH – EYE ALLERGIES

In our continuing series on Eye Health, Fatimah Hospital's Consultant Eye Surgeon Dr S.S. GILL talks to us about Ocular Allergies.



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

Eye allergies can be annoying to a person. When the eyes are exposed to allergens (substances that trigger allergies), then they may become itchy, red and swollen. Eye allergies are often referred to as *allergic conjunctivitis*. This is not dangerous but can be very distressing to an individual.

Eye allergies may be triggered off by a variety allergens:

1. Dust and animal fur: This is very common and is often associated with allergies to the nose and skin too. The condition may be long standing and recurrent, occurring throughout the year.
2. Pollen: This is usually seasonal and often occurs during a particular time of the year. The condition is sometimes referred to as *seasonal allergic conjunctivitis*.
3. Medications, eye drops and chemicals: This occurs when the eyes are exposed to any of these. This sometimes poses a problem as a person may be allergic to the preservatives used in an eye-drop bottle. Most eye drops will contain a preservative including eye drops used to treat allergies.
4. Contact lens related allergies. This is called *Giant Papillary Conjunctivitis* (GPC) and is usually due to longstanding contact lens wear. This mainly occurs in non-disposable contact lenses.

SYMPTOMS

The symptoms of eye allergies include the following:

- Itchiness and/or burning sensation.
- Redness of the eyes.
- Swollen puffy eyelids (often both eyes)
- Lacrimation or excessive tearing.
- Photophobia or sensitivity to bright lights.
- Sometimes itchy, red, scaly eyelids.



These symptoms may or may not occur alongside nasal allergy symptoms of sneezing and runny nose. Sometimes symptoms of allergy may mimic the appearance of an eye infection but one thing that often stands out is the presence of eye itchiness. Do note that some eye drops including medication used to treat dry eyes can also cause allergies too.

ALLERGIES THAT MAY BE ASSOCIATED TO EYE ALLERGIES

Eye allergies as with any other allergies may occur along with skin allergies (atopic dermatitis), asthma, nasal allergies and sinusitis (hay fever). Watch out for these symptoms and highlight them to your doctor.

TREATMENT

Rubbing the eyes may be your first reaction but do take every effort to stop yourself the moment you start. Rubbing the eyes will only worsen the condition because it stimulates the tissues of the eyes to release more chemicals (histamine from the mast cells).

If you have identified an allergen (substance that triggers the allergy), then removing the offending agent is essential. If you are certain that you are suffering from an ocular allergy and not any other eye problems, then OTC (over the counter) antihistamines may be taken. This will often relieve the symptoms. However, if you are unsure that you suffer from eye allergies or if your symptoms are prolonged, then always seek professional medical help.

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

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Ipo Echo Sdn Bhd
(Regd No 687483 T)

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What Happened to Civic Mindedness?

Nursyuhada Johari, a 20-year-old student at the UiTM Permatang Pau campus died after her throat was slashed by a 25-year-old cook, as she drove the car they were travelling in. At around noon, a black Proton Perdana stopped in the middle of the North-South highway, close to the 228.2km mark, at Bukit Gantang, near Taiping and Nursyuhada staggered out and collapsed onto the road.

Her alleged assailant dragged her to the side of the road, before escaping into the jungle. He emerged shortly afterwards, to retrieve his handphone, but motorists who had come to Nursyuhada's rescue held him, before handing him over to the police. Sadly, Nursyuhada died from her wounds, at the Kuala Kangsar hospital, two hours later.

The drama unfolded around 11am that morning, when it was believed that the undergraduate in Hotel Management and Tourism had been abducted at knifepoint, by the man, who had sneaked into the campus.

Nursyuhada's mother, 44-year-old Nor Azlina Dawari, from Kulim, was disappointed to hear the statement of the Deputy Vice Chancellor Student Affairs Division UiTM, Professor Dr Abdullah Mohamad Said, who allegedly said that Nursyuhada had voluntarily gone with the suspect into his car. Nor Azlina said, "I have retained the message from my daughter's friend, which told of a man brandishing a knife, and forcing my daughter to enter the car. How does UiTM know that my daughter joined the suspect voluntarily? We are disappointed with the statement from the university."

Nor Azlina claimed that security was lax in the campus and alleged that her daughter claimed that anyone could enter the campus just by waving at the security guards. She hopes that the campus authorities will beef-up security, to stop further incidents.



One wonders why more was not done to prevent the abduction of Nursyuhada? Her mother claimed that she was abducted in broad daylight and her friends witnessed the suspect brandishing a knife. There were also

claims that the friends had tried to stop Nursyuhada from going along with the suspect.

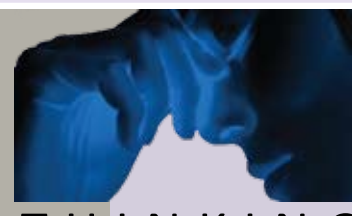
So, why did her friends not alert campus security guards as well as phoning Nursyuhada's parents? Why did no one bother to call the police? They must have noticed the car she had left in. Even if they had not taken note of the registration number, they could have noted the make, model and colour of car.

Malaysia prides itself on having a large number of CCTVs. Surely, the campus security could have accessed further information from the CCTV.

The abduction allegedly happened at 11am. By noon, Nursyuhada had driven several miles away and been fatally knifed.

If the police had been notified, roadblocks could have been set up, the suspect's car spotted and perhaps, a tragedy averted. An early notification and the provision of as much information as is possible to the police could have prepared them and ensured a successful rescue operation. The friends could have told police what Nursyuhada was wearing, perhaps, given them a photo of her and the suspect. They could have described his demeanour; did he appear calm or anxious, angry or tense?

Nursyuhada's parents and her family will grieve for her, but the authorities are rather callous to claim that Nursyuhada voluntarily agreed to accompany her killer. The least they could do is to increase security and prevent another disaster. It may also be a lesson for the rest of us. If we witness an abduction, we should contact the police and furnish them with as much information as possible, to help the person who has been abducted.



THINKING ALLOWED

by Mariam Mokhtar

School Celebrates Achievements



After working hard and giving its best for five decades, SMK Sungai Pari has achieved its mission of creating individuals with potentials to meet the nation's aspirations.

During the school's golden jubilee celebration recently, guest of honour, Deputy Education Minister II, P. Kamalanathan, applauded the school's teaching and administration staff for their determination and devotion. "The school's efforts in the last five decades have helped produce individuals who are skilful, creative and innovative," said Kamalanathan in his opening remarks.

"I hope that the school's golden jubilee theme, 'Dedication for Excellence', will lift the spirits of the teachers to help instil a positive working culture in students," he added.

Fifty water rockets, one for each year, were fired by students to mark the beginning of the celebration. On 23 July, 2011, the school made it into the Malaysian Book of Records for firing 105 water rockets simultaneously.

Present at the ceremony were Deputy State Education Director, Zulkurnaini Hussin and Kinta District Education Officer, Marazlen @ Mar Azlan Amran along with principal, John Devasayam Seeni.

RM

Dr Saravana.K

Consultant Physician,
Gastroenterologist & Hepatologist

Digestive Health

Pancreatic Cancer

Pancreatic cancer begins in the tissues of your pancreas — an organ in your abdomen that lies horizontally behind the lower part of your stomach. Your pancreas secretes enzymes that aid digestion and hormones that help regulate the metabolism of sugars.

Pancreatic cancer often has a poor prognosis, even when diagnosed early. Pancreatic cancer typically spreads rapidly and is seldom detected in its early stages, which is a major reason why it's a leading cause of cancer death. Signs and symptoms may not appear until pancreatic cancer is quite advanced and complete surgical removal isn't possible.

Symptoms

When signs and symptoms do appear, they may include: upper abdominal pain that may radiate to your back; yellowing of your skin and the whites of your eyes (jaundice); loss of appetite; and weight loss.

When to see a doctor

See your doctor if you experience unexplained weight loss, abdominal pain, jaundice, or other signs and symptoms that bother you. Many diseases and conditions other than cancer may cause similar signs and symptoms, so your doctor may check for these conditions as well as for pancreatic cancer.

Factors that may increase your risk of pancreatic cancer include: African-American race; excess body weight; chronic inflammation of the pancreas (pancreatitis); diabetes; family history of genetic syndromes that can increase cancer risk, including a BRCA2 gene mutation, Lynch syndrome and familial atypical mole-malignant melanoma (FAMMM); personal or family history of pancreatic cancer; and smoking.

As pancreatic cancer progresses, it can cause complications such as:

- Jaundice. Pancreatic cancer that blocks the liver's bile duct can cause jaundice.
- Pain. A growing tumor may press on nerves in your abdomen, causing pain that can become severe.

In severe cases, your doctor may recommend a procedure to inject alcohol into the nerves that control pain in your abdomen (celiac plexus block). This procedure stops the nerves from sending pain signals to your brain.

- Bowel obstruction. Pancreatic cancer that grows into or presses on the small intestine (duodenum) can block the flow of digested food from your stomach into your intestines.
- Weight loss.

Diagnosing pancreatic cancer

If your doctor suspects pancreatic cancer, you may have one or more of the following tests to diagnose the cancer:

- Imaging tests include ultrasound, (CT) scan and (MRI).
- Using a scope to create ultrasound pictures of your pancreas. An endoscopic ultrasound (EUS) uses an ultrasound device to make images of your pancreas from inside your abdomen. It is passed through a thin, flexible tube down your esophagus and into your stomach in order to obtain the images. Your doctor may also collect a sample of cells (biopsy) during EUS.

Treatment for pancreatic cancer depends on the stage and location of the cancer as well as on your age, overall health and personal preferences.

Surgery

Surgery may be an option if your pancreatic cancer is confined to the pancreas.

Radiation therapy and Chemotherapy

Radiation therapy uses high-energy beams to destroy cancer cells. You may receive radiation treatments before or after cancer surgery, often in combination with chemotherapy. Chemotherapy can be injected into a vein or taken orally.

Targeted Therapy

Targeted therapy uses drugs that attack specific abnormalities within cancer cells. The targeted drug blocks chemicals that signal cancer cells to grow and divide.

When pancreatic cancer is advanced and treatments aren't likely to offer a benefit, your doctor will help to relieve symptoms and make you as comfortable as possible.

For more information call Saravana.K Gastroenterologist and Liver Specialist Clinic at Hospital Fatimah (05 548 7181) or email gastrosara@gmail.com.



MUSINGS ON IPOH FOOD

By **SeeFoon Chan-Koppen**
seefoon@ipohecho.com.my

Pics by Ginla Chew



SeeFoon's Capon Caper in Falim



It's that time of year again as Chinese New Year approaches, when Ipohites find themselves craving for Capon. Larger than a chicken, a bit smaller than a turkey, but more flavourful than either, a Capon is a castrated rooster, fed and nurtured for four to six months and weighing between 4-7lbs. Called *Yeem Gai* in Cantonese, they are hard to come by and expensive to boot. Capon is prized for its fragrance, its juicy meat and best of all its springy yellow skin and fat. The Chinese prefer their capons *Pak Cheuk* which means 'white blanched' or steamed and served with a grated ginger and scallion paste on the side.

Usually, in most of the local restaurants (if they have them in the first place), capon has to be ordered whole and unless one has a table of ten, a whole capon is a monumental feast for any less than that number. And it is pricey, costing between RM250-350 or more per bird.

However, at the newly-opened **Restaurant Kim Wah** in Falim, very close to Taman Mas, you can eat to your heart's delight even if you're just 2 or 3 people as they will serve you a quarter bird for RM60, a half for RM118 and a whole bird for RM228. And the bird we had was easily 3kg. According to my Foodie 'kaki' Ginla Chew, who as usual, discovered the restaurant in her peripatetic food explorations, these are exceptionally good prices for *Yeem Gai*. And the quality is good too. The meat, firm yet succulent and the skin resilient with just the right amount of fat beneath. In fact, the whole chicken we had was surprisingly lean so we



could 'have our skin and eat it too'!

Naturally the Chinese New Year season is the best time to get the best capon as all the farms that rear these birds focus on getting as many to market as possible at this time. Kim Wah is open throughout the festive season so do get your capon fix during this period.

But it's not only the capon at Kim Wah that deserves praise, other dishes are outstanding too. Head Chef Teoh Hock Eng, a true-blue Ipoh boy has come home to roost after 20 years in Kuala Lumpur heading up the kitchen at my favourite Overseas restaurant in Jalan Imbi. Ably assisted by Choong Kwet Thiam, Chef Teoh dishes out

some impressive temptations. Like his *Char Siew* (sweet roast pork) which is melt-in-mouth succulent and tender, marbled with fat to which you throw admonitions about cholesterol to the wind and begin wolfing down the whole plate. **RM22 – S; RM36 – M and RM48 for a large plate.**

Another porky dish which our group enjoyed was the **braised pig's elbow**, chunky cuts of elbow, the skin and tendons braised to a mucilaginous tenderness in a light sauce fragranced by ginger and dried cuttlefish slices. Comfort food at its best – **RM22.**

But I am jumping ahead. We began the meal with the obligatory **Yee Sang** or the 'prosperity toss'. Yee Sang comprises thin slices of pickled vegetables and other ingredients which are enhanced by its special sauce which imparts a distinctive flavour. The popular custom is for all round the dining table to toss the ingredients high in the air with joyful exclamations of *Loh Hey* (toss high) to wish for abundant luck and happiness for all. **RM38 – S and RM63 – L with salmon.**

The **wild mushroom soup** which was served in individual tureens was clear, the dried mushrooms coming from Yunnan, China which is renowned for its abundance of various wild mushrooms, was a variety I have never seen before, imparting its fragrance to the soup which was light and umami – **RM10 per portion.**

Kim Wah is a branch of their original restaurant which is based in

Tanjung Tualang. Their fish tanks attest to their Tualang origin, with *udang galah* in varying sizes waiting to be selected. So naturally we had to have our **Steamed Udang Galah**, more commonly called the Tualang prawns. Now we don't have to drive to Tualang for them. We had the medium-sized prawns which arrived just a shade overdone but nevertheless sweet and umami. **RM90 – small; RM120 – medium; RM150 per kg for the large prawns.**

The **Loong Dun** or giant grouper, a fish that has seen a phenomenal rise in popularity in the past few years prized for its firm flesh and the delectable jelly-like skin; was braised to perfection with taro in a claypot, and saw all of us at the table scrambling to scoop up the last drops of thick sauce. The essence of that dish was still lingering in my gustatory memory bank when I went to bed that night; such was the impact it had on my taste buds – **RM120 per kg.**

Restaurant Kim Wah

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News

A Symphony of Fun, Food and Festivity

With the theme 'Hawaiian Night', some 40 permanent employees of Symphony Suites Hotel let their hair down for a night of fun and recognition. It was the hotel's first annual dinner for its staff since opening its doors for business in 2013.

The party, which included a scrumptious dinner of grilled food, steamboat and a generous buffet spread, was expertly handled by multilingual emcee, KT Pillai who kept the guests laughing non-stop throughout the night with various stage games.

Prizes were given away to the winners in those games as well as via lucky draws. Almost everyone walked home a winner with a good range of prizes, from hotel stays to household electrical appliances and personal electronic devices.

Certificates of appreciation and cash rewards were presented to exemplary employees. Among other accolades, Fo Wee Peng and Winni Ng were awarded with 'Zero MC Record 2013/2014' while 'Best Employee 2013/2014' went to Noor Suhaila Bt. Shamsudin. This recognition was given based on the attitude of the employee; someone who is committed to her duties, is dedicated, a good communicator and a role model to her peers.

Five of the staff also received letters of promotion, much to their delight. Said General Manager David Tsen, "2014 saw varied improvement compared to 2013, the year Symphony Suites Hotel first operated. These improvements were due to changes in



administration and operations of the hotel. We've seen growth in terms of revenue and the opening of new market sectors such as corporation, banking and finance, association and government.

With a fresh budget allocated for 2015 and the commitment of staff from senior management to the rank and file, business is expected to be better this year. We anticipate the first quarter of the year, normally a low period for hotels, to perform better compared to the same period last year."

Emily

Art & Culture

Street Musicians to The Fore

The success of *Caliph Buskers*, a street musical group consisting of disabled musicians, at the recent TV3's 'Anugerah Juara Lagu 29' has created much excitement within the music industry.

Spurred by the group's achievement, vocalist Khairul Azmi Minute, 28, who has gained sudden popularity, suggested doing charity performances for a start. "I didn't expect such an overwhelming reception from the public. Apart from it being a source of income, we'll do charity performances to help fellow buskers, especially those like us," he said.

Khairul's noble aim was realised when *Caliph Buskers* was invited to perform in a charity event organised by Umno Youth Ipoh Barat and Yayasan Bina Upaya at *Mat Periuk Cafe* in Bercham recently.

"Events like this can help foster closer relationship among buskers and help improve their image. It goes to show that the buskers are capable of participating in social service programmes like other able-bodied people," he said after entertaining more than 500 spectators at the cafe.

The special programme, presented by Kelab Penghibur Jalanan Malaysia, provided *Caliph Buskers* the opportunity to perform five songs, including 'Roman Cinta', the song that helped popularise the group.

The community's acceptance, said Khairul, was beyond his expectation. It was a timely boost to the group's morale. "We'll make efforts to improve with time. It'll not come so sudden, as we still have much to learn. However, we are grateful to the Almighty for this good fortune," he exclaimed.

Yayasan Bina Upaya's International Relations Unit officer, Salim Ahmad Shibi said that monetary contributions from the public would be channeled directly into the



foundation's kitty to assist buskers, in general.

"We had organised a number of programmes for street musicians in the past, the success of *Caliph Buskers* has proven that these musicians are able to contribute to society in their very own way," he said.

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Education

First Lady Principal Retires

Madam Loh Wei Seng of St Michael's Institution, Ipoh who served as principal for almost four years, bade farewell to her school when she retired from service on Friday, February 6. A farewell ceremony was held in her honour at the school hall.

According to Senior Assistant, Bhajan Kaur, Loh had received several awards for her exemplary service from the Ministry of Education. She received excellent service awards in 1994, 2002 and 2009. Loh was bestowed the Ahli Mahkota Perak by the late Sultan Azlan Shah in 2012.

"Madam Loh is the first lady principal this school has ever had. Please don't judge her by her size, she's a dedicated teacher whose determination is well known to us all," said Bhajan in her opening remarks.

Loh, in her return speech, expressed her gratitude to the teaching staff, students, members of the board of governors, the Old Michaelians' Association, parent teacher association and all those who had assisted her during her time at the school.

Loh plans to devote her free time to her family and friends now that she has fulfilled her professional obligations.

"I thank each and everyone of you for your time. I hope all Michaelian teachers will work with passion to help our students do their best. I'll take with me all the happy moments we have had together," said Loh. She ended her speech with a subdued, "I'll miss you all."

The outgoing principal was 'pulled out' of the school compound in an antique car led by teachers while students lined up the road to bid farewell as her car passed by.



Nantini



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TKB Committed to Perak



With the implementation of Goods and Services Tax (GST) in Malaysia come April 1, both consumers and businesses are jittery and adopting a wait-and-see attitude.

How does this affect the outlook for the property market, especially in Ipoh?

Leading developer in Perak, Team Keris Berhad (TKB), with major commercial, residential, industrial and integrated developments in Ipoh, believe that now more than ever, properties are still the best bet when it comes to investment.

Sharing this opinion was Director of TKB Michael Tan Hau Koon. He said, "Cash is no longer an asset in today's economy. Although buying properties is still the best way to protect our wealth, we must be smart to buy those that are low in risk and have a greater margin for appreciation."

Thus despite uncertain market sentiments, TKB is aggressive in their property development and have lined up some twenty project launches throughout 2015, beginning with the launch of the Group's Ipoh South Precinct Show Village on February 15. A showcase of Ipoh South Precinct's seven distinctive properties simultaneously, this RM10.0 Million Show Village provides resident and returning Ipohites a first hand experience of the lifestyle at Ipoh South Precinct this Lunar New Year.



Continuing with the momentum of 2014, TKB is bullish about growing its 58 completed and ongoing project portfolio establish over 20 years ago.

Said Michael, "There is no denying that in general there will be a slow down in property uptake in 2015, particularly in cities such as Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Johor Bahru where prices are extremely high.

"Ipoh, however, will do as well as it did last year. Properties here have a big margin for appreciation and prices are still very much affordable.

"We believe that Ipoh will continue to grow vibrantly, with more flights being served at the Sultan Azlan Shah Airport and the upcoming connectivity to Butterworth via the Electric Train Service (ETS). These enhancements in infrastructure in addition to the existing North-South Expressway, have made Ipoh more accessible to the masses. This accessibility is not enjoyed by other cities, for example, those beyond the ETS line.

"Also, we have noticed an influx of young entrepreneurs. Ipohites are flocking home to set up new businesses after their studies and are generating economic growth here. It is easier to start off a business in Ipoh as it is their home base. Some are back to take over the family business, bringing with them fresh ideas and strategies to grow it further.

"We are well-prepared and understand the development movement in Ipoh, which is moving south. As such, we have launched Ipoh South Precinct, the largest freehold-titled integrated township in Ipoh. Within this development are 800 residential units, almost 200 commercial units, a hypermarket, retail shopping, food court and Food and Beverage outlets. This development will progressively complete in 2017.

"We are here for the long haul to create opportunities for more people to own their first property. Therefore, we always believe in developing something that would meet the needs of consumers and to price them sensibly to cater to the working class communities.

"GST is not something that we can escape from but will need to get used to over time. As we have bought most land parcels long ago at good prices, we are able to continue to market our properties at affordable prices, which will defer the impact of the

tax on property purchasers. Obviously, our prices will be adjusted according to the market over time. Therefore, potential buyers should take advantage of this offer while it lasts.

"To weather the storm, property developers have to come out with a fresh product to tap into the market, introduce it at an appropriate time and dare to market it at the right price." "This is Team Keris Berhad's commitment to Perak"

Opinion

By Dr Venkates Rao.E

Prepare Your 'Run-Away Kit'

"Life is a series of punches. It presents a lot of challenges. It presents a lot of hardship, but the people that are able to take those punches and able to move forward are the ones that really do have a lot of success and have a lot of joy in their life and have a lot of stories to tell, too" – Josh Turner

The quote above speaks to me; in fact it speaks to all of us in Malaysia. 2015 was not welcomed with displays of fireworks; instead it was welcomed with people from all over the country trying to help each other due to the flood crisis which caused much pain and misery. The flood crisis was not centered in the east coast; it became a national catastrophe in a matter of a few hours of downpour. Needless to say the aftermath of the tragedy was indeed a costly one to the nation. Given the current economic condition with the slump of oil prices it has reached the point where the government will have to reallocate the national budget to reconstruct towns that have been washed away by the great flood.

So, we have spoken about the "series of punches" and the challenges it presents is pretty obvious, but the question that remains is: are the people able to take these punches? Are they able to move forward and look for their success and joy? As far as stories are concerned, they will all have one to tell.

I was fortunate enough to be in Kampung Gajah and Temerloh to provide a helping hand to the flood victims. There were too many heartbreaking situations I experienced and I would like to share them with you today.

These include victims who insisted on not seeking shelter at the relief centre and instead stood guard at their homes. It was heartbreaking to realise that their home is all they have and losing that for them feels like life is no longer worth living.

Allow me to humbly offer a few suggestions to make things a little easier for them. The most important thing will be to have a 'run-away kit' prepared at all times to make 'running away' easier. What is this run-away kit I speak of? Have your documentations such as insurance policies, birth certificate, bank books, fixed deposit certificates and valuable belongings securely packed and stored where in time of crisis it's a matter of grab and go. Always have a pre-planned evacuation plan in place whether or not you live in a flood prone area.

There is also the developing of a mindset that your life is worth much more than bricks and mortar. This is when you prove to yourselves that you will be able to take the punches move forward and show the world that nothing can stop you from being happy and successful again.

The other heartbreaking situation that affected me was the amount of rubbish I



discovered (I didn't actually have to discover it, it was right there staring at me) while I was there. We have a problem with our waste management system. Not the government, not the city council; it is we as regular citizens who have a big issue with our waste disposal habits. Drains were clogged with rubbish and water was accumulating by the minute and areas that were not supposed to be flooded were filled with water. Mind you, this water carries the germs and bacteria from the rubbish straight to your home and eventually to you. This then causes diseases which could cost you your life. It is a matter of throwing rubbish in the designated area and not everywhere as it is evident that it may come back to bite you in a way that you would have never imagined it to.

The government is already undertaking serious works to ensure that the 'great flood' will be mitigated accordingly. It is time we play our role and keep the country and surroundings clean and take necessary preemptive measures to ensure the loss may be a little more bearable in comparison to what the flood of 2014 has made us face.

While I am at it, I would also like to express my appreciation to all the volunteers out there who came together to help our fellow Malaysians in distress. Thank you.

Here's to a happy and peaceful 2015 and may God bless us all!

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Options, Options and Options for CNY

By Nantini Krishnan, Ili Aliyah & Vhyshnawi Raj

Syeun Hotel

Continuing their success for four consecutive years, Syeun Hotel is having their fifth '100 Families Reunion' dinner on the eve of CNY. Guests will be entertained with special shows and the God of Prosperity will hand out ang paws in a form of Big Sweep tickets to all legal-age diners. There will be only 100 tables available and the price starts at RM488 nett to RM988 nett for 10 persons. Guests will be receiving a complimentary 5R family photo taken before the dinner. Call: **05 253 889** or **05 242 8889** for reservations.



WEIL Hotel

The fine culinary skills of renowned Hong Kong Master Chef, Chung Ho Shi will be on display at the hotel's Yuk Sou Hin Restaurant and TIFFIN Restaurant. The restaurant's set menus start at the price of RM1188++ for a table of 10 people and will include their customised salmon Yee Sang and the chef's signature dish the *Smoked Duck with Lychee Wood*.



TIFFIN All Day Dining, is offering buffet lunch/dinner package for RM68++ per pax. The package comprises of a plate of *Yee Sang* and features some signatures dishes such as *Ginger Braised Duck*, *Ginseng Black Chicken Soup* and *Cantonese Style Steamed Red Snapper*. Children are also welcome and the buffet spread is complimentary for children below 6 years old. For children aged 6 to 12 years old, they get 50% off the price of RM68++. Call: **05 208 2228**.

Impiana Hotel

Impiana Hotel Ipoh is offering their 'Prosperity Feast' at RM78 nett per adult and RM39 nett per child (6-12 years old) at The Coffee House between February 18 to 22.

On Chinese New Year's Eve, there will be an '8-Course Reunion Chinese Set Dinner' promotion that is priced from RM688 nett per table for 10 people. If you prefer a more relaxing family gathering, opt for the 'Chinese New Year Eve Reunion BBQ Dinner' priced at RM88 nett per adult and RM45 nett per child (6-12 years old). The 'Fortune Hi-Tea' is available, priced at RM58 nett per adult and RM29 nett per child (6-12 years old). Call **05 255 5555 ext. 8009**.



Restoran Shabu-Shabu

Restoran Shabu-Shabu will be laying on a special promotion at RM41 per adult and RM20 per child between 90cm-130cm from February 16-23. There will also be a special price on lunch from 12pm-4pm at RM31 per adult and RM16 per child. Call: **605 241 3555** or **011 1219 6722**.



Citrus

Known as one of the best fine dining restaurants in town, Citrus is having special CNY dishes for the upcoming festival. Priced at RM30, *Nian Nian You Yu* is a combination of Tuna Tataki, Smoked Salmon with Crispy Tortilla and a side of Mixed Greens with Sesame Manuka Honey Dressing. While sipping on their *Abalone and Mushroom Tea*, priced at RM19, guests are welcome to try the *Smoked Australian Lamb Rack* with Tomato Chutney for RM67. Call: **05 545 1070**.



Casuarina @ Meru

Casuarina @ Meru promises an auspicious start to celebrate CNY with Lion Dance Blessing Ceremony at the hotel main entrance with drums on February 19 at 9am. Poon Choi selections for 6 to 8 persons at RM388, one day advance booking is required. Takeaway available. **05 529 9999** or email to info@casuarinahotels.com.my. Website <http://www.casuarinahotels.com.my/>.



Excelsior Hotel

Excelsior Palace at Excelsior Hotel is having up to 9-course meals for the upcoming celebration. With special menus such as *Salmon Yee Sang*, *Steamed Village Chicken* with Chinese Herbs and *Prawns* cooked in two ways, guests can choose between 4 available set menus. Early birds reservations will receive a complimentary 1 bottle of House Wine and get to enjoy abalone for 10 persons at a special price.

Another in-house restaurant, Dulang Coffee House will have a special Chinese New Year buffet for lunch, hi-tea and dinner from February 18-22. RM29.90 nett to RM49.90 nett per person; 40% discount is applicable for senior citizen aged 60 years old and above and kids between 6-12 years old. Call: **05 253 6666**.

Kinta Riverfront Hotel & Suites

Chinese New Year Reunion Dinner Menu (February 18 to March 3): Great Miner Chinese Cuisine @ level 1, with 9-course menu starting at RM788 nett. Call: **05 245 8888 ext. 8818** or **05 245 8818**.



Bar.Racuda

Bar.Racuda has prepared an exciting CNY menu for its customers. For something less traditional, check out the Prosperity Fusion Platter Set and Combo Set. The latter is priced at RM18.88 nett and contains a combination of five Western and Asian delicacies which include Chicken Wings, Lamb Paretal, Fish Strips, Bacon Chips (Turkey) and Onion Rings.

The Prosperity Combo set, which is only open for pre-bookings, includes the Fusion Platter and a Bottle of Martell VSOP priced at RM308.88 nett or a bottle of JW Black Label priced at RM288 nett. Customers will also be entertained by a Chinese Lion Dance, live band performances, and pool and karaoke competitions.

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Community

Batu Kurau Health Fest

The usually quiet country town of Batu Kurau, near Taiping, turned into a hive of activity on Sunday, recently when a health fest was held for the first time at the town's Arena Square. About 300 kampung folks turned up for free health programmes and screenings jointly organised by the Rotary Club of Taiping and Wanita Umno Larut.

They included breast cancer examinations, eye and dental checkups, blood tests for diabetes and blood pressure levels and general health screenings by specialists from both the government and private sector medical teams.

To add to the festivity was a vibrant senamrobic session, a novel health food and juice display competition, discounted sales of eyewear, promotion of herbal health supplements and an informative talk on breast cancer.

Deputy Foreign Minister, Datuk Hamzah Zainuddin, a local boy, was on hand to kick off the event. He said similar programmes should be organised more often in the Larut, Matang and Selama District as people in the countryside could benefit as well.

"More effort should be made to reach out to communities in rural areas who seldom get the opportunity for free health screenings due to the distance to health centres in the towns and Ipoh," said Hamzah, who is also the MP for Larut.

Dr P. Suresh, from Apollo Medical Centre, Taiping, said due to shyness, women seldom come for free breast cancer screenings. He said they expected the examinations

to be conducted by male doctors and this made them reluctant.

"They'll only come in when it's already too late," he said, adding that from age 35 onwards, it was necessary to start having breasts checked, as the disease was quite prevalent nowadays. "And from 45 to 50, do it regularly, either at home or at the hospital," he added.

Present at the event were Orang Kaya Menteri Paduka Wan Mohd Isa Dato Wan Mohd Razalli, Dato' Dr Mohammad Amin Zakaria, state assemblyman for Batu Kurau and Executive Councillor for Education, Science, Environment and Technology and President of Rotary Club Taiping, Dato' Mohd Zuhuri Ahmad.

Nirmal Ariyapala



Helping People to Help Themselves

The St John's Community Help Service (CHS) organised an open day recently at its premises with the primary objective to help those who don't know where to get help. It was also to create awareness regarding services on offer by the organisation.

The event was open to the public and was supported by government agencies such as the state health department who provided free health screening and dengue-awareness lessons. JobsMalaysia was also present to assist young graduates find their career pathways. Besides these free services, there were also booths for visitors to buy food, clothes, books, souvenirs and knick knacks.

According to CHS coordinator, Jebasundar, the event was held with the aim of bridging the gap between government agencies and the community and to tell those in need of help that help is out there. He added that after two years of hard work, their tagline, 'Helping People to Help Themselves' seems to work.

"People come in with many problems. We learn about their problems and help guide them through their problems. People come to seek assistance, mostly for employment, citizenship, welfare, education or just to pour out their sorrows," he said.

Ruth Yates, also a coordinator for CHS, said that they are planning on extending their services and getting the word out to those in need via the social media.

The St John's Community Help Service is open to all people and for all problems, big or small. Services are available on Tuesdays and Saturdays at the Kindergarten Room 1, St John's Church.

For more information, email stjohnschsipoh@gmail.com or visit their Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/stjohnschsipoh>.

Vhyshnawi



First Aid Course

A total of 10 staff from the Handicapped and Disabled Home in Gunung Rapat Ipoh attended a course on Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and dressing wounds at their premises. Manin Singh, the trainer from St John Ambulance Perak conducted the course. A demo on Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) was shown to the participants using a dummy. All participants had to perform the demo to ensure that they really learnt how to handle Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and dressing of wounds. This course is to equip the staff with the know-how to overcome any emergency occurring to the inmates as they will be the first responders before sending for medical aid. Each received a Certificate of Attendance on completion of the course.



Keeping Fit Nor's Way

If you jog around iconic Polo Ground, Ipoh, you can see two giant tyres propped against a tree, dumbbells and unique-looking exercise equipment lying next to the aerobic court. You may wonder what they are for.

Since August 2014, Nor Azian, 45, and her husband, Masfazel, 46, have been preaching the goodness of keeping fit to everyone. Along with sport-science graduate, Mohd Hafizil Qaifee, 31, they conduct a fitness camp called, 'the Fun and Fitness Boot Camp'.



After losing about 20kg in one year, Azian feels it is her responsibility to educate the community on the importance of staying healthy. "It's not about being fat or skinny, what matters is staying fit. We've participants who, at first, looked healthy but turned out otherwise. After a few sessions with us, they admitted to feeling better," she told Ipoh Echo.

"Apart from our weekly camp, we also have a 5-week losing-weight challenge called, 'the Fun and Fit Challenge.'" During the programme, activities are held both indoors and outdoors. We'll visit the gym where we teach contestants how to use the exercise machines and guide them on food and calorie intake."

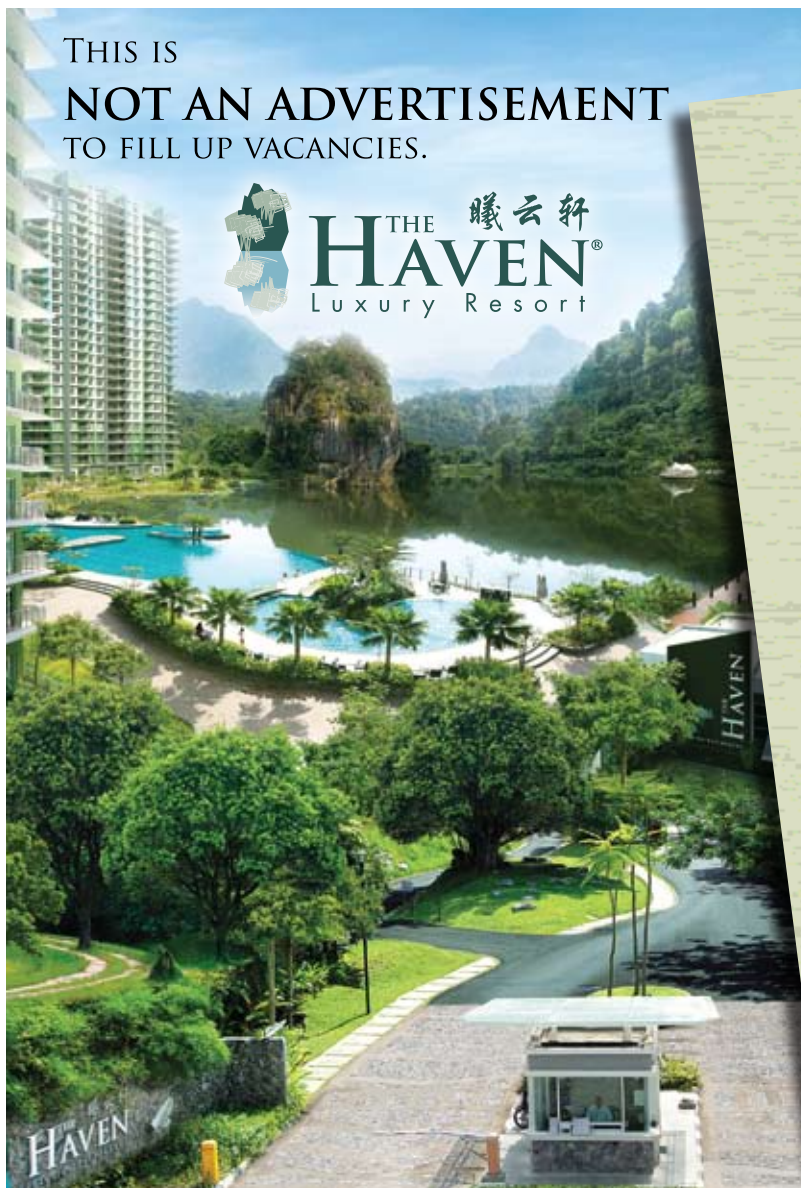
They are currently into their third session of the losing-weight challenge. Although former contestants had achieved what they wanted, some joined in for the sake of keeping fit.

The 5-week programme is limited to a few contestants only, as Nor and her team have to provide personal attention to all. As for the boot camp, number is not an issue. The camp is open to all. Joining fee is only RM10 a session.

Readers keen on participating can contact Nor at 012 519 1950.

Ili Aqilah

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Ear, Nose & Throat Care

By Dr Rekha Balachandran

Dealing with Ear Wax

Ear wax or cerumen as it called in medical terms, is produced by special glands in the ear canal. It serves as a cleaning agent with protective, lubricating and antibacterial properties.

Ear wax is produced in the outer part of the ear canal, not deep inside the ear. It moves out by itself, assisted by movements of the jaw. When the wax is pushed in too deep (usually due to cotton bud use) and presses onto the eardrum, it becomes painful.

Does the ear need to be cleaned?

The old saying that nothing smaller than your elbow should go into the ear, still holds true. Ears need to be cleaned only when there is so much ear wax that it causes symptoms (wax impaction). The symptoms of wax impaction are: ear pain or fullness; some degree of hearing loss; noises in the ear especially on chewing or moving the jaw; and ear itch.

How is impacted wax removed?

In most cases, impacted wax needs to be softened before it can be removed. You can try placing a few drops of baby oil or commercial wax solvent drops in the ear for a week or two. After instilling the solutions, you need to massage the ear and lie down with the ear facing upward for about 5 minutes. Once the drops are instilled the wax will absorb the liquid and in some cases expand slightly, worsening the blocked sensation. A common mistake is to start using cotton buds after instilling the drops in hope of getting the wax out. The cotton buds only causes the wax to impact further in the ear.

If you have a history of discharge from the ear or a suspicion that your ear drum may have a perforation, please consult a doctor before using any oil or wax solvent products as it may cause more harm.

Seeing an ENT doctor for wax removal is preferred when the ear canal is narrow, the eardrum has a perforation or a ventilation tube, if you have had previous surgery to the ear or when other methods have failed. Wax removal is usually done by using a suction device and special miniature instruments under a microscope to magnify the ear canal.

Ear candling – a safe alternative?

Ear candles are not a safe option as they may result in serious injury. Ear candling has caused documented cases of ear obstruction due to the melted wax, burns and ear drum perforation.

Is there a way to prevent excessive wax build up?

There is no way to prevent excessive wax from building up. Those with narrowed ears, history of recurrent ear infections, ear surgery or radiotherapy to the head area are prone to excessive wax build up. However, inserting cotton-tipped swabs or other objects in the ear canal is strongly not advised. If you are prone to repeated wax impaction or use hearing aids, consider seeing your doctor every 6 to 12 months for a checkup and routine preventive cleaning.

Rekha ENT Specialist Clinic

Suite 509, Level 5, Pantai Hospital Ipoh. Tel: **05 540 5408**.

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Community

Thaipusam in Ipoh

The Thaipusam celebration took place between Maha Mariamman Temple and Kallumalai Murugan Temple. Over 10,000 Hindu devotees, as well as foreign tourists, participated in the festival recently and like every year, large, colourful processions marked the occasion.

Thaipusam, a festival celebrated by the Tamil community in the month of Thai during the full moon commemorates the occasion when Goddess Parvati gave her youngest son, Lord Muruga, a Vel or spear so he could vanquish the evil demon Soorapadman. During this time, devotees seek blessings, fulfil vows and offer thanks.

In Ipoh, hordes of people thronged the roadsides to watch the colourful *kavadis* and the grand chariot passing by. Traders and non-governmental organisations took the opportunity to set up refreshment stands for the devotees and visitors.

Most devotees fulfil vows and say thanks by carrying pots of milk and offering it to Lord Muruga. Some go further by carrying a *kavadi*, a form of public penance that literally means "sacrifice at every step" in Tamil. Devotees usually carry a steel or wooden

frame decorated with lights and flowers. Some have spikes pierced into their bodies.

Every person who carries a *kavadi* has a story behind them. Harrish Aswin Kumar, 27, said that he has been carrying a *kavadi* every Thaipusam for the past seven years alongside his brother, Kanesskumar, 25. According to Harrish, he made a vow at the age of 20 to carry a *kavadi* for nine years. His decision to do so was a result of a prayer for a sick family member.

When asked about challenges he faced, Harrish said the preparations prior to carrying a *kavadi* is lengthy. "I've to fast for 48 days, abstain from anything unclean and follow certain rituals and traditions," he exclaimed.

The task of carrying a *kavadi* is considered very sacred and it is believed that it can only be done when one's mind and body are free from earthly pleasures.

Vhyshnawi



Properties

Initiative by Keris Properties

As property prices skyrocket, the people behind Keris Properties, Perak's largest housing developer, took it upon themselves to help Perakeans own a house. The developer went out of its way to promote this initiative during the 3-day exposition held at the Indera Mulia Stadium, Ipoh from February 6 to 8.

The company, at the exposition, offered discounts up to 15 per cent, the first ever in the country, on their houses and properties purchased during the duration of the event.



The 3-day exposition was divided into four parts – houses, IT hardware, furniture and automobiles. The launching, on Sunday, February 7 was officiated by Dato' Zainol Fadzi bin Paharuddin, Executive Councillor for Infrastructure, Energy and Water.

Zainal commended Keris Properties for its role in developing Perak over the past years. Development projects taking place in Station 18, Pasir

Puteh and along Jalan Sultan Nazrin Shah, Ipoh exemplify their commitment.

Zainal, in his opening remarks, stressed the importance of owning property. He recalled, "25 years ago I bought a shop lot for RM150,000 now its value is in excess of RM700, 000. Unlike cars, the value of properties will go up and up," he reasoned.

The executive councillor referred to the uniqueness of the exposition, as it encompassed four business components namely, properties, IT hardware, furniture and automobiles. With its tagline, "Everyone Can Own a Property" this exposition was considered the biggest 4-in-1 show ever held in the city.

On the whole it was a roaring success, considering the huge crowd that patronised booths and stalls showcasing the various products on display. Anchor exhibitor, Keris Properties, recorded some very encouraging sales resulting from its overgenerous discounts.

The closing was equally remarkable when fireworks lit up the city sky courtesy of Keris Properties. It was a fitting finale to a show that had caught the imagination of many Ipohites.

Ili Aqilah



Happenings

PERAK ACADEMY TALKS

The Perak Academy continues its journey of making our Perak a centre for thought and intellectual discourses.

Dato' Seri Lim Chong Keat will speak on the **current state of botanical research in Malaysia** on Saturday, **February 28** at 4pm at Perak Academy's Secretariat Building, No 71A, First Floor, Jalan Tun Sambanthan, 30000 Ipoh (Opp Maybank Main Branch, Old Town).

Dato' Seri had addressed the Academy on 'Travels with Frank Swettenham' on May 20, 2000 and again on 'Botanical Discoveries in Perak' on November 9, 2004.



On Saturday, **March 14** Perak Academy will host a dinner talk by YAM Tunku Zain Al-'Abidin ibni Tuanku Muhriz, founding president of the Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS). Tunku is an author and columnist in The Star and various other leading newspapers.

The title of Tunku's talk is **'Healing the Nation'**.

The Academy's two previous events, namely the Perak Lecture 'Inequality and Financial Crisis' by Dr Lim Mah Hui on December 20, 2014 and the launch of the book 'Ripples' on Saturday, January 24 were well attended and generated interesting feedback.

Enquiries for the above events should be made to Wai Kheng at **05 241 3742** or **016 551 8172** or via email to contact@perakacademy.com.

Announcement

Press Statement By Menteri Besar Of Perak

Menteri Besar of Perak, Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir, again reminded the public not to be cheated by individuals who used his name, names of state officials and the Menteri Besar Office for the purpose of deceit to collect money or funds.

He reiterated this as a reminder to the public of the actions of such individuals who used deceit as a means to gain monetary rewards.

The MB urged those who are being confronted by these individuals to first confirm the authenticity of documents/files/letters/information produced, with the Menteri Besar or the State Secretary Office beforehand.

The state government, said the Menteri Besar, does not tolerate such acts and will not hesitate to take punitive action against those who attempt to deceive the public by using his name, names of state officials and the Menteri Besar Office for illicit purposes.

Menteri Besar Office
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Education

Tenby's Inaugural Music Festival



It was a weekend of music and celebration for Tenby Schools, which had its inaugural music festival in Ipoh recently. Hosted by Tenby Schools Ipoh, the event saw over 130 students from all five Tenby Schools across Malaysia converging and collaborating on various musical projects, workshops and performances for the festival.

One of the highlights was the 'Tenby's Got Talent' competition, which showcased the musical talents of Tenby students – from playing the harp to acoustic singing. Another highlight was when the five schools sang the "Green, Green World" song as a group for the first time. Renowned Broadway and Disney composer, Alan Menken, wrote the song

exclusively, as one of the Green World Campaign theme songs.

The festival programme also included a Tenby School Song Competition where students were asked to compose both the lyrics and the music for a song dedicated to the founding principles of Tenby Schools: 'A United World At Peace – Through Education'. The Music Festival weekend ended with a tree-planting ceremony by the leaders and students of Tenby Schools Malaysia to commemorate Tenby's involvement with the Green World Campaign and its mission to re-green our world.

For more information about Tenby Schools, please visit www.tenby.edu.my.

Yin Fong

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Books

Stories for Hungry People

From the publication that brings you the wickedly serious and witty KL Noir series, 'Murtad' and more, BukuFixi is now looking for entries for their upcoming book, 'Hungry In Ipoh'.

Picked personally by Amir Muhammad, the founder of BukuFixi, to be the book's editor, Hadi M Nor is no stranger to the world of writing. Despite having the experience in writing short stories and novels, Hadi admitted that he is nervous to be an editor but excited at the same time.

"I've received so many nostalgic stories. Which is fine but I want stories that'll move readers. Something that'll make them want to live here in Ipoh," he told Ipoh Echo.

When asked what is the definition of 'hungry'?



"'Hungry' means you're chasing something or wanting something. But it's hard to specify, as the definition itself is broad. It's up to the writers to characterise what's 'hungry'," he added.

BukuFixi has gained interest among teenagers and young adults with its unique and quirky style of writing. Instead of the typical stories that you can predict by just reading the first few pages, "Hungry In Ipoh" will follow the success of other BukuFixi's books. Apart from Fixi Novo that published English stories, BukuFixi also produces short stories and novels in Bahasa Malaysia.

With two books and short stories in hand, Hadi has also written scripts entitled 'KeMulut Harimau' which was directed by his brother, Haris M. Nor and released early this year on TV. With most of his family members pursuing art for a living, Hadi has no intention of becoming a director but prefers to focus on writing for the time being.

As for 'Hungry In Ipoh', he is looking forward to see entries that will make future readers love Ipoh as much as he does. He described the book as, "Short Stories for Hungry People".

Those interested can email your stories to info@fixi.com.my before **March 31**.

Ili Aqilah



Young Perak

JJ's Malaysia Book of Records

Wong Jun Jie brought glory to Perak by being the first team to win the silver medal in the ILS World Lifesaving Championships at Montpelier France in September last year and being entered into the Malaysia Book of Records (MBRS).

Guest of Honour and MBRS official for Perak, Dato' Dr Mah Hang Soon, handed over the mock certificate to Jun Jie at a packed hall at Sam Tet Secondary School.

Jun Jie or JJ, as he is fondly called by his friends and family, began training as a Perak State Swimmer at the age of 13 and began gaining medals year after year. His greatest achievement in swimming was getting Bronze (50m Freestyle Event) in MSSM 2012 Sabah & MSSM 2013 Shah Alam. Besides, in local competition as in Perak Close 2012 & MSSPK 2013, he obtained 14 Golds in both competitions.

This was what he shared at his acceptance speech at Sam Tet School recently.

"For success you need teamwork, endurance and confidence. Swimming trains us both physically and mentally. I learnt from every mistake in every competition so that I can do better for the next competition. I learnt to compete with myself, always heeding my Mum's admonition: 'Just do your best, beat your own time'."

"The whole experience of being in France and getting to meet people from 46 Nations around the world

was exciting but winning the silver medal was astonishing. During the prize giving ceremony, I felt very emotional as the president of the International Life Saving awarded me the silver medal. I was proud to win my first medal for my country," he added.

He thanked his coaches for their guidance and hard training, his swimming teammates for



their support and his winning partner Mr Geh Cheow Chien from Penang, adding that he felt blessed to have him as a partner in the competition and how Geh's dedication and tough spirit was an inspiration to him.

He also thanked LSSM President Mr Lim Chien Cheng, Secretary Mr Geh Thuan Tek, Vice President and Team manager Mr Lim Chee Gay and members of his family.

The last thank you was especially moving when he thanked his parents and conveyed his respect, love, gratefulness and affection towards both of them, Caroline and Warren Wong.

"Nothing I say can perfectly articulate my gratitude to my mom. I must put special emphasis on my mom Caroline for her involvement in my swimming career. She has been a committee in the Perak swimming society since day one when I started swimming."

"Whenever you see me in the competition, you will see my mom. She's either an announcer or organizing the event or my greatest fan taking photos, videos and cheering for me. That's where all my precious photos came from. Thank you mom for all you have done. You have influenced my life in such a positive way, words cannot express my appreciation. Be it rain or shine, Thank you forever for standing by me."

There were not too many dry eyes in the auditorium after that speech.

SFCK

Most Outstanding Graduate

Sportsman and a diploma in human resources management student, Mahathir bin Hyder Ali, 22, was voted the most outstanding graduate at TAJ International College's 5th Convocation recently held at the Casuarina @ Meru Hotel, Ipoh.

Mahathir has been involved in athletics since the age of 10. He participated in the Malaysian Games (Sukma) 2014 representing Perlis in the 5000m and 10,000m events. He also won medals in the running events at the inter-college games.

"Everyone has his own goals in life. My short-term goal is to produce a personal-best time in both the 5000m and 10,000m events. My long-term goal is to further my studies and to represent Malaysia in the 2016 Asian University Games. I want to be a good and a disciplined sportsman," said Mahathir to Ipoh Echo when met after the ceremony.

"If there's a lecture in the morning, I'll train in the evening. If the lecture is in the afternoon, I'll train in the morning," said Mahathir when asked about his time management.

His time of 35 mins 17.4 secs in the 10,000m, clocked in 2014, has placed him among the top in the collegiate ranking. Mahathir represented Malaysia in both the running events at the Asean University Games 2014 in Palembang, Indonesia.

"I attribute my success to my parents, coach, friends and Taj International College for their trust and confidence. Hopefully, I get to represent Malaysia in the Sea Games, Asian Games and Commonwealth Games," he added.

Nantini



MBI Breeding Mosquitoes in Kinta Riverfront Park



The Kinta Riverfront Park which is located beside the Kinta River Bridge along Jalan Iskandar Shah (Hugh Low Street) seems to have been abandoned by MBI. The major attractions which were the recreation pools and fountains are not in operation.

The pools and fountains contain stagnant water which is ideal for breeding Aedes mosquitoes. The contractor who is maintaining the place has also not cleared the garbage, another breeding ground. In the cover story 'Battling Dengue in Perak' in Issue 199 of Ipoh Echo (October 16 -31, 2014), photos of stagnant water in the park were published.

In response to the story, MBI wrote a letter dated November 20, 2014 signed by Normala Latiff, Ketua Penolong Pengarah Korporat Bandaraya, informing that the fountains and pools have been filled with sand on 10 November 2014.

In fact, as of February 8 when I took the new photos nothing had been done.

It was reported in the New Sunday Times (February 8) that Dato' Dr Mah Hang Soon, State Health Committee Chairman, informed the public that as of February 1, there were three dengue related deaths this year in Perak and 1083 cases were recorded compared to 426 cases last year.

A. Jeyaraj



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Orthopaedic Health

Dr Suresh Siva
Orthopaedic Surgeon

Chinese New Year

February brings about a number of festive events and holidays with Thaipusam and Chinese New Year in Malaysia and Groundhog Day and Presidents Day in the USA. Ipoh in particular will be very busy and congested as all the local people who have gone away for study or work come back to their hometown to enjoy the local food and spend time with their families and relatives. All the local restaurants will be full of people in good cheer who are having a wonderful time enjoying the food that Ipoh is famous for. However, it is also during this festive season that some orthopaedic conditions become particularly prevalent.



Gout

Gout can present in a number of ways, although the most usual is a red, tender, hot and swollen joint (also known as 'inflammatory arthritis'), gout was historically known as "the disease of kings" or "rich man's disease", because dietary factors account for a large percentage of cases of gout and affect people with a rich diet including alcohol, meat and seafood. The consumption of coffee, vitamin C, and dairy products, as well as

physical fitness appear to decrease the risk of gout. The occurrence of gout is also partly genetic and people with certain genes have increased uric acid levels in their blood, which causes gout.

Trauma

Trauma or accidents are the biggest cause of disability in those aged below 55 years of age. Accidents can be caused by travelling at speed along the highway, falling off ladders or injuries in the kitchen while cooking. In any case of trauma, the patient should be quickly brought to hospital and be seen by an orthopaedic specialist. Prompt treatment saves lives and there should be no delay in seeking help.

Arthritis

Knee pain can become more prominent during the festive season as people walk more and are more active. Knee arthritis affects 1 in 4 people above the age of 55 and is commoner in women. Painkillers that are used to treat this condition have side effects which include gastric bleeding and kidney failure. Steroid injections are no longer an option due to their dangerous side effects. Therefore most people with knee arthritis opt for surgery to relieve their pain.



We wish all the readers of this column a Very Happy Chinese New Year.

For more information, call Siva Orthopaedic Clinic at Hospital Fatimah 05 548 6380 or email: info@sivaclinic.com.

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Ecology

By SeeFoon Chan-Koppen

Are You Sure It's Organic?

We're all familiar with this supermarket scene of glistening red tomatoes, thick smooth-skinned carrots, big blooming cabbages with nary a mark on them, huge bunches of perfect greens and a host of other vegetables beckoning buyers from their shelves at affordable prices.

In stark contrast, move to the organic section or any organic shop and the produce is usually smaller, some are pockmarked, the cauliflower are tiny, as are the beets and the carrots, some leafy greens may have holes in them and god forbid, there may even be a creepy-crawly or two still clinging to the leaves when we put them in the sink to wash. And they all cost more by comparison.

So why would one pay more for seemingly unattractive produce? For the nutrients and the lack of pesticide residue, that's why.

Celery, greens like spinach, Bak Choy, Choi Sum, cucumbers, lettuce, sweet capscums, zucchini and corn are particularly notorious for pesticide residues, as are a whole host of fruits, grains and other vegetables.

Health Risks from Pesticides

There are over 3000 pesticides approved for use in Malaysia with 190 of these tested for allowable residues in food (Sixteenth Schedule on Regulation 41). They all present different risks: some are linked with cancer, while others can cause birth defects or harm the nervous system. Some pesticides – including organophosphates commonly used on crops – are what are known as endocrine disruptors, which means that they affect the body's highly sensitive endocrine (hormone) system. There's good reason to be concerned about this: the body uses hormones to coordinate just about everything – cell growth, appetite and metabolism, among other things.

Organic Practices

Farmers who grow organic produce don't use conventional methods to fertilize and control weeds. Examples of organic farming practices include using natural fertilizers to feed soil and plants, and using crop rotation or mulch to manage weeds. Hence organic produce may look insipid and have a few holes in the leaves and yes, even the occasional worm or two, but worms are easily washed off and the holes they may have created with their nibbling do no harm.

Of course, some sceptics are prone to doubting the authenticity of organic produce and may cynically dismiss it all as a scam to charge higher prices. Certification with no proper enforcement appears futile and most organic farms in Malaysia are not certified so it is up to the organic farmer to establish a reputation of credibility.

Organic Produce at Meru Valley Resort

When Meru Valley Resort opened the Terrace Grocery & Cafe at the clubhouse I was delighted to find that they stock organic produce which are delivered twice a week from Cameron Highlands. This meant that I no longer had to traipse into town to buy my organic produce. But doubts about their organic authenticity amongst some of the residents prompted me to take a trip up to Cameron's to verify for myself and to see the actual conditions of this particular farm known as Hatiku Agricultur Sdn Bhd. All my doubts and questions about organic farming could all be answered, I thought to myself.

Hatiku Agricultur

So a group of us set off one fine day for that trip up to



SeeFoon looks on as Chee Siang slices a Chayote



Seedlings

Cameron Highlands. Arriving at Hatiku Agricultur I could barely make it up the dirt path that led up to the farm but fortunately help was at hand when owner/farmer Fung Chee Siang came down in his old truck to fetch me.

Arriving at the top where the farm was situated, my first burning question was answered. "How do you prevent runoff and seepage of water contaminated by other non-organic farms in your vicinity?" At Hatiku Agricultur there was none as it was situated at the top of its own hill and there is no other farm above it or next to it. In fact, it sits in isolated splendour with uncontaminated soil which is fertilised with its own 'home-grown' compost free from hormones or antibiotics and crop rotation ensures that the soil is replenished with every harvest and new planting. Its eagle's nest position also ensures that no pesticide or herbicide sprays get carried by the wind to the crops.

Embracing Nature

"When you embrace nature, nature embraces you. Pests are part of nature and we must learn to live with them. The more you fight, the more they come. If we kill them we kill ourselves. We want to cultivate the land but actually it's the land that is cultivating us," said Chee Siang during our walk through his farm as he proudly showed us one Chayote growing side by side with a beautiful pumpkin.

Slicing into the Chayote, he offered us a bite saying, "with organic produce like this, you can eat them raw and it's as good a substitute as any for cucumber". And he was right. Where before I was dubious about biting into it, after, I was hooked. It was sweet and crunchy and better than any cucumber I have ever eaten.

"Farmers worry about snails and pests and use pesticides heavily to kill them. In my case, I say, let's share the bounty of nature. See my cabbages? You see how the outer leaves are all eaten through? I let the snails eat that. Then I harvest the sweet inner core. So my cabbages are smaller but the health benefits and taste are large," he enthused.

Hatiku only delivers produce to two locations in Ipoh, the cafe in Meru Valley Resort and another organic shop in Pasir Puteh. The rest of his production is sold in Penang, Melaka, and especially in Singapore where his Heirloom produce (grown from seeds which have been handed down for generations) go exclusively to some select restaurants as part of a farm to table project to cut down on the carbon footprint.

All of Hatiku's produce are grown from Heirloom seeds with no GMOs (genetically modified organisms). At the Meru shop, there is a total of 90 different items being sold at different times depending on the harvest and the crop rotation. I have purchased vegetables I have never tasted before thanks to the Heirloom seeds and I can vouch for the freshness and taste of the produce. So even if they don't look like the plastic perfection of what you find in the supermarkets, give organic produce a chance. Your body will thank you for it.



Display of Hatiku's produce at Terrace Grocery & Cafe, Meru Resort.

Hatiku Agricultur Sdn Bhd
Fung Chee Siang
Tel: 019 278 5797
Email: fungs58@gmail.com

Terrace Grocery & Cafe
Fresh produce is delivered on
Sundays and Wednesdays.
Available all week. Tel: 05 529 3319

Announcements

Announcements must be sent by fax: 05 255 2181; or email: announcements@ipohecho.com.my, by the 9th or 23rd of every month in order to meet deadlines. Announcements by phone will not be entertained. Ipoh Echo reserves the right to verify any announcement before it is published.

Health Screening by Perak Family Health Association (with the support of Pantai Hospital Ipoh), **March 4**, 9am to 1pm at Perak Family Health Association, Waller Court Clinic, E1-E4 Ground Floor, Waller Court, Ipoh. Free health screening and breast examination to the general public as part of its cervical cancer and bone health awareness programme. For more information, call 05 254 4275 or 016 526 4233, or call

Angilin at 016 524 8233.

'Walk For Children in Need' organised by Anning Children's Home, **March 29** @ 7am. A 5-km walk starting and ending at Red Crescent Hall Ipoh. Contact: Ng Wern Qi 010 562 1210.

AUSPICIOUS LUNAR YEAR CELEBRATION

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Validity Period: 11/10/2014 - 10/10/2015
Approved plan no.: OSC(038-AJL)2/15/135/12
Land encumbrances: Charged to Malayan Banking Berhad
Total units: 96
Land tenure: Freehold
Exp. Completion date: September 2015
Price: Min RM 580,280 - Max RM 738,800
Approving Authority: M.B.S.

Iconic Falim House to be Preserved

Amber Synergy Sdn Bhd which bought Falim House together with its 26 acres site in 2012 is all set to allay fears and public concern on the preservation and restoration of this iconic site with their launch of their Transformation Request for Proposal (RFP) from interested parties and consultants. Ideas and suggestions are being sought from the general public as well.

Thus begins the process whereby one of the heritage landmarks in Ipoh will be restored to its former glory as well as stand as a benchmark for other restoration and enhancement projects in the future.

Amber Synergy Well positioned

Amber Synergy is well positioned to do this with its track record in development which includes Meru Desa Park, The Racing Circle, Meru Dragon Ridge, Taman Pertama and The Majestic Ipoh which has set benchmark pricing in the Ipoh market as well as in the region. Apart from core property development business, the Group has always been passionate about redevelopment and preservation projects which add value and character to the city scape. Some of the key projects which a director of the Group has undertaken is the Royal Perak Golf Club and the Meru Golf and Country Club.

The aspiration of transforming the Falim House into a historical landmark stems from a spirit of giving back to Ipohites and Perakeans a part of their history. Amber Synergy's CEO Dato Poo Tak Kiau, the driving force behind the group, is advocating for heritage to be preserved, documented and enjoyed for future generations.

Falim House

The centerpiece of the RFP, the Falim House, was the vision of Mr Foo Nyit Tse one of the most successful tin miners in the State in the 1930s. The property where Falim House sits, was acquired from his mentor and compatriot Mr Foo Choo Choon who originally built a modest 2 storey home (who was the richest Chinaman in the world according to the Ballarat Courier in 1907) as an exchange to settle debts. Falim which means "beautiful forests" was transferred to the late Mr Foo Nyit Tse who expanded it into a 20-room mansion which later became famous for lavish parties and dinners.

Falim House has an excellent architectural treatment with Neo-Classical touches and strong Chinese elements in its finishing which can be noticed via its specific detailing throughout the building from the selection of tiles, ironmongery, door knobs, balustrades and also the fountain adjacent to the balcony at the ground floor.

The very complexity of its architectural and design features require an invigoration of new ideas to accentuate its beauty and the intent is to integrate the building in a preservation exercise which will add to the city scape's interesting features. It will also enable residents of Ipoh to have a strong sense of belonging and pride to make the Falim House a reference landmark.

Intent, Vision and Strategy for Transformation

In order to ensure that Falim House itself will be a landmark with a sustainable concept in mind whilst not undermining the importance of history, the Group decided that the Intent, Vision and Strategy for Transformation shall be identified in advance.

The Falim House is one of the components of the new mixed development known as Tin City by Amber Synergy Sdn Bhd. The aim is for it to be a chic new hub featuring an integrated mixed development located between Ipoh town centre and Menglembu. It is created to cater to the business or entertainment needs of the surrounding community with the main development mix comprising Tin Tower, sited on a 3.27 acres land, two blocks apartment consist of 22-storey apartments totalling 616 units; a Hypermarket/Shopping Complex, sited on a 6.64 acres land and envisioned to be a community mall with the emphasis on convenience; 61 units of three (3) and four (4) Storey Commercial Shops area ready for occupation sited on 5.00 acres land, envisaged to be the 1st development in Ipoh to be fitted with a lift for a 4-storey commercial shop lot and a Future Private Medical Hub



sited on 2.17 acres of land of which 16 of the 21 units have been sold.

Aspirations Defined

In a nutshell, the transformation is aimed at realizing the following dreams into a reality:

- Aspiring to create a 4 to 5 star Boutique Hotel address in Ipoh and its surroundings with heritage as its dominant theme.
This dream aspires to fill the gap in quality hospitality suites available in Ipoh and its surrounding vicinity with heritage as its backbone.
- Aspire to create a year round happening address for entertainment, business and leisure.
- The heritage factor is expected to generate excitement for all occasions with co-supporting development components which works in favour of the Falim House.
- Aspire to be an exemplary redevelopment and restoration project which adheres to sustainable principles in terms of execution and design.
- Aspire to be the Icon of Ipoh.

Benchmarks

Benchmarking for the Falim House development will include notable developments like the **Strand Hotel, Yangon, Myanmar; Macalister Mansion, Penang; 23 Love Lane, Penang and Hotel Penaga, Penang.**

The Group believes that expensive is not necessarily good and cheap is not necessarily bad. The execution of the redevelopment and restoration is to be cost effective yet sustainable.

The Group plans to add a silver lining to all the effort by aiming to obtain the following niche awards like the *Pertubuhan Aritek Malaysia Award for Conservation or Adaptive Re-Use; Malaysia Property Award for Heritage (Restoration/Conservation); FIABCI Prix d'Excellence for Heritage (Restoration/Conservation)* and *Trip Advisors Travellers Choice Award* to name a few.

Intent for RFP

The underlying intent for the RFP are:

- To provide clarity on development concept on transformation programme.
- To provide clarity on product positioning.
- Long term sustainability between Property Development & Property Investment.
- Realizing the development of a successful boutique hotel development.

Participation Fees

In addition to welcoming feedback, ideas and comments from the public, the Group undertakes to pay each *accepted* Participating Establishment a One-Off Participation Fee of RM20,000 (Ringgit Malaysia: Twenty Thousand Only) for participating in this exercise. This offer is inclusive of cost / reimbursement incurred for the purpose of this competition. No additional fees or monies will be paid. The remuneration shall be inclusive of 6% GST.

It is anticipated that Participation Fee would be absorbed and included in the successful Participant's Overall Fees for the ongoing design, documentation and delivery of the above development.

SFCK

**All queries throughout the RFP must be in writing (official or email) and directed to: Mr Rameson Nallusamy at +(60) 17 782 6747
Email: rameson.n@gmail.com**

