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30 SEN FOR DELIVERY TO YOUR DOORSTEP -
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ISSUE **217**

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'Gateway to Ipoh' or Obstacle Course?

By A. Jeyaraj

The most popular public transport between KL and Ipoh is the ETS train service. This is the safest and fastest mode of transport at a reasonable cost which makes the Railway Station an important gateway for visitors to Ipoh and for residents, a convenient access to Kuala Lumpur. On most weekends the tickets are sold out. There have been compliments and complaints about the train service and the railway station. Ipoh Echo set out to investigate the good, bad and ugly about the ETS service and the Railway Station and its surrounds.

Continued on page 2



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Many more to come..

State-Of-The-Art Service But Poor Infrastructure and Support Services

Comments from regular passengers

K. Sagadevan, Secretary, Malaysian Indian Business Association, Perak Branch, uses the ETS frequently for his business trips and said that everything is fine with the train service itself. The hostesses are polite and greet the passengers. As for the toilets, he said they are clean. At times the electronic door gets damaged because people do not know how to use it. He informed that the toilet in KL Sentral is free and clean, however, at the Ipoh Station there is a charge of 30 cents and the toilet is dirty as most passengers travelling by ETS use the toilet before they board the train.

Shafruddin Nasution, Chairman, Rukun Tetangga, Lim Garden travels by train regularly and has only good things to say about the train service. However, parking is a nightmare. Hawker stalls are operating next to the Town Hall at night causing traffic jams.

My relatives staying in Ipoh and in KL who use the service regularly also did not have anything negative to say about the train. Occasionally the train is late but announcements are made to inform passengers and sometimes the train makes up the lost time. According to them, since embarking and disembarking from the train is from the first platform, there is less walking. Even if the escalators and lifts are not working it does not affect the passengers.

Ticketing services

Sagadevan said a few of the ticketing staff are not customer friendly. There are complaints that the service is slow especially during peak hours and passengers have heated arguments because of a long wait to buy tickets.

On a Sunday morning, I was at the station before noon and noticed that out of the four counters only two were open. This needs to be rectified as Sunday is a peak traffic day.

Railway Station

The waiting hall is inadequate for accommodating all the passengers and is often over crowded. Seats are not available and senior citizens have to stand. Only about one third of the ground floor is being used; the other section is closed. It should be opened up.

The first floor of the station is vacant and unutilised. Taking a leaf from KL Sentral, they could move the waiting hall to the first floor and leave the trains to run from the ground level.

Food Outlet

There is only one stall selling a limited variety of food and it is too pricey. There should not be a monopoly where the stall holder can charge outrageous prices because passengers have no other options from which to purchase food and drinks. Ipoh is a food haven and tourists come to Ipoh to enjoy the food. The unused space of the station can be turned into a food court serving the special dishes of Ipoh. Passengers can taste the delicacies of Ipoh in the station itself.

Tourist Booth

There is no tourist booth and tourists cannot get any information on popular tourist spots or how to get there. In fact a couple of times I have met tourists who wanted to go to Kellie's Castle and complained about the high taxi fare. They wanted a one way trip and to walk around. I informed them that other than the Castle, there is a Hindu temple which is associated with the Castle and nothing else. I advised them to ask the taxi to wait and bring them back. There must be a tourist booth in the station to provide this type of information. While travelling in India I noticed that railway stations had manned tourist booths with English speaking staff.

Pickup Area

The pickup area is not clearly demarcated and the place is jammed. Few of the cars are parked without drivers and double parking is common. A canopy must be built to protect passengers from the rain and sun and security personnel must be stationed to control the flow of traffic.

Public Transport/Taxi Service

There is no public transport and many passengers walk to and fro from Medan Kidd bus station to the railway station. Passengers have to rely on taxi services. There is no scheduled price and the drivers charge as they please. The fare to popular destinations needs to be



displayed as is being done in Amanjaya Terminal. There should also be a shuttle bus service between the railway station and Medan Kidd bus station. Buses travelling along Jalan Panglima Bukit Gantang Wahab should pass through the station. There is a parking space reserved for buses adjacent to the Cenotaph.

I spoke to the taxi drivers about the charges and they said that they have to pay RM800 per month to get registered with KTMB to operate at the station. Their taxi fares reflect this as they have to cover this cost. The fare to my house which is about three kilometres away is RM15. KTMB must look into reducing the fee or allow all taxis to operate in the station.

Parking Woes

Everyone I spoke to complained of the shortage of parking spaces. The problem is aggravated as parking in front of the building is reserved for KTMB staff. An increasing number of passengers are making day trips to KL and park their cars

for the whole day. The car park is used by people going to the railway station, Post Office and the courts.

Each train can carry about 300 passengers and currently there are 20 arrivals and departures on weekdays and 24 on weekends. There is an acute shortage of parking space. My suggestion is to use the vacant piece of land next to the Magistrate's Court and convert this into space for parking.

No U-turn to Return to Station

The road in front of the station is one-way traffic and after dropping off a passenger, if a person has to return to take care of senior citizens boarding the train, he must drive all the way to the front of St Michael's School and make a U-turn. It would be convenient if a mini roundabout is built at the junction of Jalan Panglima Bukit Gantang Wahab so that motorists can return to the station.

Rear Entrance to Station Not Used

Commuters are using the front entrance, unaware of the entrance from the back of the railway station from Regat Tun Perak (Jelf Road). This entrance is not being used. There is a passageway leading to the front of the station. The entrance to the passageway is a small building with no signboard. Regat Tun Razak is a bypass road and few vehicles use it and parking space is available. Even at Platform 1 in the station there is no signboard pointing to the passageway.

Residents living on the other side of the railway station can use this entrance and avoid the traffic jam. People are afraid of using the passageway as it is deserted so it is advisable to place security guards and cameras at both entrances and it must be well lit to encourage passengers to use this route. It is up to KTMB to promote this entrance to alleviate congestion at the front entrance.

Traffic Nightmare at Night

At night Jalan Panglima Bukit Gantang Wahab is jammed from Medan Kidd roundabout up to Tun Razak Library. It is acute during weekends. Many passengers have missed their trains due to the jam. It is a common sight to see passengers getting out of cars and running to the station. The taxi drivers complained that during puasa month there was a pasar malam along Jalan Maharajalela next to the Town Hall and they had to take a roundabout route to reach the station. This restricted the number of trips they could make and reduced their earnings. Traffic police must be on standby to control traffic. As a result, people are also avoiding booking the Town Hall for private functions because of the jam and parking problems.

New and Planned Services

KTMB has introduced new ETS services from KL to Padang Besar and from Ipoh to Padang Besar. For a start there is only one service per day in either direction. This would be an increase of the existing passenger load. There is also a plan to introduce commuter service between Kampar and Ipoh, which will further exacerbate the congestion and traffic flow.

Conclusions/Recommendations

We have a state-of-the-art train service, but the infrastructure is lacking. As a gateway to Ipoh the first impression we give to tourists upon arrival is important. A survey must be carried out on the traffic flow.

I urge our new Mayor, Dato' Zamri Man to *turun padang* and see for himself the situation and come up with a permanent solution. To get a true picture, he must visit the Railway Station without forewarning at different times with his entourage.



TWO SETS OF LAWS

Arabisation of the Malays has eroded their will to be themselves. It is a real pity. My question is – do the Arabs care for us?

The propensity for some to court controversies is simply baffling. Do they thrive in making a fool of themselves or is it purely a ploy to gain unsolicited publicity largely due to ignorance? I don't have the answer but judging from what was reported and what had transpired in the print and the social media, the "couple seats not for unwed Muslims" directive by Perak Tengah District Office to the lone cinema in Seri Iskandar is an affront to personal liberty, as being enshrined in the Federal Constitution.

As it stands today, Malay Muslims are being restricted by many "haram" (taboos) involving both sexes that it is becoming difficult to separate fact from fiction.

The path of righteousness, apparently, is in the eyes of the few holier-than-thou clerics who are calling the shots. State religious departments and, to a lesser extent, state muftis are in the forefront of this mad scramble for a heavenly retreat in the hereafter. They and only they, have the carte blanche to decide what is good and what is bad for the Muslim masses.

I don't wish to ruffle feathers lest being denounced an apostate and an unbeliever, but when these directives are either too simplistic or incredulous, one can't help but to take notice.

That is how I view the Seri Iskandar cinema-seat caper, which was front-page news late last month. It could not have come at a better time. The 1 MDB financial scandal is at its nadir and, coupled with the banning of the whistle-blower website, Sarawak Report and the 3-month suspension of two business papers, The Edge Weekly and The Edge Financial Daily for their coverage of the fiasco, the stage is set for a little drubbing.

When the matter became national news and answers were sought from the authorities, the person to approach was the state non-Islamic Affairs executive councilor, Dato' Dr Mah Hang Soon. Mah had found the ruling odd too as he had never come across such before.

The directive to the Lotus Five Star (LFS) cinema was issued by the district office in September 2013, following complaints of unsavoury behaviour by unmarried Muslim couples in the cinema. Spying, I must admit, has become a national pastime among Malay Muslims in the country and that accounts for many arrests by religious department staff of couples committing khalwat (close proximity). This form of moral policing is distasteful, to say the least. It is a form of intimidation and also life-threatening, as some men are known to have injured themselves when caught with their pants down, literally.

But Mah had exonerated himself by stating that the directive was applicable to Muslims only, non-Muslims had nothing to fear, he stressed.



Yes, it is meant for Muslims but isn't this one restriction too many? If you are not married you can't hold hands in public, you can't ride pillion on motorbikes, you cannot be pally with the opposite sex, you cannot do yoga for fear of losing your faith, and this is laughable, you cannot even laugh loudly!

The state government is mulling over plans to implement the ruling state-wide. This was announced by none other than the state executive councilor for Islamic Education, Entrepreneur and Cooperative Development, Dato' Mohd Nizar Zakaria. The noose is slowly but surely tightening around Muslims in the state. I hope we don't reach a stage when we can't even be seen on the streets on Fridays.

Malay Muslims have lost their identity. Today it is difficult to find a shop selling baju kurong, forget about baju kebaya, the favourite of my mother and aunties of yore. Wearing these outfits, although identifiable with the Malays within the Malayan archipelago, is now a no-no for reasons of religion. Well, by all accounts, Malays have lost their identity.

Arabisation of the Malays has eroded their will to be themselves. It is a real pity. My question is – do the Arabs care for us? Do we need to become like them and follow their ways in matter of speech and actions? Which Arab nation has ever achieved First World status?

There are two sets of laws for Malay Muslims in the country – one syariah and the other civil. Which do we follow? Honestly, I am lost.

EYE HEALTH – PHYSICAL EXERCISES BENEFIT YOUR EYES

IpoH Echo's EYE HEALTH series continues with Consultant Eye Surgeon Dr S.S. GILL talking to us about EYE BENEFITS from REGULAR EXERCISING.



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

The benefits of exercise for the body seems endless. Regular physical exercise helps maintain cardiovascular fitness, improves mental alertness, improves the control of diabetes mellitus, helps in weight reduction, reduces stroke incidence, increases good cholesterol or high density lipoprotein (HDL), decreases bad cholesterol, improves our mood by releasing endorphins ("happy" hormones), promotes better sleep, improves muscle strength plus boosts energy thereby preventing lethargy and even helps those with arthritis.

So, does regular physical exercise help the eyes in any way? Well, the answer is a resounding yes! Studies have shown that those who regularly exercise have less chances of developing serious eye diseases. For those who already suffer from glaucoma or diabetes mellitus, studies have shown that it improves the control of these diseases.

SOME STUDIES

A study that was published in the journal of Investigative Ophthalmology & Visual Science of approximately 5600 individuals, showed that regular physical exercising improved ocular perfusion pressure (OPP) which has a bearing on glaucoma.

In another study of about 3800 individuals, with regards to regular physical exercises and AMD (Age Related Macular Degeneration), it showed that exercising three times a week, reduced the likelihood of such individuals developing AMD.

Exercising also helps control diabetes mellitus better thereby reducing the potential of diabetic retinopathy (eye complications of diabetes mellitus) which is the leading cause of poor vision amongst individuals in the productive age group.

WHO RECOMMENDATIONS

Here is a summary of weekly physical activity for adults aged between 18-64 years recommended by WHO (WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION):

1. Perform at least 150 MINUTES per week of MODERATE-INTENSITY physical activity OR at least 75 MINUTES OF VIGOROUS-INTENSITY aerobic physical activity per week.
2. AEROBIC ACTIVITY should be performed in bouts of 10 MINUTES DURATION.
3. For ADDITIONAL HEALTH BENEFITS, to increase moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity to 300 MINUTES PER WEEK, or perform 150 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity per week.

Be reminded that 150 minutes (two and a half hours) per week is really not long at all. You can simply accumulate your exercise time by doing exercises ten minutes each time to add it up to 150 minutes per week!

MODERATE-INTENSITY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY examples: brisk walking, dancing, gardening, games and sports, carrying or moving loads less than 20kg, walking the pet briskly.

VIGOROUS-INTENSITY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY includes: running, walking fast, climbing briskly, fast cycling, aerobics, fast swimming, competitive sports like soccer, volleyball, hockey and moving heavy loads more than 20kg.

So, get off that couch and start exercising yourself to health! Remember that you do not have to be a sportsman to maintain a reasonable exercise regime. Do take precautions if you are planning to get into some unaccustomed vigorous exercise regime but suffer from serious medical problems. Checking with your doctor before starting would be the right thing to do.



Business

PICC 65th Anniversary Dinner

Perak Indian Chamber of Commerce (PICC) celebrated its 65th Anniversary by organising a Gala Dinner and Achievement Award function at Kinta Riverfront Hotel. Some one thousand community business leaders and entrepreneurs attended the function.

Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam, Minister of Health was the Guest of Honour and in his address said that the government was liberalising its policies and Indians should make use of the opportunities available and as well to look out for them. PICC must provide input to the 11th Malaysian Plan for sustainable growth of the Indian community, especially entrepreneurs. Further he urged PICC to encourage the younger generation to enter into business.

K. Seven Munusamy, President, PICC, in his welcome address, informed the audience that PICC organises programmes to build strong networks among entrepreneurs. PICC brings together state agencies, banking sectors and other business organisations in Perak to meet Indian businessmen. Currently PICC is very concerned about the many foreign business start ups and this is creating stiff competition especially for small Indian businessmen.

Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his contribution to the nation on human capital development and implementation of the minimum wage. He is instrumental in promoting preventive health and public awareness of health issues.

The Highest Achievement Award was presented to: Dato' Lal Ravindrarajuloo Naidu (Group Executive Director of CSE Group of Companies), Dato' N. Vasantharajan (Managing Director of NTS Arumugam Group of Companies) and S.K. Sundaram (CEO of Raviraj Sdn Bhd and Enrico's).

The Achievement Award was presented to: N. Rakunathan (Managing Director of Bionic Vision Group of Companies), Dulkibali Bin Hj. Jamaludin (Managing Director of DJ Holdings Group of Companies), AKS Sakthivel (Managing Director of SRRI AKS) and Suresh Sathasivam and Rajasegaran Selvaduray (Directors of Biomed Engineering Sdn Bhd).

Jeyaraj



For more information, call Gill Eye Specialist Centre at Hospital Fatimah
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'Open Houses' are a Great Show of Unity



by Mariam Mokhtar

When politicians of all persuasions hold 'Open Houses', after a festival, they attempt to show the spirit of unity by giving the *rakyat* the opportunity to rub shoulders with VIPs, and also consume free dishes like *lemang*, *rendang*, *satay*, *laksa* and *cendol*. Contrary to popular opinion, the cost of hosting the 'Open House' is not borne by the politician, but is paid for by the taxpayer. The taxpayer should be happy that he is able to make a small contribution towards national unity.

It is only the truly patriotic Malaysian who does not mind queuing up, alongside other Malaysians, thousands of whom are ahead of him in the long line of guests. The people who have made annual 'Open House' visits, have only one complaint. The weather!

Those who attend 'Open Houses' are unwavering in their belief that they are helping to create a harmonious nation. They dismiss allegations that they are freeloaders, who are only interested in a free lunch, and are looking their best, as they pose for 'selfies' beside the politician and members of royalty.

Members of the public who visit 'Open Houses' are careful to dress well, because they have heard recent reports of several people being turned away from government departments. More often than not, the women who frequent these places had exposed their bare arms and legs. As Malaysia is an equal society, the men folk may no longer be able to escape scrutiny, as department heads are mulling over the enforcement of dress regulations on men who dare to expose their knees, or who wear socks with sandals.

The enthusiasm of the regular 'Open House' visitors is evident, as they begin to queue-up at least two hours before the opening time. These regulars hope that the host, will see his guests being drenched by rain, or sweltering in the heat, and will send their waiters with huge trays of drinks and titbits.

Politicians know that the pool of people who wish to attend 'Open Houses', is limited so there is a lot of rivalry between the politicians, to attract a large crowd at their 'Open House'. The competition is stiff.

The rakyat claims that their 'Open Houses', are more popular than those of the politician's. Family and close friends don't normally visit a politician's 'Open House'. It is also a well-established fact, that people who like to be photographed by the media, are normally found in the queue to the politician's 'Open House'.

Malaysians are friendly people. They gather by the thousands and they are normally busy chatting to their friends, on their handphones. A survey done by a consumer group found that people are more likely to attempt to strike-up a conversation with strangers if they are not in the company of friends or family.

Children are particularly welcome at 'Open Houses'. Then, politicians can pose with the babies and children of their guests. The only problem faced by the politicians, is the child who has consumed too many fizzy drinks and sugary foods. There have been a number of times when children have regurgitated the contents of their stomachs onto a bewildered politician. The tendency nowadays is for the politician to pose beside the mother as she holds her child or toddler, instead of the politician cradling the baby.

The other issue, which was unresolved for several years, was the early guests consuming the food at such an alarming rate, that very little was left for the late comers. The event organisers solved this problem very simply. They did not have to pay huge sums of money to a management consultant. The solution was to issue guests with paper plates and plastic cutlery.

Anyone who has eaten from a paper plate will know how frustrating it is and that it is almost impossible to pile a huge amount of food on it. The plate simply sags in the middle or gets soggy, with gravy. The plastic fork is extremely bendable and jabbing at a piece of meat is impossible. Cutting anything huge, with a plastic knife only snaps the knife.

People are frustrated in their failed attempt to eat quickly and return to the main table, for seconds. So, they will leave plates of uneaten food. This confuses those who have yet to eat, because plates of uneaten food make

people think that the food is inedible.

Hari Raya 'Open Houses', like other 'Open Houses', are a magic and instant cure for unity.



CHILD HEALTH

Dr Shan Narayanan

Consultant General Paediatrician, Hospital Fatimah

Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse is a form of child abuse. Children are forced by an adult or an adolescent to participate in a sexual activity. The sexual activity can be touching, non touching or exploitation.

Touching sexual offenses include:

- Fondling;
- Making the child touch an adult's sexual organs; and
- Penetrating a child's vagina or anus no matter how slight with penis or any object that doesn't have a valid medical purpose.

Non-touching sexual offenses include:

- Engaging in indecent exposure or exhibitionism (live or online);
- Exposing children to pornographic material;
- Deliberately exposing a child for the purposes of prostitution; and
- Using a child to film, photograph or model pornography.

The activities are carried out to satisfy the sexual desire/needs of the adult/adolescence. Many a time the abuser is a person known to the child and the children involved do not realise that what is happening is wrong or abuse.

According to the U.S. National Child Abuse and neglect Data System (NCANDS), an estimated 9.3 per cent of the confirmed or substantiated child abuse and neglect cases in 2005 involved sexual abuse (U.S. Department of Health and Human Service, 2007). The figure translates into over 83,800 victims in 2005 alone (USDHHS, 2007).

A report by UNICEF Malaysia, indicates that in 2008, there were 2780 child abuse reports. Of these 733 was Child Sexual Abuse (72% of which were incest).

Child sexual abuse can occur in a variety of settings, including home or school. The victims are predominantly girls. Boys are also abused. Perpetrators are mainly men but women are also involved.

Children who are sexually abused may exhibit behavioural changes, based on their age.

The effects of sexual abuse extend far beyond childhood. Sexual abuse robs children of their childhood and creates a loss of trust, feeling of guilt and self-abusive behaviour. It can lead to antisocial behaviour, depression, identity confusion, loss of self esteem and other serious emotional problems. It can also lead to difficulty with intimate relationships later in life.

Sexual abuse is usually discovered in one of two ways:

- Direct disclosure (e.g., the victim, victim's family member or parent seeking help make a statement).
- Indirect methods (e.g., someone witnesses the abuse to the child, the child contracts a sexually transmitted disease or the child becomes pregnant).

Teaching children what is an appropriate touch and when to say "no" if someone tries to touch sexual parts of their bodies or touch them in any way that makes them feel uncomfortable is important.

Preventing all forms of child abuse is at three levels:

- The primary level is by raising awareness among public, service providers and policy makers about the scope of issues involved in abuse.
- The next level is secondary prevention methods where families with one or more risk factors for child abuse are identified and supported.
- Finally, in tertiary prevention, for families where abuse has already taken place, the necessary support is provided to reduce the impact and prevent it from re-happening.

For more information, call Dr Shan's clinic at Hospital Fatimah 05-546 1345 or email shaniea02@gmail.com.

SeeFoon is taking a sabbatical from food

By SeeFoon Chan-Koppen



Wellness

SeeFoon checks out Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy

I was expecting my head to be cradled and gently moved side to side as this was what I experienced in the two sessions of craniosacral therapy I've ever had in my entire life. At those times, I was left with the feeling of, "Is that all there is?" – regarding the session – and yet, there was a recognition that something deep had occurred in my physiology.

Therefore when I went for my first session of Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy in Ipoh I was expecting more of the same.

To my surprise, she began by saying to me on the first encounter as I walked through the door, "You have a lot on your mind" to which, taken aback, I countered with, "and how did you detect that?" And she replied, "I can tell from your energy field."

"So I am dealing with someone who is highly sensitive and intuitive" I thought. I began with relating to her all my physical ailments and about how little energy I had. When the session was over, I literally floated out of her place, lightheaded, relaxed and relieved of all my stresses and strains. And so began my relationship with Caitlin Tham who's from Ipoh (hooray, another alternative wellness resource for Ipoh!), coupled with the resolve to do this every week if possible.

So what is this miracle stress relieving therapy? Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy is a gentle yet profound non-invasive, hands-on treatment for the whole body which assists in the body's capacity for self-repair. Performed on a massage table, the client is fully clothed and the touch is generally light and still.

The treatment is focused on supporting the health of the whole being, especially the nervous system. This is the system that dictates all of the body's functioning, constantly sending and receiving information. Craniosacral touch can bring about a reorganization that is physiological, psychological and energetic.

As this is a gentle therapy, it's suitable for all ages including newborns, the elderly and people with delicate, degenerative or painful conditions. Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy can lead to changes in areas of restriction and discomfort and an optimising of overall health. I certainly experienced more energy, calmness and mental clarity after just two treatments.

Craniosacral Biodynamics originated in osteopathic medicine. It is a unique specialty field with a deeper understanding of energy dynamics. Anyone who's ever had a deep tissue massage can testify to the knots and blockages that a good massage therapist finds in one's body. These are the stored remnants believed to be caused by stress whether physical or emotional such as injury, illness, or trauma. These are held in the energy dynamics of the body along with the physical structure. The beauty of the Biodynamic approach is that it works with the individual's inherent resources for change and healing.

Physically – BCST influences the central nervous system; brain and spinal column, as well as the fluid that bathes it. This fluid is called the cerebral spinal fluid (CSF). From our skeletal system and the bones of the cranium to the ebbing and flowing of our endocrine system, this cranial modality is effective, yet gentle.

Emotionally – Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy can affect very deep and primary patterns, while providing the client with resource and space to explore their emotional landscape. Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy provides a deep sense of resourcing within



Caitlin with a young client



the client. This resourcing provides a safe container for emotional issues to resolve.

Spiritually – Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy can open doors to both our hearts and soul, profoundly changing our lives.

CST has been characterised as pseudoscience and its practice has been called quackery. Search the web and one will find the therapy being debunked by

some.

And yet, how do I explain the feeling of total calm and peacefulness I feel after a session. With my presenting aches and pains diminished? And she barely touched me; with none of the movements that I have come to expect from massage and all the while, I am fully clothed. I actually find myself going into a very deep space. Not sleep per se but a deep meditative state.

Medical doctors would pooh pooh it all and dismiss it as the placebo effect. But how would they explain that I didn't take any medicine; I wasn't hypnotised, and she only put her hands on my legs and under my body near the rib cage. And in about an hour I walked out refreshed and energised.

When I asked Caitlin about the process, she explained that she basically tunes in to the client's energetics and to the client's body. She can actually feel imbalances in the cerebral spinal fluid (CSF) and works at bringing it back to balance.

So what made Caitlin decide to train in BCST, I asked, "I have an autistic son and was desperately looking for ways to calm him down as he was quite uncontrollable at times. My search led me to BCST and as luck would have it, there was a training course being conducted in Kuala Lumpur.

"I haven't looked back since. I now work with mothers who bring their autistic kids to me and using BCST, I manage to calm the kids down. My own son has improved considerably in being less rowdy and throwing fewer tantrums which makes training him much easier. I don't claim to perform miracles but I can definitely see results in the clients that I treat," said Caitlin modestly.

Autism is not the only condition that responds to BCST. Other conditions which may respond favourably range from allergies, arthritis, back pain, colic in babies, to hearing issues, fluid retention and a host of other maladies.

As for me, I'm hooked on Caitlin and BCST and with her on my doorstep in Ipoh, help for all my aches and pains are but a short drive away.

Contact Caitlin **016 529 9328** or caitlntkf@yahoo.com or <https://www.facebook.com/caitlin.tkf?fref=ts> or www.bodyintelligence.com/practitioner.

Nosh News



The next time you crave for good and tender satay, try and visit the nearest Sate Legend in your area. The franchise owner, Zuri Azma B Zulkifli or Kak Azma to her customer, used her late mother-in-law's recipe to ensure they stand head and shoulders above other satay stalls.

"I started the business ten years ago but the crowd came in three years ago. I am looking forward to opening more stalls in the future," said the aspiring entrepreneur.

Sate Legend offered a selection of satay including beef, chicken, lamb, innards (perut, lampung), duck, venison and turkey. The price of beef and chicken satay is 80 sen per stick, while RM1 per stick is for lamb, innards and duck. As for venison and turkey satay, customers are charged RM1.50 per stick.

Sate Legend is available at three different locations: the outdoor food court at Angsana Mall, Jalan Raja Azman Shah (Jalan Hospital); Row Come Corner at 11 Jalan Rokam, Kampung Sungai Rokam, which will open only after Hari Raya; and Classix 253 Restaurant located at Jalan Jelapang, Off Jalan Besar, Jelapang. For early bookings, contact **017 577 3124**.



Sate Legend



Ili Aqilah

Community

Antenatal Seminar

Perak Community Specialist Hospital (PCSH) held an antenatal seminar with a difference recently at its premises. As parenting is a shared responsibility by both mothers and fathers, the seminar was tailor-made to include mothers-to-be, fathers-to-be and those with kids.

The participants comprised 14 expectant mothers out of 26 participants which included husbands.

The seminar began with a talk by the Obstetrician and Gynecologist, Dr Chen Yoke Chuan who spoke about Family Planning, followed by a talk by Dr Pang Ay Minn, who addressed the topic of breastfeeding. It ended with a question and answer session.

Anaesthesiologist, Dr Sidney spoke on pain relief and pain management during labour. The midwives of of PSCH advised expecting mothers on the right ways to take care of newborns by demonstrating bathing and massaging techniques.

It was a lively session as the participants were given an opportunity to perform the bathing techniques on baby dolls.

Nantini



Boston CSR with DAYBREAK

Mr Leslee Wong Group CEO of Boston Group of Companies was at Persatuan DAYBREAK on with his team recently to deliver some good cheer to the trainees there.

As part of their ongoing CSR programme, Boston had brought a delicious lunch prepared in the kitchen of the Boston Restaurant located at De Gardens, Ipoh Garden for the trainees which was received with great delight.

Persatuan DAYBREAK Chairman Mr Siu Tack Chuan was on hand to greet Mr Wong and his team. In his welcome address Mr Siu thanked Boston not only for the meal but also for their earlier support where they bought more than RM10,000 of Daybreak handicrafts to be given for their Mothers' Day promotions. Boston had also bought RM3000 worth of school socks from DAYBREAK.

According to Mr Wong, the Boston Group of Companies were glad to be able to help Persatuan DAYBREAK as they had always been looking to give back to the community and found that Persatuan DAYBREAK with their model of vocational training and job placement of Persons with Disabilities to the one of the best cause for them to give their support.

Chronically Ill Siblings Get Help

When three of his five children were diagnosed with chronic diseases, Suhardy Che Omar, had to quit his job and focus on the health of his sick kids, leaving his wife as the sole breadwinner of the family. It was difficult but the couple managed to work around it and survived.

One of the kids, Nur Athirah Ayu Suhardy, 17, who is supposed to sit for her Sijil Penilaian Malaysia (SPM) examination this year is recovering from brain surgery. She welcomed the staff of Eonsave led by its Operation Manager for Northern Region, Zamzuri Mansor when they dropped by to see the Suhardy kids.

"Eonsave will set up a fund to foot the medical bills and other necessities for the three siblings. A donation box will be placed at every Eonsave outlet in Malaysia," said Zamzuri who gave a hamper consisting of groceries and hari raya goodies worth over RM1000 to the family.

Nur Athirah's younger siblings also suffered from debilitating diseases. Nur Ameera Aisyah Suhardy, 11, suffers from bronchial asthma while her younger brother, Muhammad Airl Daniel Suhardy, 9, has severe kidney complication, high blood pressure, a weak heart and glaucoma in his left eye.

"I am happy to see Athirah doing well today. The brain surgery to remove a tumour has affected her a lot. Her memory is slowly returning. However, I am still very worried about Ameera's and Airl's conditions," said Suhardy to reporters. The family lives in a rented house belonging to a relative in Klebang Restu.

Readers keen on helping the unfortunate family can do so via monetary contributions. You may deposit your money into Suhardy's Bank Simpanan Nasional savings account: 08100-41-00011-384. Suhardy welcomes any form of assistance to tide them over in their hour of need.

RM

Parking Nightmare



Roads leading to the Inland Revenue Board of Malaysia building and the Pantai Hospital in Ipoh Garden South are jam-packed with cars and, with limited space available, parking is a nightmare.

Motorists have the tendency to park their vehicles on both sides of the roads. Double parking is a common sight, stretching as far as the eyes can see. This causes traffic congestion, particularly during peak hours, making it dangerous for pedestrians to cross the roads.

"The staffs and visitors like to park outside my house, as parking is free in residential areas. It's worse during BR1M and tax-paying periods. Dogs would start barking as early as 8am when they see strangers' outside the fences," a housewife who has been staying in the neighbourhood since 1983 told Ipoh Echo.

Many resort to indiscriminate parking as there are inadequate parking bays. "There was a proposal to turn our neighbourhood open ground, which serves as a community playground and a green lung, into a parking lot. This was met with objections from concerned residents," said a retiree who has been staying in the area since 1978.

"More than half of the existing parking lots are being taken by the staffs. This is the reality of the 'everyone-drives-a-car syndrome' afflicting our society today," the 67-year-old man lamented.

The parking attendant at Pantai Hospital had this to say, "Everyday it's full. From 7am to about 9.30am, it'd be vacant. From 10am to 12.30pm it's peak hours. It'd be vacant again from 12.30pm to 2.30pm, as it's the doctors' lunch break."

The additional parking lot behind the hospital is full most of the time. During peak hours the sign "Full" is up. This is indicative of how serious the problem is at Ipoh Garden South. But residents have come to accept the inconvenience as a matter of fate. "We're on the receiving end. What else can we do?" said one old-timer who prefers to remain anonymous.

Will the problem be resolved? When the question was posed to Ipoh City Council we received the standard answer associated with authorities, "We'll look into it".

Mei Kuan



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HONDA

Community

Aidilfitri Open House



On Friday, July 17, the first day of Syawal, Ipohites and fellow Perakeans came in droves to the Menteri Besar's residence to celebrate Hari Raya Aidilfitri. The event, held annually, provides the public an opportunity to share the joyous moment in the company of Menteri Besar, Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir and his wife, Datin Seri DiRaja Sharipah Zulkifli.

While enjoying the sumptuous spread, which included traditional delicacies such as *lemang*, *ketupat*, *satay* and *rendang tok*, the crowd, estimated in excess of 5000 was entertained to dances and songs performed by state troupe, Selendang Perak. To add colour to the merriment Malaysia's leading animated characters, Upin and Ipin, were present to charm the visitors with their brand of comical gestures and movements.

His Royal Highness Sultan Nazrin Muizuddin Shah and Her Royal Highness Raja Permaisuri Perak Tuanku Zara Salim arrived soon after. The newly crowned Sultan and his consort were the star attraction and many took the opportunity offered to take selfies and photos with the royal couple.

Although Aidilfitri is celebrated by Muslims, following the rigorous fasting month of Ramadan, the festivity is being shared by all Malaysians regardless of race and religion. It was in that spirit that Aidilfitri was observed that Friday afternoon at the MB's residence.

Ili Aqilah

Meaningful Ramadan Celebration at KPJ Ipoh

KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital celebrated the month of Ramadan with preparation and distribution of bubur lambuk, Raya shopping for children from Rumah Kanak-kanak Sultan Abdul Aziz, Kuala Kangsar and Hari Raya goodies distribution to all in-patients of KPJ Ipoh.

The most exciting part of this Ramadan 2015 celebration was "Raya Shopping and Iftar" with children of Rumah Kanak-kanak Sultan Abdul Aziz, Kuala Kangsar which was held on Saturday, July 11. Forty children were involved in this Raya shopping each paired with 40 volunteers from KPJ Ipoh. This is the first time ever for KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital to have organised such a Raya Shopping event.

Meanwhile, Iftar with the children and volunteers was held at Masjid Muhammadiyah also known as Masjid Cina at Tasek, Ipoh.

"The blessed Ramadan is the month for us to spread some joy to the less fortunate amongst us. Therefore, we are glad to have organised these events which we hope can make memorable memories and ultimately benefit the children involved," says Asmadi Mohd Bakri, Chief Executive Officer of KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital.



Bubur lambuk preparation and distribution to all staff, Consultants and public is part of the hospital's tradition where four huge pots of bubur lambuk packed into more than 1000 packs were distributed. This event was held every Thursday, for three weeks throughout the month of Ramadan. The prime objective of this programme was to strengthen the relationship amongst the Consultants, Management and staff of KPJ Ipoh besides the noble charity of distributing bubur lambuk to the public.

The distribution of Hari Raya goodies was held in the final week, to celebrate the in-patients especially the Muslims who were unable to be at home during this festive season.

Community

Blood Donation Campaign & Medical Camp



In conjunction with World Blood Donor Day, Kinta Medical Centre in collaboration with Ipoh Chinese Chin Woo Athletic Association, organised a Blood Donation Campaign & Medical Camp. The objective of the event was to focus on thanking blood donors who save lives every day through their blood donations, and people in good health who have never given blood, particularly young people, to begin doing so. Besides that, the hospital also would like to create wider public awareness of the need for regular donation because of the short shelf life of blood components and to encourage existing and potential donors to donate blood at regular intervals. In addition, the hospital provided free height and weight measurements, blood pressure, blood glucose test, body mass index and eye check.

Allowance for Inshore Fishermen

Dato' Sri Haji Tajuddin Abdul Rahman, Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Agro-based Industry, presented living allowances to 424 inshore fishermen from all over Perak during a ceremony held at TAJ International College (TIC).

The fishermen received RM1200 each as allowance for the months of January till June 2015 at RM200 per month, in accordance with the provision made in Budget 2015.

Present at the ceremony were Datuk Haji Ismail bin Abu Hassan, the Director General of the Fisheries Department, Dato' Haji Azini bin Mohd Shahid, the Deputy Secretary General (Development) Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-based Industry and Dr Bah Piyen Tan, the Director of Perak Fisheries Department.

"Besides the allowance, the ministry provides the fishermen with various aids such as housing. We also provide loans via Agrobank and National Entrepreneurial Group Economic Fund (Tekun) for them to buy fishery tools and boats," said the deputy minister during the press conference. Tajuddin highlighted the manipulation by middlemen and its effects on the unfortunate fishermen.

"They should venture into downstream industries such as the production of dried fish, fishcakes and fish balls in order to augment their income. For that, the ministry provides basic training on food technology and production through the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI) and National Agricultural Training Council," he added.

Mei Kuan



Reclaiming the Glory of Malaysia

Newly formed non-governmental organisation, Negara-ku People's Movement (NKPM), organised a *teh tarik* session together with IKRAM Perak, SABM Perak, Perak Women for Women (PWW), Alaigal and LLG Ipoh on Friday, July 24 at Seri Malaysia Ipoh Hotel.

Zaid Kamaruddin, the chairman of the steering committee, shared the aspirations of the Negara-ku movement which, among others, include mobilising and empowering the people to resist all forms of intolerance, bigotry, hatred, extremism and violence. It strives to do this by alluding to the Federal Constitution as the Supreme Law of the Land, the Malaysia Agreement and the Rukunegara as guides for national objectives and values. The session ensued with a passionate yet fruitful open-floor discussion among the 40-odd participants present.

Attended by people of multiple ethnicities and ages, the *teh tarik* session contributed to the setting up of Negara-ku action groups all over Malaysia with the objectives of promoting unity and action against division.

Ipoh Echo spoke to one of the steering committee members, Haris Ibrahim. "My hope is people who came here today will take ownership of Negara-ku, in its true sense. Negara-ku does not belong to us. We start this movement for people to come on board and take ownership of it," he declared.

"I love my people. I have 28 million children in this country. They're all my children because we are all anak bangsa Malaysia. We're all equal. So that's it," such was his affirmative reply when asked what motivated him to take on the challenge.

"I feel it's a good initiative bearing in mind the present situation in the country which can easily get out of control. Attitude towards racial harmony is found wanting. And religious intolerance is on the rise which is making many Malaysians uncomfortable. This initiative may look small but it's definitely a step in the right direction," said Rani, an attendee at the end of the inspiring 3-hour session.

The formation of civil society movements like Negara-ku, at this juncture, is most appropriate to help reclaim the glory of Malaysia.

Mei Kuan

Free Groceries for Needy Folks



Ipoh City Council and the Ipoh's Civil Community Council distributed free grocery supplies to some 200 single mothers and needy folks during the Sekalung Budi (generosity) programme on July 10. The event was held at City Hall in conjunction with the Hari Raya Aidilfitri celebration the following week.

Each of the recipients was given a basket containing 5kg of rice, coffee, sugar, snacks, cooking oil, flour and duit raya.

Mayor Dato' Zamri bin Man said that the recipients were those with monthly earnings of less than RM220. They were selected from the state-initiated e-Kasih list while some were chosen by the Civil Community Council. Those listed under e-kasih received RM1488 from The Ministry of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government to settle their annual Council flat rents.

The mayor told reporters that this was his first official charity event after being appointed to helm the Ipoh City Council.

"It's a worthy programme, as it's a way for Ipoh City Council to engage with the public, especially the needy. I hope more similar events will be organised forthwith," said Zamri.

"Although the programme is directed at Muslims in general, we've decided to include other races as well to help reduce their financial burden," added Zamri.

The mayor thanked sponsors for their support in making the programme a success.

Nantini

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Community

Taman Cempaka – An Aedes Hotspot

The State Health Department carried out a cleaning campaign to clear areas identified as aedes hotspots in Taman Cempaka on Monday, July 27.

During the day-long operation, owners of abandoned lots and houses were issued with compound notices. Similar actions were taken against house owners whose properties were being classified as mosquito-breeding grounds.

Taman Cempaka, incidentally, is among the most dengue-prone areas in the country, thus efforts at eradication are being undertaken seriously.

The cleaning-up operation involved over 400 staff from various public and voluntary agencies. Unfortunately, the participation of residents was non-existent. The apathy among residents of Taman Cempaka was simply too glaring. A *gotong-royong* effort by Ipoh City Council last month was a complete disaster when hardly anyone turned up except for the Council workers.

According to Dato' Dr Mah Hang Soon, Executive

Councillor for Health, Transportation and Non-Islamic Affairs, Kampung Dato Ahmad Said in Manjoi was taken off the dengue-hot spot list on July 19.

"Kampung Dato Ahmad Said is no longer on the danger list following the success of *gotong-royong* activities. The number of dengue cases too has declined," he told reporters. Mah praised the attitude of the residents there.

The task force, said Mah, is currently focusing on Taman Cempaka and other affected areas. His only regret is the attitude of residents who are not too concerned for the well-being of their housing estates or even themselves for that matter.

Nantini



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Community

Nolee's Raya Open House

Over 2000 Ipohites and Perakeans from all walks of life dropped by state executive councillor, Dato' Nolee Ashilin's Raya open house on Saturday, July 18, the second day of the Aidilfitri celebration. Her house at Tambun Heights was a hive of activity right from morning till late at night.

Visitors were treated to a wide selection of traditional Malay food such as *lemang*, *ketupat*, *rendang* and the crowd's favourite, grilled lamb.

Despite the heavy traffic jam during the climax of the festivity, it did not stop the public from coming and greeting Nolee and her family in person.

"I like to express my sincere gratitude to all who came to our raya open house. It's such a privilege to meet everyone today. Hopefully, I'll get to organise it again next year," said Nolee to Ipoh Echo.

RM



No End to Bus Woes

Following the move by Perak Transit Bhd to display its service routes and schedules at bus stops in the city, effective Thursday, July 23, Ipoh Echo sent its team to get feedback from commuters. The team visited two popular stops, one at Kamdar and the other at Medan Kidd.

From our team's observation, commuters hardly noticed the schedules until we pointed it out to them. Some stared at the schedules with a puzzled look before resorting to asking those around them for explanation.

"If they don't know how to read it they can ask us," said a staff at the Medan Kidd bus terminal. "Even though the schedule was only posted yesterday, we've been following the routes and schedules religiously. If there are four buses for that particular route, the waiting time would be 20 minutes. If there are three, it would be 30 minutes," she explained.

The public, however, beg to differ. "All this while we don't refer to schedules, we just wait and wait. It's tiring, especially on a hot day. We're not aware of the schedules at all," said a housewife who commutes daily from her house in Tanjung Rambutan.

"The bus is always late. Once I've to wait over an hour. Right now, I've been waiting for more than 30 minutes already. As for the schedules, I can't read them as the letterings are too small," said an elderly woman who was waiting for a bus to Gunung Rapat at the Kamdar bus stop.

"It's normal to wait for more than half an hour," said a student who too was not aware of the development.

"Buses to Ipoh Jaya, Gunung Rapat and Ampang are the worst. No one waits for these buses anymore because the buses will never come. They only operate in the morning and none after that. As a result, I either cycle or get a lift from friends to go to work because I don't have my own transport," complained a very depressed middle-aged woman who has been struggling with the inconvenience for over 20 years.

The displaying of bus routes and schedules by Perak Transit Bhd is commendable but the lingering problem of availability and reliability of buses from other bus companies continues to haunt commuters.

Mei Kuan and Nantini



Rotary Club Ipoh's New President

Dr Kok Fu Loon was installed as the 85th president of Rotary Club of Ipoh for the year 2015/2016 during a dinner held at the Excelsior Hotel on Sunday, July 12. District Governor, Lady Siti Subaidah Adil was the guest of honour.

A mathematician and an expert of mnemonic techniques, Dr Kok was inducted into the Club in 2003. The graduate from King's College, London said in his speech that his main project is a Mnemonic Techniques 'O Level' course for Form 4 and 5 students of the five sponsored Interact Clubs from Main Convent, Anderson, Yuk Choy, Raja Perempuan School and Perak Girls Secondary School, respectively.

"My second priority is membership development," he added.

Immediate past president, Gavin Tang Cheng Loong brought guests down the memory lane via pictures of the past year in review.

"I wish to thank all those who had supported me and had contributed, in one way or another, to the club during my tenure as president. Dr Kok, as I step off the limelight, the baton is now in your hands," he enthused amidst cheers from an approving audience.

Mei Kuan



Politics



Hope for the Future

Leaders of Gerakan Harapan Baru (GHB) organised a *harapan baru* (new hope) dialogue with the public on Sunday, July 26 at the Symphony Suites Hotel. Some 500 Ipohites of all races and creed attended the animated discussion along with elected state representatives from Pakatan Rakyat. A number of non-governmental organisations members were also present.

Former Menteri Besar and state opposition leader, Dato' Seri Ir Haji Mohammad Nizar Jamaluddin and now Harapan Baru (Perak) deputy chairman, gave an inspiring speech prior to the dialogue.

"We're not the frustrated lot, as alleged, to form a new political party. We're together with NGOs to form this new party as a sign of inclusivity," he emphasised. "The membership of Harapan Baru is open to Malaysians of all ethnicities, as long as he or she is 16 years and above. We worked in PAS for the last 20, 30 years based on Islamic principles, therefore, when we're ousted we'll still work based on the same Islamic principles," he reiterated.

Present at the dialogue were Dr Lee Boon Chye, Member of Parliament for Gopeng and former state legislative assembly speaker and Member of Parliament for Batu Gajah, V. Sivakumar.

"Presently Gerakan Harapan Baru is an NGO and will remain so until we obtain the status of political party. Right now we want to gather as much grassroots support as possible while preparing a solid foundation for the party," explained Gerakan Harapan Baru chairman, Haji Mohamad Sabu, formerly the Deputy President of PAS.

Gerakan Harapan Baru will provide Malaysian Muslims with an alternative to PAS and UMNO and since membership is open to all Malaysians, the participation of non-Muslims will be not be an issue.

"There's hope now for Malaysians with Gerakan Harapan Baru," said a Malay gentleman to Ipoh Echo.

Mei Kuan

Announcement

Marriage Education Course

Family Wellness Club Ipoh is organising a premarital and marriage education course for the benefit of Ipohites. The 9-module course covers a variety of issues that couples may experience in marriage. Some of the modules include preparedness for marriage, planning a family and relationships with future spouse and in-laws.

The facilitator for the course is Associate Professor Dr Mohammad bin Abdul Rahman, a consultant psychiatrist with UniKL/RCMP, Ipoh.

The course will be conducted on Saturdays. The first class is on Saturday, August 8 from 9am to 12.30pm. Venue: Banyan Spa at No. 40, Jalan Raja Dihilir, 30350 Ipoh.

To register call Denis/May at **05 242 6866** or **012 507 3866**. Do hurry as the intake is limited to a maximum of 50 participants.

Education

Best Practices in Learning You Can Apply at Home

We are constantly bombarded with adverts which introduces quick-fix programmes and how a few days of camp could transform a child from being below average to being excellent. As ambitious as this may sound, many parents turned to this as they were clueless over how they can get their child to learn.

By creating the right environment and providing the correct guidance, we believe that every child CAN learn well.

The International Baccalaureate programme did exactly this by gathering the best practices in education from around the globe and applying it effectively in their schools. Some of these you may adopt and administer at home.

Before you pull out a large piece of paper to start designing your plan, it is important that you first understand how your child learns best. One of the many factors which are frequently ignored is 'inquiry learning' or in layman's terms, learn when you are curious.

Remember when your two-year-old child asked you why the sky is blue? Our usual reaction is "It is blue. That's the way it is." This will be registered into his mind until one day, when he is no longer interested, his teacher will make him memorise about molecules in the air and how the composition affects the colour we see in the sky. If you had put in the extra effort to do a quick google search with him on this subject, he would have probed further to understand the whole concept – building his skills to research, nurturing him to be more understanding and giving him the ability to learn on his own. Can you see how you would be able to impart knowledge while developing skills and character, just by allowing your child to learn when he is curious?

Based on a research by Professor Charles Desforges in 2003 on parental involvement in a pupil's achievement, the provision of a secure and stable environment greatly stimulates the intellectual development of a child. The parent-teacher-child discussion should exhibit good models for constructive social and educational values. It is never too late to make changes to how your child learns. As R. Buckminster Fuller once wrote, "Everyone is born a genius, but the process of living de-geniuses them." Together, we can make changes to the process of living.

Professor Gopi will conduct a talk on this topic on August 8 at Fairview Ipoh Campus. Come and learn about the best practices we have effectively applied for the past 36 years and how it can be done at home.

Professor Gopi is the Academic Director of Fairview International Group of Schools. He delivers his presentation in an exciting and lively manner, captivating his audiences with his vast energy. Professor Gopi is regularly invited to deliver talks at national level conventions and conferences, sharing his knowledge and expertise in education in many countries. He is also on the faculty of University College Fairview International (UCFI), the new praxis university that focuses on IB-related degree qualifications.

*To register for the talk, kindly call **05 313 6888** or email enquiries_ipoh@fairview.edu.my. The parent's talk is complimentary and subject to availability of seats. While the talk is going on, your child will be guided to create their own action journal at a minimal fee. To avoid disappointment, please register in advance.*



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.

Soka Gakkai Malaysia, Perak Branch (SGM-Perak) peace exhibition, entitled "Everything You Treasure - For a World Free from Nuclear Weapons" (EYT) from August 8 till 16 from 9am - 9pm at its culture centre in Taman Lapangan Ria, Ipoh. A total of 34 printed pictorials are displayed in three languages. Admission to the exhibition is 'Free'. Enquiry – **05 323 6588 or **012 510 2917** (Mr Goh)**

In conjunction with the International Month of Peace, Soka Gakkai Malaysia, Perak Branch (SGM-Perak) is hosting a '10km Run for Peace' (RFP), a non-competitive event targeting 4000 runners on September 20 at the Kompleks Sukan dan Belia in Ipoh.

Ipoh Christian New Life Church Fund Raising for Unique Old Folk's Home in Pasir Puteh area, in which, relatives of residents are encouraged to make a visit at least once a week. He/she would be able to enjoy a discount or other form of subsidies. Donation of RM100 would be rewarded a bottle of Chinese herbal shampoo 300ml worth RM75 as long as stock last. For donation of RM3000, donor would be rewarded 30 bottles of above mentioned shampoo and the invitation to take part in the ribbon cutting ceremony. The goal for this campaign is RM80,000. Contact: Miss Wong **016 513 4258** or Miss Heena **016 553 2310**. Address: 2 Jalan Pengkalan Barat 32, Taman Pengkalan Jaya, 31650 Ipoh.

Pet Fiesta, August 1 & 2 at PHL Convention Centre, Menglembu, Ipoh. Malaysia's largest Pet Expo! Contact: **03 7832 3931**, Website: www.petfiesta.com.my. Facebook: [mypetfiesta](https://www.facebook.com/mypetfiesta).

Perak Women for Women Society's 'Make It Happen!' with Francissca Peter, Saturday August 1 at Syeun Hotel Ipoh. Call **05 546 9715** for details.

Fourth Ipoh International Dancesport Championships 2015, Saturday August 8,

6pm-11pm at Kinta Riverfront Hotel Grand Ballroom, Jalan Lim Bo Seng, Ipoh. For enquiries, contact: Ms Yen Chin **012 516 2708** or Mr Chun Wai **016 553 7962**. Email: ipohdancesportchampionships@gmail.com.

Perak Society of Performing Arts proudly presents the 2015 PSPA International Ensemble, 'A Musical Kaleidoscope from Bach to Yiruma'. Saturday August 15, 7.45pm at Tenby Schools Ipoh Auditorium. Contact: Sara @ **05 242 7814 or www.pspaipoh.org.**

The Dementia Day-care Centre is open daily from 9am till 3pm. The centre also holds support group meetings every **2nd Saturday and Monday of each month**. All carers who have love ones with dementia and others are welcome to attend. These are sharing sessions. For more details kindly call April at **05 241 1691** before 3pm.

Performances of Traditional Songs and Dance every Friday every week from March 25 at 8.00pm (except fasting month). Held at Kompleks Jabatan Kebudayaan dan Kesenian Negeri Perak, Jalan Caldwell, Off Jalan Raja DiHilir, Ipoh. Come and experience dances like Dikir Fusion, Nego (Kelantan), Joget Kete Lembu, Tangtung, Kollatum, Joget Malaysia and traditional music. Free admission. For enquiries, contact: Puan Nor Fairus Binti Alias **018 958 9049**.

YMCA of Ipoh Toastmasters Club Mission provides a supporting and positive learning experience in which members are empowered to develop communication and leadership skills, resulting in greater self-confidence and personal growth. The group meets every **2nd & 4th Wednesday** at 7.45pm at 211 Jalan Raja Musa Aziz (Anderson Road), 30300 Ipoh. Contacts: Ramesh Victor **016 566 2866**, May Foo **017 466 0943** or Nur Aida **013 346 9490**.

Personality

Kareem's Forte is Painting

Ipoh Echo's personality for this issue is Kareem Kai, a talented painter who is currently residing in Ipoh. The odd thing about Kareem is he views the world by his own definition.

Growing up, Kareem's parents exposed him to all things artistic: theatre, music, etc. and these have shaped and moulded him into what he is today.

"I love my parents very much. They opened many doors for me to explore, they didn't shape but rather guided me to become who I am now," said the affable and youngish twenty-something.

When asked about his inspiration, Kareem found it difficult to narrow it down but agreed that everyone and everything he encountered in his life had played a role in his adolescent world.

"I've a soft spot for history. It gave my art substance and flavours," he insisted. Among his many art teachers, Kareem owed his father a debt of gratitude for teaching him the technical skills of painting.

Although reading and art helped him with ideas for upcoming pieces, every painter needs to know the art of painting, as it will widen the pool and that is what his father, who is also a painter, has guided him through.

After his first exhibition in 2012, Kareem is now on his way to his second which will be held, hopefully, next year. The second exhibition will be something which he has never done before. People of all backgrounds and social standing will be able to easily identify with the various themes depicted.

"I am determined to ensure that everyone gets to enjoy art. Paintings and sketches don't belong to anyone. They should be enjoyed by all," said the art teacher attached to the Sepaloh Art Centre, Ipoh.

Readers interested in knowing more about Kareem Kai and his works can join



Kareem's art class held periodically at the centre. You can also glean information from the centre's Facebook page.

Ili Aqilah

News

Thailand-Malaysia Land Exercise



The bilateral military exercise between the Malaysian Army and the Royal Thailand Army known as Land Exercise Thamal (Thailand – Malaysia) serial 21/2015 was officially launched on Tuesday, July 28. The launching ceremony, held at the Camp Syed Putra parade ground, was steep in military tradition.

The emphasis of the week-long field exercise was on offensive operations in a counter-insurgency warfare setting. The exercise area was the jungles around Lintang near Chemor. The thickly wooded area provided a perfect environment for a jungle warfare-orientated exercise.

Participating troops were sourced from the infantry elements of the 2nd Malaysian Infantry Division and elements from the 5th Infantry Division of the Royal Thai Army (RTA).

"This joint exercise between troops from the Malaysian Army and the Royal Thai Army has been going for quite a while. It serves as an appropriate platform to foster good relationship besides enhancing the interoperability between both armies in supporting global and regional peace efforts," said Maj-Gen Dato' Fadzil bin Mokhtar, the General Officer Commanding of 2nd Malaysian Infantry Division and the joint chairman of the annual exercise in his opening address to the participating troops.

"The exercise is designed on both conventional and counter-insurgency warfare setting incorporating 30 per cent on humanitarian assistant disaster relief theories," he explained.

Fadzil hoped that the exercise would enable both armies to better understand each other's needs when operating together.

Exchanging of pennants and the wearing of exercise armbands followed soon after. This signalled the beginning of the exercise, which would end on Monday, August 3.



Present at the brief morning parade were Maj-Gen Kunawut Mokaew, General Officer Commanding 5th Infantry Division RTA, the other joint chairman, Brig-Gen Mohammad bin Ab Rahman, Commander 2nd Malaysian Infantry Brigade and Colonel Paisan Nhusang, Commander 5th Infantry Regiment RTA.

Some 250 soldiers from both armies took part in the exercise.

Mei Kuan



Education

First Ever M100 Challenge



The first ever M100 Challenge was held over two days at UTAR Perak Campus recently. The challenge was jointly organised by UTAR Department of Alumni Relations and Placement (DARP), GTI Media Malaysia and participating companies such as Auric Pacific, Berjaya, Career Builder Malaysia, Eco World, Hartalega, KPMG, Leaderonomics, Maybank, RHB and Resorts World Genting.

The challenge comprised an exciting series of indoor and outdoor events that tested the students' physical and mental strength. The mental challenge was conducted on the first day and tested the students' skills and competencies like how graduate recruiters might test them during recruitment process. The physical challenge was conducted on the second day and combined exciting sports, games and adventure-based activities that tested the students' teamwork and communication.

Also present at the physical challenge were Pengarah Bahagian Hubungan Industri, Ministry of Education (MOE) Professor Madya Dr Arham bin Abdullah, UTAR Vice President for Student Development and Alumni Relations Associate Professor Dr Teh

Chee Seng and Regional Commercial Director of GTI Media Malaysia Lily Chan.

Lily Chan said in her opening remarks, "History is made as we are congregated here today. For many years, our head office in the United Kingdom has been urging us to start this event in Malaysia. Therefore, participants should be proud of themselves as the pioneer group of this event. M100 is meant to connect employers and students in a different manner and through this two-day challenge, GTI media hopes to provide students with a chance to showcase their abilities, leadership and teamwork and change the landscape of graduate employment in Malaysia."

Following the flag off, 27 teams with six participants each raced to finish the challenge. They had to complete all challenges at all stations and were allocated a time limit of 10 to 15 minutes for each station. They travelled from one designated station to another via bicycle. Points were given based on different criteria pre-set by employers such as numerical reasoning, verbal reasoning, business acumen, creativity and leadership potential.



Raising Funds for Needy Students

In conjunction with its 120th anniversary, SMK Methodist (ACS) Ipoh organised a first-of-its-kind celebration with the theme "Bringing People, Food, Art and Culture Together" on Friday, July 24 till Sunday, July 26. Aimed at raising funds for needy students and the conservation of the iconic school, the three-day event consisted of a food and fun fair on the morning of the second day, a festival of performing arts and its workshop every evening.

During the eight black box performances in the evening, the audience was mesmerised by the swirls and twirls of a pair of Latin dancers with their routine entitled, 'The Swinging Sixties'; the school's very own adaptation of an excerpt from 'Emily of Emerald Hill' by Stella Kon; the cool contemporary 'STOMP' ala Ipoh style by a group of 15-year-olds; the graceful traditional Bharatanatyam dance; the funky reggae band, One Drop, full of Bob Marley wannabes; a specially choreographed Bollywood number, which was a fusion of different dances from different regions of India; and a harmonious dance form entitled 'Poetry in Motion' in which the tough martial art movements were woven into a tapestry of creative dance.

In addition, there were three performing arts workshops which included an 'Improvisation on Stage' handled by budding Malaysian actor Xavier Fong; a 'Modern Pop Singing' taught by Jovean Yee; and 'Stand Up Comedy' facilitated by Cheah Tong Kim. It also featured a 40-minute show choir with well-known Ipoh and KL-based soloists.

People from all walks of life spent their weekend at the Ipoh's oldest school to immerse themselves in music, dance, theatre and good food and a good time was had by all.

Mei Kuan



Eok Kwan Enrichment Camp

A one-day camp titled 'Eok Kwan Enrichment Camp' for students and teachers of SJK (C) Eok Kwan, Pengkalan Hulu was held at the Faculty of Arts and Social Science (FAS), UTAR Kampar Campus on June 20.

Organised by FAS, the camp was attended by 10 teachers and 34 students and is part of FAS's community engagement initiatives.

Present to welcome them were FAS Dean Dr Alia Azalea, Head of Department of Languages and Linguistics (DLL) Christina Ong Sook Beng, and Department of Psychology and Counselling lecturer Andrew Au Soon Kay.

"I'm glad to have all of you here at UTAR Kampar Campus today for this one-day enrichment camp. I hope all of you will enjoy the rest of the day and learn something new," said Dr Alia, who also expressed her appreciation to the SJK (C) Eok Kwan folks for travelling all the way from northern Perak to UTAR Kampar Campus.

Heartened by FAS's warm reception, SJK (C) Eok Kwan Headmaster Hoo Yu Pee enthused, "We're truly grateful for the arrangements made by UTAR FAS. We hope that the teachers and students will learn something new at the end of camp." Hoo also introduced SJK (C) Eok Kwan as a multi-racial Chinese primary school with a sizeable student population of Malay, Indian, Orang Asli and Thai descent.

The camp also involved several English Language undergraduates to facilitate the primary school students in language games such as 'Word Family Game', 'Rhyming', 'Making Mental Images' and 'Treasure Hunt' to spark the later's interests in learning English.

The teachers, on the other hand, were taught Strategic Reading methods by DLL Senior Lecturer Renu a/l Kailsan, followed by a talk titled, 'Parenting Today's Generation' by Department of Psychology and Counselling lecturers Annie Margaret a/p Sandela Raran. Au also coached the teachers via a workshop on team building.

"The enrichment camp is a great platform for us, the teachers, to learn from dedicated lecturers, and for the students to have fun learning outside the classroom. The stimulating talks have also allowed us to rethink and redefine our very special roles as educators," remarked Hoo at the end of the camp.

"The camp was fun despite being just a day. Besides learning that English is an interesting and useful language, I also learnt about the importance of teamwork through games such as Treasure Hunt," shared Standard 6 student Suphaphorn a/p Su Thip.



Education

Annual Sports Day

Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Seri Keledang in Menglembu held its 25th Annual Sports Day on Saturday, July 25 at the school playing field. The event was officiated by the Chairperson of the Parent-Teacher Association, Madam Lip Chooi Fun.

The opening ceremony began with a march-past of the participating contingents. Their ability to march in sync with the music impressed the crowd and supporters in the field.



“I want to acknowledge the good work done by the teachers and parents. I wish to congratulate everyone for doing a great job in putting together today’s programme. This sports day is an excellent way to bring people together in a relaxed environment which will help foster a lasting friendship



among teachers, parents and students,” said principal, Sit Wai Yin in his opening speech.

A new addendum of the sports day was the cheerleading competition. It drew much attention and enthusiasm from the approving crowd.

The march-past was won by the school cadet contingent while Green House was the adjudged the overall champion for its sporting prowess.

Nantini

LETTERS

We reprint some of our reader’s comments from our online paper. Go to <http://www.ipohecho.com.my/> to read more. The views expressed in these letters are not necessarily shared by the Editorial Board. We reserve the right to refuse or modify the letters we publish.

Develop Leaders in All Fields of Endeavour

The success or failure of a nation depends mainly on the quality of leadership. Many nations become great but disappear from the face of the earth without good leadership. Leadership determines the fate of the nations.

An exemplary leader must possess good qualities. A good leader must practise what is good and reject what is bad. A leader must not allow his personal interest to supercede public interest.

Malaysia being a multi ethnic, multi religious and multi cultural society, the leaders must tread carefully. Leadership depends on a complex interaction of many qualities. Everyone can become a leader but only a few can provide effective leadership. Leadership must be able to lead the people to the right destination and not just follow the footsteps of past leaders. A leader must have the vision to determine new strategies in order to achieve what he has in his mind. A good leader should have a history of marvellous deeds to inspire followers in his absence.

Leadership must be judged from performance and results. In an era of globalisation and rapid advances in information technology, leaders must be knowledgeable, have great thinking skills and must be engaged in lateral and innovative thinking. A leader must be articulate and eloquent so that his vision can be translated into action. A leader must possess the quality to anticipate events instead of just reacting. As a leader one is expected to make instant decision. Decisions can only be made with information and sound knowledge of action. They should also be inspirational and able to strive for greater achievements. They must teach their followers to reach the unreachable, to achieve the unachievable to attain the unattainable.

There are other attributes of leaders, such as the need to be visionary. Vision without action is merely a daydream. Vision and action must travel together to change the world. Therefore what is needed is a visionary leader who is action-orientated. It has often been said that leaders are born. But leaders are not born, they are made.

We must begin to nurture and develop the next generation of leaders in all fields

Grateful Malaysians

Malaysians of Muslim faith celebrated Hari Raya Puasa, after fasting for a month. This is a very special occasion whereby the Muslim held open houses and welcomed their non-Muslims friends of all walks of life to a special Hari Raya treat. No where in the world, do we have this special open house except in this beloved country of ours.

Our beloved Prime Minister and his wife held an open house reception for all Malaysians at the Seri Perdana Complex in Putrajaya. This included the various heads of government and Chief Ministers held open houses for all including foreign dignitaries. This practice is unique in nature and we are admired by these foreign dignitaries. Malaysia is a peaceful country and we are grateful to the Police, Army, Navy and the Security forces who sacrifice their lives to maintain peace and order in this country.

In this respect, our beloved Sultan Nazrin Shah of Perak has made a special message in his Hari Raya message that we Malaysians must not waste food and avoid a culture of wastage. This is a friendly call and we as the rakyat of this beloved nation must adhere to his call. At the same time, let us all remember ‘The five principles of Rukunegara’. Let there be peace and harmony so that we as Malaysians can live together as one big family, regardless of race, culture and religion.

Let the almighty give us strength and stability and live a prosperous life.

K. Letchimanan

so that there won't be any problems when a vacuum is created. Leadership must ensure continuity. According to Dr Stephen R. Covey a principle-centred approach to leadership that is based on time-tested values like trust and integrity is the kind of legacy to create and leave behind as it will have sustaining power.

James Ratnam

Educationist cum Motivator and Socialist

Mrs Benjamin's Deeds

Tan Mei Kuan

“A man is great by deeds, not by birth.”

As long as Mrs Irene Benjamin could remember, dwellers around her house in Lim Garden have been dumping rubbish illegally in vacant lots and on the road fronting her house. These self-centred people would conveniently dispose their garbage there expecting city council staff to clean up after them.

Household rubbish in her neighbourhood is collected every Monday, Wednesday and Friday between 9am to 10am. “Actually it’s the fault of city council too. Instead of doing a house-to-house collection, the workers prefer to pile the rubbish at these dumping spots,” she lamented.

When residents dump their rubbish earlier than the scheduled collection time, stray dogs would mess up the place by tearing the plastic bags looking for food scraps. Nobody cares about the eyesore, as they blame city council workers for not doing their job.

To make matters worse, collection of garden waste and furniture, which is done once a month, is done without prior notice. The residents are left in the lurch wondering which day of the month the truck would come. Hence, unwanted cupboards, sofas and cushions are left to rot in the open, creating a perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes.

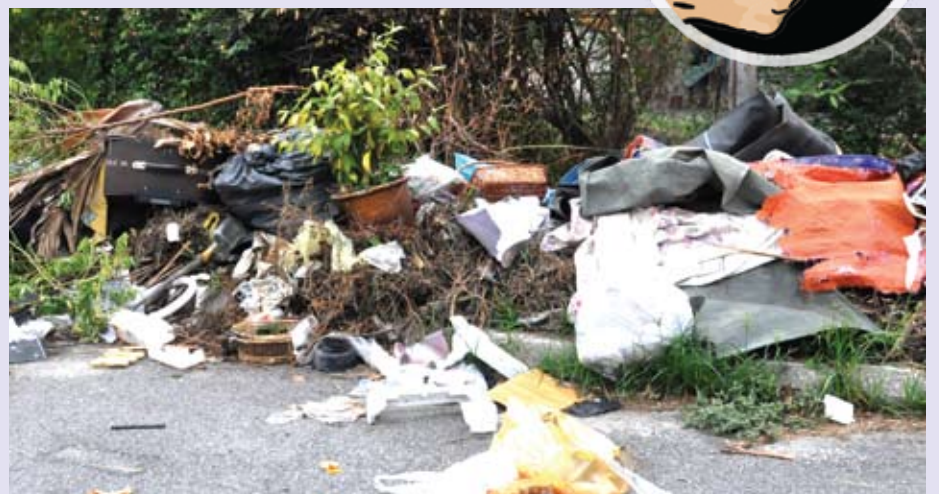
The 64 year-old retired lab assistant, cannot stand seeing the ugly sight. She takes the initiative to sweep the littered road whenever she sees one.

“We must take care of our neighbourhood. The city council will collect the rubbish but they’ll not sweep for us, as they have others work to do. People have this attitude, “If they do not care, why should we care?” But I cannot think that way as untidiness affects everyone,” said the lady to Ipoh Echo.

She hopes for a ‘gotong-royong’ once a month or so, as she loves to see the coming together of the community to help clean-up the housing area. “My grandchildren are

all eager to help me,” she added. She too hopes for a proper metal skip bin so rubbish could be adequately disposed of without them being strewn by dogs.

Thanks to Mrs Benjamin, that corner of Lim Garden has been spotlessly clean for a period of time. But must she be the only one to take the lead? Won’t others follow suit?



Callousness Revives Dumping Problem

People were throwing garbage under the tree at the corner of Tarcisian School at the junction of Jalan Kinta and Persiaran Tun Abdul Razak in Lim Garden. The tree is next to the school canteen and is unhygienic for the students. As soon as MBI workers clear the place, more garbage is thrown immediately.

Residents living nearby decided to clear the place around the tree and plant flowers along the edge of the road to deter people from dumping their garbage. On a Saturday morning, concerned residents cleaned the area and planted flowering plants. Though the number of volunteers was small, the job was completed as planned.

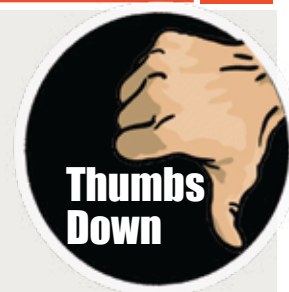
In spite of the fasting month, heat and his age, Shafruddin Nasution, Chairman, Rukun Tetangga, Lim Garden came along and did his bit. His support was appreciated.

Having done their good work, the residents had hoped that people would stop depositing garbage there. Having good intentions is one thing but I have come across places where people dump garbage in spite of flowers being planted. In boleh land, both the so-called professionals and laymen share the same callous attitude in disposing of garbage.

Postscript: Sure enough, I received a call from one of the residents complaining that people have

thrown rubbish in the area they had beautified. I visited the site and noticed plastic bags thrown around the tree trunk and next to the plants. It looks like it is easier for me to train my dogs on where to do their business than to teach people where to deposit their rubbish. Most of the residents in Lim Garden are supposed to be educated. (I hope my dogs are not offended by being compared to human beings.).

A. Jeyaraj



iSpeak

A. Jeyaraj

Formation of Book Readers Club in Ipoh

I use to think that I was one of the few people in Ipoh who spend money on books. However when I went to Big Bad Wolf Book Sale I realised that my thinking was wrong. I went to the sale on three days during working days and public holiday and was surprised to see the huge crowd. The crowd was multi-racial, Malays, Chinese, Indians and others. I noticed that people did not come for sightseeing, they were actually selecting the books they were interested in reading. Most people bought a number of books.

However, one of my friends said that people buy the books not to read, just because they are cheap. It is part of Malaysian culture to buy whatever is cheap, whether you need it or not.

I am wondering since we have a big reading population why not form a Book Readers Club. We can share what we are reading and recommend what books to read and exchange books. We can have intellectual literary discussions. During my school days in

the fifties, though I was in science stream, we had to read the classics. The teachers were also avid readers and were able to comment on the books we read and suggest what we should read.

I urge one of the English speaking NGOs like PAGE to form a Book Readers Club in Ipoh. Nowadays everyone is talking about the importance of English and the necessity to master it. Readers' clubs can encourage the usage of English. The numbers do not matter, a handful of interested people would do. We have to find participants who are interested in reading and call for an initial meeting.

I hope someone who has influence and means would take the lead in setting up the club. There are many sites online with information on how to set up these clubs. Let us start the Club and make Perak a knowledge-based state and ensure that the people are knowledgeable.

"Reading maketh a full man" – Francis Bacon

Update on 100 Per Cent Parking Fee Hike

In Issue 215 (July 1-15) of Ipoh Echo I wrote about "Parking fee hiked by 100 per cent" and a few days after submitting the article I read a news headline in NST (Friday, June 26), "RM30,000 fine over RM20 hike". I decided to raise the fee hike with Ministry of Domestic Trade, Cooperative and Consumerism.

I went to their office and spoke to one of the lady officers and handed over a copy of Ipoh Echo. The officer who was friendly, took time to read the article and said that I can make a complaint. She prepared a complaint report based on information written in the article. I gave my contact number and signed the report. The officer said that enforcement personnel from Price Control and Anti-Profitteering Unit would investigate the case and inform me of the outcome.

While waiting to see the officer, I was reading the Notice Board and saw that there was a Duty Roster for the staff for the month of July. This seems to be a well organised department and there will be a dedicated person every day to hear complaints; unlike other government departments when most of the time the person in charge would be on leave, attending a course or out of office. (All government departments dealing with the public must implement this.)

Readers who have complaints on any issue can visit their office which is located at Tingkat 1, Blok A, Bangunan Persekutuan Greentown, Jalan Dato Seri Ahmad Said, 30450 Ipoh, Perak.

Next, I went to MCA Complaints Bureau in Horley Street and told of the problem to the clerk. The clerk who was a middle aged lady, immediately replied that Greentown Business Centre is prime area and RM2 is very cheap and in fact the fee should be higher. She said parking fees in KL are much higher and no one complains. She added salaries including hers have gone up and prices are going up and it is justifiable to raise the fee. She was not willing to reason out why the raise must be 100 per cent. As far as she is concerned there is nothing to complain about. I am not sure whether this is her personal opinion or this is the stand of MCA.

Response from Ministry: I received a letter from the Ministry dated July 7 informing that action has been taken and thanked me for bringing up the issue. However, when I

parked my car in the basement car park on July 15 I was charged the new rate. I do not know what action was taken. I leave it to the people who park there regularly to talk to the Ministry directly and explain their problem.

A. Jeyaraj

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13. D'Eastern Hotel, Jln Sultan Idris Shah. Tel: 05-2543936
14. YMCA Ipoh, Jln Raja Musa Aziz. Tel: 05-2540809/2539464
15. Meru Valley Golf Club members' desk
16. Khimzian Enterprise, 75 Jln Yang Kalsom. Tel: 05-2427381
17. Sunway College Ipoh, Psrn SCI 2/2, Sunway City Ipoh. Tel: 05-5454398
18. Break the Code, Greentown Business Centre. Tel: 05-2420484
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22. Daybreak, Lot 75242 Jalan Pulai, RPT Pengkalan Pegoh. Tel: 05-3235908/09
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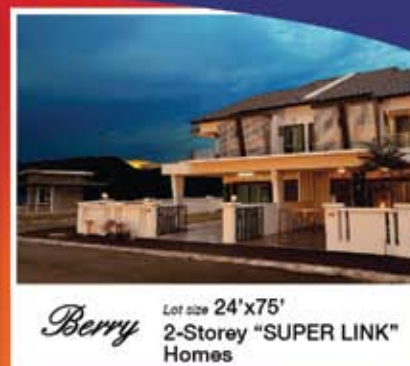
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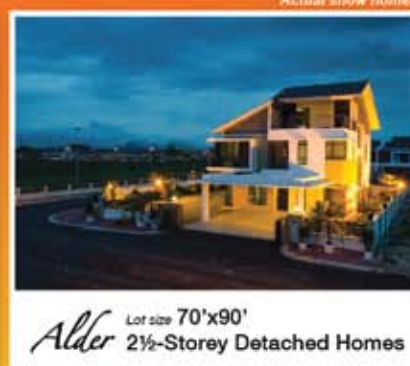
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Book Review

Zhu Pearl

The opening paragraph of Jasemin Sibo's latest novel "Zhu Pearl" goes like this: "According to early Chinese civilization, pearl symbolises wisdom acquired through years of experience and struggles."

What follows is an inspiring story about two resilient Chinese women, one an aristocrat and the other a servant maid, who find a way to look past their differences and celebrate what unites them in the face of challenges: love, faith and hope. Set in the year

1927 during the Chinese Civil War with fleeting reference to Ipoh during the tin-mining boom days, it is written by a very talented young author whose prose is so assured and whose observations are so keen and deeply felt that it is almost an insult to reveal her true age.

As the fierce civil war forces Jade, a vision of fragility and Teak, an image of sturdiness to separately flee their motherland to the untamed terrain called Peninsular Malaya, the two eventually forge a sisterly bond without any idea of what lies ahead for both of them.

"It is a simple book but it came from my heart," said Jasemin to Ipoh Echo. Author of the highly popular Epiphany satire, Jasemin enjoys tracing her rich oriental roots.

To begin with, the reader-friendly paperback is printed in black and

white in the manner of an illustrated manuscript, with each page displaying paragraphs of varying lengths and fairly large font aligned in the centre to send an important signal to the reader about a new thought or a change in the narrative. And as a bonus, there is pinyin (romanised spelling for transliterating Chinese) for all the Chinese idioms used in the book.

As the book is in verse, you will get there all too swiftly as the story sings itself along before you can give each page the attention it deserves.

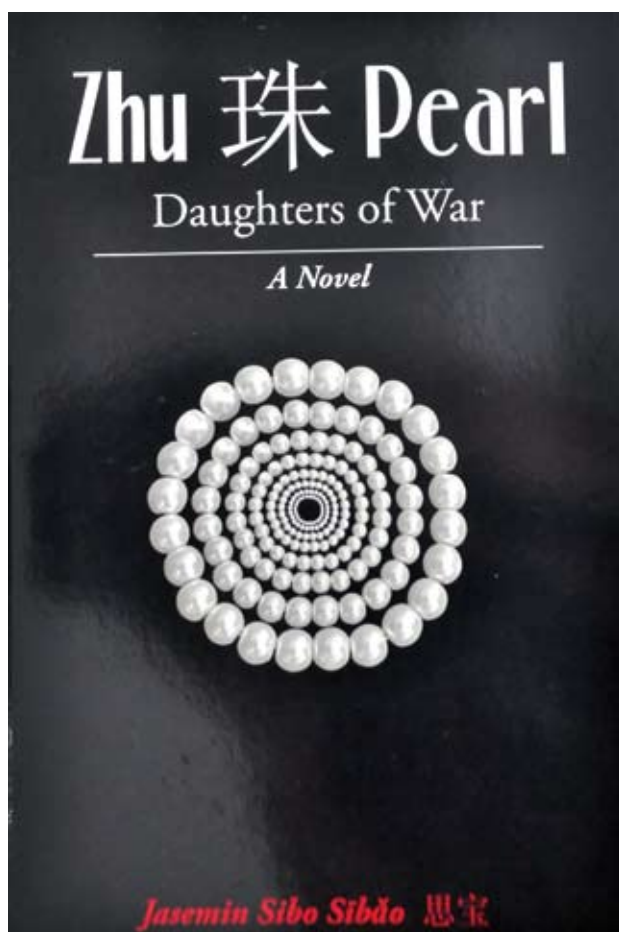
I especially love how she ends each flow of ideas with idioms that ring true, providing the right dose of emotional associations. As a young woman with feminism innately entrenched in my psyche, the storyline resonates well with me. Jasemin, with her gift of articulating her innermost thoughts, is a precious pearl living within our midst. She makes me realise that we embody bits of "Jade" and "Teak" within us, as we struggle both internally and externally.

I closed the book, reluctant to put it down until the very last line and just sat there, in deep reflection. That is the great art of the storyteller: she brings your own long-forgotten experiences to mind.

Do read this book.

Published by Partridge Singapore, *Zhu Pearl* is available online at Amazon (paperback – \$15.14, hardcover – \$29.85) and Kinokuniya Malaysia Online (paperback – RM63.49, hardcover – RM123.66). In Ipoh, this book would be featured in upcoming book events to be announced soon.

Tan Mei Kuan



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