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ISSUE **318**

IPOHecho Wishes our readers a Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

Traditions of Christmas

• By Chris Teh & Joelyn Jonathan



Tis the season of the year again! Christmas trees are popping up in shops and restaurants and the big malls vie with one another to put up the biggest and the best. Christmas is just around the corner and in this issue, Ipoh Echo interviewed Ipohites who celebrate Christmas to explore what the festive day means to them and how different people celebrate what is essentially a religious event.

FULL STORY ON PAGES 2 & 6



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It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year

What Does Christmas Mean to Christians?

Senior Pastor of Canning Garden Methodist Church Ipoh, **Rev Dr Andrew Tan** defined Christmas as the birth of Jesus, who said, "The Son of God was born into our world to save us from our sin that separates us from God".

Chairman of Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) Ipoh, **Dato' Daniel Tay** said that Christmas is a time of celebrations, who explained, "More importantly, Christmas is a form of gratitude that my Saviour came. Because of that, I'm saved for eternity".

Preacher of Revival Mission Ministries Ipoh, a church in Menglembu, **Zechariah @ Zech Prince** said that Christmas is the birth of Christ. "It's not about just a celebration but it's also a form of welcoming a king to this world".

Parish Priest for Our Mother of Perpetual Help (OMPH) Catholic Church Ipoh, **Rev Fr Patrick Massang** also defined Christmas as the birth of Jesus. "It's not only about that. We also advocate our church followers to spend more time with their families before going into their own activities," he mentioned.



Rev Dr Andrew Tan



Dato' Daniel Tay



Rev Fr Patrick Massang



Zechariah



Syeun Hotel

Traditions and Activities

"Our church has a Christmas carol and candlelight service every Christmas Eve at 10pm and a morning service at 10am to celebrate the birth of Christ," Rev Andrew stated. "These practices are to remember that God fulfilled His promise by sending His Messiah to save us."

"Ever since my primary school days, my parents would bring the whole family together to celebrate Christmas in one of the hotels at Pangkor Island," Dato Daniel said. "This practice continued even after my siblings and I got married and have our own families."

"Christmas is perhaps the only time of year that all my family members gather together," he added. "We do not even do this during Chinese New Year."

Revival Mission Ministries will be having their Christmas celebration on December 22.

"Every year during this festive season, we help the poor," Zechariah said. "The church will organise open-for-public Christmas celebrations and we take this opportunity to bless the poor and simultaneously make them realise the true meaning of this season."



Ipoh Parade



AEON Klebang

For OMPH Catholic Church, Fr Patrick said that the church has been preparing for Christmas in a 4-week-long "Advent".

"'Advent' is a way for us to get into the Christmas festive mood while also making the holiday more meaningful," he explained. "In this period of time, we highly recommend followers to perform good deeds, such as attending masses and donating to charities."

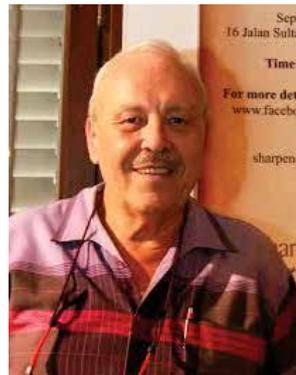
OMPH Church will also be having its debut "Christmas Carnival" on December 20 at 6pm to 10pm, open to the public.

"The three main parishes of churches around town which are OMPH Church, St Michael's Church (next to SMJK Sam Tet) and Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Silibin, will gather at OMPH Church for the carnival," Fr Patrick highlighted.

Speaking about traditions of Christmas, he explained, "We have a night mass every Christmas Eve. A few days before the mass, we will have a Christmas carolling session."

Swiss by birth but Perakian by choice, Peter Bucher, aka **Pak Peter**, who coordinates and manages Sharpened Word, an interactive platform focusing on the arts and culture scene in Ipoh, stated that he no longer celebrates Christmas much in recent years.

"I celebrated Christmas while in Switzerland back in the days before I started working in the hospitality line. After that, every Christmas is work and work because a lot goes on during the holiday season," he highlighted. "After my retirement, the only tradition that I still go to without failing is the night mass every Christmas Eve."



Pak Peter



David Seow (left) and his family

Twenty-four-year-old Ipohite **David Seow** sees Christmas as an important celebration for his family.

"My parents relocated to work and reside in Indonesia. Since I left my home in Ipoh, I had gone back almost every year to celebrate with them and my siblings," he explained.

"After my community celebration of Christmas by having candlelight service and Christmas carolling as the sun sets on Christmas Eve, my family and I usually go back home afterwards to read Christmas stories as found in the Book of Luke before watching a Christmas-themed movie together," David added. "At midnight, we will choose one present to open. We save the remaining presents until Christmas morning itself!"

For Ipohite **Felicia Alexis** who loves Christmas songs, the festive season is supposed to be a season of giving.

"It's not about exchanging gifts or anything



Felicia Alexis (in green shirt)

materialistic, but rather cheers to the unfortunate individuals or spending time with senior citizens at the old folks' home, for instance," she stated. "In my opinion, individuals who do not know the true meaning behind the celebration of Christmas will think of it as just another holiday."

"While my family and I gather together to have Christmas potluck dinner or decorate the house for the big day, I usually play some Christmas CDs to put myself in the mood of celebration," Felicia added. "If one listens to those songs carefully and understand the lyrics, they actually tell a Christmas story."

Coming from a generation that celebrates Christmas to the fullest, **Sara Fernandez** felt that Christmas is definitely the most wonderful time of every year.

"This is the time where my family members come back home from afar to celebrate the season with a home-cooked meal, either breakfast, lunch or dinner," she elaborated. "We usually pull some crackers to add on to the cheer, followed by opening the presents thereafter."

"I love having traditional Christmas food such as roast turkey with cranberry sauce and brussel sprouts and Christmas pudding as dessert," Sara opined. "It's of course not only about the food. Receiving gifts, decorating the house with all sorts of ornaments and lights are equally as enjoyable too."

"If only Malaysia snows, that would hit the jackpot!" she quipped.

Kelvin Pappu John, a 20-year-old student from Politeknik Ungku Omar celebrates by spending time with his family.

"We start by decorating the house with ornamental lights and decorations early December, followed by our church celebration of Christmas," he said. "Also, we visit relatives and celebrate with them at their houses too."



Kelvin Pappu John



Ipoh Echo and ipohWorld Christmas celebration in 2018

Non-Christians

'A Christmas Carol', a story revolving around Ebenezer Scrooge who was mean to people around him but was taught to be kind at the end thanks to the ghosts of Christmas and his business partner, Jacob Marley, resounds in the minds of our very own **Colonel Fathol Zaman Bukhari**.

"I felt that the story really has the elements to share the importance of doing good and be kind to other people," he said. "Any festivity should be about giving back to the community."

Continued on page 6

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Chin Peng and his merry men are history now, the nation has moved on. We are friendly with Japan and China. Why can't we move on?

UMNO and PAS leaders were up in arms over reports that late Chin Peng's ashes were smuggled in from Thailand and then scattered at different places in the country.

Tuan Ibrahim, Pas deputy president, insisted that the act disrespected the feelings of those who fought against members of the outlawed Malayan Communist Party (MCP). UMNO's Mohd Puad Zarkashi argued that Chin Peng's ashes should not be brought back because Chin Peng did not want to return to Malaysia. Najib Razak, not wanting to miss a publicity opportunity, said that the action would impact peace and harmony of the country. Others felt it was tantamount to glorifying communism.

Veterans Association president Shahrudin Omar expressed that it was an insult to those who fought the communist terrorists. These are standard responses whenever Chin Peng's name crops up. Therefore, it is nothing new or out of the ordinary.

Chin Peng was no hero. He and his merry men first fought the British colonialists, then the Japanese and finally against newly-independent Malaya. Hundreds of Malaysians, soldiers and civilians, Malays and non-Malays, died in what came to be known as the Malayan Emergency. With help from British and Commonwealth troops and the efforts of our own army, the terrorists were pushed across the Thai border where they slowly withered away.

On December 2, 1989, Chin Peng and his lieutenants signed a peace treaty with the government of Malaysia, formally ending their 21-year-long armed struggle. In exchange for laying down their arms, the government agreed to allow all CPM leaders, including Chin Peng, to return to Malaysia. This was repeatedly confirmed by former Inspector-General of Police, Rahim Noor who played a key role in the Hatyai peace accord of December 1989.

I wish to recall a bit on the eventful accord in Hatyai in December 1989. Around that time my battalion was on an operational tour of the Belum Forest complex.

The area was designated an operational sector to facilitate search and destroy operation by troops. An operational tour will last anything between three and four months, depending on the urgency of the task in hand.

Since the forest reserve was under a 24-hour curfew, human activities were virtually non-existent. Being forewarned of the unfolding event in Hatyai, we were on our toes to forestall any untoward incidents from happening. Fortunately, nothing dramatic happened.

Active patrolling of the sector was maintained stretching from the Thai border to the Perak River. We uncovered many tracks and signs left by poachers and those looking for kayu gaharu (agarwood). We managed to apprehend a few, mainly Thais and handed them to the police in Grik. The Belum Forest Reserve was devoid of enemy activities during that period in time.

Now back to Chin Peng. The government, however, did not honour their word. The authorities prevented him from returning on the grounds that he was the leader of an insurgency movement. Allowing him to return would offend the sensibilities of soldiers who fought against the terrorists and an affront to those who died during the Emergency. I am an ex-soldier, I don't feel offended.

Chin Peng wanted to return home. He engaged lawyers to challenge the home ministry's ban on his return. In 2009, the Federal Court concluded that since he was unable to prove that he was born in the country he was barred.

The home ministry had acted in bad faith by refusing to accept the fact that he was born in Sitiawan and had friends and family there to prove it. Other leaders such as Shamsiah Fakeh had no trouble returning home although she had been living in China for many years. Even her non-Malaysian family members were allowed in.

As for him being the leader of the movement, it ignores the fact that others too had leadership roles in both the party and the party's armed wing – the Malayan National



Liberation Army. Abdullah CD was once the chairman of MCP and commander of the Malay-dominated 10th Regiment operating in Kelantan. Rashid Maidin, the first Malay to join the Malayan Communist Party, was also a senior commander of the 10th Regiment.

They all played key leadership roles, participated actively in the armed struggle and yet were allowed to return home following the 1989 Hatyai peace accord. Chin Peng was unfairly judged and punished.

Whichever way you look at it, there is no escaping the fact that ethnicity played a huge role in the whole affair; if Chin Peng were a Malay-Muslim, he would have almost certainly been allowed to return home along with his old comrades Abdullah CD, Rashid Maidin and Shamsiah Fakeh. Both Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad and ex-IGP Rahim Noor had alluded to this.

Why is it that even the return of Chin Peng's ashes is considered offensive to some veterans while the return of Malay-Muslim members of the CPM's armed wing created no outcry whatsoever?

Chin Peng and his merry men are history now; the nation has moved on. We are friendly with Japan whose army committed atrocities against our people during the Japanese Occupation. We now enjoy good relations with China which supported the MCP, provided refuge for many of its leaders and hosted the party's clandestine radio station, Suara Rakyat Malaya.

Why is it so difficult to move on when it comes to Chin Peng? Is his ethnicity a huge stumbling block that even his ashes cannot be returned to Malaysia? Has Chin Peng become, in death, a convenient tool for the Ketuanan Melayu bigots?

When Noordin Mohammad Top, who was implicated by Indonesian authorities in the bombing of a hotel in Jakarta and a nightclub in Bali was killed in a police raid in Solo, Central Java in 2009,

Putrajaya allowed the return of his remains to his hometown in Pontian where he was subsequently interred.

Honestly, I don't really know where we are heading as a nation?

We work ourselves into a frenzy over the ashes of a leader of an outlawed organisation and ostracise people with alleged links to a defunct Sri Lankan terrorist organisation while mollycoddling fighters and supporters of Islamic State and Al-Qaeda.

We are definitely sending the wrong message to the world. Over here, race and religion predominate and will ultimately determine one's luck. It is simply mind-boggling.

From The Editor's Desk

By Fathol Zaman Bukhari



LIGHTHOUSE HOPE SOCIETY, IPOH & GUSTAVUS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, MINNESOTA, USA brings you an event entitled, "An Evening with the Gustavus Symphony Orchestra & Jazz Lab Band" on **January 31, 2020**. Entry passes can be obtained with donation towards the **LIGHTHOUSE HOPE SOCIETY (LHS)**.

LHS is an NGO which has been providing **free meals, free medical care, haircuts, clothing, drug rehabilitation assistance**, legal assistance and **other humanitarian aid for the hungry, helpless and homeless** in the society **regardless of race or religion since year 2006**.

It also does **Orang Asli Economic Empowerment Projects** to assist the OA communities by providing rubber/durian seedlings along with chicken rearing projects. An expanding part of their charity involves installing free solar lighting for villages without electricity under the **LightUP Our Kampung Solar Project**.

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Amy's Permaculture Farm



Last October, Ipoh Echo published a story entitled, "Amy's Farmstay Puts Lenggong On The World Map and Boosts Perak Tourism". It described the eviction of Amy Tan, her husband and three young children, from their farmstay in the hills overlooking Lenggong.

Thankfully, Executive Councillor for Tourism, Arts and Culture Tan Kar Hing intervened in the nick of time and has given permission for them to stay on to continue with their project.

Hers was not just a story about a plucky young lady who wanted to share her experience of a simple life surrounded by mother nature. It was also a story about bullying by the state, neglect by those in power, the destructive Little Napoleons and the unseen hands of big business.

Many people were inspired by Amy's ability to remain positive, persevere, and have the confidence to continue with her permaculture dream, despite continual resistance from the authorities (and the police).

More importantly, many wanted to know more about permaculture. They were curious about Amy's, and her husband's, move from the city, leaving the rat race behind them. A few people wondered if they were depriving their children of company, of social interaction and modern amenities.

Amy explains the concept behind permaculture and the effects on her family, in Part I; and in Part II, shows the impact of permaculture on the community, climate change and the environment.

Mariam Mokhtar: Most people had not heard of permaculture until they read about your eviction. What is permaculture?

Amy: Permaculture is a combination of two words "permanent" and "agriculture". In simple terms, it means cultivating land in a way that preserves and enhances its fertility, without destroying its long-term productivity.

2. What are the principles of permaculture?

Amy: The main idea is to mimic nature's cycles, observe the characteristics of the land, the design agriculture and living systems which will not deplete its resources.

For example, if the terrain is hilly, the last thing that should be done is to scrape it clean, which is how it is mostly done in Malaysia, unfortunately. This destabilizes

the soil and washes away the rich topsoil.

The permaculture way starts with observation. Where there are natural land depressions, swamps will appear and these could be potential fish ponds. We observe the direction of flow of water during rainfall, and channel the water, to prevent erosion.

3. What do you find fascinating about permaculture?

Amy: Permaculture is becoming extremely popular because it is a system that preserves nature, not destroy it.

It advocates natural farming, using compost instead of chemicals. It preserves the natural environment for biodiversity and allows us to grow our own food sustainably.

It is essentially living in harmony with the land, where humans feed the land and harvest its bounty.

4. You were prepared to dedicate the lives of your family to permaculture. Why?

Amy: We realised that our urban way of life was unhealthy and was not sustainable – environmentally or personally. No matter how well we eat or how much money was spent on organic food and water purification systems, the nature of an urban lifestyle was the cause of long-term health issues, mostly caused by stress.

We wanted to create a more meaningful life for ourselves and combine our passion and energy into something that inspires us every day.

5. What does permaculture mean for your husband, Ladia?

Amy: Ladia is passionate about plants and their medicinal properties. He is in awe of the way in which animals and plants exist symbiotically. He is passionate to show others that sustainable farming does not require a huge investment.

6. What about for you?

Amy: I am passionate about seeking answers to how our bodies can remain healthy. Whilst working as a pilates teacher and rolfing practitioner, I saw a pattern of illnesses and chronic conditions suffered by many people and I witnessed that those who were closer to nature, obtained the best recovery.

The natural environment is healing. Nature heals and is the most powerful and free healer. That explains the popularity of "forest bathing".

7. How has permaculture benefited your children?

Amy: We decided that there was no better place to raise our children, in an environment and lifestyle that puts them in close contact with nature. There is something new every day to put us in awe of its magic.

8. How did permaculture enhance your role as parents?

Amy: We raise our children with the values to which we subscribe ourselves. We don't expect them to continue this lifestyle as adults, but we believe strongly that a childhood in nature builds the strongest emotional resilience and this will make adult life bearable and well-grounded.

9. How different is permaculture from organic farming?

Amy: Commercial organic farming can mean having a conventional farm which uses organic fertilizers and pesticides instead of chemical ones.

Permaculture is more a lifestyle and community-driven effort and is not usually aimed at large commercially driven farms. It is about self-sufficiency and in this respect, permaculture is very suited for our kampung settings.

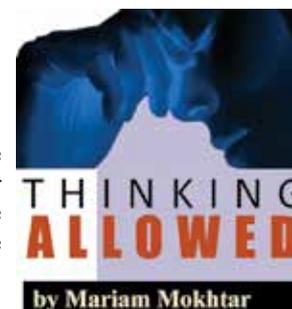
10. Do you have surplus crops and what do you do with them?

Amy: We share our surplus crops with family and friends or find ways to use them. For example, after a big harvest of bananas, we will spend a few days making jam, which can be preserved for the next six months. Herbs are processed into tinctures, handmade soaps and herbal oils.

NB: Don't forget to read Part II of "Amy's Permaculture Farm", in the next issue of Ipoh Echo, to see how permaculture affects the community and environment.

Source:

http://www.ipohecho.com.my/v4/article/2019/10/16/thinking-allowed-amys-farmstay-puts-lenggong-on-the-world-map-and-boosts-perak-tourism?fbclid=IwAR35Pk1i3Dw02IirmdQ6RF91gATO3dyruWkQ5V5XDfPfuwkS1VmZkHYi_gU



Community

An Affordable Home

By Rosli Mansor

Ipohites in the B40 and M40 categories now stand a chance of owning a house via the 'Rumah Perakku' project which will be developed at Tanah Hitam, Chemor.

According to CEO of Mimbar Nusantara, Nazrin Cheong Abdullah, the 'Rumah Perakku' project in Chemor is in its final stage of approval by Ipoh City Council (MBI).

"We plan to build 534 houses of which 133 units will be reserved for 'Rumah Perakku' project. Units under the project would not cost more than RM90,000 each. However, for places such as Malim Nawar, it will be sold at RM70,000 per unit. Since the Chemor project is under MBI, the houses will be sold at RM90,000 per unit."

"Perakeans who wish to apply for a unit under 'Rumah Perakku' may do so online via our official website 'Lembaga Perumahan dan Hartanah Perak' (property board)," he told Ipoh Echo during a charity event on Thursday, November 28 at his office in Bandar Sri Klebang.



Mimbar Nusantara Holding Sdn Bhd is a property development and management company that has been around since 2015. The company has been working closely with the Menteri Besar's office for the 'Rumah Perakku' project.

Nazrin Cheong stated that approximately 54 units of the 'Rumah Perakku' in Malim Nawar have been sold out. The launch was on December 12 and was officiated by the Menteri Besar.

Nazrin handed a cheque for RM1000 to two tahfiz schools, namely Maahad Tahfiz Al-Ansari, Ulu Chepor and Nur Muhammad Tahfiz Centre. Two other schools will receive similar donations. They are SJKT Ladang, Chemor and SJKC Pei Cheng, Chemor.

"We've extended financial assistance to Kamiley Ngah, the former handball player who has been diagnosed with a chronic disease. I hope that the aid will come in handy," said Nazrin.

SeeFoon gets her spice fix in Old Town

Pictures by Yugin



ON IPOH FOOD



By SeeFoon Chan-Koppen
seefoon@ipöhecho.com.my
For more info go to www.ipohfooddiva.my

The interesting phenomenon in Ipoh old town nowadays is observing the plethora of new restaurants that open and close like Venus flytraps, that rare carnivorous plant species that traps insects who have the misfortune to wander close, lured by the bright colours and the fragrant scent it secretes. Hence the name Venus, the Roman Goddess of love.

Restaurants appear to do the same, open and close rather quickly and often, sad to say, we don't even miss them. However, for a few new ones that have recently opened, I would like for them to stay around and become part of the Ipoh food scene.

One of these is **Zaitun**, a newly-opened family restaurant on Market Street, which is owned and operated by charming Naveen, an Indian national married to a local. This is the second restaurant to be opened by this enterprising young man whose first one, **Hadramot Tent Restaurant**, an Arabic restaurant, has been up and running for a while on Jalan Sri Ampang.

Far from a Venus flytrap, the signage for the restaurant is so unassuming that it's easy to miss it. In fact, I have been so often to the **PWW** shop and not noticed it directly across the street. Plus I have an inherent prejudice against any restaurant that over-reaches and wanting to be all things to all people, for, as per Zaitun's signboard, a "Multi Cuisine Family Restaurant". But I was about to be proven wrong.

Naveen has seven chefs manning different stations in the kitchen, all highly skilled in their respective specialities. So he'll have someone just preparing all the grilled items, another all the breads, another on the Arabic sauces and mezes, one handling the continental dishes another blending the masalas and another one cooking the various regional Indian specialities, and so it goes. So there is not one or two 'jack of all trades' dishing out mediocre food.

That is what makes Zaitun special.

At first, I thought we were walking into a Malay restaurant as the name is fairly common here but Naveen explained that 'zaitun' means 'olive' in Arabic. So now that was all explained, we began to taste the dishes which on this particular occasion was a mix of Indian and Arabic dishes.

The first dish was the **Chicken Mandi** a quarter of a chicken served with long-grain flavoured basmati rice, soup and Arabic sambal. The chicken looked remarkably bland on the plate but on tasting, was tender, well-marinated through and umami. The soup reminded me of a mild sup kambing and the Arabic sambal, pungent, fiery and had its own unique flavours, quite unlike the local Indian sambals I've tasted; **RM13 – quarter, RM22 – half**.

Next to come was a **Chicken Cheese Tandoori**, a large portion but with a difference. All the tandoori flavours were there but the addition of mozzarella cheese which was stuffed into the meat lent a new dimension to the tandoori package. The coriander-mint sauce was thankfully(!) not sweetened, mildly tart and tangy and the serving of mayonnaise (I reckon) was for those who need the fatty mouthfeel for the non-oily chicken; **RM22**.

The **Butter Chicken** was hands down one of the best I have tasted. Creamy, voluptuous, spicy and populated with chunks of chicken; **RM17**. We ate it with a mixture of Naans. Parathas, a Rumali Roti varying in price from **RM3-5** except for the stuffed one.

Other dishes with gravy included a **Chettinad Chicken** made with 35 types of spices fresh from India, **RM15**, and a **Chettinad Lamb** at **RM22**.

Then, we had the **mixed kebab platter**, lovely skewers of grilled minced lamb and chicken served with french fries and chilli sauce and mayo. The kebabs were certainly flavoured exotically (more Arabic) and were very tasty but I thought the attempt at fusion



Non Vegetarian Thali



Mixed Kebab



Selected Breads with Butter Chicken



Chicken Mandi

with the fries and mayo rather tainted the dish. I would have much rather preferred the coriander-mint chutney and a squeeze of lime. But then that is my palate and next time I would request for that. I am sure that many a young person would much prefer the fries and the mayo! **Mixed RM23. Lamb only RM24.**



Chettinad Chicken

We were five of us and by this time groaning with surfeit and then came the non-vegetarian **Thali!** Which is a full meal in itself – 11 small dishes of delectables, like **Chicken Khorma** (very umami), two types of dhal, mutton curry, fried bitter gourd, mixed vegetable and a very delicious fish curry which I have promised myself to order next time, served with a heaping portion of Ponni rice which you eat with ghee and powdered dahl – an unusual serving style which is new to me; **RM24**. There is also a vegetarian option for **RM12** which is currently on promotion for **RM10**.

Overall I found the prices at Zaitun very reasonable. Their menu is extensive and I hadn't even ventured near their continental dishes! If they keep up with the quality, Ipoh can look forward to having them on the permanent food scene.

Zaitun Multi Cuisine Family Restaurant
(pork-free and waiting for Halal certification)
Address: 20, Jalan Market, 30000 Ipoh.
Contact: 017 737 2711
Business Hours: Monday-Sunday, 11am-10.30pm



Chicken Biryani

Traditions of Christmas . . . continued from page 2

“Other than that, I really love Christmas food like roast turkey and baked pie,” Colonel Fathol added.

Twenty-eight-year-old Ipohite **Tan Mei Kuan** felt that Christmas is an ideal opportunity for everyone to gather with family and friends since the festive season coincides with the year-end school holidays.

“Living in a food paradise, we have the chance to taste traditional Christmas dishes such as roast turkey and Yule log cake, so that everyone could join in the fun,” she said. “Besides that, I love the fact that everyday products have special limited edition Christmas-themed packaging and malls roll out their lavish festive decorations, plenty of year-end sales and promotions. Did I mention the TV reruns of holiday movies like Home Alone and The Polar Express?”



Yule log cake

Another Ipoh girl **Chong Jo Lynn**, despite not being a Christian, celebrates Christmas with her family quite majorly.

“Whenever Christmas is around the corner, I will gather with my family members to spend some quality time together. We usually go to cool places such as Cameron Highlands or Fraser’s Hill to feel as if we are also celebrating Christmas in winter too,” the 17-year-old explained.

“Apart from that, my mother also bakes Christmas goods like the Gingerbread cookies and Yule log cakes to share with family and friends,” Jo Lynn added. “Roast turkey is included too and she always invites people over to have a meal and catch up over a good and casual-natured conversation.”

‘We the Rakyat’ founder, Ipoh-boy **Darren Lee Yeu Jyn** who is currently residing in Melbourne, Australia, told Ipoh Echo that one will see crowded beaches and surfers instead of groups of carolers wandering the neighbourhood during the Christmas season.

“For a typical Australian Christmas, one will also see the Australians packing up the Esky (brand name for a cooler box in Australia) for a picnic or barbecuing prawns – as they call it in their cliché Australian slang, ‘put another shrimp on the barbie’,” he remarked in jest.

“Although my family and I don’t usually celebrate



Darren Lee (extreme right) and his family

Christmas in Malaysia, whenever I come back, we will indulge ourselves in European cuisine. So, Christmas to us has also always been food and gathering too,” Darren added.

Commercialised Christmas

Many agree that Christmas has become too materialistic and increasingly abandoning the true meaning behind the celebration of the festive season.

“There’s too little about Christ’s birth,” Rev Andrew opined. “Modern-day Christmas traditions are indeed commercialised and focused more on partying.”

Fr Patrick has a similar sentiment that Christmas is getting more and more commercialised. “This is why I strongly advocate my followers to find time in their own way to spend with their families, especially after the night mass every Christmas Eve.”

“It’s not about how one celebrates the season but how much does one know about the true meaning behind Christmas,” Zechariah said. “Individual preferences do matter of course, but every follower of the Christian faith should know the core meaning of the season before doing anything.”

Mary Anne Lalitha, 33, opined that people around her have forgotten the real meaning of Christmas.

“They are celebrating Santa Claus, which has nothing to do with Christmas!” she expressed.

“Modern Christmas celebrations seem very materialistic in comparison to what the festive season is truly about,” David opined. “It is true that part of the celebration is about giving and it is rewarding to be able to give thoughtful presents to the people you care about.”

“Sometimes there is so much pressure to find the ‘perfect’ gift,



Mary Anne Lalitha



Roast Turkey from WEIL Hotel

what is meant to be a season of thankfulness and to spend time together becomes stressful and overwhelming,” he lamented.

“For someone like me who is involved in church activities, it is easy to get swept up with events and festivities that sometimes, the sight of the real reason for the celebration can be lost,” David remarked.

“As the years go by, time changes many things, including people. They grow, they change and traditional practices can never escape that fact,” Sara highlighted. “I believe each and every family has their own Christmas rituals. Some stick to the old tradition and some revise them by celebrating it differently.”

“To me, no matter how Christmas traditions change, for better or worse, the one thing that never changes is the love for family that surrounds us and every beautiful moment is captivating. We must cherish them,” she further remarked.

In short, Christmas is never only about exchanging gifts or partying. From the birth of Jesus Christ to bringing joy to other people, the season is definitely not short of meaningful traditions and festivities that will undoubtedly leave an everlasting impression on anyone. For Christmas this year, let’s celebrate differently by reaching out to communities that deserve our attention and care!

Ipoh Echo wishes our loyal readers a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Enjoy your holidays!



55ft Christmas tree at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Silibin



More decorations at Ipoh Parade



Dong Cafe



WEIL Hotel



Community

Good Shepherd goes Orange for NO to Violence



Good Shepherd Services (GSS) kicked off its "16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence" campaign with an Orange the World, Charity Run – Say NO to Violence against Women and Children. This international campaign is celebrated annually from November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) to December 10 (Human Rights Day). Its theme for this year is "Orange the World: Generation Equality Stands Against Rape". This campaign is important as it highlights

the importance of gender equality and the elimination of violence towards women and children, which is in line with GSS' vision and mission.

The colour orange symbolises a bright and optimistic future free from violence against women and children.

Throughout this 16-day activism campaign, GSS conducted sessions that included public events to raise awareness, signature campaigns and other activities as part of their advocacy effort to raise awareness on the issue of gender-based

violence.

On November 24 the nation-wide campaign launch for GSS started off in Ipoh with a 5km run from the Indian Recreational Club in Buntong close to where their newly established Community Service Centre is located. This first community event was aimed at raising awareness about the issue of violence experienced by women and children and promotes the need to protect and keep them from harm. The run with three categories drew the participation of about 150 runners and was officiated

by Sivasubramaniam Athi Narayanan, Perak State Legislative Assembly Buntong area. Technical advice for the run was provided by officials from Kinta Athletic Association. The top three winners in each category received cash prizes. There was also a Fun run category for children. Lucky draw prizes included a Samsung handphone, children's bicycles, electrical goods and others.

"This year's international theme for the campaign speaks about the need to break generational harmful

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practices, beliefs and traditions that perpetuate violence against women and children," said Beatrice Lim, Manager of Good Shepherd Services Ipoh. "For this to happen, it calls for a response from all of us to act. We all have the capacity to do this and can easily start by having conversations about the issue of violence and not be silent about it" she added. "Being silent is being complicit."

Good Shepherd Services has been working with the children and women at Bekor Flats and its surrounding communities in Buntong, Ipoh since 2017. They have also been engaging with three primary schools in the area namely SK Guru Kalgidhar, SJK (T) Methodist and SK Buntong to conduct programs and workshops relating to safety and

protection.

The Community Service Centre (CSC) is a focal point and base for Good Shepherd Services to collaborate with the local community in relation to issues on the environment, education and gender-based violence. The CSC provides a safe place for children to spend their after-school hours where they will be involved in activities that enhance their creativity, knowledge, develop leadership skills and strengthen values. For the women, they conduct activities such as financial literacy, health and nutrition, addressing sexual and gender-based violence and other relevant activities that can empower and benefit them. Counselling services are provided at the centre.

For more information please visit their website www.goodshepherd.my.

Reach for the Stars

By Mei Kuan

The peace-filled community project to end all forms of violence, "One Million Stars to End Violence" met its target in October after two years. To celebrate the completion of the advocacy project, the Gallery of Stars was officially launched on Wednesday, November 13, along Jalan Market above The PWW Shop.

A joint project of Perak Women for Women Society (PWW) and Soroptimist International (SI Ipoh), each woven star made of recyclable materials is a commitment to resist violence and hatred as well as a symbol of light, peace and solidarity. The creative installations in the gallery were done in close collaboration with the architectural faculty from UiTM Seri Iskandar consisting of more than 30 undergraduates.

"This project which was started on November 25, 2017, was our way of sending a message to everyone irrespective of age, race and religion that violence of any form should not be tolerated. Stars were made to convey the message. It was made



possible with people from all walks of life, from Malaysia and all over the globe. Our members also conducted talks on this project at various schools during our two-year period. The young students and youths will now be our ambassadors of peace," explained Sumathi Sivamany, President of PWW.

Present were Kavaram a Subramaniam, Director of Perak Women Development Department, Cindy Chong Evans, Olympia College Principal,

Associate Professor Dr Norhayati Baharun, UiTM Perak Deputy Rector (Academic), Nor Syamimi Samsudin, High Achievers Club Advisor of UiTM Perak Architectural Faculty and Michelle Ayon Navajas, the author of the book, "After-Rain Skies: A Million Stars".

The gallery features three installations erected in three phases since June: Melancholy, Sayap (Wing) and Lady Liberty.

It was followed by the launch of the book titled, "After-Rain Skies: A Million Stars",

a collection of stories about abused women. The proceeds from the sales will go towards helping downtrodden women.

Michelle, a Filipino writer, blogger, educator and loving mother of four, shared with Ipoh Echo about her first published book, "The main takeaway for readers is that abuse and violence of any form should never be tolerated and cannot be accepted. Readers have been touched by the stories in this book. We realise that abuse and violence are actually universal. It can



happen to you, me and even the most successful, seemingly happy women."

It is available in The PWW Shop in limited copies at RM20 per book starting September. She is currently based in Ipoh.

When asked on the meaning behind the book title, the amiable Michelle added, "When there is so much rain, the sky is so dark. After the rain, we see the stars in the clear sky. That is basically also what will happen to all the victims after the sufferings and trouble as well after you get help."

The Gallery of Stars is open from 10am till 1pm on Monday and

Tuesday and 10am till 4pm from Wednesday to Sunday.

For more updates, visit the Facebook page: One Million Stars to End Violence - Malaysia.



Michelle Ayon Navajas

Military

Honouring the Veterans

By Mei Kuan

Malaysian Armed Forces Chinese Veterans Association (MACVA) hosted a lunch to honour members of the Perak Disabled Veterans Club (Kelab OKU Veteran Perang Perak) on Saturday, December 7 at Hotel Seri Malaysia, Ipoh.

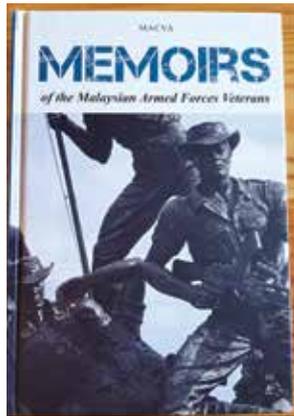
Attended by over 50, it was aimed at fostering fellowship amongst all veterans associations under the Department of Veterans Affairs (JHEV).

Present were Brig-Gen (Rtd) Datuk Goh Seng Toh, President of MACVA and Captain (Rtd) Roslan bin Mohd Din, President of Perak Disabled Veterans Club.

"I'd like to stress that our good deeds have got no ethnic boundary. We will assist anyone in dire need. Plus, we always encourage the youth to be involved with the defence of their country," said Goh, 74, to Ipoh Echo.

Pontian-born Goh enlisted in the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) in the midst of Confrontation in 1965 at the age of 19. In 1968, with only two years of operational experience and only 500 flying hours under his belt, he was selected to go to the United Kingdom to be trained as one of the earliest Qualified Helicopter Flying Instructors.

"During the height of confrontation, the Indonesians landed their paratroopers in Labis and seaborne guerillas on the beach in Pontian. As the Commonwealth Forces were still with us, I saw a lot of helicopters flown mostly



Datuk Goh and Roslan

by foreigners landing and taking off. Being a Form 5 boy at the time, I told myself how nice it would be to fly one of them. Two years later, I was flying them," he said.

After serving for over 35 years and having been to every part of Malaysia, the amiable Goh retired in the year 2000 as the RMAF Commander East Malaysia based in Labuan.

"In 1976 when we were fighting the communist terrorists along the Thai border, my helicopter was shot at. Four rounds of bullets hit the fuel tank. That happened when I was picking up casualties from a clearing. Our commandos captured a communist camp and while they were clearing the area they stepped on booby traps. There was no place to land so I had to winch up the injured. While we were winching, the terrorists shot at us. I managed to pick all four casualties but sustained the four

shots to the fuel tank. Fortunately, we did not crash," Goh recalled.

"It's my commitment to the Air Force and the country," he explained when asked what motivated him to serve the nation.

His advice for those aspiring to join the armed forces: "Look at the bigger picture and further ahead."

Next on the MACVA calendar will be the launch of its book entitled, "Memoirs of the Malaysian Armed Forces Veterans" scheduled for March 2020.

"The intention is to raise enough funds to print more of this book for distribution to schools," Goh added.

The Malaysian Armed Forces Chinese Veterans who contributed significantly in the early years decided to take the lead in penning their experiences via The Memoirs after observing that little was recorded of the contribution of the Malayan and later, Malaysian Armed Forces, certainly not from the perspective of the local military.

In The Memoirs, Gen (Rtd) Tan Sri (Dr) Hashim Mohd Ali, a former Armed Forces Chief was quoted as saying, "The Memoirs narrate explicit events of their activities whilst in service. Even though we have left the service, our DNA has not changed and this book expresses our fond memories of our comradeship in arms whilst serving in the Armed Forces."

"I congratulate MACVA for the publication of The Memoirs. It should be read by all Malaysians," Hashim concluded.

Available now at RM90 (paperback) and RM110 (hardcover), interested readers can email to MACVA at Memoirofveterans@gmail.com.

Tourism

Dolphin Sighting in Kuala Sepetang

By Rosli Mansor

Dolphin sighting was one of the highlights of the Northern Perak Eco Visit Malaysia 2020 Expedition held from December 4 to 6 by Tourism Malaysia (Perak). Focusing on the various tourism products of Taiping Heritage City, participants, consisting of media representatives, tourism agents and bloggers, were in attendance.



One no longer needs to go to Moray Firth, UK, or Bohol, Philippines, to enjoy dolphin watching as the exhilarating experience is available in Kuala Sepetang attracting both local and international tourists.

Our adventure began with a 15-km boat ride from the Kuala Sepetang Tourism Centre jetty cruising through Sungai Reba and Sungai Sangga lasting approximately 30 minutes.

Along the way, we got to see the dense mangroves, a viable economic asset of the locals. This riverine route was used by traders in the past to transport tin ore to the port (Port Weld) around circa 1880.

Upon arrival at Kuala Sepetang and Kuala Gula, we were pleasantly surprised by the antics of the Indo-Pacific humpback dolphins (*Sousa chinensis*) swimming alongside and ahead of our boat.

According to our guide, there is another species of dolphin found here although they are rarely sighted known as the Irrawaddy Dolphin.

Present was Director of Tourism Malaysia Northern Region, Ahmad Husni Ahmad Basri. He highlighted that Kuala Sepetang has a huge potential in the local tourism sector.

"Dolphin sighting and eagle watching are among the main tourist attractions here. I believe they will help draw tourists during Visit Malaysia Year 2020," he remarked.

Those keen to partake in the Kuala Sepetang outdoor "adventure" please call Jusri: **012 631 6132**.



Development of Geoparks in Perak

By Rosli Mansor



The state government has set aside RM 0.8 million for the development of geoparks in Perak.

Executive Councillor for Tourism, Arts and Culture Tan Kar Hing said the sum will be used to develop basic infrastructures at identified sites which will be used as examples for future projects.

"We'll add more signages, upgrade the jetty, build proper bus parking areas at Gunung Lang Recreational Park and fences to protect the vertebrate fossils at Naga Mas Cave."

"The state government hopes the Kinta Valley Geopark site will be elevated as UNESCO Global Geopark.

"The combination of natural resources, forests, beaches and historical sites are the core elements that form a geopark and this will place Perak as one of the famous tourist attractions for both locals and foreigners," he said in his speech during the Kinta Valley Geopark Festival 2019 at Gopeng Square, Ipoh, Perak.

The festival was held on November 23 and 24. Various activities such as the Geopark Amazing Race, Kinta Valley Geopark Fun Race, Geopark Talk and a number of exhibitions were organised.

The opening and closing ceremony were graced by the Deputy Minister of Water, Land and Natural Resources, Tengku Zulpuri Shah Raja Puji.

Present was the General Manager of Perak State Parks Corporation, Mohammad Shah Redza Hussein.

Education

First International Valedictorian for QIU

Journalism graduate received Dato' Sri Dr Vijay Eswaran award as 370 students got their scrolls

Reflecting its status as a truly global educational institution, Quest International University (QIU) honoured its first international valedictorian at its 5th Convocation Ceremony recently.

Bachelor of Mass Communication (Hons) Journalism graduate Sahibzada Mubashir Noor, who hails from Pakistan, received the Dato' Sri Dr Vijay Eswaran award for outstanding scholastic achievement. The 37-year-old stood out from his competition by combining a near-perfect academic performance with a stellar co-curricular resume.

Moby, as he is known to friends, was one of 370 students who graduated at this year's convocation, which was presided over by University Council Chairman Dato' Sri Dr Vijay Eswaran.

Besides graduating with First Class honours, the valedictorian had also represented QIU with distinction in several competitions. He won a gold medal at the 2017 National English Olympics (NEO17) and was a key member of the university's debate team which placed in the top 16 of the World Universities Peace Invitational Debate (WUPID) 2017.

He was also Head of Production of the University's student-run advertising agency Ad.U and student editor of the University's news portal e-Q.online

QIU believes in creating graduates who can immediately make an impact in their respective fields, and Moby embodies this perfectly. Already, he has more than 250 published articles in international and local news outlets, including The Huffington Post, the New Straits Times, South Asia Magazine, Iran Daily News, the Saudi Gazette and many more.

QIU Chief Operating Officer Nicholas Goh said: "Education and talent know no race, skin colour or nationality, and we are extremely proud of how we are a university that leaves no one behind."

"From the ground up, inclusivity has always been one of our council chairman Dato' Sri Dr Vijay Eswaran's driving principles and our first international valedictorian is proof of that."

"Our commitment to inclusivity has also manifested in the excellent academic achievements of our students with disabilities. We are the only private university in Malaysia to offer a Bachelor's in Special Needs Education degree, and we are working with the Perak Association for the Intellectually Disabled (PAFID) to offer special needs education training for educators, caregivers, parents and members of the public."

Degrees were conferred to students from five faculties at today's convocation, namely the Faculty of Medicine, the Faculty of Pharmacy, the Faculty of Business and Management, the Faculty of Social Sciences, and the Faculty of Science and Technology.

The certificates were handed out by Dato' Sri Dr Vijay Eswaran and University council members Tan Sri Dato' Seri Megat Najmuddin Datuk Seri Dr Hj. Megat Khas and Tan Sri S. Veerasingham.

Over 1200 attendees were present at the event, including QIU Council members, academics, staff, students and their families.



L-R: Professor Dato' Dr Raman Narayanasamy, Dato' Sri Dr Vijay Eswaran and valedictorian Sahibzada Mubashir Noor

Connexion

By Joachim Ng

Green Lane for climate warnings

When nature calls, where do you go? Old town is taking the right steps as more eateries green their toilets with potted plants and raise hygiene standards to earn five-star toilet rating.

But old town can do far more greening. It has a Concubine Lane — sexy name for a street with mostly pasar malam fashion accessories on weekdays and weekends. Very plastic. Old town should have a Green Lane in sync with the "Ipoh Bersih, Hijau dan Maju" slogan displayed on giant billboards.

Green Lane means a street dedicated to nature where you can buy organic products at eco-friendly prices and get climate change information from exhibits, standees, and takeaway leaflets. Contrary to rumours, paper isn't eco-hostile as it is biodegradable and manufactured from specially grown commercial trees.

It's a street with no plastic fashion accessories or plastic bags in sight, but lots of natural green and a prominent stage space for green heroes to perform skits that dramatise the risks to Malaysia's survival posed by climate change.

Old town has the right feel as heritage museums abound featuring Perakian lifestyles in the early and mid-20th century. Seniors will remember that, back in the 1960s, Ipoh houses needed only ceiling fans. Up till the mid-1970s, most cars had no air-conditioning. But from the late 1970s you could feel a rising heat.

The Economist newsmagazine showed on one of its recent covers a graphical illustration of global average temperatures year by year since 1850, using blue stripes to denote cooler years and red stripes to denote warmer years. From the year 2000, there were just red stripes getting progressively darker.

Twenty years of unabated global temperature rise, and still rising. It has permanently melted large tracts of Himalayan, Antarctic and Arctic ice. But in Malaysia, only green heroes talk about climate change at lunch or dinner. There's plenty of ice in the fridge.

The general lack of concern is due to a psychological condition known as frog boiling. Just as frogs in a cooking pot get used to the rising heat, so too we adjust to warming as global temperatures are rising just marginally from one year to the next.

Frog boiling cripples our response to climate change, and this effect is very evident in the losing battle against killer mosquitoes. Dengue cases by end-2019 are set to reach an all-time high ever in Malaysia. The mosquito is a tiny home and neighbourhood pest that has defeated us. From dengue inaction to climate inaction, what lies ahead may be climate-change-connected calamity.



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Education

Conducive Learning Environment at Sunway College Ipoh



Located in an integrated resort township in Tambun, Ipoh, Sunway College Ipoh is a prominent name in higher education services in the Northern region.

The college which was established since 2003, is owned and governed by the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation and has produced more than 800 graduates.

To many of its current students and alumni, the decision to enrol into Sunway College Ipoh after SPM seems to be un baffled. One apparent reason for their choice is locality. Students relish studying in a familiar environment with the readily available support from their near and dear. Similarly, for parents, they can put their worries at rest as their children are within their sight.

College life can be both pleasant and frightening for the students. Fortunately, in Sunway College Ipoh, students are supported tremendously in their academic and personal growth. Small size classrooms and friendly lecturers enable personalised coaching to take place. Activities are organised to enrich students' learning experiences.

Sunway College Ipoh offers a range of professional and diploma programmes which are highly relevant to the industry needs. It provides students with employment opportunities once they graduate.

School of Accountancy

The school has been notable for its CAT and ACCA programmes. Sunway College Ipoh is the only approved learning partner for ACCA with Platinum status in Perak. This accolade is an assurance of high-quality education that is provided in the college. Time and time again, the school has produced global CAT Prize Winners, made possible through the experienced and qualified team of lecturers.

School of Business

The programmes offered by the school include a Diploma in Business Administration, Diploma in Marketing, Diploma in Business Information System, Diploma in Entrepreneurship and Diploma in Media Communication. The school's strong connection with industry partners ensures the curriculum is aligned with the latest industry trends and consequently paves way for students to gain the right exposure vital for their future employment.

School of Arts and Design

For those with the knack of creativity, there is Diploma in Interior Design and Diploma in Graphic Design that will certainly stimulate their creative minds to advance to the next level.

Both programmes require students to carry out live projects that give students an early insight into working life. Internship opportunities are also available for students in the programmes.

Former students have made the college proud with their winning in several international and local design competitions. The most recent winning is of Wan Sue Khay, whose design of a cute Malaysian tapir was selected as Perak tourism mascot.

School for Pre-University Studies

Students who prefer flexible and wider options for undergraduate studies will find the Foundation in Arts programme a viable option. The programme is identical to what is offered in Sunway College Kuala Lumpur (SCKL). Students get to learn the same module as SCKL, all in the comfort of their hometown. With this qualification, students may progress into Sunway University undergraduate programmes in collaboration with Lancaster University UK, Victoria University, Australia or Le Cordon Bleu, Australia.

Enrichment Programmes

Sunway College Ipoh will offer an Intensive English Programme in **January 2020** for school leavers who are interested in improving their English language competency. The programme will run for eight weeks and students will also be privileged to learn more about the programmes they are interested in pursuing.

In addition, a Creative Design Workshop will be held from **March 9 to 13, 2020**, for all interested SPM 2019 / O-level leavers, with a minimal fee of RM100. Upon completion, students will be awarded a certificate of participation.

The registration for January 2020 semester is still open and various scholarships are available for qualified students.

For more info, visit Sunway College Ipoh from Monday-Friday (8.30am-5.30pm) & Saturday and Sunday from 10am-4pm. Alternative, you can Whatsapp **019 368 1096**.

Property

Something New at Seri Iskandar

By Joelyn Jonathan



Upon receiving positive feedback from buyers, Team Keris Berhad (TKB) has launched its latest promotion Lestari IUS by offering fully-fitted customised furniture for all last phase units purchased between now till December 31.

According to the Deputy Chairman of TKB, Datin Irene Lee, she told Ipoh Echo that this is a form of appreciation to the buyers for their support during the launch on Saturday, November 23 at Lestari IUS, Seri Iskandar, Perak.

The furniture includes bed frames, side tables and wardrobes for all four bedrooms, a TV cabinet and sofa in the living hall, dining table and chairs, kitchen cabinets and additional storage cabinets under the staircase which will only be available for the double-storey and 1.5 storey units.

"The entire project is 52 acres with total housing units of 354 whereas for shops, there will be a total of 56 units. We consider this a strategic location as it is along the main road and we may enjoy a very wide frontage of about 2000 feet. We definitely do prioritise workmanship and our QC team constantly checks on them."

"The single storey houses do not come with a wet kitchen as we aim to utilise the entire space, unlike the double and 1.5 storey houses. Also buyers will only have to do minimum renovation work," added Datin Irene.

"Although it is not gated and guarded, Lestari IUS is safe as the planning itself is very controlled with ample parking space," she said.

Datin Irene also explained that the first floor of the shops can be converted to student hostels as the location is right beside Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP).

Lestari IUS is set to be the next bustling spot in Seri Iskandar due to its strategic location. Besides that, Lestari IUS also received the Reka International Design Award 2019 and won the second prize for Show-house Design Category.

Lestari IUS sales office and show units are open daily from 9am-6pm. For further information, call **019 701222** or **019 703 2222** or visit www.teamkeris.com.my.

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.

Is UTC Relevant?

UTC was set up to help working people get their routine jobs with government departments done after office hours. It was open up to 10pm daily. A few months ago the working hours were shortened to 5pm like other government offices. Most private-sector workers work up to 6pm and beyond and some work during weekends. With the new working hours, UTC does not serve its purpose.

With the current set up all we can say is that we have an additional government office, say, two Immigration departments to get our jobs done during office hours.

Many people have complained to me about this. People do not know the "proper channel" to lodge their complaints. We are told that we must always use the "proper channel". During my meeting with the CEO of a GLC, he asked me whether UTC is relevant with normal working hours.

UTC should revert to its previous working hours. Alternatively, they can open from 4pm to 10pm or at least work up to 8pm, otherwise, UTC can be closed and the government can save money. I read in the papers that the government departments in Putrajaya are working during weekends. This can be introduced in Ipoh as well so that working people can have access to government departments during weekends.

What is the point of having a facility that does not serve the people?

A. Jeyaraj

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Nosh News

New Spot for Japanese Souffle

By Mei Kuan



Badaimu, a Taiwan-based cafe franchise specialising in Japanese soufflé, launched its first branch in Malaysia right in the heart of Ipoh at the end of November.

“With recipes originating from Japan, our soufflé is freshly-baked and made to order using fresh ingredients without any food colouring. Thus, there is a waiting time of between 20 to 40 minutes. We chose Ipoh as the location because Ipoh is a food paradise,” explained Ipoh-born Leow Keng Fai, the owner of the dessert spot.

Currently, its menu offers six types of soufflés priced at RM13.50 per plate: toffee, lemon, Earl Grey milk tea, strawberry, matcha and chocolate.

Light and fluffy, it is served in a stack of two with a

blanket of sauce creating an Instagram-worthy presentation.

“To date, the crowd-favourite is toffee with a burnt-caramel top. One customer who had tried it told us that he even dreamt about our toffee soufflé in his sleep! We will innovate and add new items to the menu so stay tuned!” Leow enthused.

“The height of a soufflé depends on how fluffy it is. It is not easy to create a quality soufflé as it must not be too sweet, not feel greasy and have a pretty presentation,” he added.

Meanwhile, beverage options include sparkling fruit

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Badaimu Japanese Souffle is located at 187-C, Jalan Sultan Iskandar, 30000 Ipoh. It opens daily from 11am till 8pm, to be extended to 10pm towards the end of the year. With a seating capacity of between 40 to 45 diners, the cafe also accepts bookings for private events or catering. Pork-free.

For more updates, visit its Facebook page: **Badaimu Japanese Souffle**

Arguably the Best KSHF in Ipoh

By SeeFoon Chan-Koppen

In the 16 Jul 2019 issue, IE308, I wrote about Yinzo Kopi that newly-refurbished cafe right in the heart of old town. At the time, I thought some of their offerings were brilliant and some hit and miss. However, William Oh, manager and partner, takes feedback very well and I am happy to report that all my comments on previous occasions on some of the items have all been taken to heart and the dishes modified.

They also have some new dishes on the menu like the traditional Hakka “Lei Cha” and traditional Hakka Tofu made by their own chef!

Available every Tuesdays, Fridays and on every 1st and 15th day of the Chinese Lunar Calendar, each serving is priced at “Lei Cha” **RM13.80**; **Hakka Tofu RM3.80 (2 pcs)**; **set of both RM16.80**. Great for sharing or if a big eater, hog it all for yourself. The portions are BIG, the herbal tea soup umami and fragrant and the mix of ingredients freshly prepared.

And they have expanded their dim sum menu with new additions like **Dried Prawn Pastry (3 pcs RM4.80)** and a yumilicious **Polo Pau**, fragrant, pillow-soft and enveloping a big slab of



butter. This had me asking for more and my dear readers know that I don't have a sweet tooth! **RM3.80**.

Also **Osmanthus Jelly**, **RM4.80**, is available on Saturdays and **Longan Soya Bean Curd**, **RM4.80**, available on Sundays.

But I'm saving the biggest **surprise** for last. From now on, I will only go there for their



Kai Si Hor Fun (KSHF), Ipoh's iconic dish of rice noodles in soup. Depending on individual taste buds of course, for my palate, their **KSHF** is now edging out the front runners Moon de Moon and Pulau Sembilan. Here you sit in air-conditioned comfort and leisurely sip their home blend of local white coffee, pick at a dim sum or two and wait for the KSHF to arrive (which is pretty quickly), as you eat the noodles and slurp the broth. This latter is the magic to their KSHF. **Simmered** for a minimum of six hours, the broth is out of this world umami with **no MSG, RM8.80**.



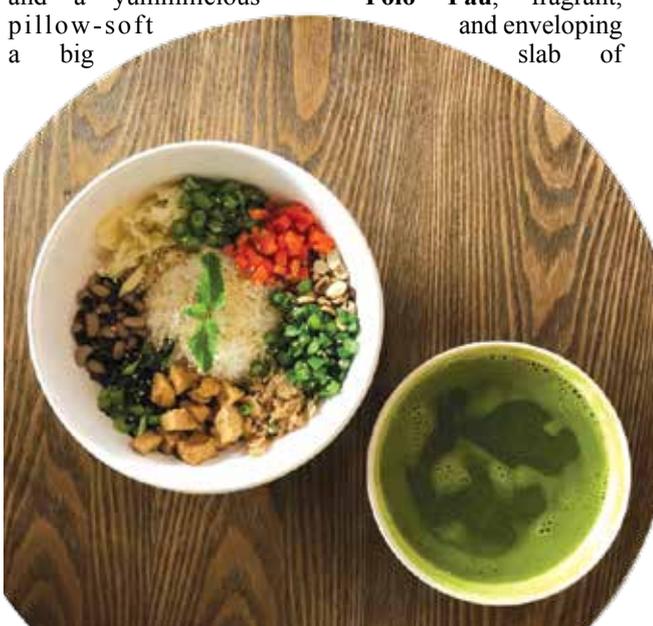
And no waiting for tables or queuing up (although parking is rather difficult around there, take a Grab).

If still hankering for more, check out the **Mizo Pork Rice**. Well marinated pork slices, tender and well-coated with Mizo, served with white rice and mustard, **RM13.80**.

So **William Oh**, keep up the quality and don't let Ipohites down! People will start complaining to me if you do.

YINZO KOPI

No. 1 & 3 Persiaran Bijih Timah, 30000 Ipoh.
Tel: 019 556 1393 or 05 241 0571 (ask for William Oh)
Business hours: 8.30am-5.30pm
Dim Sum from 8.30am-11am and 3.30pm-5pm



Heritage

Santa Claus is Coming to Town

By Ian Anderson

Christmas, like many other festivals, is riddled with legends stories and half-truths; the greatest legend being one of Santa Claus, variously known as Father Christmas, Kris Kringle or St Nicholas. However, in this case there is more than a grain of truth in the story. There really was a man, a fourth-century humble Greek monk, later a bishop, who was famous for his generosity towards the needy orphans of his parish, particularly at Christmas. When he was beatified by the Christian church, he became Saint Nicholas.

It is from these early beginnings that the children of the Christian world look forward to getting gifts from a mysterious Santa Claus; a man who arrives in a sleigh, drawn by reindeer, who enters their home via the chimney every Christmas Eve. Depicted as a rather portly, jolly, white-bearded old man – generally with spectacles – he wears a bright red suit with white fur collar and cuffs, a black leather belt and matching boots. He is



Ipoh's Presbyterian Church 1963



Sungai Siput 1958

never without a sack full of gifts for children.

Despite the incongruity of the story, young children believe in him and religiously write letters to him and hang up their stockings for him to fill with the gifts they desire. Then, one day they find out the truth and their world is shattered. Nonetheless, the stockings continue to be hung by the fireplace, waiting for him, in the hope that he will come – and he does!

Shirley Temple, the famous child actress from the age of three found out the truth fairly early. She remembered: "I stopped believing

in Santa Claus when I was six. Mother took me to see him in a department store and he asked for my autograph."

The Christian children of Malaysia, a truly multi-racial country, also enjoy the idea of Santa Claus and not surprisingly he has often appeared here, even though we have no chimneys! Perhaps he does not arrive quite so often these days as he once did, but ipohworld.org has several examples to share with us.

Along the road in Kampar, not long after the Japanese surrender, the red-coated gentleman with a long white beard arrived in the town. It seems that the invaders had commandeered his sleigh for military use because he had to arrive in a bullock cart! Nonetheless, the children were enthralled.

In 1958, 700 children eagerly lined up to meet Santa at a Christmas party. Hosted by Company B, 3rd Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment (RAR), at Sungai Siput, the party had all the festive trimmings, with tables groaning under the weight of food, Christmas carols and countless sacks of toys. The delighted children were from the local new villages and rubber estates. Many of them have never had a better Christmas before or since.

Then, back in Ipoh in 1963, Father Christmas visited the children at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church. In the photograph, Ruth Iversen is standing with her son Donald in the middle, her mother is on the extreme left. There were gifts a-plenty that day and everybody got one.

I remember my childhood Christmases with fondness. Santa was very basic in those days. Nothing digital or plastic. Just simple gifts; an apple, a second-hand Dinky car, some sweets and a pair of socks. Nothing expensive, but very special, as in those far-off days of war, as they came from St Nicholas. The good news is that he will always be here. He is part of our Christian children's heritage.



Kampar c 1945

Nostalgia

How Times Change

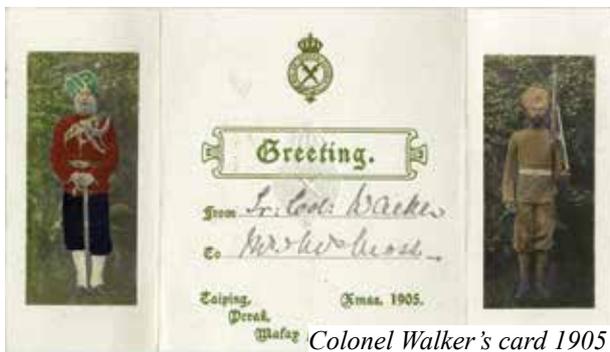
By Ian Anderson

Christmas, although a Christian festival, in many ways, it is no different from the other religious festivals we enjoy in Malaysia. They all involve home decoration, festive food, the giving of gifts, open houses, the sending of Greeting Cards and of course taking part in services to pay homage to your God, whoever he may be. For the Christians, sending Christmas cards has been a long tradition since the first card was sent, in 1843, by Sir Henry Cole, educator, patron of the arts in the UK and founder of London's Victoria and Albert Museum. It was hand-drawn with a great deal of care, printed and delivered by hand to his close friends and sent by the "Penny Post" to those farther afield.

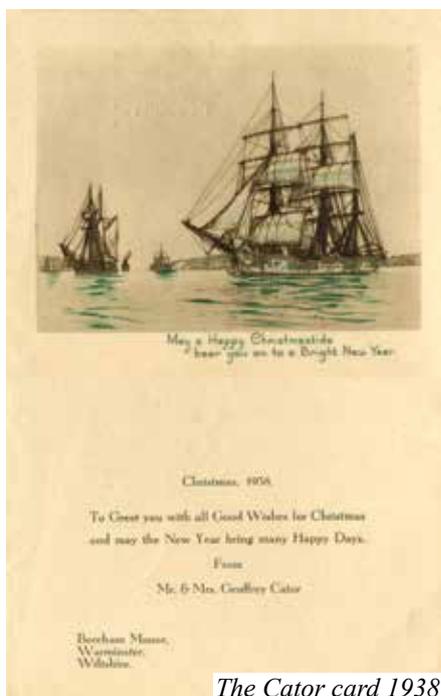
With the improved printing available by 1860 and the 50% reduction in postage charges for Christmas cards to one halfpenny (pronounced 'haypenny'), the sending of these festive greetings became the trend. By 1870 the postal service

became flooded every year with millions of cards that travelled across the world. It was the British answer to keeping in touch with friends at least once a year, irrespective of their race or religion.

It is no surprise therefore that the British officers serving in the colonies carried on the tradition and brought the habit to Malaya. The website ipohWorld.org has several examples. One such "Servant of the Crown" was Colonel Walker of the Malay States Guides. He had a unique batch of regimental cards printed in the early 1900s. The front



Colonel Walker's card 1905



The Cator card 1938



Foo Lee Wai c1945



The Wu family 1952

of card displays carries the words 'Xmas Greetings in gold on a green background. Inside, the card there are pictures of the Malay States Guides with greetings to Mr and Mrs Moss, from Col. Walker. Moss was the regimental tailor.

Some 30 years later the British Resident of Perak (1933 to 1939), Geoffrey Cator, sent Christmas cards to a wide circle of friends and business colleagues every year. In 1938 he sent a card to Mohd Ali Pitchay, Superintendent in the Health Department of Ipoh. Posted from UK the inscription read, "May a Happy Christmastide bear you on to a Bright New Year".

But it was not only the British who sent such cards. It soon caught on locally as a perfect way of wishing your friends the greetings of the festive season. For example, Foo Lee Wai took a leaf out of Sir Henry Coles' book by producing a personalized card c1945 with a photograph of himself in Falim.

Another example of the locally produced personalised card is from 1952. It is from the family of Dr Wu, the famous Plague fighter. With two photographs of the family from days gone by and greetings for Christmas and the New Year, it is a wonderfully nostalgic keepsake.

It did not take long for commercial printers to jump on the bandwagon and since the 1860s trillions of cards have been mailed, but like everything else, technology has overtaken us. Gone are the beautifully personalised cards, replaced by standard Internet greetings, sent at the push of a key. How times change!

Community.

First-ever Christmas Carnival

By Mei Kuan



The first-ever Christmas Carnival in town initiated by the Perak Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCCI) was brimming with people from all walks of life as it took place on the morning of Sunday, December 8.

Games and freebies galore, it was held at the Ipoh Octagon Cultural Street along Jalan Theatre to celebrate the festive season and the upcoming new year in addition to promoting goodwill and harmony.

Besides the Santa walkabout and choir, a classic car Christmas decoration contest and costume contest were also held.

Present were Nga Kor Ming, Deputy Speaker of the Dewan Rakyat as the guest of honour and Dato' Liew Sew Yee, President of PCCCI.

"Next year, 2020 is Visit Malaysia Year (VMY) and I am very proud of this initiative by the private sector in collaboration with the state government so that similar activities like these could be held to promote Ipoh as a premier tourism destination. I would like to stress that unity in diversity is the founding principal of our nation-building as we celebrate Hari Raya Aidilfitri, Deepavali, Chinese New Year and Christmas," Nga explained during a press conference.

To add to the joy, the state government and Member of Parliament for Ipoh Timor, Wong Kah Woh collectively contributed RM100,000 for the upcoming Chinese New Year Carnival to be held by PCCCI to promote tourism and unity.

"The private sector will come together to contribute as well for the event as the total expenditure is estimated to be RM150,000," Dato' Liew highlighted.

"It's a private and public cooperation and that is the smart partnership we form. We will join hand in hand for the betterment of the community," Nga concluded.

For more updates, call PCCCI at 05 242 1366 or visit its website: www.pccci.org.my



HAPPENINGS

Only pay RM30 for chargeable events/seminars announcements. You get 3 media avenues for the price of one: • Print (circulation 100,000) • Website (over 1 million hits per month – verifiable) • Facebook (Free public events are published FREE)

Announcements must be sent by fax: 05 543 9411; or email: announcements@ipöhecho.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.

ARTS AND CULTURE

SHARPENED WORD: RUNNING OUT OF IDEAS, ZUNAR? JANUARY 11, 2020 (Saturday), 2.30pm-5pm at 22 Hale Street, 22 Jalan Ipoh. Entrance by donation. For updates visit Facebook page: www.facebook.com/sharpenedword.kinta.

AN EVENING WITH THE GUSTAVUS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA & JAZZ LAB BAND. JANUARY 31, 2020, 8pm at Weil Hotel Ballroom, 292 Jalan Sultan Idris Shah, 30000 Ipoh. Organised by Lighthouse Hope Society Ipoh and Gustavus Adolphus College, USA. Entry by donation in support of Lighthouse Hope Society, Ipoh. To book a seat, call 05 545 5582 or 012 523 6558. Email: Lighthouseeven7s@gmail.com.

COMMUNITY

PERAK STATE CHRISTMAS NIGHT. DECEMBER 21 (Saturday), 7.30pm at Stadium Indera Mulia, Ipoh. Guests of honour: Perak Menteri Besar, Perak EXCO and Archbishop Rev Datuk Ng Moon Hing. There will be a flower dance, Christmas drama, choir, cultural dances and door gifts. Free admission.

HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAMME ON MENTAL HEALTH will be conducted at the Ipoh Adventist Community Services Center. This programme has helped many to optimize their brains and has equipped others to help loved ones recover from mental health illness, with proven results. It runs for 2 hours, every Saturday afternoon for 8 weeks, from July through August. For further details, WhatsApp us at 016 400 0271.

NEDLEY DEPRESSION & ANXIETY RECOVERY PROGRAM™ will be run by the Ipoh Adventist Community Services to equip those who are struggling with anxiety disorder or depression, or those desiring to assist loved ones with mental health disorders. This programme can help improve EQ and help students achieve peak mental performance. For further info, WhatsApp 016 595 0829 or 016 400 0271.

Kechara Earth Project. LET'S RECYCLE FOR GREENER EARTH. EVERY 4TH SUNDAY of the month, 9.30am-11.30am in front of Ipoh Garden Post Office, Jalan Dato Lau Pak Khuan, Ipoh Garden, 31400 Ipoh. Carton boxes, paper, metal/aluminium, electronic equipment, plastics, light bulbs, batteries and used clothes. Funds are channeled towards Kechara Food Bank that serves the urban poor and underprivileged community in Ipoh. For more details, contact: 016 532 8309 (Mr So) or 012 522 3200 (Ms Yee Mun).

FREE REALITY-BASED STREET DEFENSE WORKSHOP. Organised by Urban Street Defense's Centre for all NGOs and Women's Groups in Ipoh. Workshop covers what to do when you are attacked, defend against various real life attack scenarios and more. Call 016 538 4562 to book a FREE session. Booking confirmation on a first come, first served basis.

REPORT BULLYING. All schools in Malaysia have an Anti-bullying Guideline. Anti-bullying hotline: Talian Aduan Disiplin 1800-88-4774 or email adudisiplin@moe.gov.my. You can also call 15999 Childline to report bullying.

Ipoh-Fukuoka Sister Cities

By Mei Kuan

To mark the 30-year milestone of Ipoh-Fukuoka Sister Cities, the Mayor of Fukuoka City, Soichiro Takashima visited the 1.2-hectare Japanese garden at D.R. Seenivasagam Recreational Park with the accompaniment of Mayor Dato' Ahmad Suaidi Abdul Rahim on Wednesday, December 4.

This pristine garden represents the beautiful scenery of Satoyama, ponds and paddy fields, the symbol of Fukuoka.

The highlights of the morning included a plaque signing and tree planting ceremony where a selected tree, known as 'Tabebuia Rosea spp' and resembles the pink sakura, was planted as a symbol of fellowship. It is a neotropical tree that can grow up to 30 metres and can reach a diameter of 100cm. Thus it is often planted in parks and gardens to provide shade and abundant flowers during the dry season.

Present were Masanobu Kusuki, 76th Vice Chairperson of Fukuoka City Council and Mohd Zakuan Hj Zakaria, Council Secretary.

The Japanese Garden was officially opened in June 1995 after an accord was signed between Ipoh and Fukuoka in March 1989, the first Sister City Agreement ever materialised between Japan and Malaysia.

Aim to establish cooperation in the field of economy, commerce, science, technology, culture, sports and education, various programmes have been implemented such as the annual Asia Pacific Children Convention and Sister City Student Exchange.

"I hope that this celebration will further strengthen our relationship. I am keen to work on urban issues being increasingly prominent on national policy agendas such as



Smart City Development, Low Carbon City and initiatives promoting social inclusions and shared societies," Ahmad Suaidi said during a gala dinner held on the same day to commemorate the anniversary.

According to Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Ahmad Faizal Azumu, the guest of honour for the evening, the state government aspires to cooperate with Japan in general and Fukuoka in particular, on addressing the issues of an ageing society and creating opportunities for businesses and families by meeting the needs of retirees.

Present was His Excellency Shinichiro Kanoya, the Consul-General of Japan in Penang.

Arts and Culture

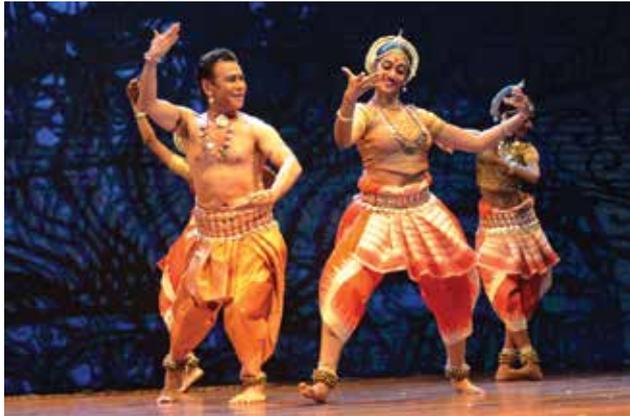
Ganjam Wows Audience

By Chris Teh

Over 300 spectators attended the “Ganjam” dance performance by Sutra Dance Theatre held at the RTM auditorium, Ipoh on Friday, November 29.

Present were Perak Menteri Besar Dato’ Seri Ahmad Faizal Azumu and his wife, Datin Seri Nomee Ashikin Mohammed Radzi. The show was organised by the Ipoh Fine Arts Society.

The hour-long show was helmed by renowned Indian classical dancer, Datuk Ramli Ibrahim who has over 30 years of dancing experience under his belt. Ramli led a team of 24 dancers, including



himself. According to the dancer, “Ganjam” refers to a southern region in India named Odisha, which was part of Kalinga (former name of the region), rich in folk dances and theatre genres.

“Many medieval

artists were born in Ganjam. Their works are still being performed by present-day Odissi dancers,” said Ramli. ““Ganjam’ is an infusion of new and adventurous elements and energy into the present repertoire of Odissi.”



The four sequences in the frenetic dance, which pay homage to Indian deities, are “M a n g a l a c h a r a n”, “Sthai”, “Rama Bhajana” and “Yogini-Moksha”, accentuated by vivid and colourful lighting designed by visual artist,

Sivarajah Natarajan.

When met after his performance, Ramli thanked the ongoing Ipoh International Arts Festival 2019 for the opportunity to showcase “Ganjam”.

“I’m impressed with what the Ipoh City Council has done to

preserve heritage elements around the city,” he told Ipoh Echo. “I have a very strong connection with Ipoh. The town is changing for the better, thus arts and culture should be a part of the landscape. Everyone must be given the opportunity to experience it.”

Ramli concluded by saying, “Hopefully, Ipoh will maintain its slow-paced lifestyle and avoid being another town bustling with developments.”

The Sutra Foundation will tour South India next year. For more information, go to its website at www.sutrafoundation.org.my.

Theatre Through a Time Tunnel

By Joelyn Jonathan

Theatre through a time tunnel located inside a souvenir shop in Concubine Lane is the latest addition in exciting new venues in Old Town, Ipoh.

“I was working on a new tourist attraction spot at Jonker Street, Malacca, called the Ching Ho Cultural Museum when I visited Concubine Lane. I immediately fell in love with it. That’s how the idea of developing a theatre came about,” said founder Kok Kee Boon.

Having years of experience in performing arts, Kee Boon decided to build a show house within Ipoh’s most famous landmark to allow Ipohites to experience a show, up close and personal.

“While walking around the city, I realised that Ipoh’s entertainment business is dead after 6pm. So I decided to build something that offers night shows. I’ve always wanted a heritage site and a place filled with people. Concubine Lane met my expectations.”

“The time tunnel was built to create a nostalgic feeling for visitors,” he told Ipoh Echo after the grand opening on Friday, November 29.

Concubine Lane, said Kee Boon, provides a safe and cosy environment.

“There are not many snatch thefts here unlike Jonker Street. And that’s definitely a plus point,” he remarked.

For the grand opening, a Teresa Teng tribute concert was held. The positive feedback received after the show prompted KeeBoon to have more shows.

“Next, I plan to do a ‘No Black Tie’ concept in Ipoh. ‘No Black Tie’ is one of the most successful jazz bars in Kuala Lumpur. The bar constantly hosts shows for artists from all around the world. Hence, I’ve planned to do something similar to it. This will give visitors a new exposure since not many are aware of what a ‘No Black Tie’ means. Although the theatre looks small, it has the right amount of facilities. I’ll bring in my grand piano soon,” he said.

Upcoming shows will be Christmas themed and will be held at the end of December. Kee Boon hopes he will receive a similar response for his future shows.

If you are in Concubine Lane, drop by the iconic theatre for some magical close-up performances.



Ipoh International Arts Festival 2019

Ipoh International Arts Festival 2019 was officially launched on Sunday, November 30 at the Darul Ridzuan Museum, Ipoh.

The event, jointly organised by Tourism Perak and People of Remarkable Talent (PORT), was graced by Menteri Besar Dato’ Seri Ahmad Faizal Azumu.

“There’s a need to create a platform for art practitioners to help them achieve their goals,” said Executive Councillor for Tourism, Arts and Culture, Tan Kar Hing to Ipoh Echo.

“I’ll ensure more art-related festivals and events are organised,” he added.

Among the featured artists were Ramlan Abdullah, Raja Shahrman Raja Aziddin, Bayu Utomo Radjikin and Ahmad Shukri Mohamed.

“The dedication shown by different parties and agencies led to the success of this event,” said Faizal. The art pieces were then paraded by models on the catwalk and accompanied by their creators.

Among those present were the MB’s wife, Datin Seri Dr Nomee Dato’ Mohamad Radzi, Teja Assemblyperson, Sandra Ng, Ipoh Mayor Dato’ Ahmad Suaidi, Director of Perak Museum Board, Nor Janati Ibrahim and renowned cartoonist, Dato’ Mohammad Nor Khalid (Lat).

The festival, lasting a week, began on November 30 and ended on December 8.



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Personality

Nick Shen Weijun

By Mei Kuan

Ipoh Echo had an exclusive one-on-one with Nick Shen Weijun, Singaporean actor, emcee, performer, founder of Tok Tok Chiang and troupe leader of Lao Sai Tao Yuan Teochew Opera Troupe, one of Singapore's oldest opera troupes with 156 years of history.

He is currently filming in Ipoh and Tronoh since October for a Mediacorp English drama series, "Titoudao" by The Oak3 Films which is scheduled to be aired in February 2020.

"Titoudao" is a story about Singapore's most famous Hokkien opera troupe, 'Sin Sai Hong' with over 100 years of history. Coincidentally, I am acting as the troupe leader Master Gwee Boon. He is a very strict master and will scold the artistes on stage," he told Ipoh Echo on Friday, December 6.

Nick began his career in showbiz when he won both the All Asian Star Search Singapore and Star Awards Best Newcomer in 1999 after completing his acting course with MediaCorp, Singapore's leading broadcasting company.

Whilst establishing his career as a media personality, Nick relentlessly pursues his passion for Chinese opera. In 2010, he founded Tok Tok Chiang Events Management, a Singapore-based company specialising in Chinese opera, cultural events and workshops. In 2014, Nick established Tok Tok Chiang Opera, a non-profit entity, as a platform to promote cultural appreciation in Singapore.

His versatility as a media personality and in Chinese opera has earned him numerous accolades. For instance, he is the first actor in Singapore to master the unique Chinese art of mask changing. Under the tutelage of China's professional mask changing master, Li Shuimin for two years, Nick started performing mask changing since 2013.

When asked about what sparked off his interest in Chinese opera, he shared, "My grandma used to bring me to watch Teochew street opera when I was a little boy. My grandfather used to be a drummer backstage of Lao Sai Tao Yuan Teochew Opera Troupe. I was fascinated by the costumes, painted faces and the fighting scenes. I wanted to be that brave warrior on stage."

In 2014, Nick was awarded the Honouree Award for the Junior Chamber International (JCI) Ten Outstanding Young Persons of the World – Singapore for the cultural achievement category. He was the only winner selected from a pool of over 200 candidates, to represent Singapore in Germany to compete against other youths from more than 150 countries.

The faculty member of the Singapore Media Academy also contributes to various charitable causes such as the



Singapore Kindness Movement.

On his venture into the traditional performing art, he explained, "Chinese opera is not just about performance – it's also about filial piety, it's about how you can become a better person. It's not a secret that local interest in Chinese opera has been declining over the years. The situation in Singapore has actually become rather dire. Old and established firms are slowly closing down. I feel very disheartened to see the actors getting older and the audience getting smaller. Our rich tradition, culture and history will disappear with the art, too."

To make Chinese opera enticing to people especially the Singaporean youth, Nick has created a hybrid genre of traditional Chinese opera dance with western magic techniques. Performances are also conducted on stage in the respective Chinese dialects with English subtitles in order to overcome the language barrier.

"Tok Tok Chiang will be starting a Chinese opera basic workshop in Singapore in February 2020," the amiable Nick added.

Here's his advice for those who would like to pursue a career in Chinese opera: "There's a Chinese saying, 'One minute on stage takes ten years of hard work, perseverance and true passion'. Go through training by professional opera teachers and be more involved and engaged through film, drama, documentary and workshop. Gain more information from veterans and industry professionals."

Having been to Ipoh countless times, he was spotted participating in the Ipoh Car Free Day back in November. "I find Ipoh to be a very peaceful city. I like the fat, juicy bean sprouts here and streetfood like steamed vegetable dumpling and laksa," he enthused.

"One of my dreams is to create a cultural heritage restaurant displaying Chinese street opera puppets, costumes, instruments, props and pictures besides serving traditional Singapore Chinese food," he mentioned towards the end of the interview.

For more updates on Nick, check out his Facebook page, Instagram and WeChat.

Travel

An Inaugural Flight

By Murni Fazira

The inaugural Ipoh-Guangzhou flight, operated by a chartered airline, Scanda Sky, took off from Sultan Azlan Shah Airport, Ipoh at 10.10pm on Wednesday, November 27. The flight, lasting four hours, landed at Baiyun International Airport, Guangzhou at 2.10am on Thursday, November 28.

The launching ceremony was officiated by the Executive Councillor for Tourism, Arts and Culture, Tan Kar Hing on behalf of Menteri Besar, Dato' Seri Ahmad Faizal Azumu.

The introduction of the Ipoh-Guangzhou-Ipoh air route was in anticipation of Visit Malaysia Year 2020. It ties in with the ongoing tourism campaign to attract 30 million Chinese tourists from China.

Tan Kar Hing said that the chartered airline service launch had been in the pipeline for a while. "It's like waiting for your wife to deliver your first baby," he remarked in jest.

Executive Chairman of Scanda Sky, Tengku Faizwa Tengku Razif said her company aims to be different in order to give passengers an exhilarating in-flight experience.

"Our Scanda Sky ambassadress will escort and assist passengers from here until the checkout point at Guangzhou," said Tengku Faizwa.

Forty guests were on the special flight. Among them were Tan Kar Hing, Tengku Faizwa, state assemblywoman for Canning, Jenny Choy Tsi Jen, Executive Councillor Howard Lee and the Perak Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry President, Dato' Liew Sew Yee.

Information on Scanda Sky is available at its website: www.scandasky.com.



Sport

DRZ Uncovers Little Perakean Talents

By Luqman Hakim

Parents are encouraged to send their children, especially those who are talented in football to join the DrZ Football Academy. Established in 2016, the academy has produced many talented footballers from Ipoh, including primary school students below 12 years old.

Director and founder of DrZ Football Academy, Zool Hilmi Md Aris said the main objective of the academy was to unveil new footballing talents that could one day be promoted to the next level.

In addition, he said, the young player will also be exposed by participating in regional tournaments.

"The DrZ Football Academy was established for the past three years at SK Pakatan Jaya and is now expanding with the second DrZ Academy branch in Meru Ipoh," he said.

The opening ceremony of the Drz Meru Football Academy was officiated by Ahmad Sarji Abdullah, SK Chepor Curriculum Senior Assistant on 9 November.

The former Perak football player in the 90s, Zool, said about 400 registered players attended DrZ Academy for both branches. Players are also exposed to participating in outdoor games.

"The best academy achievement so far is the local

tournament champions under eight years old and under 10 years old, runner-up for the under 12 and 14 years old for the year 2019," he said. All the coaches who have been selected to be in the DrZ are former players as well as former presidential and national futsal coaches. Among them is the Head Coach and DrZ Meru branch manager, Mohd Azahar, assisted by DrZ Meru Assistant Director, Mohd Halim," he said.

Meanwhile, Zool hopes more talented players will sign up and join the DrZ Academy in an effort to produce more talented players to be featured in the future. Training sessions will be held weekly on Saturdays & Sundays. Training hours are from 8am to 10am at the DRZ Tambun, SK Pakatan



Jaya and SK Chepor DRZ Meru.

For parents interested in enrolling their children, please contact Halim's assistant manager 019 558 9129 or Dr Zool 012 522 8756.

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BANDAR MERU RAYA

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- 2-Storey Terrace
- 20'x70'
- 3+1
- 3
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- From RM338,800

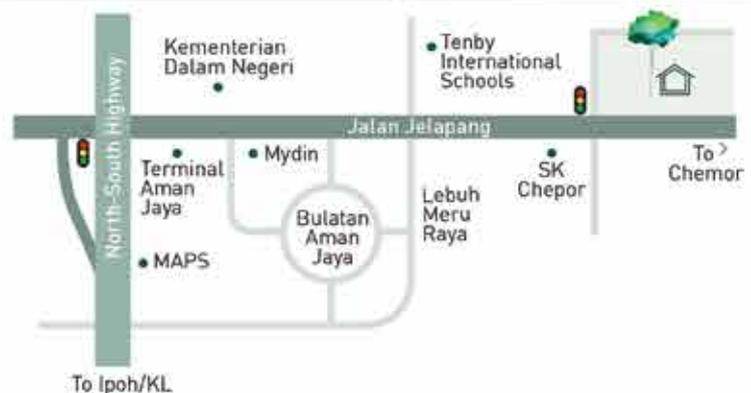
5% discount for bumiputera on bumiputera lots



Development: Kinta EcoCity Sdn. Bhd. 1960099177 (MNO) M.
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Taman Meru Mentari Fasa 2
No. Lesen Pendaftar: 265-26/08-2001/077/11 Tempoh: Sab. Lesen: 24/04/2018 - 23/06/2021 Permit Bilas dan Jual: 265-26/08-2001/077/09 Tempoh: Sab.
Permit: 24/04/2019 - 23/06/2021 Tarikh: Jangka Siapa: Juhar 2021 Jumlah Unit: 51 Bilangan Tanah: Malayan Banking Berhad Jenis: Pagarangan Tanah: Kawat
Harga: Min RM338,800 Maks RM532,800 No. Kelulusan Petan: DD1/000286/0007/G&F00/000/00 Pihak Bertugas yang bertanggungjawab: MABR Bandaraya Ipoh

IKLAN INI TELAH DILULUSKAN OLEH JABATAN PERUMAHAN NEGARA