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Your Voice In The Community

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30 SEN FOR DELIVERY TO YOUR DOORSTEP - ASK YOUR NEWSVENDOR

ISSUE **111**

BUMPER ISSUE

Wishing
All Our Readers
**A Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year!**



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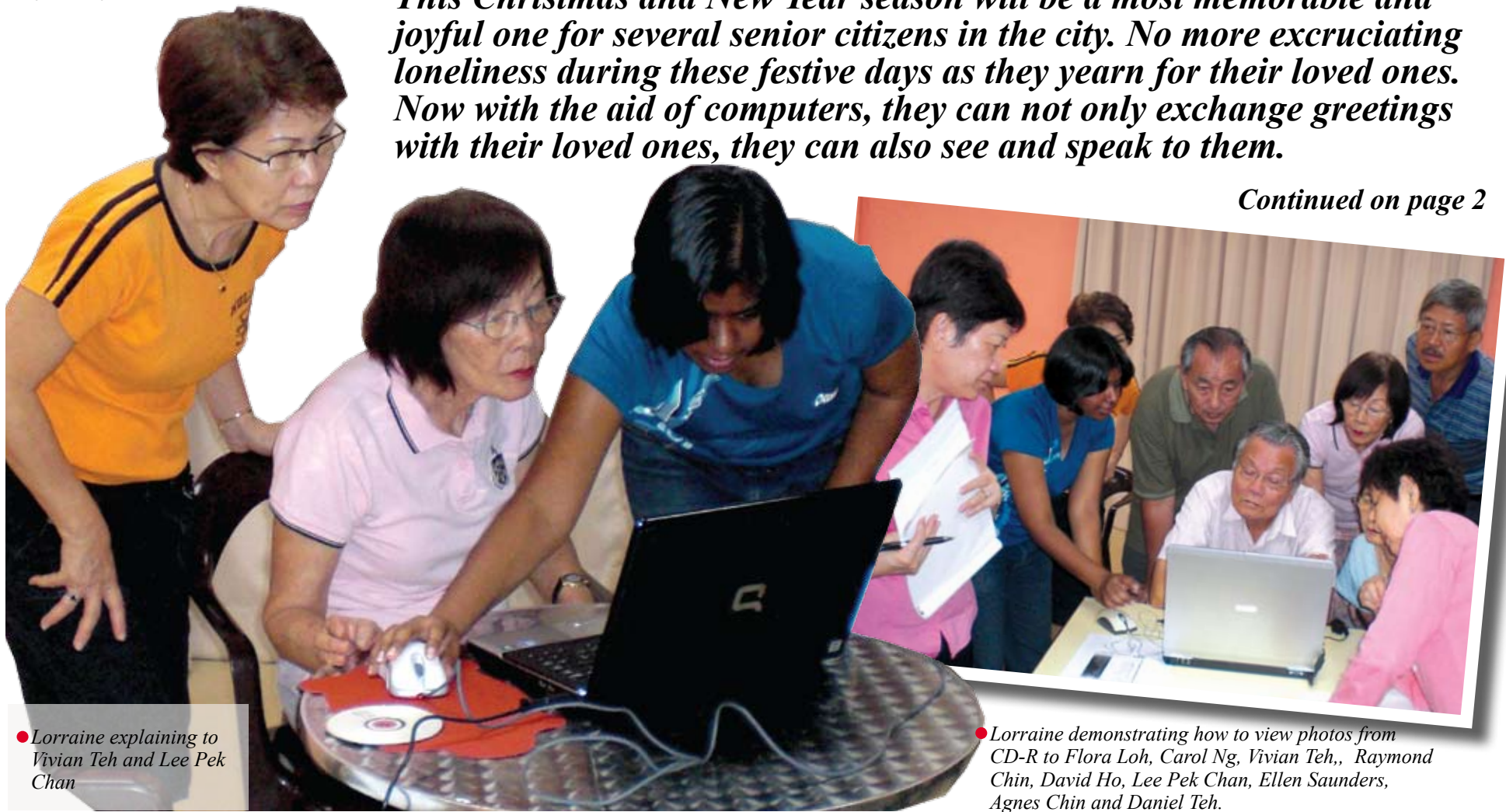


Bits and Bytes Bring CHEER TO SENIORS

By Jerry Francis


This Christmas and New Year season will be a most memorable and joyful one for several senior citizens in the city. No more excruciating loneliness during these festive days as they yearn for their loved ones. Now with the aid of computers, they can not only exchange greetings with their loved ones, they can also see and speak to them.

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● Lorraine explaining to Vivian Teh and Lee Pek Chan

● Lorraine demonstrating how to view photos from CD-R to Flora Loh, Carol Ng, Vivian Teh., Raymond Chin, David Ho, Lee Pek Chan, Ellen Saunders, Agnes Chin and Daniel Teh.



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Connecting Loved Ones

In their twilight years, senior citizens, more than ever, find themselves needing to be constantly in touch with their loved ones. Due to various circumstances their children and grandchildren live far away, and as absence makes their hearts grow fonder, they yearn to see and talk to them especially during auspicious occasions.

Instead of relying solely on the telephone to keep in touch, today with the advancement of technology, their lonely days which they had silently kept in their hearts for years are over. Now with just a "click" of the mouse, they can be connected to each other. Realizing how computers can connect them, many senior citizens in the city have transformed themselves from computer illiterates to computer literates.

Thanks to the many patient volunteers tutoring the senior citizens and helping them in establishing connections through the various internet facilities, such as Skype, Facebook and e-mail, many seniors today who took the plunge to get over their fear of technology, no longer feel the loneliness of living on their own. Their new-found technological expertise is bringing joy as they can e-mail, chat, or even speak directly and see their loved ones on the computer screens, receiving and posting photographs at convenient times. Even their faraway children and grandchildren are delighted by this new found connectivity and have expressed their gratitude to the volunteers for making that communication possible.

Groups of Voluntary Tutors

There are various groups of volunteers and individuals providing basic computer classes in the city for senior citizens who are keen to venture into the computer world which they once considered "beyond their comprehension." For one of the volunteers, Mrs. Lorraine Francis, it all began on a Saturday evening. "I was sitting on the pew of the church browsing through the bulletin and suddenly a notice 'Volunteers to teach senior citizens how to use the computer' caught my attention," she explained.

"Well, I thought to myself, I could be of some use here. With my husband's immediate approval, I approached Pastor Jeya (of the Canning Garden's Methodist Church) to render my service".

"Little did I know that this would turn out to be most rewarding for me instead. What began as a mere service quickly changed into an event I look forward to every Saturday morning," she said.

What moved Lorraine's heart was the reason each "uncle and aunty" gave. It was not that they had retired and just wanted to pass time or keep themselves occupied, but more so to stay connected with family members.

"Most of them have children overseas and like any of us, we sometimes forget that they are relational beings too. They are willing to face this 'monster' called the computer just to keep in touch with their children and grandchildren,

to receive news on what's happening over there, to see photos of their grandchildren growing up, to see videos of or have live chats with their grandchildren speaking baby-language."

Grateful "Students" And Family Members

"It's a pleasure teaching them as they



• Vivian Teh and How Moh Huat checking a photograph in a camera



• Senior citizens concentrating on their lessons



Lorraine

are so attentive and diligent in taking notes as well as practising the exercises assigned for the week. Now I'm more than impressed at what they can do with e-mails. Sending e-mails with formatted text, attaching photos, saving attachments received, using Google, sending video links are now all at their fingertips or should I say, mouse-clicks."

"On a busy day at work, I've been blessed to be a recipient of some encouraging e-mails sent by my very own students. I'm sure this Christmas and New Year season will not be a sad and lonely one, but an exciting one."

"The saying 'To bless and be blessed', is a phrase that brings deeper meaning to me today, thanks to my Senior Citizens' Class of 2010," she added.

On the day of the briefing, there were 30 senior citizens. They were divided into four classes as there were four volunteers. The oldest in Lorraine's class is about 77 years of age. He and his wife learn together which is quite a sight to behold.

"The first thing my class wanted to learn was how to use e-mail. Most of them have Gmail accounts, so I began with that. We've finished that topic which took about eight weeks," she said.

After a short "semester break", they returned to the classes to learn how to transfer photos from the camera to the laptop and then onto the CD. The other volunteers teach different topics. The other tutors in the group are Mr. How Moh Huat, Mr. Ong Tit Hin, and Mr. Kirby Samydarai.

Opening Up A Whole New World

Here is how some of the jubilant "students" described the computer classes, which according to them have opened up a whole new world, as well as allowed them to discover that they have been missing out on lots of things out there.

"We wanted to attend computer class despite knowing that it is difficult. But we decided to try anyway and learn as much as we can absorb. The classes have helped us learn so much, so easily" said Mrs. Vivian Teh, a student in Lorraine's class.

"I've been able to communicate with my daughter in Canada through Gmail even better after attending the computer class. We've also shared photos of our holiday trips with her," said Mrs. Flora Loh another student.

Mr. Daniel Teh praised Lorraine for having been a blessing to all the students in teaching them the basic skills needed to send emails and also download the pictures taken in their cameras.

Gerakan Service Team

City councillor Ceylyn Tay, who led a Gerakan service team, said free internet lessons were organised by her team in July and attended by 52 participants aged between 40 to 73 years.

During the two-hour class, they were taught about internet, how to search information through internet, and reading the latest news from relevant websites.

"The hardest thing we realised is that many of them are very uneasy with putting their fingers on the keyboard, so it took quite some time for us to hold their hands and teaching them step by step," said Ceylyn.

"We also encourage them to practise at home or go to the nearest cyber cafe, as some of the elderly said their children won't allow them to touch their computers, so we suggested the use of cyber cafe." At the end of the session, the participants were presented with a certificate of attendance each, as encouragement.

Ipoh Echo salutes such community projects for opening up windows of opportunity for senior citizens to become more technologically savvy and thus brightening their lives.

Interested parties may call the Gerakan Service Centre at **05-2410202**.
Only groups of 10 or more will be entertained.

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From the Editor's Desk

● by Fathol Zaman Bukhari

Spiralling Cost Of Living

The good old advice we get from the government, whenever inflation sets in, is to tighten our belt. How are we to tighten our belts when they are already too tight?

The recent price hikes of fuel, diesel, gas and sugar are slowly but surely beginning to make an impact on the *rakyat*, especially Ipohites. I was completely unaware of the rise in prices until I stopped by my neighbourhood petrol kiosk on the morning of Saturday, December 4 to fill up my tank. The cashier politely reminded me that the price of petrol (RON 95) was no longer RM1.85 a litre but RM1.90. She told me that the price was effective some 7 hours before.

"What?" I retorted, "Another hike?" The guy beside me looked dejected, paid his due and left in a huff. "Not only petrol, Uncle!" she responded, "but diesel, gas and sugar too." She raised her arms to demonstrate her displeasure. "How to survive, mah?"

Wendy, the cashier, is a single mother with three school-going kids. I



empathised with her. Life is indeed a struggle for this gritty forty-something who has been behind the cash register since I began patronising the kiosk many years ago. With a take-home pay of about RM1,200 a month, raising a family of three is no easy task considering the demands children make on their parents these days. "I have to keep the kids at home this school

holidays," she muttered.

My usual RM50 gives me 26.32 litres of RON 95 instead of the previous 27.8 litres. That is a small price to pay considering those who purchase RON 97 regularly. The same amount of money could only buy 21.74 litres not 23.3 litres as before. RON 97 now costs RM2.30 a litre, up by a hefty 15 sen since November 2.

Few realise that a

rise in petrol, diesel, gas and sugar prices will have a rippling effect on the prices of commodities. It is similar to the multiplier effect associated with the increase in money supply on aggregate demand, a theory advanced by economist, John Keynes.

The hike in prices of gas and sugar will have a far greater impact on individual households than perhaps, petrol. Cooking gas is now priced at RM23 for a 10-kg canister and RM28 for a 14-kg canister while sugar is RM2.10 a kilo. The latest pricing has already affected the way *mamak* shops do business.

Malaysians' favourite drink, *teh* and *kopi tarik* now cost RM1.10 up by 10 sen. Some are even charging more. *Roti canai*, another favourite, costs RM1 a piece at Pelita and Nashmeer, two popular restaurants in the city.

Inflationary pressure will cause food prices to escalate thus burdening the poor and the marginalised more than ever. The good old advice we get from the government whenever inflation sets in, is to tighten our belt. How are we to tighten our belts when they are already too tight? Other too-often quoted measures are: "Stop eating at expensive restaurants", "Prevent wastage by not buying more than you can eat" and the classic, "Do not buy on impulse." All these admonitions mean nothing to the Dollah, Muthu and Ah Chong in the streets when their lives are akin to the Malay proverb, "*kais pagi makan pagi kais petang makan petang*" (scratch in the morning eat in the morning, scratch in the evening eat in the evening).

The average household consumption expend-

iture over the last 20 years has gone up by almost 250 per cent. In 1973 a family of five could survive comfortably on RM400 a month. By 1995, the sum has gone up to RM1,200. At the onset of the new millennium, the figure touched the RM1,700 margin. Today RM2,000 in Ipoh will get the same family nowhere. No wonder cashier Wendy is so demoralised.

I seldom take the official Consumer Price Index (CPI) seriously as it does not reflect the truth on the ground. The government develops statistics so the inflation-weary *rakyat* will direct their hostility at the business community instead of the authorities. Real household income has been growing but at a snail's rate of 1 per cent a year. Just think how much your last pay raise was.

In 2006, when Najib was Deputy Prime Minister, he asked Malaysians to change their lifestyle in order to face the spiralling cost of living. Someone responded, rather sarcastically: "How are we going to change our lifestyle when we have none?" He could not have been more precise.

Innocent Victims

● by Peter Lee

Three children aged 6, 12 and 15 were deprived of their comfortable life after their father died and their mother was accused of his murder. Two of the children were sent overseas and are cared for by friends while the youngest child is under the care of the accused's sister. When enquiring on the welfare of the children, the Judge was shocked to discover that no payment was made for their maintenance by the Company in which the deceased had a 40% stake. The Bungalow, in which the deceased, his wife and children were staying, is now occupied by the parents of the deceased and their family members, depriving the children of their home. Apparently, the deceased died leaving properties and businesses worth millions and a life insurance policy of RM300,000. It was also uncertain whether the deceased had written a will.

This real life case which happened many years ago may be rare but reminds us that the future of a family can be changed overnight in a fit of anger, and ultimately the children became the innocent victims. Presuming that the deceased did not have a will, his estate would have to apply for a Letter of Administration (LA). Before the family members apply for LA, they must appoint at least two Administrators because the children who are entitled to half of the estate are still minors. The appointment of Administrators must have the consent from all the beneficiaries. The court is unable to intervene if the family members cannot agree on the appointment of the Administrators. As such, the entire estate will be frozen. If the appointment of Administrators is agreed upon, then there is a need to have 2 Guarantors to provide an Administration Bond that is equivalent to the gross value of the estate. The purpose of this Bond is to ensure that if the Administrators abscond with the assets of the estate, then the Guarantors will have to pay for the losses.

All this could have been avoided if the deceased had provided for his family by writing a "will" and setting up a "Private Trust". In this situation, he would have done well to choose in his will, Rockwills Trustee Bhd. to be the sole Executor/Trustee due to its impartiality, expertise, professionalism and perpetual existence. Then in the best interest of his family, he could will his entire assets to his Private Trust. In this Trust the deceased is named the "Settlor". He appoints Rockwills Trustee Bhd. as the "Trustee". Subsequently, he has to name the "Guardian" of his children in the event if he and his wife are unable to take care of their children. In his position, when choosing the Guardian, he must take into account the character of his family members or close friends and their relationship with his children. This applies to the appointment of the "Protectors" who will liaise with the Trustee on the welfare of the children. Thereafter, he can name his wife and children to be the "Beneficiaries". As for immediate funding, he must execute an absolute assignment for his RM300,000 insurance policy to this Trust during his lifetime so that money can be immediately utilised upon his demise while the other assets will be transferred to the Trust upon obtaining the Grant of Probate from the courts. Then he can list down all this together with his conditions on distribution and the duration in the "Trust Deed".

Wishing all readers a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and it is my sincere hope that everyone will make their wishes come true with a Will and Trust.

Peter Lee is an Associate Estate Planning Practitioner (Wills & Trust) with Rockwills International Group. He is also an Islamic Estate Planner providing Wills & Trust services for Muslims. He is based in Ipoh and can be reached at: 012-5078825/05-2554853 or excelsec@streamyx.com. Website: <http://www.wills-trust.com.my>.



Festive Season's Celebration

The warm touch of Christmas is around the corner. Take this golden opportunity to cherish precious moments with your loved ones at Garden Terrace.

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Thinking ALLOWED

• by Mariam Mokhtar

A Time for Giving

With days to go before Christmas, the shops are already doing a brisk trade in Christmas items. The effect Santa Claus has on children, both Christian and non-Christian alike, is magical. Shops try to outdo each other, by investing in more sophisticated decorations each consecutive year. There is stiff competition to attract more customers.

As children are still on their end-of-year vacation, they are usually the ones who enjoy this holiday season best. There are presents to buy, to receive and parties to go to. Even adults welcome the over-indulgence. On Christmas day, families gather together for Christmas lunch at restaurants, clubs or private homes.

Christmas in Malaysia is a public holiday, but it is still very much a religious one also. Against the backdrop of heavily commercialism, there is no doubt that Christian self-confidence in Malaysia is strong. Christmas is a time for giving and a time when we show our love to others. But in the run-up to Christmas, have we thought about giving of ourselves? Do we ever wonder what it is like to serve others?

Story of Blue and Sunday

On September 16, the Ipoh Echo ran a story about "Blue and Sunday", a story about a man and his dog. It wasn't just any old man, it was about 66 year-old "Blue", a homeless man who roams the streets



of Ipoh Garden with his best friend, a dog called "Sunday". Although Blue refuses to be housed, the tree under which he calls home is regularly kept clean by a team of volunteers. A kind lady regularly supplies him food and drink.

How many "Blues" are there in Ipoh? Has any study been conducted to discover the extent of this problem in Ipoh, or Perak? In the 1930s, the Hugh Low Bridge was home to several homeless people who lived beneath it, their individual private spaces being separated by strips of paper.

No Public Policy on Homelessness

In 2008, Universiti Malaya presented a conference paper entitled "Homelessness in Malaysia: A public policy issue?" about the homeless people in Kuala Lumpur. The study's conclusion was that a developed public policy in relation to homelessness was

non-existent. The problem of homelessness was being denied by the authorities. There were no statistics on the number of homeless people, and the Social Welfare Department only had data on those they housed.

Shockingly, the Provisions in the Destitute Persons Act 1977 indirectly criminalised the poor and homeless. A homeless person enters the welfare system as an innocent but is unable to exit of his own free will and without permission from the authorities. To "escape" from the custody of the police or institution would incur three months' imprisonment. This archaic law compounded the problem, because the homeless were deterred from approaching the Welfare Department or the authorities for help.

Insufficient Data

Some of us might believe that Malaysia's homeless problem is relatively minor, possibly because we do not

know where to find them. An old lady once lived in a cardboard box along Jalan Chamberlain. Another used to push her cart of possessions along Kampar road. Homelessness is not confined to old ladies or old men. The fact that the elderly are out on the streets is a classic case of old-folk dumping.

The young also make up Ipoh's homeless population. Teenagers who don't get on with their parents, or step-parent, or who have been dumped by their boyfriends, also run away from home. Is our local government able to address such issues? Possibly not.

The government low-cost housing scheme is not available, nor affordable to those with neither money nor job. It is reported that around 20 people end up living on the streets every week in the capital city. What might that figure be

for Ipoh?

Help the Homeless

It is obvious that the measure of our love should not just show in what we do for one another. Can we really be too busy to help someone in need, this Christmas? Buying a gift is easy, but sometimes just being there and being supportive costs nothing, but has the power to bring joy to others; in some cases, it is better than a tangible gift. There are many opportunities to help those who are feeling down, depressed, or alone, and need our support. Some of you may already be part of a group that helps homeless people.

As you tuck into your Christmas turkey and cake, spare a thought for the homeless. It is a sad fact that not everyone has a home. This also means not having safety and security, or a stable community in which to live. That is why groups like the Canning Garden Methodist Church, who help the homeless, provide a valuable service to our homeless community.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all Ipoh Echo readers; may 2011 be a peaceful one for all!

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Musings on Food

seefoon@ipohecho.com.my

By See Foon Chan-Koppen

SeeFoon Finds Herself in Hot Soup in Chemor

There is this mental attitude amongst Ipohites that any destination that takes more than five minutes to get to by car is far. Thank goodness for developers like Sunway, the Haven, Namcom, and Kinta properties in Klebang and Meru who have pushed the residential mind set of locals further afield to embrace a travelling time of 20 minutes as normal. So I was not fazed when my foodie friend Ginla Chew suggested we meet at Chemor Village Restaurant for their special peppery-hot fish soup.

Situated on a corner lot with ample parking spaces around and highly visible from the main road, this restaurant was a stall in Chemor and only moved to its present location two years ago. Because it is on a corner site with open space on two sides, the lack of air-conditioning was not a problem as both ceiling and standing fans were whirring at full blast.

Peppery Fish Soup

The first course to arrive was naturally their famous Fish Soup, a large tureen of bubbling broth with its hidden treasures. The *Ikan Haruan* fish bones and head bits were deep fried for crunch but the fish meat slices were 'au-naturel' just poached to perfection by the broth. The taste was fiery, pepper-hot rather than chilli, but only to the degree that removed any possibility of a lingering fishy taste and smell. There was enough for two helpings each and do ask for the addition of Hsao Tsing wine to the broth. RM50 for 10 people to order in advance.



Unusual Fish Intestines

An unusual dish followed, fish intestines sautéed with dried prawns, a hint of chillies and *sambal belacan* and topped with oodles of *Chu Yau Cha* or



fried pork lardons, that irresistible cholesterol nightmare of local cuisine that lends its crunch and fragrance to many a dish. RM15.

We then had clams steamed in Chinese wine: fresh, large and not one bad clam RM15; a steamed 'Wu Tsou Kai' (white-whiskered chicken – a special breed) that was juicy and tender, served with grated ginger RM40; 'Sayur Paku' or jungle fern fried with *sambal belacan* – RM8; and another vegetable dish, the 'Sei Tai Teen Wong' or 4 Heavenly Kings, *petai*, ladies fingers, long beans and *brinjal* fried with a *sambal* sauce.

'Al Dente' Noodles

We finished this meal with one of their signature dishes: their 'Sang Meen' fine egg noodles famed for their 'al dente' or springy quality, topped with refried roast pork. This is perfect for those with a sweet tooth but for my taste buds, I found it a tad too sweet. When ordering this dish, depending on your taste, do ask them to lay off the sugar which they add to the pork.

On another occasion when I gave that instruction with the order, it arrived perfectly. RM20. This time I had specially ordered the Hakka style 'Yong Tau Fu' – *brinjal*, ladies fingers, chillies and tofu stuffed with their homemade fish paste and pan fried with a dark *taucheo* (preserved bean paste) sauce. RM28.



Chemor Village Restaurant
20 Hala Chemor 1, Taman Chemor Mutiara
Tel: 05- 291 1359
Monday-Sunday 11.00 a.m.-10.30 p.m.
Closed two days a month on Mondays.

HAWKER FOOD

Laksa Asam

There are many kinds of *Laksa*, all named from the places they originated, namely, Sarawak *Laksa*, Johor *Laksa*, Kelantan *Laksa* and Penang *Laksa*. Unfortunately, Ipoh does not have its own. However, the ubiquitous (Penang) *Laksa Asam* seems to have found its home here.



This is the same kind of *Laksa* that the *nyonya-kuih* man used to cart around on his shoulders (pot and all). If home-made, fresh fish, like *ikan kembong* (Indian mackerel) or *ikan parang* (wolf herring), is used for the gravy which is soured with tamarind (*asam*). Rice noodles are used accompanied with julienned cucumber, pineapple, torch ginger, lemon grass, shallots, etc., garnished with Vietnamese mint, and drizzled with *heh ko* (prawn paste). The gravy is another one of those that is good till the last drop.

Places to try:

Kay Por (Kee Poh) Laksa (11.00 a.m.-5.30 p.m.)
216 Gunung Rapat, Ipoh (across from the Gunung Rapat wet market).

They claim to be "The Best Laksa in Town!!" and are also known for their *yeong liu*. RM2.60 for a bowl and the *yeong liu* are 50 sen each.

Dai Shu Keok (Big Tree Food Garden) (8.30 a.m.-5.30 p.m.; Wednesdays off)
Jalan King, Off Jln Tokong, Pasir Pinji (behind Tuck Kee Restaurant).

For those who like their gravy a little sweeter. A bowl is RM2.40 and the *yeong liu* is also 50 sen each.

Kafe Ipoh Central (7.00 a.m.-4.00 p.m.)
51 & 53, Jalan Raja Ekram (Cowan St.), New Town.
The delicious gravy has the signature sourish taste. A steaming bowl costs RM2.80.

Pasar Malam at the Perak Stadium (Wednesdays) or behind Tesco Jln Jambu (Tuesdays) for more choice.

RECIPE



By Margarita Lee

Lu Rou Rice (Soya Braised Meat Rice)

Ingredients:

- 1 kg pork belly or lamb brisket (halal version) diced
- 300g shallots (shredded thinly)
- 1 tsp Five Spice Powder
- 4 tbsp soya sauce
- 1 tbsp sugar
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 star anise
- 1 tsp pepper
- 6 hard-boiled eggs
- 1 cucumber (peeled and cut into strips)
- 1 carrot (peeled and cut into strips)
- 3-4 cups cooking oil

Method:

- Heat oil for deep-frying, deep fry shallots until golden brown. Dish out from wok for later use.
- Add pork or lamb into the wok, fry over medium heat until colour changes; add in Five Spice Powder, soya sauce, salt, sugar and pepper to taste.
- Add in fried shallots and toss well.
- Dish out mixture, add in hard-boiled eggs, put into a steamer and steam for 4-5 hours.
- Serve with rice and garnish with carrots and cucumber strips.



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SJK(C) Padang Gajah is now in operation. Interested parents can contact the school at 05-312 6813 for information on student enrolment.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements must be sent by fax: **05-2552181**; or email: announcements@ipohecho.com.my, by the 9th or 23rd of every month in order to meet deadlines. Announcements by phone will not be entertained. Ipoh Echo reserves the right to verify any announcement before it is published.

Blood Donation Drive: The Gift of Life on Saturday Dec 18 at the lobby of Hospital Fatimah from 9.00 a.m. to 12 p.m. The blood donation drive is in collaboration with Hospital Raja Permaisuri Bainun. Donors will receive a free general blood screening (M50) by Gribbles Pathology (lipid, renal, glucose and urine tests).

PSPA Singers Choral Presentation on 'A Message of Love and Inspiration' on Sunday Dec 19 at 8 p.m. at YMCA Ipoh. Admission is free. Donations collected at this second charity performance will go to the Orang Asli Community. Contact YMCA (Michael Thong or Grace): **05-2540809** or PSPA (Sara): **05-5487814**.

Wawasan Open University Information Day at its Ipoh regional office on Sunday, Dec 19 (10.30 a.m. to 4 p.m.). Counselling for those wishing to enrol. A 50 per cent waiver on processing fee and gifts for those registering on this day. Call: **05-2426323/05-2436323**.

Tan Sri Lee Loy Seng Chess Championship 2010 – Grand Final on Dec 19 at Dewan MSN, Majlis Sukan Negeri Perak. Contact: En Yunus Sharif **013-3908129**. Details at PICA website: <http://perakchess.blogspot.com>.

Perak Malayalee Association (PMA) Family Day & Sports Carnival on Sunday Dec 19 from 8.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. at Sekolah Menengah Tarcisian Convent, Jalan Abdul Manap, Lim Garden, Ipoh. Call: **012-5381939** (K. Letchimanan) or **012-5279650** (K.P. Thatatean).

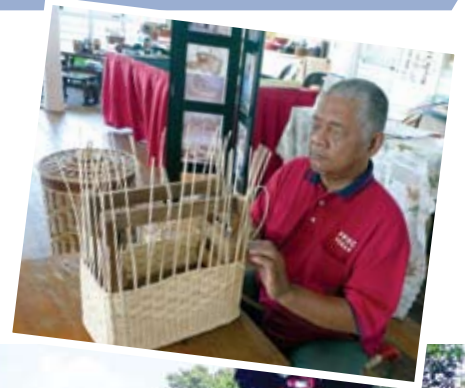
Olympia College 'Open Day' on Tuesday Dec 21 from 10.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. at its premises: 18 Jln C.M. Yusuff, Ipoh. Also a talk on "Know Your Future Career" at 3.00-4.00 p.m. Contact Mr Foong at: **05-2433868** or **017-5341834**.

Malam Anugerah Ikon Usahanita Negeri Perak 2010 on Tuesday, Dec 28 at 7.30 p.m. at the Town Hall, Ipoh. Guests-of-Honour: MB Perak, Dato' Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir and wife. Call: Datin Ruby 012-8331801, Pn Maznah **016-5937295** or Pn Bibi **017-5858477**.

Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) Perak – 'Introduction to Bird-Watching' Course on Jan 9 at YMCA Ipoh & Kinta Nature Park. RM20 per pax includes classroom lectures and practical field trip to Kinta Nature Park. Contact: Chan Kai Soon **012-531 5670**, chankaisoon@hotmail.com or log on: www.mnsperak.wordpress.com.

Heritage By James Gough

Preserving Perak's Heritage



The first ever living-heritage exhibition showcasing the traditional arts and crafts and cultures from throughout Perak was held with much fanfare and colour recently.

Themed "1 Malaysia, Perak Lost Heritage", the exhibition at the Garden Villa, was co-organised by the Kinta Heritage Group and the State government with the purpose of creating awareness of cultures and traditions around us.

Perak Tourism Chairman, Dato' Hamidah Osman, who officiated at the opening of the exhibition was greeted by a lion dance upon her arrival followed with a silat display.

Kinta Heritage Director, Adib Vincent Tung who welcomed Hamidah, was dressed in the traditional Malay costume complete with sampin and matching headgear, setting the mood for the exhibition. Also present on the morning was Malaysia's favourite cartoonist Dato' Mohammad Nor Khalid more endearingly known as Lat.

Hamidah, in her address praised the organizers for initiating this exhibition saying that "we should preserve our valuable heritage and culture for the next generation and repeating her often mentioned slogan, "once our heritage is gone, it is gone forever".

The craftsmen present demonstrated how to make rattan baskets, wooden clogs, keris, and lions' head or head gear from palm leaves.

Orang Asli from the Semai tribe in Ulu Geroh performed their melodic song and dance, and the Punjabi community the lively Bhangra dance. The week long exhibition recorded over 1200 visitors.

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Exp Date of Completion: Nov 2012 Land Encumbrance: OCBC Bank (M) Bhd Land Tenure: Freehold Total Units: 21 Price: Min: RM 645,000.00 Max: RM 954,500.00 Approving Authority: Majlis Bandaraya Ipoh
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Wellness

Anti-Aging Skin Treatment – Hope or Hype?

By Dr. Agnes Heng



As life expectancy of our population increases, there has been an increased interest in anti-aging treatments and their purported ability to make a person look more youthful. In this issue of Ipoh Echo, we speak to consultant dermatologist, Dr. Agnes Heng, regarding the aging skin and the current hype surrounding anti-aging skin treatment.

What are the signs of aging skin?

Skin changes are among the most visible signs of aging. Wrinkles, sagging skin, loss of skin firmness, thin and fragile skin, brown spots on the skin, dry flaky skin, and greater visibility of skin pores are among

the many indicators of aging skin.

Can we prevent all these changes as we age?

While we cannot halt the aging process, we can equip ourselves with valuable tools to help us age gracefully such as living a healthy lifestyle coupled with a proper skin care regimen.

What is your advice on skin care?

One of the most important factors that influence skin aging is sun exposure. Therefore, it is vital to include a sunscreen in your skin care regimen. As we age, our skin tends to become dry and using a moisturizer will help alleviate dry skin and decrease the appearance of wrinkles or fine lines. In addition, certain moisturizers containing active ingredients such as alpha hydroxy acids and retinol may have some anti-aging properties.

Can you tell us about the current trends in anti-aging skin treatment?

The term that we use is facial rejuvenation, which can be defined as any cosmetic or medical procedure used to improve or restore the appearance of a younger age on a human face. A person who wants to take his/her skin care to the next level, may consider medical procedures like injections of botulinum toxin (botox) and fillers, chemical peels, microdermabrasion and lasers. These procedures can reduce wrinkles and skin lines, address pigmentation problems, improve collagen synthesis resulting in firmer skin and overall improvement of skin tone and texture.

Do they really work?

They certainly can take away a few years off your face! However, the effects are not permanent and you will need a maintenance regimen. Your doctor should be able to discuss your expectations with you and design a treatment plan for you.

Are there any side-effects?

If it is done by proper hands, the side-effects are minimal and most are easily handled.

Are these treatments expensive?

This is a very subjective question! I would think that a person who can afford the expensive skin care products in the market should be able to afford these treatments. The cost will depend on the type of procedure.

So, there is hope then?

I would think so. While we have yet to find the elixir of youth, the advances of medical science have enabled us to improve the appearance of our skin and somewhat slow down the aging process.

Any last advice to our readers?

Your skin reflects your state of health. Take care of it.

If you have any questions, Dr. Agnes Heng can be reached at 05-2559992 or email: agnesheng@gmail.com.

Caring For Your Eyes

We continue our part 4 interview with Dr. S.S. Gill, Consultant Ophthalmologist at Hospital Fatimah about Diabetes Mellitus and eye complications.



It is estimated that 1.4 million Malaysian diabetics are walking around unaware that they have diabetic retinopathy that can lead to total blindness. A lot of times this is because of poor awareness of the complications of diabetes mellitus.

What are the other steps that diabetics can take apart from the regular eye checks that you have suggested in order to help reduce their risk of developing diabetic eye complications?

Good control of diabetes mellitus is the key to slowing down the complications of diabetes mellitus in the eye as well as to other organs. The best way to know whether your blood glucose control is good is to measure your blood glucose levels frequently at home with a glucose monitoring machine called a glucometer. Keep a small booklet and write down blood glucose results in a tabular fashion with the date, time of blood check, and whether the test was done fasting or after a meal.

Do indicate in the booklet, the time of the last meal before the check was done. Better still, indicate the kind of meal that was taken. Do show this booklet to your physician when you go for your regular diabetic follow-ups. This booklet with the readings tabulated gives a lot of information to your physician should he need to adjust your diet or your diabetic medication.

Many diabetics make a mistake of only checking fasting blood glucose levels. Fasting blood glucose levels alone is not reflective of the actual blood glucose control. Check blood glucose measurements at different times of the day and even 1 or 2 hours after a meal. Even a random blood glucose reading is helpful – it's really like doing a spot-check on the patient, says Dr. Gill.

It is also important to have other special blood tests that reflect 3-month blood glucose readings. This test is called haemoglobin A1C (HbA1c). The test is recommended to be done every 3 to 6 months. It is recommended that people with diabetes maintain an HbA1c level below 7%. Studies have shown that for every 10% reduction in elevated HbA1c levels, there is an associated 39% reduction in the risk of diabetic eye complications.

Dr. Gill adds that another step that can slow down the progression of diabetic eye complications is good control of blood pressure or hypertension. High blood pressure (hypertension) can also damage blood vessels in the nerve of the eye (retina) and can cause diabetic eye disease or retinopathy to progress.

Research shows that keeping blood pressure as close to normal as possible can help prevent the onset and progression of retinal damage. Experts recommend that people with diabetes keep their blood pressure at or below 130/80 mm Hg to prevent long-term eye complications. Here too, self-measurements of blood pressure is useful in helping your physician who is monitoring and managing the diabetes mellitus.

Next issue: more tips on how diabetics can reduce their risk of developing eye complications and what to expect during an eye examination. For more information, contact Gill Eye Specialist Centre at 05-5455582, or email gillyeyecentre@dr.com.

Caring for Your Knees *An interview with Dr. Suresh Sammanthamurthy*

Dr. Suresh Sammanthamurthy is one doctor who loves having a full plate. Not only is he a Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon based in Kinta Medical Centre but he also wears another hat as Executive Director (Operations) who is spearheading the re-engineering exercise for the hospital. His first love though is for orthopaedics and here he talks to Ipoh Echo on his speciality.

"Aside from accident and trauma, the most common affliction I see in my patients is Osteoarthritis which is a condition caused by a combination of several factors" he said. While it is often called 'wear-and-tear' arthritis, this condition is due to more than just wearing away of the joint surface. It usually causes pain and limited motion, and is most common in the knee joint and hip joint.

Rheumatoid arthritis on the other hand is a systemic, autoimmune condition that causes the body to attack its own soft-tissues and joints thereby destroying the joint cartilage. Rheumatoid arthritis most commonly affects the joints of the hands and feet, but can also cause hip, knee, elbow, shoulder, and neck problems.

Who develops knee arthritis?

Knee arthritis typically affects patients over 50 years of age. It is more common in patients who are overweight, and weight loss tends to reduce the symptoms associated with knee arthritis. There is also a genetic predisposition to this condition, meaning knee arthritis tends to run in families. Other factors that can contribute to developing knee arthritis include trauma to the knee, meniscus tears or ligament damage, and fractures to the bone around the joint.

What are the symptoms of knee arthritis?

The most common symptoms of knee arthritis are: Pain with activities; Limited range of motion; Stiffness of the knee; swelling and tenderness along the joint; a feeling the joint may "give out"; and deformity of the joint (knock-knees or bow-legs).

What is the treatment for knee arthritis?

Treatment of knee arthritis should begin with the most basic steps and progress to the more involved, possibly including surgery. The range of options are:

- * **Weight Loss**
Probably one of the most important, yet least commonly performed treatments. The less weight the joint has to carry, the less painful activities will be.
- * **Activity Modification**
Limiting certain activities may be necessary, and learning new exercise methods may be helpful.
- * **Walking Aids**
Use of a cane or a single crutch in the hand opposite the affected knee will help decrease the demand placed on the arthritic joint.
- * **Physical Therapy**
Strengthening of the muscles around the knee joint may help decrease the burden on the knee. Preventing atrophy of the muscles is an important part of maintaining functional use of the knee.
- * **Anti-Inflammatory Medications**
Anti-inflammatory pain medications (NSAIDs) are prescription and nonprescription drugs that help treat pain and inflammation.
- * **Viscosupplementation**
Viscosupplementation is a procedure that involves the injection of gel-like substances (hyaluronates) into a joint to supplement the viscous properties of synovial fluid.
- * **Joint Supplements (Glucosamine)**
Glucosamine appears to be safe and provides symptomatic relief.
- * **Knee Arthroscopy**
Knee arthroscopy helps by reducing the synovial tissue caused by inflammation and thereby provides symptomatic relief of pain, while delaying the eventual surgery.
- * **Knee Osteotomy**
Helps in offloading the weight bearing area of the knee joint by correcting the angular deformity but requires



strict criteria for selection of patients.

*** Total Knee Replacement Surgery**

In this procedure, the cartilage is removed and a metal & plastic implant is placed in the knee.

*** Stem Cell Therapy**

Still undergoing trial and research but may be the thing of the future, currently still in its infancy but fairly successful results have been reported. Current draw-

back is the high cost involved and repeated therapy with prolonged limited weight bearing.

Knee replacement surgery is a procedure that is performed when the knee joint has reached a point when painful symptoms can no longer be controlled with non-operative treatments. In a knee replacement procedure, your surgeon removes the damaged joint surface and replaces it with a metal and plastic implant that functions similar to a normal knee. These implants will wear out over time and may require revision surgery depending on the age at which the primary surgery was performed. Knee replacements are done infrequently in younger patients because of the concern of the implant wearing out too quickly. The average cost of an uncomplicated knee replacement is about RM15,000. The patient must realise that the goal of a knee replacement is to provide the patient mobility, a reasonable life style and activities of daily living without pain. If this can be achieved then the surgery is a complete success.

SFCK

For more information on caring for your knees, call Dr Suresh Sammanthamurthy's Clinic at Kinta Medical Centre: 05-2428315. Email: sureshmurthy70@gmail.com. Website: www.kmc.com.my.

news roundup

Haven Unveils Its Worth



A contest to name the imposing 280-million year old rock, the centrepiece of The Haven, was announced during a ceremony at the site of the project

in Tambun on Friday, December 10. The occasion was graced by Mayor Dato' Roshidi Hashim, Dato' Rusnah Kassim, Adun for Ulu Kinta, Datuk Wong Foong Meng of Binapuri Holdings Bhd and foreign dignitaries from Abu Dhabi, Singapore, Hong Kong and China, including Professor Bernard Pierson, the Shell Chair for Geosciences at Universiti Teknologi Petronas.

Superboom Projects Sdn Bhd's CEO, Peter Chan, in his welcoming address, impressed upon his 200-odd audience the significance of the rock, as it predates the dinosaurs of the Mesozoic Era by 30 million years. The 14-storey rock and its pristine surrounding, he said, belong to the Permian Age. The lake fronting the rock is a "live" body of water which is free from bacteria and contaminants. This was confirmed by Professor Bernard Pierson who spoke at length regarding the geophysical structure of the environment, alluding to its sturdiness and permanence. He was appreciative of Peter's effort in preserving the integrity of the limestone hills, unlike others who would destroy them for short-term gains.

Bernard vouched for the safety of residences by giving his stamp of approval.

Mayor Roshidi was full of praise for Superboom Projects Sdn Bhd for taking the initiative to develop high-end apartments for sale. He felt that misconceptions surrounding the project would dissipate once the 26-storey, dubbed the tallest apartment buildings in Ipoh, are completed by 2013. The impetus brought about by the building boom will have a direct impact on Ipoh's economy. Property values will appreciate as a result, bringing about positive changes to the city's socio-economic landscape.

Cash prizes totalling RM50,000 await winners of the contest with RM25,000 going to the first-placed winner. Those interested in participating can contact Superboom Projects Sdn Bhd management at 05-546 6666 or visit The Haven's website www.thehaven.com.my for details. Contest closes on Monday, January 10, 2011. (See page 9)

FZB

SE Asia's Longest Railway Tunnel



The newly rebuilt Bukit Berapit railway tunnel, at 3.3 km, is being dubbed the longest in South East Asia. The tunnel is part of the RM12.5 billion double-tracking project connecting Ipoh to Padang Besar. It is 70 per cent completed. Monday, November 1 witnessed a landmark breakthrough when the final stretch of the tunnel was blasted. The occasion was officiated by Transport Minister, Datuk Seri Kong Cho Ha. The tracks within the tunnel are specially designed to accommodate accidents should they happen and are configured in a shape of a horse shoe with nine side tracks each way.

The tunnel is 9 metres high and 9 metres wide. Local expertise is being maximised by the project developer, MMC-GAMUDA JV. The difficult part said, Datuk Azmi Mat Nor, Director of MMC-GAMUDA JV, was working underneath the Plus Expressway. "It involves blasting and excavation which are controlled to avoid structural damage." The geo-technical makeover of the area was taken into consideration since the tunnel supports an expressway and the KK-Taiping trunk road. "Safety of motorists is our primary concern," he added.

"The remaining 30 per cent of the tunnel will be completed by 2011," said Yeoh Hin Kok, the project director. "We've achieved 19-million work hours without any stop-work time. That's a record of sorts," he told reporters at the site.

Other landmarks of significance along the rail route are the 3.5-km marine bridge across Bukit Merah Lake, the 342-metre Larut tunnel and the 282-metre Prai swing bridge. The three structures, according to Yeoh, are over 85 per cent completed.

RN

Perak Indian Chamber of Commerce ANNUAL DINNER



The three-storey building purchased by Perak Indian Chamber of Commerce (PICC) in Jalan Iskandar Shah (Hugh Low Street) is undergoing renovation and is planned to be officially opened in March, next year. Its president Hj. Sultan Abdul Kader said that the building would serve as a multi-purpose complex with a training centre for entrepreneurs, one stop office for businessmen, platform for meeting other members and a secretariat.

He was speaking at the PICC's Fund Raising cum Annual Dinner held at the Banquet Hall of the state secretariat building in Ipoh. He added that the

building was purchased at a cost of RM420,000 and the final cost including renovation would be RM750,000.

In the competitive environment of today, he said that Indian businessmen cannot survive unless the government supports them. He requested the state government to award contracts to Indian contractors and urged for the processing of loans to be made easier and faster.

Guest-of-honour, Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Dr. Zambry Abd. Kadir,

congratulated PICC for purchasing their own building. He remarked that he would like to see PICC as the only body to look after the business interests of everyone in the Indian community; he is not in favour of formation of Team A and Team B.

During the function donations totalling RM290,000, including RM50,000 from the state government were received. The guests were entertained by bharathanatyam, Indian classical dances.

AJ

Perak State Assembly Meeting It lasted 4 days!

The recent Perak State Assembly Sitting on the 2011 State Budget was historic as it was the first time the sitting lasted four whole days since after the Barisan Nasional wrestled the administration from the opposition in 2009.

By comparison the previous budget sitting held on October 28, 2009 saw the budget speech being read out by Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Zambry Abdul Kadir and the motion moved through three readings with approval by the BN assemblymen present all within the span of 30 minutes. The sitting was completed by the afternoon of the same day.

This year's budget sitting, held from November 30 till December 3, approved a deficit budget of RM862 million. For the duration of the four days a total of 120 oral questions were tabled though only 20 were replied.

Zambry's budget speech took two hours while

Leader Dato' Seri Nizar Jamaluddin took over 90 minutes. The debates were heated during which microphones, mostly belonging to opposition assemblymen, were intermittently switched off. Two assemblymen, Dato Hasbullah Osman of Temenggor and Khalil Idham Abdullah of Titi Serong, were referred to the Rights and Privileges committee for making unsubstantiated accusations and allegations while another Assemblyman, S. Kesavan of Hutan Melintang, was suspended for the duration of the sitting for demanding his question regarding his constituency be answered despite question time being over.

On the 3rd and 4th days when the sessions ended after 6.00 p.m. more assemblymen presented their issues concerning their constituencies. Assemblyman A. Sivasubramaniam of Buntong, lamented the pace of development in his constituency while Assemblywoman Dato Rusnah Kassim for Tambun hilted the poor bus service

in her area.

Overall over the four days, it was clear that both sides made an effort to accommodate each other despite the intense arguments presented by each side. Zambry said "the session went well despite the opposition's arguments". Similarly Nizar commented that "despite the constant intimidation like switching off the microphones we persevered and proved we are serious to represent the rakyat". This is the first session in two years that our elected representatives, on both sides of the floor have shown that the seriousness of the meeting can be maintained.

JAG

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news roundup

A Journey of ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



● At the Chin Woo dinner (l-r): 6th from left is Victor Sun. Leland Sun is next to him. Inset: Teh Hean Meng standing beside the photo of his grandfather Teh Lay Seng

The descendants of Dr. Sun Yat Sen, all 29 of them recently made a tour to Ipoh after attending the International Centennial Celebrations of Sun Yat Sen's 1910 Penang Conference as well as the 22nd Joint Conference of Sun Yat Sen and Soon Ching Ling memorial both of which were held at Penang.

Dr. Sun Yat Sen is regarded as the Father of Modern China as he was instrumental in inspiring the successful 1911 Wuchang Uprising on October 10, 1911 which resulted in the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty, the last of the imperial dynasties which ruled China for over 2,000 years. Sun was elected as the first President of the Republic of China on January 1, 1912.

Sun recognised that the Malayan Chinese as with other overseas Chinese

had financial clout to fund his uprisings in China. Hence he made many trips to Malaya to propagate his cause and raise funds.

It is noted that the Chinese of Malaya donated \$47,663 for the 1911 uprising with Perak's contribution amounting to \$11,420.

According to Leland Sun, 67, the great grandson of Dr. Sun, the journey to Ipoh was to "get in touch with the roots of all the 'small people' who though anonymous, had contributed to the cause both through money and laying down their life. The Penang Conference of 1910 was Dr Sun's 'last resort' attempt for the cause as funds from other traditional sources were drying up after 9 failed uprisings.

During the visit both Leland and his cousin Victor Sun, 70, the great

grandson of Sun Yat Sen's brother Sun Mei were pleasantly surprised to see

a large photo of Teh Lay Seng, an Ipoh resident and staunch supporter of

Dr. Sun at Keat Sin Leong sundry shop along Jalan Bijih Timah, Old Town, Ipoh. The address is the Teh family home and is currently managed by the grandson Teh Hean Meng.

According to Leland, Teh was a member of the first cabinet formed by Dr. Sun and his photograph can be found in China and Taiwan. Teh's contributions to the cause were recognised by the Chinese Republican Government when he died in 1940.

It must be noted that the Perak Chinese sympathised with the cause because they were driven to Malaya due to poverty

and a corrupt Chinese government. Till today the photo of Dr. Sun can still be seen hanging on the walls of some associations.

During the visit, the Ipoh Chinese Chin Woo Athletic Association hosted a dinner for the family which was attended by several prominent community leaders.

Interestingly both Leland and Victor and the rest of the family members described the dinner as "very good". Another point that they liked about Ipoh was that everyone spoke Cantonese "just like in Guangdong, China".

JAG

Police Chief Bids Farewell



Perak out-going police chief, DCP Dato' Pahlawan Zulkifli Abdullah bade farewell to his men during a parade held in his honour at the contingent's headquarters on Friday, November 26.

Zulkifli ended his three-year tenure (2007 to 2010) in Perak with some measure of success. A reduction of 13.3 per cent in the state's crime rate was the top of the icing. "This is attributed to CCTVs which were installed in crime-prone areas within the city," he told reporters. "It has also led to the reduction of street crime, especially bag-snatching," he added. Former CPO of Terengganu, SAC 1 Dato' Mohd Shukri Dahlan, takes over from him.

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news roundup

HBUK Centenary Celebration



In less than a year's time iconic Hospital Bahagia Ulu Kinta (HBUK) is set to celebrate its hundredth anniversary. When the hospital was opened on November 1, 1911, its founding father and first director, Dr W.F. Samuels, wanted to name it the Federal Lunatic Asylum. He, however, acceded to pressure from the medical fraternity who were mindful of the negative connotations such a name would engender. It was named the Central Mental Hospital Tanjong Rambutan, instead.

The name Tanjong Rambutan and its abbreviation "TR" subsequently became synonymous with those afflicted with mental problems – real or imagined. In the mid-1970s it was renamed Hospital Bahagia Ulu Kinta, for want of a less derogatory term in Bahasa Malaysia.

HBUK sits on a 503-acre site of which 300 acres are built-up. This is where the centre's treatment facilities are concentrated. The remaining 203 acres are used for rehabilitation purposes such as farming and animal husbandry.

When it first started, the centre consisted of only three male wards and one female ward. Today there are a total of 79 wards, 54 for males and 25 for females. The hospital can take 2,600 patients at any one time making it the largest mental institution in the country. However, a gradual reduction in capacity has been enforced for reasons of expedience. The centre's ability to do so is due to the success of its community-based psychiatric programme introduced in 2008.

According to Dato' Dr. Suarn Singh, Director and Senior Psychiatric Consultant (Forensic), HBUK has undergone numerous changes since its inception a century ago. The hospital's transformation has impacted the way the general public views the centre.

"We've adopted a three-prong approach in treating the mentally ill," Suarn Singh told Ipoh Echo. He was referring to the community-based programme, which the hospital has been pursuing in earnest. "First, we do house calls to treat those with mental problems. Second, we provide psychiatric treatment and consultation at selected district hospitals in the state. Finally, we established community treatment centres known as Pusat Kesihatan Mental Masyarakat Kerajaan." These measures have helped reduce relapse cases from 25 per cent previously to 0.45 per cent, currently, said the director.

RM

Young Perak

IIS Shakespearean Theatre Club

Ipoh International School's (IIS) A-Level students are visiting Ipoh's schools to showcase their renditions of three Shakespearean plays. Among the schools where they have staged their shows are SMK Seri Ampang where they staged "Macbeth" and SMK St Michael where they staged 'Julius Caesar'.

Shakespearean plays seem formidable in their original texts but the IIS versions are simplified and fully accessible to the average school audience.

The objectives of the IIS Shakespearean Theatre Club are to reawaken interest in Shakespearean classics and to promote an appreciation of literature in English. In the process, this endeavour provides an exciting drama and public-speaking experience for the A-Level students here.

IIS's A-Level programme which offers the Cambridge (CIE) qualification is conducted at the Tenby A-Levels Centre at Ipoh International School. The programme which offers both Arts and Sciences is of great interest in view of its co-curricular focus on Shakespearean drama, public speaking and community service.

"Every A-Level student is required to undergo the Shakespearean drama experience as it deepens their appreciation and understanding of life issues," says Louis Rozario Doss, principal of the Tenby A-Levels Centre.

"Our students study the original Shakespearean texts, then remould the stories in a modern context in language today's students would understand. It is the process of bringing Shakespeare to life in our schools and society."

The setting of 'Julius Caesar', for example, is in a country that echoes Afghanistan. The opening scene is set in a secret disco where musicians are playing 'Dekko Abto', the Hindi version of the Beatles 'I Wanna Hold Your Hand'. This scene gives a sampling of what the IIS's A-Level students are engaged in.

"Our renditions of Shakespeare are really funny and cool," says Cheang Hoi Yee, formerly of SMK Perak Girls, who plays the narrator of 'Julius Caesar'. "Our audiences are never disappointed."

"My plunge into Shakespeare has been the fulfilment of a long-cherished dream," says Balakarthish Balaravi, formerly of SMK Methodist (ACS), Ipoh. "I enjoyed acting as Julius Caesar renamed as Julius Caesar Khan in the new context. The drama experience has brought our A-Level class together in a powerful bonding experience."

The IIS Shakespearean Theatre Club's performances are available to all schools in the Kinta District on Mondays from 4.00-6.30 p.m. Schools which would like to invite them to perform may contact Mr Louis at 012-5902025 or call the IIS Office at 05-2538530. There is no performance charge for schools in the Kinta District.



● Decius (Caroline Welling) & Julius Caesar Khan (Balakarthish Balaravi)

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Carsem Football Clinic



Carsem recently brought joy to 81 kids aged 7-12 years with a special coaching session from Jim Duffy (former Chelsea 1st Team Coach) when they put on a football coaching clinic recently at Sunway Extreme Park in Tambun. Lucky participants were a mix of Carsem Employees' children as well as children from Rumah Anak Yatim Simpang Pulai, Joyful Home, Salvation Army Home and Vision Home.

As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility initiative to promote good health in a fun manner through Sports and Recreation activities, Iain Meikle, Carsem VP of Manufacturing, said that the clinic is part of a series organised by the 'Carsem-DCI Soccer Kids Club' with the next clinic scheduled a month later at the world class Soccer Experience Football centre, Gurney Drive, Penang.

The clinic was led by former Chelsea 1st Coach Jim "James" Duffy and mates Martin Tierney and John McCarthy, all FIFA certified coaches. Incidentally all three coaches and Meikle are a "Scottish connection" all originating from Glasgow who are familiar with each other.

Jim Duffy, 50, was named Scottish Player of the Year in 1985. In the early 90's he was the 1st coach for Chelsea before going on to coach Portsmouth. His last post till May 2010 was with Scottish FC Brechin City.

Duffy likes working with kids and described himself as being an "anti-racist". He described Malaysia as an "eye-opener, a perfect example of an anti-racist community where the different nationalities, cultures and religions live together happily".

JAG

Community

EMPOWERING THE POOR

Yayasan Bina Upaya (YBU) or literally translated as the Capacity Building Foundation is another one of the products of Perak Amanjaya, the Silver State's comprehensive transformation plan to achieve a developed status by year 2015.

YBU, a Private Trust Foundation formed

The foundation's activities currently are:

1) Micro Credit Financing. This programme enables community members to apply for loans for working capital in economic activities such as opening a food stall, or increasing output of existing small businesses. Based on the micro credit system,



● YBU Chief Executive Khairul Azwan Harun

active track record and a working paper must be submitted with their request".

2) Infrastructure Development Programme refers to their housing assistance programme to construct new housing (3, 2 or 1 room houses) and home repairs damaged by natural causes. The purpose of this programme is to enable a comfortable and quality living environment for the poor. This year, 20 recipients have been given keys to their homes while another 15 are currently under construction.

3) Adoption Programme. This programme calls for individuals and corporations to sponsor children studying in Years 5 and 6 by contributing RM50 per month which would go towards meals and incidentals. According to Khairul, it is a trend for children from the low-income group to drop out of school. The reason for this being poverty and parental attitude. Currently there are 100 children enjoying this programme. However if there were more participants for this programme more children could benefit.

Future Pawn Broking Service

For the future, Khairul announced that the



● Micro credit recipient Wong Ying Fung

under the Trustees Act in October 2009, commenced full operations last March with an allocation of RM4 million from the state government for its activities.

The role of this foundation is categorized under the plan's first of 7 KRA's (Key Result Areas): Equitable Development and Distribution whose goal is to raise living standards of low-income households by creating a sustainable livelihood (*kehidupan lestari*).

To make the goal a reality YBU is set on empowering respective communities, through its programmes of distributing economic benefits in various ways.

Ipo Echo recently met up with its Chief Executive Khairul Azwan Harun to gain an insight of its structure and more importantly to learn what criteria need to be met to warrant assistance from the foundation.

"This programme is open to ALL communities, it is multi-racial and all can apply, even the orang asli" said Khairul excitedly. Khairul, 34, comes from an accounting background and had worked earlier in audit and corporate finance with Ernst and Young before joining government service four years ago.

The goal of the Foundation is in line with the Federal Government's 10th Malaysia Plan whose focus group is the "40% which belong to the bottom half of society or kumpulan kebawah", those whose monthly income per family unit is around "RM440 per month".

loans are interest free and do not require collateral nor guarantor.

Loan values, ranging from RM1,000 to RM20,000, are given for eligible applicants between the ages of 18-60. Applicants fill an application form available at its office or on its website after which YBU will send its teams (usually within a week) for an on-site visit to vet the applicants "from all aspects to minimize the risk of non-performing loans (NPL)."

Till last October, 69 applicants had been given loans. Interestingly, the loans applied for were to purchase equipment like sewing and cendol-making machines besides working capital. The applicants included a number of single mothers.

NGOs too are eligible to apply with approvals to be given on a 'per programme basis'. The requirement for NGOs is that they "must have an



● Gurdip Singh of Tg Tualang receiving the mock keys to his house



Programme Anak Angkat

Foundation would be introducing a Pawn Broking service sometime next year. This service, based on Islamic Pawn Broking rules is currently being offered by Bank Rakyat and Agro Bank and has proven successful. "Based on data from loan applicants, most have "some form of 'inheritance' from the spouse or parents" which can be used to unlock its value for capacity improvement.

YBU Administration
YBU's office is located

at Greentown Square and is manned by 35 staff. However it has a volunteer force of 1,000 currently spread throughout the state to help it identify candidates and vet applicants. Donations made to the foundation are tax exempted. Additionally, under the Trustees Act, donors are entitled to a 'statement of expenditure' report from the foundation.

The cry from YBU is to please make them an alternative option so

they can contribute back to society via their programmes. As for Khairul, his Key Performance Index (KPI) is not how many applications YBU processes but how many sustainable livelihoods he can create through the programme.

Based on the all-encompassing approach the foundation has adopted, some of those from the lower-40% bracket might just have an opportunity to pull themselves up and beyond.

James Gough

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Career in the Accountancy Profession	Ms. Yeoh, Audit Partner of Deloitte Kasim Chan	10.30am-11.30am	—
1-Day Secrets Review	Mr. Lim, Course Coordinator School of IT	11.30pm-12.30noon	—
Pathway to be a Professional Accountant	Ms. Jennifer Lee, Course Coordinator School of Accountancy	—	1.00pm-2.00pm
Introducing the World of Business & Marketing	Ms. Chevi, Course Coordinator School of Business & Marketing	2.00pm-3.00pm	2.00pm-3.00pm
Each Day is a Masterpiece	Ms. Mulyati, Course Coordinator School of Art & Design	12.50pm-1.30pm	—
The Secrets Behind Social Networking	Mr. Alvin Cheang, Lecturer School of IT	—	12.00noon-1.00pm
Foundation to a Career in Law	Mr. L. Bernard, Lecturer Centre for Foundation Studies	10.30am-11.30am	—

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Sport

Plan To Unify TaeKwon-Do Governing Bodies

Efforts are being made to unify all international governing bodies of the TaeKwon-Do's martial arts. Currently there are the World TaeKwon-Do Federation (WTF), Global TaeKwon-Do Federation (GTF) and International TaeKwon-Do Federation (ITF). Some informal talks aimed at uniting the three federations of martial arts into one single body have been held.

The objective is to remain true to TaeKwon-Do founding father, General Choi Hong Hi's philosophy that TaeKwon-Do should be made available for all regardless of religion, race or creed and should never be influenced by politics of any particular country.

General Choi was born in North Korea in 1918. Young Choi joined the Korean Army under the command of the Japanese. His insubordination led him to be interned in jail at the end of 1945. To keep himself fit he began to formulate martial arts movements, which eventually formed the foundation for TaeKwon-Do. His cellmates and jailers were his first students.

After liberation from Japanese rule, Choi joined the new South Korean Army and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant. The South Korean Army started to learn TaeKwon-Do and soon the art spread all over Korea. On April 10, 1955, the word TaeKwon-Do was registered and formally recognised as the leading martial art in Korea. By 1959 it spread beyond Korean boundaries, firstly to the Far East and later to South America and Europe. TaeKwon-Do came to our shores when Choi was appointed ambassador to Malaysia in 1962. A year later the Malaysian TaeKwon-Do Association (MTA) was formed.

The International TaeKwon-Do Federation (ITF) was formed by General Choi in 1966 with its base in Seoul. WTF was set up in 1973, as an alternative to the growing influence of ITF around the world, and GTF was formed with headquarters in Ontario, Canada, by Grand Master Park Jung Tae in 1990 as an alternative to WTF and ITF, which were increasingly subjected to outside influence and governmental control (WTF by South Korea and ITF by North Korea). This split was



● Wan Xiang Wei, 12 (ex-IIS student from Ipoh), at the recent Canadian TaeKwon-Do ITF National Championship in Vancouver



● General Choi Hong Hi

not only evident on the international front but had affected all countries practising ITF TaeKwon-Do. Thus, when one says he a practitioner of ITF TaeKwon-Do, it is not unusual to ask which "F".

In Malaysia under the advice and guidance of the Sports Ministry, the Commissioner of Sports set up TaeKwon-Do Malaysia (TM) to replace Malaysian TaeKwon-Do Association (MTA), which was deregistered in 2005. Under TM, the Malaysian TaeKwon-Do Federation (MTF) and the Malaysian TaeKwon-Do Club Association (MTCA) could deregister and be affiliated under TM,

as the national body for WTF TaeKwon-Do. A myriad of other WTF organisations at clubs, academy and district levels could also be affiliated to TM. The WTF immediately supported this move by recognising TM.

The ITF has a nationally registered body called International TaeKwon-Do Federation Malaysia (ITFM). The ITF headquarters is currently in Vienna, Austria. All three ITFs hold their respective world championships bi-annually except that ITF has bi-annual world championships for their juniors and veterans, alternately with their senior championships.

In Perak alone it is estimated that approximately 2,500 members, coming from three major schools in the Kinta Valley and Taiping District, are active in the sport. While WTF and GTF cater mainly to students of government-controlled schools, ITF is more popular with students of Chinese-type national schools. At the world championship held at St Petersburg in October, 2009, eight of the 11 competitors from the Malaysian team were from Perak. The same is observed at the recently concluded championship in Vancouver. There is a large number of Perakeans involved in TaeKwon-do, particularly at school level. The sport does deserve the support of the state government considering its popularity amongst the youths in Perak.

All three governing bodies practise the same pattern forms called kups and, save for a few minor technical differences, the pattern forms are generally similar. The regulations for sparring are almost identical except that with the advent of technology, point awards are probably more precise.

Whatever the outcome, it is hoped that the final result remains true to General Choi's philosophy and that is that practitioners "should help build a more peaceful world" together.

WKS

Aussie Equestrian Team Wins Trophy

The equestrian team from Queensland, Australia won the Tan Sri V. Jeyaratnam Challenge Trophy beating eight other riding teams for the top spot. The Aussies' exquisite display of horse riding and jumping won the judges' hearts and their choice of an overall champion at the National Horse Show 2010 at the Perak Turf Club Equestrian Centre, Ipoh recently. The award ceremony coincided with the opening of

the show by Perak State Secretary, Dato' Seri Dr Rahman Hashim.

The 4-day show, which lasted from December 2 to 5, was the fourth in a series organised by the Perak Turf Club. It was started in 1994 and is held at the respective turf clubs in the country on a rotational basis. The last time Perak Turf Club (PTC) hosted the show was in 2006.

PTC Chairman, Tan Sri V. Jeyaratnam, in his welcoming speech, thanked



participants, especially students of riding schools for their effort in making this year's gathering a success. The show, in essence, was aimed at promoting horse riding and all things associated

with horses and equine sports, to the public. Perak, said Jeyaratnam, has the largest number of schools and school children participating in pony clubs and riding programmes supported by the Malaysian

Equine Council and the Education Department of Perak.

The carnival-like atmosphere did plenty to attract both young and old to the turf club grounds where activities, central to the show, were held. Pony rides, breed show, magic

show and farriery display (making of horse shoes and fixing them to horses' hooves) were some of the major attractions. Over 30,000 spectators attended the show making it one of the most spectacular calendar events in Ipoh.

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Community

WHITE ELEPHANTS in Ipoh



Anyone living in Ipoh will sooner or later, run into a number of 'white elephants' scattered around our fair city. These 'albino pachyderms' are not the variety favoured as royal mascots in Thailand, but rather structures/objects of no apparent use. This article seeks to highlight 'white elephants' of the second variety.

If we keep our eyes peeled we can recognise quite a number of them in our fair city. These buildings involve substantial financial costs. As such it reflects a waste of financial resources if left to "rot" after construction. If these were erected using public funds, it becomes the business of the citizens of the state to ask a number of pertinent questions, and seek answers from

those responsible. If these 'useless' structures were privately owned, the owners would no doubt have learned a bitter lesson. Perhaps the public can assist by suggesting some positive uses for them, thereby alleviating the financial burden to the owners. This article will give a few examples of 'white elephants' which stick out like sore thumbs.

The first interesting example is the 'glass building' along Jalan Raja Dr. Nazrin Shah, just after the turn off to the Ipoh Swimming Club. This almost fully glassed up structure was completed more than a year ago and has as yet, been left unused. One cannot help but wonder what this was intended for. With so much glass (pic left) the cost of keeping the building cool in

our tropical weather, would certainly be astronomical. Surely it could not have been intended as a residence ("people who live in glass houses should not change clothes", for one thing).

This is probably a privately funded structure and the owner will no doubt, have one big headache by now. Perhaps some kind soul, after reading this, will come up with some suggestions to make it useful. How about turning the building into a gym?

The second 'white elephant' looks like a food court. Completed more than a year ago, it remained under lock and key and has never been used till very recently. It was overrun with shrubs and undergrowth, and an ideal breeding ground for mosquitoes (pic right). This building is at the left of

the road after crossing the bridge over Sungai Kinta in Jalan Datoh, heading toward Medan Kidd. It is indeed a pity that a purpose-built building, a food court, is left unused for such a long time when Ipoh needs to have such purpose-built

structures to cater to its many famous food outlets. Hygienic food outlets are what Ipoh needs. Finally, on a recent visit just a few days ago, I detected signs of activity. It is about time.

These are but a small sampling of the 'white elephants' in Ipoh. It is hoped that the readers of Echo will add more to the list. It is also hoped that some useful proposals might be forthcoming to turn these 'white elephants' into something productive. Most importantly though, it is hoped that by highlighting these structures, those involved will think twice before embarking on more wasteful projects, especially when public funds can be used for more productive purposes.

Lai Kah Lye

FAMILY DAY



The Manjung Pensioners' Association organised a family day in Kg Sitiawan recently. The turnout was overwhelming. Over 500 members and their families attended the function which was aimed at getting members together before the year draws to a close.

Association Chairman, Hj Jauhari Yahaya, thanked the members for their camaraderie. Sitiawan, Ayer Tawar and Lumut, he said, have become popular places of domicile for pensioners and retirees alike. A growing number of civil servants, army and naval personnel and public sector employees, especially factory workers, have made Manjung District their home. "Pensioners and retirees are still productive in spite of their age," he insisted. "They can still contribute to society." Their experience and expertise can be used by the authorities to combat anti-social activities which seem to proliferate in the area.

Saminathan

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Lifestyle and Leisure

By See Foon Chan-Koppen

Have you ever yearned to get away and spend a day of total indulgence in complete relaxation, far from the madding crowd? Well this festive season, give yourself and your loved ones a treat to remember at the Banjaran Spa.

There is no need to hop on a plane, book a cruise, or even drive a few hundred kilometres. The Banjaran Hotsprings Retreat is a world-class resort right here on our doorstep, just next door to the Lost World of Tambun. A group of friends and I were there recently to experience the delights of Banjaran's myriad facilities.

Angelika Hartung, the charming Spa Manager who hails from Munich was on hand to greet us with a warm cup of their signature ginger and honey tea. We were led by the hand to the changing room where luxurious bathrobes, disposable underwear and flip-flops were provided and, as some of us had forgotten to bring swimsuits for dipping in the geothermal pools, we were given sarongs to protect our modesty.

Hotsprings

We began with a soak in one of the four hot-spring pools which were marked by the degree of heat. We were advised to start with the 39 degree pool and if we felt up to it gradually inch our way up to 43 degrees. We happily settled into the 39 degree water and allowed the therapeutic effects of the spring water to work its magic.

The geothermal hot spring water contains magnesium, iron and a small amount of sulphur. These minerals are good for rheumatism, skin problems e.g. psoriasis and for supporting detoxification processes, increasing the blood circulation and cell oxygenation. It contains high amounts of negative ions, which can help promote feelings of physical and psychological well-being.

Dr. Fish

We were ushered out by attendants after half an hour and led to the fish pond where we sat in waist-deep water while the specially imported Garra Rufa fish (known as Dr. Fish) nibbled away at the dead skin cells on our feet and legs. One of our party, who was initially squeamish about fish nibbling her, soon enjoyed the sensation so much that she ended up immersing her whole body in the water and allowed the fish to nibble at her arms and hands too.

Breathtaking Steam Cave

So much for squeamish fun and games, it was now time to

Banjaran Sparadise

enjoy the steam cave. This unique cave contains hot geothermal pools over which the ingenious architect has created wooden platforms with steps that lead from one area to another, creating one giant steam cabinet which in my mind, has to be the only one in the world (not the steam cave but the artful use of natural resources combined with creative design). Natural rock crystal lamps illuminate the pathways and wooden stools and seats provide comfortable nooks for chatting or just quiet contemplation.

Again, as in the dipping pools, attendants brought fresh towels, robes and lemony iced water for refreshment mid way through the session.

Back in the changing room we donned fresh bathrobes and proceeded to the Pomelo Restaurant for a light lunch followed by the treats awaiting us in the afternoon.

Anti-Oxidant Therapy

We began with the Antioxidant Therapy, where you lay on your back on antioxidant ceramic floor tiles which are heated. This stimulates one's parasympathetic nervous system which helps to improve the body's immunity and also increases blood circulation and metabolism. While inside for 45 minutes, you're provided with Antioxidant Water which is very beneficial for detoxification and protecting blood cells and tissue cells against free radical damage. This water is produced by Japanese technology which changes the pH level of filtered water to mildly alkaline pH 7.5, creating water that is soft and ionized.

Chi Nei Tsang

Next on the pampering agenda was the Chi Nei Tsang massage, conducted in a Chinese inspired room for 45 minutes. Chi Nei Tsang which involves directly massaging the internal organs concentrating on the stomach area is meant to balance their energies. This increases the energy and blood flow to and from the organs. Everything from fascia, tendon, muscle, intestine, organs, lymph system, nervous system, and ganglions are worked; its major healing process is in untying the knots and clearing the blockage in the abdomen and organs put there by stress.

Hawa or the Malay Journey

The final treat of the day was the Hawa Package or the



Malay Journey as it is described in the brochure. Beginning with a footbath filled with rose petals, into which was mixed a small tub of coconut cream as emollient, I was then given a head massage with their special hair treatment concoction, a mixture of coconut and jojoba oil plus Polygala extract. This helps to nourish and rejuvenate hair shaft, hair follicles & scalp.

This was followed by the Hibiscus Scrub, made from Roselle powder from the Hibiscus flower, rice powder, kaffir lime and vitamin C from Hibiscus whose anti-oxidant properties help to exfoliate, smoothen and brighten skin.

The massage treatment came next using a herbal oil made from lemongrass, turmeric and ginger which is anti-inflammatory and skin tightening, increases lymphatic flow, and releases muscle aches and pains. Next came the full body Hibiscus mask made from Roselle powder, clay and Vitamin C from hibiscus and then wrapped with a compress dipped in Himalayan rock salt and cloves. The most unusual part of the Hawa package consisted an of old Malay remedy, the Tangas Steam treatment which consists of sitting over gentle steam from herbs that are meant to tighten the vaginal muscles and acts as an anti-bacterial, anti-infection remedy for women especially after delivery. While steaming, we were served the Jamu drink, a herbal remedy to maintain vaginal health and for increasing overall well being.

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my say

By Jerry Francis



People's Right to Demand for Better and Faster Service

The admission by the director of the Public Complaints Bureau (PCB) of the Prime Minister's Department, Encik Aziz Ismail, that poor service at government departments which tops the list of grouses from the public, as well as failures to follow-up on complaints, are tarnishing the good name of the establishment and is a frank and honest statement.

Every Malaysian, will one day or another, require the services of the civil service. As such they are no longer willing to just keep quiet and receive below-par services and are rightfully demanding improvement.

Very often, members of the public are continuing to be confronted with unpleasant experiences when seeking services from relevant government departments or agencies. Among them, elderly people, who may be hard of hearing or unable to converse in Bahasa Malaysia, are told off unkindly by some impatient civil servants.

It is a matter of "whom you know" to get your problem promptly attended to, and ordinary folk who may have travelled far, are at a disadvantage. They may have to make repeated visits before they receive attention as most of the time, the heads of departments or agencies and their subordinates are not around.

Other grievances include telephone calls being directed to answering machines which put them

on hold as the lines are busy, and then only to be told that the officers concerned are not available. All these shortcomings need to be addressed, especially at those departments and agencies dealing with members of the public daily. In spite of the large number of complaints of poor services, political leaders are claiming that all the country's 1.2 million civil servants are dedicated and hardworking. They are doing so for their own obvious reasons.

Aziz's statement to the newsmen during a mobile counter programme jointly organised by his department and Ipoh City Council at Stadium Indera Mulia recently is therefore seen as a clear contradiction. "Calls to government departments go unanswered and this has caused the ire of the public," said Aziz. "The use of voicemail and voice recording should be minimized and relegated to night time when traffic is low." One other grouse which is also of major concern to PCB is follow-up action.

However, will this admission of "poor service" be remedied? The heads of respective government departments and agencies need to be dedicated and hard working themselves before they can command respect and demand efficiency. In other words, they must lead by example.

Some improvements are, however, being implemented in various departments and agencies.

Such as the use of composite application forms and licences, the establishment of One Stop Investment, and Bill Payment Centres, the use of Electronic Calling System to organize long queues and many others – which are innovations unheard of in the past.

More and more government departments and agencies are also simplifying and standardising their work methods and norms on their own initiative. Failure to attend to grouses from the public are, however, not the only set-backs; the efficiency of the various departments and agencies also appears to have dropped. Some of these agencies which are to provide professional services and advice to the government, appear to be redundant now with the setting up of "think-tanks" or new agencies to help in the planning of projects.

An example is the establishment of Perak Amanjaya, which is to plan and implement projects to achieve a developed state status in the next five years. What has happened to the State Economic Planning Unit, State Development Corporation and State Development Department, which were once highly valued by the state government to lead and plan projects? The establishment of Perak Amanjaya only implies that they have become redundant and Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Zambry Abdul Kadir requires the services of the new agency

Business

Andaman Group Moves into Ipoh

Andaman Group of Companies recently announced the soft launch of its latest development, TAIPAN@Ipoh Cybercentre, its first foray into the Ipoh property market.



• Officiating of Sales Gallery by YBhg Dato' Dr Patrick Teoh (4th from left)

TAIPAN@Ipoh Cybercentre will provide the initial commercial/business centre as an avenue for commercial activities within the township of Bandar Meru Raya, a 1,600-acre integrated, self-contained township located at the North Ipoh Growth Corridor, a private-sector driven initiative, spearheaded by PCB Development Sdn Bhd as the Master Developer, and fully endorsed by the State Government.

The development is located just off the Jelapang Interchange, on the way to Chemor. According to Mr Vincent Tiew, the Head of Marketing & Sales – Andaman Group of Companies, a major portion of Meru Raya has been zoned MSC Cybercentre – the State Administrative Centre in the making, "a Putrajaya and Cyberjaya combined," he quipped.

A total of at least 20 government agencies have already confirmed moving to this location, with a few already relocated there, including Jabatan Audit Negara, Kompleks KDN (Kementerian Dalam Negeri) and Jabatan Perhutanan. Kompleks Pejabat SPRM has also been completed. Others like Ibu Pejabat Bomba, Jabatan Kesihatan, Jabatan Perikanan, Yayasan Perak, have all been approved to move there under the 10th Malaysian Plan.

A total of 11,000 residential units have been planned for the entire township, of which quite a sizeable portion has been completed. To cater for the population, on the education front, Kolej Poly-Tech MARA, with an expected enrolment of around 1,500 students, will also find its place here, besides the pre-requisite primary and secondary schools. "The Ipoh International School – Tenby has also purchased a 13-acre lot and will start construction soon, moving from its present location near the Polo grounds," Mr Tiew added.

TAIPAN@Ipoh Cybercentre will have 102 units of offices and shop lots ranging in price between RM688,000-RM2,215,000 with completion expected by end 2012.

to implement his three-prong objective of quality living, quality income and quality opportunities.

This should not happen if the departments and agencies are efficient and competent. So, it is necessary for the Malaysian civil

service to improve because it plays a huge role in the growth of the country, do-

mestically and internationally, and therefore cannot afford shortcomings.

Note: Members of the public can forward their complaints and grievances on public service to www.pcb.gov.my or contact PCB at 03-88725777. For the Ipoh City Council's services, complaints can be channelled to its hotline: 05-2551515 or via email to: aduan@mbi.gov.my.

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