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December 1-15, 2011

PP 14252/10/2012(031136)

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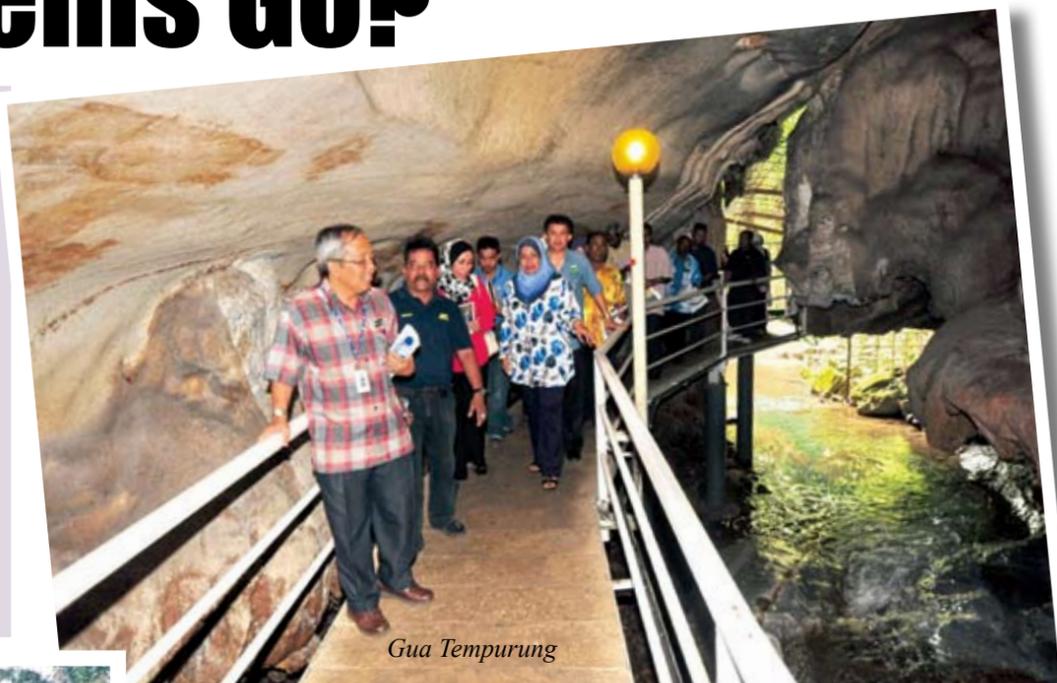


Icons May Be Ready But Are All Systems Go?

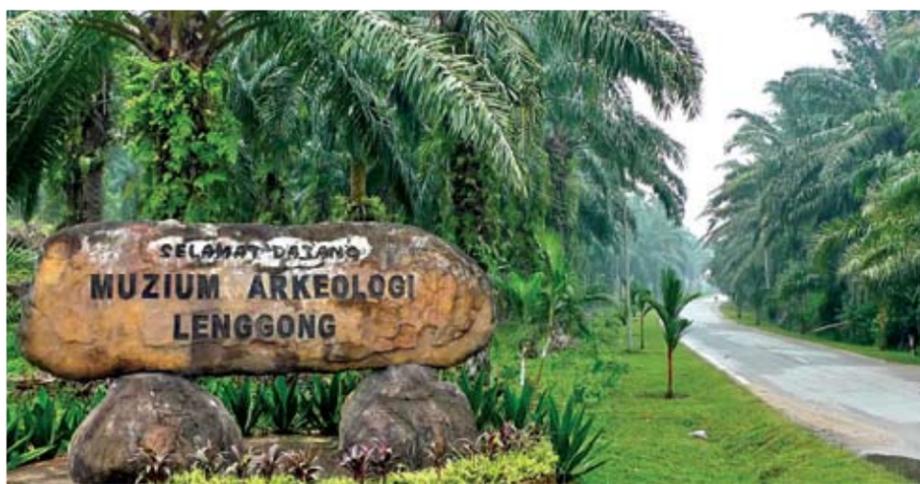
By James Gough

Over the last two months, Dato' Hamidah Osman, Perak's State Executive Councillor for Tourism, together with her team from Tourism Perak, have been going around the state checking on all 10 Tourist Icons of Perak to ensure the state is ready for the anticipated influx of 5 million tourists targeted for Visit Perak Year 2012. Well, the products may be ready but are the service providers that provide the feeder services also ready?

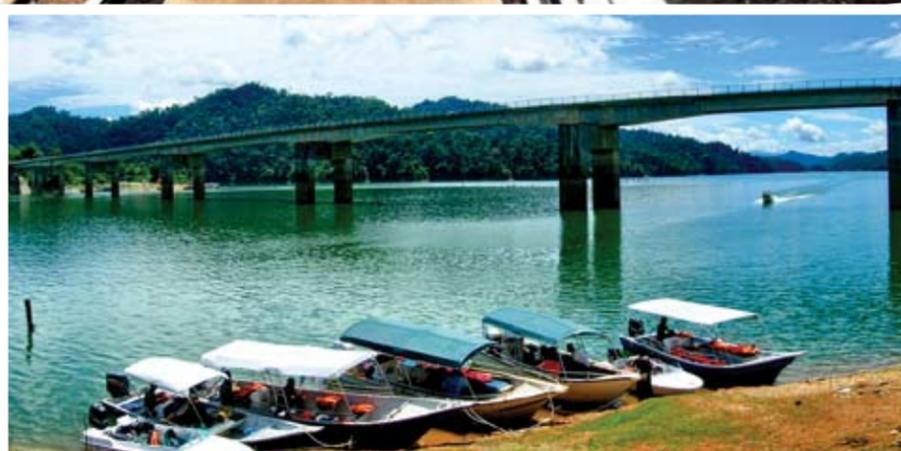
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Gua Tempurung



Entrance to Lenggong Museum



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Ancillary Services Critical to Success of VPY 2012



Kidd Road
Bus Terminal



Medan Gopeng Bus Terminal

While Hamidah has traversed the whole state from Gua Tempurung, Gopeng to Royal Belum in Grik and took in the Royal Town of Kuala Kangsar and Pangkor Island as well, all part of the 10 Tourist Icons of Perak, questions arise as to the ancillary services, such as: Are the buses and taxis that physically transport visitors to the icons available? Are there sufficient tour guides around to explain to visitors the wonderful points of our tourism products and in the visitor's native tongue? Are the local tour agents supportive in promoting and ferrying inbound tourists to the 10 icons?

Meanwhile, the promotions for all these sites have been moving along, such as: wrap-around buses highlighting VPY 2012; billboards on the highway, between KL and Ipoh, portraying alluring Pangkor Island; and similarly displayed at KLIA, LCCT, Singapore and KL Sentral.

In actual fact the entire state machinery has been working towards the success of VPY 2012, with MB Dato' Seri DiRaja Zambry Abdul Kadir chairing a meeting at his residence one night before a public holiday where all state executive councillors and district councils were present.

However, a recent negative report by Ipoh Echo about the inadequacies of the service provided by the Tourist Information Centre at Ipoh Padang, and a recent outburst by the Chairman of the Malaysian Chinese Tour Agents Association, has glaringly highlighted a disconnect to ensure the success of VPY 2012.

Tourism is About Pleasant Memories

Tourism is all about pleasant memories. Tourists who



Kidd Road
Terminal Toilet

have enjoyed their visits will go home and tell a few friends and would consider coming for a second visit. On the other hand, it is a well-known marketing fact that a dissatisfied tourist will tell many more people to avoid a destination like the plague.

Recently, Ipoh Echo received feedback from a visitor about difficulty visiting the Icons of Perak. The visitor is what the industry terms as FIT or Foreign Individual Tourist. She tried enquiring about getting on a local tour but was told that if she could get a group together, then the local operator could organise one. To get to the the Royal Town of Kuala Kangsar, the only option she had was to hire a taxi that would take her to the places of interest. The taxi man did take her to a few of the locations on the brochure and the tourist felt very disgruntled as she felt that the price she paid for four hours of the taxi time was way too high since the actual travel time to and from Kuala Kangsar took up at least one and a half hours, and not enough time was left to explore the sights.

Similarly for Gua Tempurung, getting there was the problem. There was no public bus service so it was by taxi and at higher cost. Fortunately, there was a group of students at Gua Tempurung that morning so she paid the nominal group tour fare and joined the guided tour.

But should a tourist have to put up with the hassle of having to 'search' for transport to get them to a tourist site? Logically after spending millions to promote the tourist sites the next step should be to make the sites as easily accessible as possible.

Tourism Retreat Findings

In April this year MOTOUR Perak, a branch of the Ministry of Tourism together with NGOs and the State Government organised a Perak Tourism Retreat. Its goal

was to analyse the tourism industry state-wide and make recommendations on the way forward. Identifying the six tourism clusters, Northern Perak, Taiping, Kuala Kangsar, Ipoh, Pangkor and Kampung Gajah, was one of the results of the Retreat.

Inadequate Bus Services

Another finding from the Retreat was the inadequate bus services. Although a bus service was available to the various Districts it did not extend directly to the tourist sites themselves. Some examples are: Gua Tempurung, Gopeng, Banding Lake at Royal Belum or Lenggong Museum, all of which are a considerable distance from the main roads.



Buying a bus ticket to Lumut

Similarly for Ipoh, although there is a bus service, commuters say that the bus schedules are not published and do not run on time. Commuters are unaware of the Ipoh City Tour bus service, although it was launched in the middle of this year, to ferry visitors and tourists to and from their hotels to popular places of interest, food courts and restaurants.

The alternative mode is to use a taxi. However, taxi fares here do not run on a meter and are at the whim and fancy of taxi operators.

Entry Points and First Impressions

The Retreat also identified Ipoh to be the 'main gateway into the state' as the airport, railway station and express bus companies are located here. The recommendation proposed was to 'create a tourism-focused area in Ipoh' from which to ferry visitors 'to other tourist attractions in the state'.

Of the three transport modes, the express buses ferry the most number of visitors or commuters into the state annually and is said to be several millions more when compared to air and rail modes.

Unfortunately, the entry points for bus commuters at Medan Gopeng and Kidd Road Bus Terminus, provide a most dismal first impression of Ipoh due to its shabby

image and haphazard operations structure.

A check with Dato' Samsuddin Hashim, the Chief Executive of Perak State Development Corporation, the owners of Medan Gopeng terminal, confirmed that the Corporation will be taking over the management of the terminal but, due to an on-going 'legal issue', the upgrading of the bus terminal area can only be carried out after the first quarter of next year.

Samsuddin added that the upgrading plans included discussions with Ipoh City Council and the Drainage and Irrigation Department who would look into the large drain adjacent to the road before entering the bus parking bay.

The immediate plan is to relocate the hawker stalls currently outside the complex into the Silveritage Complex area and landscape the exterior. This will be completed by December.

Ipoh Airport is currently under expansion and is scheduled for completion by September next year.

Tour Agents and Inbound Tours

There is a perception that local travel agents promote more outbound than inbound tours. "Not so," says MATTA Perak Chairman Ranjit Singh, adding that its members do promote inbound packages. The inbound tour charge is around RM200 and usually "caters to a van load which is approximately 6-8 passengers" at a rate of RM25-RM35 per head.

Tour Guides

The role of the tour guide is to bring life to a product. All tour guides are licensed and can practise throughout the country. The Ministry of Tourism has a guideline that for any coach with more than 8 passengers it must be accompanied by a tour guide. According to several sources this ruling is being implemented strictly in KL and Penang but not so in Perak.

Private Sector Participation

According to Syahrudin Abdul Hamid, the Director of MOTOUR Perak Office, the Tourism Industry is very much a "Private Sector Led Industry". Hence in order to ensure that VPY 2012 succeeds in meeting its goals, a dialogue must be held with all the stakeholders and industry players to iron out all the 'disconnects' in the system.

A check with Dato' Hamidah acknowledged that she was aware of the issue and would be sitting with all the industry players. "Let us not forget that 2013 is Visit Malaysia Year. Lets fine tune during 2012 and reap the full benefits for 2013," added Hamidah.

The Centro in Bandar Baru Sri Klebang



Another important milestone for Kinta Properties was reached when The Centro, a community recreation centre in Bandar Baru Sri Klebang was officially launched by the Second Minister of Finance, Dato' Seri Ahmad Husni Hanadzlah.

Kinta Properties' Chairman, Dato' Lim Si Boon, in his opening speech, said that the vision for Bandar Baru Sri Klebang consists of the three elements of LIVE, LEARN & PLAY within the community.

With the different types of affordable and luxurious homes, commercial centres and shops already being occupied and fulfilling the LIVE element, The Centro, fulfils the PLAY element providing a place for residents to gather with family and friends. Its facilities include a golf driving range, 25m swimming pool, children's wading pool, gymnasium, play area, as well as cafeteria.

The Centro hopes to promote healthy lifestyles and foster closer family interaction.

As for the LEARN element, the Poi Lam School building is presently under construction and shall be ready for operations in Sri Klebang in 2012. Another school, a Sekolah Kebangsaan, also under construction, is expected to begin operations soon.

For information and membership, contact:

The Centro
Jalan Sri Klebang 2, Bandar Baru Sri Klebang,
31200 Ipoh.
Tel.: 05 293 1328/1333 or
email: info@thecentro.com.my.

IPOH **echo**

From the Editor's Desk

• by Fathol Zaman Bukhari

Perak Budget 2012 was tabled during the 12th sitting of the state assembly on Monday, November 21. The meeting at the august house got off to a heady start when Opposition Aduns complained of being locked out. The truth of the matter was that some had come in through a door which was inadvertently locked from the inside. While the political representatives were settling down to business, a noisy gathering of residents from Chemor were picketing outside of the State Secretariat Building with placards and banners demanding land for the construction of a Hindu temple.

The locked door and the noisy picketers were interesting preludes to a serious discussion that was about to unfold. The political scenario in Perak has long been a subject of debate by various parties, ordinary Perakeans notwithstanding. Seldom has an assembly sitting been conducted with decorum befitting its stature. It seems a norm for some form of disruption to happen at the behest of the rakyat. However, on this particular day it was the exception. Chief Minister, Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir completed his budget speech, which lasted an hour and a half, with the least number of interruptions although some murmurings were heard from the opposite bench.

Many have dubbed it as an "Election Budget" for a number of reasons. Just like Federal Budget 2012, the amount of goodies was a little too much to stomach. In spite of this not-too-flattering innuendo, the objective of Perak Budget 2012, which is to "prosper the populace and develop the state" (*Mensejahterakan Rakyat dan Memakmurkan Negeri*), is never in doubt.

Budget 2012 is estimated to cost the government RM915.26 million while revenue and receivables to be generated amounted to RM865.12 million. Excess of expenditure over income is RM50.14 million. Therefore, this is yet another deficit budget, the eighth in succession since 2005.

An Election Budget?

If the 2010 Auditor-General's Report is to be heeded, Zambry and his Perak Amanjaya planners need to avoid the pitfalls of tampering and impropriety, deliberate or otherwise, caused by a dubious delivery system.



The policy adopted to macro-manage the state's economy is to encourage consumer spending by putting more money into the rakyat's pockets. A scaled down Herbert Stein's supply-side economics is evident by the subtle removal of restrictions to allow for expansion, especially among traders who ply their wares at the ubiquitous *pasar malam* (night markets) in the state. Consumption is being spurred by the many goodies proffered to Perakeans, such as:

- A RM60-million three-year rolling plan fund for first-time house buyers, RM10 million for year 2012. The state will provide the 10 per cent deposit required by banks to purchase new houses.
- Reduction in permit fees for all night market traders.
- A RM2 million allocation for teachers' clubs.
- Allowance increases for village heads, religious teachers and mosque officials.

Non-governmental organisations that care for women's welfare and well-being will be given a RM2 million stipend. An allocation of RM1 million for the construction of half-way houses for abused women and children. RM5 million is allocated for NGOs that dabble in charity work.

Former servicemen and policemen were not ignored. Seven thousand land lots will be given to those eligible to build houses. They need only pay a RM500 premium each to acquire the lots.

In view of Visit Perak Year 2012, an allocation of RM18 million has been set aside for the maintenance, improvement and upgrading of existing touristic sites. A number of events are being planned to attract tourists to Perak. Zambry estimates tourist arrivals to breach the 5-million mark, generating income spin-off worth RM5 billion, provided each tourist spends a minimum RM1,000 while in transit. The MB's optimism is based upon the state's capacity to captivate visitors while they traverse the Plus Expressway from Tanjong Malim to Parit Buntar.

Mechanisms to be employed in the disbursement of funds intended for the needy are unclear as the budget, at the time of this publication, has yet to be passed. However, the Chief Minister is optimistic that a workable methodology will be in place in due time.

The RM321 million earmarked for development must be channelled to deserving parties and individuals, not some illicit entities. If the 2010 Auditor-General's Report is to be heeded, Zambry and his Perak Amanjaya planners need to avoid the pitfalls of tampering and impropriety, deliberate or otherwise, caused by a dubious delivery system.

Please Hold On

• by Peter Lee

Just the other day while I was having coffee with my friend, he told me that recently his mother tried to match make him with three girls all of whom he found unsuitable. So I asked him why? The first girl, he explained, works as a telephone operator and during the whole week of their date she frequently said to him "please hold on". Then, his mother introduced him to another girl who is a teacher. This time, his date always had the habit of saying "one more time" to whatever they did. With two unsuccessful dates, his mother was rather upset but continued and introduced him to another who is a bus conductor. After two weeks of courtship, he told his mum to stop the match making game. His mum thought this one would be a success but to her disappointment he told her this one also didn't work because she kept telling him "can you go further in" of whatever they do.



Such a story reminds me of how most people would behave towards planning for their families in the event of death. The common reply when asked to do their will would be "please hold on," stating reasons like resolving their personal issues first... too busy with their business... will think about it... maybe after Chinese New Year. Then, there are those, to whom I have explained several times about the importance of making a will, who would return to me and ask me to explain "one more time" all over again. Sometimes this would go on for a few months and still their will is not done. Another group of people whom I have met would ask many hypothetical questions and every answer will invite more questions like "can you go further in" on the subject. All questions and doubts which all of us have are valid. However, to take action immediately by planning for your family is crucial.

One way of doing it is through a will, where you can choose your Executors/Trustee to ensure that your estate is fairly distributed in the event of death. That's the reason one has to seriously consider appointing a Trustee Company like Rockwills Trustee Bhd. The choice of the Guardian is equally important when both parents of minor children die, because Guardians will take over the role of parents of the children. When minor children are involved, then there must be a condition stating how much to pay them progressively on a monthly basis for their living, education and medical expenses in the form of a "Testamentary Trust". Besides having a will, a Living Trust or Inter-Vivos Trust is essential for immediate funding. However, such a "Trust" is still sadly under-utilized perhaps due to lack of awareness. Setting up such a Trust requires you as the "Settlor" to appoint Rockwills Trustee Bhd. as the "Trustee", choosing a person whom you trust to be the Guardian and Protector of your children, naming your "Beneficiaries", stating down the mode of payment to your beneficiaries and assigning some assets like an insurance policy to the "Trust" for funding. All these must be stated in a legal document called a "Trust Deed". If you have a business, then it is strongly encouraged to set up a business continuation plan for your shareholdings which requires a "Buy-Sell Agreement", a Trust, Power of Attorney and insurance policy for funding. So don't hold on but just do it.

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>.



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(Clown, Magician, Balloon Sculpturing, Party Packs, Balloons, Carolers, Goodies from Santa)

New Year's Eve Buffet Dinner
31st December 2011
RM85 nett per person
RM48 nett per child (4-12 years old)
(Party Packs, Balloons, Photography)



Christmas Day Brunch
25th - 26th December 2011
RM40 nett per person
RM28 nett per child (4-12 years old)
(Balloons, Goodies from Santa, Carolers)

New Year's Sunday Brunch
1st - 2nd January 2012
RM40 nett per person
RM28 nett per child (4-12 years old)
(Games, Balloons, Colouring Contest at Kid's Corner)



Christmas Day Buffet Dinner
25th - 26th December 2011
RM65 nett per person
RM35 nett per child (4-12 years old)
(Balloons, Goodies from Santa, Party Packs)

New Year's 2012 Buffet Dinner
1st - 2nd January 2012
RM80 nett per person
RM35 nett per child (4-12 years old)

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PUBLISHER

Ipo Echo Sdn Bhd
(Regd No 687483 T)

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Thinking ALLOWED • by Mariam Mokhtar

At a Loose End in Ipoh (part III): Taiping Night Safari

A visit to the Kinta valley would not be complete without a trip to Taiping's night safari. Far from its image as a retirement town and a sleepy hollow, Taiping and its environs, seem to be packed with activities for every age-group, from jungle trekking to coastal fishing.

On the Taiping night safari, children will be delighted that they can watch nocturnal animals under the soft moonlight. The Taiping zoo houses 180 species of animals in a beautiful natural setting of lakes and lush vegetation. It is spread over 34 acres and is one of a handful in the world offering a night safari. The others are Singapore, Chiang Mai (Thailand), and Guangzhou (China).

On the day we visited the zoo, the weather was uppermost in our minds. Taiping is known to be one of the wettest places in West Malaysia. If it rained when we got there, it would have been a wasted trip and a disappointing drive back to Ipoh.

Public Transport Impossible

Going to the Taiping night safari by public-transport is impossible. Perhaps, those in charge of VPY 2012 could bear this in mind. Not everyone has their own transport and Perakians have yet to benefit from a reliable, cheap and efficient public-transport network.

As we drove to Taiping, the darkness of the highway gave way to the lights of the exit at the Kamunting Toll Plaza. One could feel the excitement building up but our spirits were dampened when the signs petered out on the way to the Zoo.

Poor Signage to Zoo

At night, the signs to the Zoo were difficult to find. The roads were poorly lit and many signs were obscured by trees and billboards.

We had no problems parking at the Zoo and as we went mid-week, during the term-time and did not find the place crowded; however, the queues can be lengthy during the school holidays.

There was a student discount for those with an International Student Card.

When our mini-train arrived, we set off on a guided tour of the Zoo. The train driver gave us a commentary of the animals as we passed their enclosures. It would have been nice if he had explained a little more about the habitat of the animals and any other interesting information which would have enthralled visitors to the Zoo.

We were grateful that he drove slowly so that we could appreciate the animals, read the information tablets outside the cages and try and locate the animals.

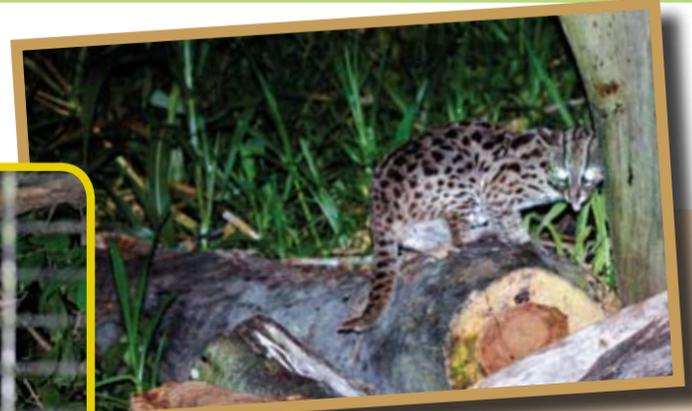
Open Concept

The open concept of the Zoo ensures visitors are given a good view of the animals from a relatively close range. The large animals like elephants, tigers, lions and bears, were separated from us by moats. The smaller animals with glass barriers or wire fences.

It was thrilling to observe the animals in a good approximation of their natural habitats, seeing them forage for food, mate and sleep.

Good Foot Paths

The best bit of the evening came after the 25-minute mini-train ride, when



we were able to explore the Zoo on foot along good paths, which were well sign-posted, and return to the animals which had interested us most.

We went back to see the crocodiles which were only a few feet behind a wire fence, and if we wanted to, could reach out to the hippopotamus which was staring at us.

A few giant fish, measuring around five feet in length living in the brackish water were fascinating but the tigers were disappointing as they seemed lethargic.

The lions were a joy to watch for they were chasing each other. They gave us a nasty fright when they roared loudly and ran towards us.

We wondered if the primates were fast asleep, and were saddened that the snakes section was closed.

It all ended too soon, and we thought it was a trip that was well worth the journey from Ipoh.

Room for Improvement but Well Worth a Visit

The night safari is not without faults. The lights outside the animal enclosures faced us and blinded us so that we were unable to view the animals properly.

The engine of the mini-train was noisy and belched smoke which spoiled our enjoyment. We did not have the same experience in Singapore which used quiet, clean engines and animals like the Malayan Tapir, would occasionally wander across our path.

Some of the information plaques outside the animal enclosures were missing or incomplete and we wondered if some of the unmarked cages were empty, or the animals were hiding.

We also saw that many pieces of broken equipment had been dumped beside the paths.

We laughed when we overheard a woman tell her friend that she was not returning because "the place smells of animals" and she could not see anything. But the joke was on us when we took another hour trying to find the signs to get us back onto the highway to head back to Ipoh. We kept ending up at the main entrance to the Kamunting Hilton.

Despite some shortcomings, the Taiping Zoo night safari is well worth a visit.

Join us as we explore Gua Tempurung in the next instalment of the *Ipoh Echo*.

VPY 2012 Countdown



Photography Competition



Perak Tourism, in collaboration with the Society of Foto Imej Perak (FIP), has organised a photography competition in conjunction with Visit Perak Year 2012.

The competition was launched recently and attended by Senior Exco for Tourism Dato' Hamidah Osman and officials from Perak Tourism and FIP Society.

The competition is open to all photographers and focuses on the 10 icons of Perak.

In her message Dato' Hamidah hoped that a lot of keen photographers would participate in order to enable a "photo bank of quality photographs which will be used to promote the beautiful attractions in the state which can also include heritage and culture". The photographs submitted will subsequently be used for billboards and brochures to promote tourism in the state.

A grand prize of RM10,000 awaits the winner of the competition while the first prize winner will take away RM5,000, runner up RM3,000 and third prize RM2,000. There will also be 10 merit prizes with a value

Sunway Lost World of Tambun to Promote VPY 2012

Sunway Lost World of Tambun has become the first corporation to promote Visit Perak Year 2012 and in a big way too with a Family Countdown Festival 2012.



The Festival is organized by event management company Tango Team with sponsorship from Digi and has the full support from Perak Tourism. The Countdown starts on the evening of December 31 and promises a host of fun performances for the whole family.

For more information on the event, contact Tango Team at 05-5467722, Sunway Lost World of Tambun Ipoh at 05-542 8888 or Taiping Sentral Mall Management at 05-8099 333 or 012-588 0405.

To read more, go to Ipoh Echo online at www.ipohecho.com.my.

JAG

of RM500 each.

The closing date of the competition is December 17 and the presentation of prizes is scheduled for New Year's Day which is also the launch of Visit Perak Year.

Entry forms for the competition can be downloaded from FIP Society's website at www.fip.org.my.

JAG



Musings on Food

seefoon@ipohecho.com.my

By See Foon Chan-Koppen

Photos by Chris DiGiovanna

SeeFoon Goes Grazing in Bercham

The one lament I have as I find myself adding yet another year to my age, is a constant reminder of the admonition from my beloved grandmother of “wide eyes, narrow stomach”. This is happening with increasing frequency, especially as many friends keep inviting me to try this and try that. I wish I had the appetite of yore, when eating at three different stalls or ordering from five in one go was never an issue and there were always ravenous mouths around on youthful friends.

Now, when I mention grazing to my foodie friends, they will groan and tell me to take it one eatery at a time. And so it is that while the title of this column is on grazing in Bercham I have to confess that I went there on a few separate occasions to sample the various items which I am recommending here today.

As readers will be familiar, I have reviewed quite a few places in Bercham, but they are mainly what I would refer to as ‘big meal’ locations. Today I am going to cover more snack food, a bowl of noodles here, a congee there and a plate of soya chicken over yonder.

Foo Kwai Curry Mee

To begin my grazing spree I was invited by Dr Anoop Kumar, one of my foodie friends, to sample the **Curry Mee** next to his clinic in Bercham. Rushing there at 10.30 a.m., I found the place packed to the gills and my group were seated on the pavement.

Restoran Foo Kwai is a corner coffee shop on Taman Bercham Jaya. Turn right on the third traffic light where Glamour Square is and immediately left onto Taman Bercham Jaya which runs parallel to the main road of Bercham.

Here the curry mee comes in a choice of wet or



dry noodles and a plate of chicken curry can be ordered separately. The curry soup for the wet noodles was nicely ‘lemak’ (coconut-ty) without being cloying and there was a generous helping of bean sprouts and *char siew* (roast pork) that came with it. Similarly for the dry noodles which came with a soya based sauce but one can add either just the plain curry sauce or share an order of their chicken curry.

All Homemade

The chicken curry served here reminds me of the Hainanese curry that I used to eat in my youth; mild, the gravy thick with well-blended spices, the chicken tender and cooked with potatoes. This is a different curry from the one that is served as the curry noodle soup. The addition of this curry to the dry noodles makes for a lovely combination. The addition of their *Yeong Liu* makes for an even more interesting feast, especially if one is having the wet noodles. The dunking in of the various morsels and allowing them to soak up the curry soup is a taste sensation not to be missed.

Noteworthy here is the fact that all their ingredients are homemade, from the ‘*Yeong Liu*’ to their *char siew*, the latter being moist and luscious. While there, check out the velvety **Soya Sauce Chicken** from another stall operating from the same coffee shop. Curry noodles wet – RM3.70; Dry – RM3.30; plate of chicken curry – RM4-5.00; *Yeong Liu* – 70 cents each.

Comforting Congee

There is nothing more comforting than a bowl of hot **Congee** early in the morning or late at night for that matter and it was with that in mind that I went in search with my foodie friend Ginla Foo. Imagine our disappointment when we arrived around 10.00 p.m. to find the **Fee Kee Porridge** in Bercham closed.

Not to be deterred, I went back again the next day at lunchtime, having this hankering for a rare treat: the pig’s offal porridge. Its hard to locate a stall that sells this, let alone a good one and so armed

HAWKER FOOD

by Rosli Mansor and Ed Shahir



Mee Bandung

Mi Bandung

or Mee Bandung, is a traditional dish originating from Muar, Johor. The word ‘bandung’ in its name literally translated means “mixed” or “pairs” in Malay. In the case of Mee Bandung, it originally consisted of only noodles and eggs in a thick soup made of a mixture of chilli, onion, spices, shrimp paste and dried shrimp. Since then the Mee Bandung recipe has been embellished, with the addition of shrimps, meat, fish cakes and vegetables. For “Mee Bandung” lovers, the dish is readily available.

Here are some popular stalls around Ipoh:

Restaurant Al-Zahra

No 80, Rapat Setia, Gunung Rapat, Ipoh. 6.00 p.m. to 2.00 a.m. everyday. Generously served with medium sized prawns, thinly sliced chicken meat, fried shallots, lots of vegetables and the gravy is thick and sweet, RM4.50

Restaurant Di Naina

No. 37, Jalan Sri Ampang 1, Taman Sri Ampang, Ipoh. 24 hours everyday. Gravy with usual ingredients and served with hard-boiled eggs, bean sprouts, prawns, fried shallots. RM4.00

Restaurant Seri Cempaka Tulen 2, Abang Din Tomyam

31, Jalan Seri Cempaka, Taman Cempaka, Ipoh. 7.30 p.m. – 1.30 a.m. everyday. Thick gravy served with hard-boiled eggs, medium sized prawns, bean sprouts, and fried shallots. RM5.00.



with tiffin carriers, I descended on this outlet and brought home a variety of congees to taste.

I was not disappointed. The congee was the Cantonese style, smooth, not too viscous (although I would have preferred it more liquid) and very tasty. My suspicion of MSG was somewhat alleviated a few hours later with a verdict of ‘not too much’; bearable under the circumstances. There is a choice of chicken – RM3.30; pork offal – RM3.30; fish – RM4.00; pork and century eggs – RM4.50; and a YiMeen (fried egg noodles) mixed with your choice of ingredients – RM5.50. I also ordered an extra helping of the fried pig’s intestines which came mixed with fried Chinese crullers.

Fee Kee Porridge is easy to find, located on Bercham’s main road on the left just after the famous claypot rice shop, which is only open at night.

Foo Kwai Curry Noodles
243 Jalan Bercham, Desa Kenchana
Finishes just after lunch. Closed Tuesdays.

Fee Kee Porridge
552A (Lorong Bercham 5), Jalan Bercham
1.00 p.m.-8.00 p.m.
Tel: 016-5623536

RECIPE

By Margarita Lee

Braised Pork Trotter



Ingredients (A):

1 Pig’s Trotter – scrape the skin with knife to remove hairs, wash thoroughly
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt

Ingredients (B):

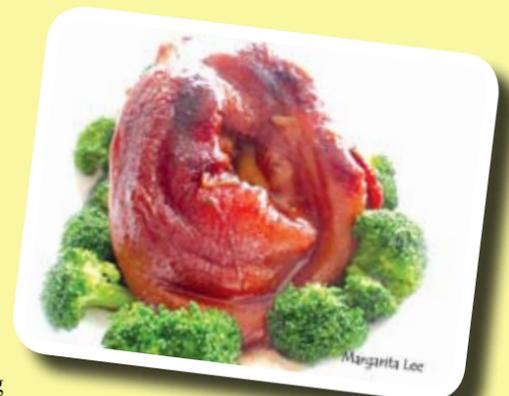
5 tbsp. light soya sauce
3 tbsp. Shaoxing wine
2 tbsp. rice wine (optional)
3 cm fresh ginger
3 stalk green spring onions
4 tbsp. rock sugar
½ tbsp. dark soya sauce

Ingredients (C):

1 tbsp. corn flour for thickening

Method:

1. Blanch Trotter in boiling water, soda and salt for 10 minutes. Remove and drain.
2. Add Ingredients (B) in a pot, Trotter, cover with just enough water, and bring it to boil.
3. Lower the heat to simmer for about 2 hours or until the Trotter is soft.
4. Remove Trotter in a serving platter. Thicken the remaining gravy with corn flour mixed with some water.
5. Pour gravy over Trotter and serve.



News Roundup

Ironman Danny's Heart Race



Danny Ng, an Ipoh boy was a student of St. Michael's Institution, Ipoh in the nineties. He is currently the senior sales manager at the Four Seasons Resort in Whistler, British Columbia, Canada. Danny lives with his wife, Julie, two sons and a daughter in Squamish, B.C. He is my family friend.

I first heard about Danny's Ironman Triathlon activities and training when I was in Vancouver last year. By then he had already participated in a few international triathlons including the Ironman 70.3 Hawaii. Danny was modest about his achievements. However, what had started for Danny as a mere sport to keep his heart pumping now takes on a new dimension in meaning and purpose, as he will be competing for the affairs of the heart. His race is to raise funds for paediatric cardio purpose i.e. children who have heart complications from birth in Canada and the United States. Still very much a Malaysian at heart, I had an easy task convincing Danny to angle this event to raise funds for children with similar problems in Malaysia too.

Thus, on August 11, 2012 Danny will swim 3.8 km in the Hudson River, cycle 180 km and run a 42.2-km marathon, a sum total of 226 km in and around New York, all within a time frame of 17 hours.

Funds raised from sponsors in Malaysia for this event will be donated to the IJN (Institute Jantung Negara) for a worthy purpose. We shall be hearing more from this gutsy Ipoh lad in the issues to come.

WKS

Impiana Wine and Dine Evening



Impiana Hotel Ipoh celebrated its inaugural "Wine & Dine" evening held at The Bistro recently.

The 5-course specialty dinner was complimented by prestigious award-winning Australian wines from Kooyong Estate and Braided River.



New Problems for Taman Istana Residents

Taman Istana residents are facing new problems as the Kinta Riverfront Project nears completion. In Issue 64 (Dec 16-31, 2008), Ipoh Echo highlighted the problems faced by them due to the construction of high-rise apartments and an hotel which are part of the Kinta Riverfront Project. The problems were resolved during the meeting between the residents and the developer.

However, recently, Ipoh Echo was informed by Cheong Chok Fei, Secretary of the Residents' Committee that the exhausts from the kitchen of the hotel are facing the houses with the consequence of hot air blowing towards their houses.

When contacted, Khiew Mien Chun, Project Engineer said that a new technology, Grease Extraction Ventilator System is being installed and minimal grease would be discharged. The outlets are also turned away from the houses. The noise level of the fans would be less than 60 decibels which is within acceptable level. Meanwhile, Cheong said that the Health Department of MBI has agreed to look into the matter.

Liew Chee Weng, Vice President of Residents' Committee then complained that a heavy object crashed through the roof and ceiling of his house, creating a big hole. Because of the rainy season he repaired it at his own cost immediately but his claim for the repair cost has not been settled by the developer. In reply, Khiew said that the length of the rotating arm of the crane does not reach the



houses but he is discussing this with management and hopes to reach an amicable settlement.

On the fears from residents about damage from heavy vehicles using the inner roads of the housing estate, Khiew assured them that repair work will be carried out as soon as the project is completed. As regards the Kuan Yin temple that is being affected in the construction, Khiew said that a safety barrier on the wall separating the hotel and temple will be installed and further repairs to the temple will also be carried out after completion of the project. He would also look into the issue of the plastic safety netting that fell on the roof of Cheong's house assuring that this was a one-off incident due to strong winds.

AJ

In Search Of New Entrepreneurs

The three-day Karnival Pencarian Usahawan Muda (Carnival In Search of Young Entrepreneurs) organised by Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA), served as a platform to instil an entrepreneurial mind-set in the youths of today, particularly in Perak. The carnival, held at Bazar D'Mara, Medan Jaya recently, was launched by Ipoh City Councillor, Syamsul Baharin Putra bin Ahmad Shibi, on behalf of the Mayor.

A series of activities over the three-day period was lined up by MARA's smart partners Celcom, Hub Brite, D'or Rue and Iyanis Green Beauty, all with the aim of helping participants to venture into business. The carnival, held for the first time, provided business-matching opportunities for owners and their potential partners.

At the carnival, five new food products were launched. The "Made in Perak" specialties were durian-flavoured



and goat's milk ice cream, *Rendang Tok* (beef *rendang*), *Pekasam* (fermented fish) and instant rice.

Readers who would like to explore the various business opportunities available can contact Zahari Aziz, Assistant Director MARA Perak, at **019-6757119**. EL

Kiwanis Raises Funds



Kiwanis Club of Meru Valley, Ipoh, stepped up their charitable efforts by organising a fancy-costume-dinner party at Tower Regency Hotel recently. The dinner was held in conjunction with the installation of their new president, Tora Wu Kar Choon and her Board of Directors, for term 2011/2012. Proceeds from the function, through ticket sales and cash donations, went towards funding the Eliminate Project.

The club is joining Kiwanis International and UNICEF in a global project to eliminate maternal/neonatal tetanus (MNT), a disease that kills an estimated 30,000 mothers and 60,000 new-borns every year, one every nine minutes in underdeveloped countries around the world.

The cost of a series of three vaccinations for women of childbearing age to prevent MNT is less than RM6. Readers who wish to contribute to this cause can do so by contacting Ms Kimberly Tan of Kiwanis Meru Valley at **012-5968933**. EL

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News Roundup

Subsidies for Schools

Approximately RM1 million was disbursed by Executive Councillor for Health and Local Government, Dato' Dr Mah Hang Soon, on behalf of the Perak State Government, to 18 mission and 17 national-type secondary schools in the state.

This was part of the state's allocation to pay for the schools' utility bills and miscellaneous expenses for the third and fourth quarters of 2011. A similar disbursement was made in August for the first and second quarters of 2011.

Dhanabalan Segaran, an assistant director with the Perak Education Department, was present at the presentation ceremony held at Bangunan Perak Darul Ridzuan, Ipoh recently.

The total amount disbursed for 2011 is almost RM2 million. Perak is the only state in the country to make such payments. Mah hopes other states will follow its example.



EL

Tasek Corporation's Bursary Programme



As part of its corporate social responsibility, Tasek Corporation Berhad recently launched its first bursary programme at its head office in Ipoh.

Thirty deserving recipients, 10 each from SJK(C) Chung Tack, SJK (T) Kampung Simee and Sekolah Kebangsaan Tasek, Ipoh, were selected based on their financial backgrounds, academic results and involvement in extra curricular activities, among other criteria.

Monies from the bursary, paid out twice a year, will be administered by the respective heads of schools. Each student will receive RM1,000 a year for school expenses such as fees and the purchase of books, uniforms and shoes.

The bursary programme, a brainchild of Executive Director cum Chief Executive Officer, Philip Ting, will allow Tasek Corporation Berhad to not only support those selected but to also expand the programme to help other deserving students of other schools annually.

EL

Arts and Culture

Self-Taught Artist Solo Exhibition



A self-taught Filipino artist held a six-day solo exhibition "Art Tunes 2011" at the Garden Villa in Ipoh. Officiated by Dato Dr Madhuri Majumder on November 11, the exhibition was attended by members of the public and Kinta Heritage Group.

Artist Julbert G. Maranon displayed 24 paintings, which included a number of oil paintings of heritage buildings in the city. He started painting in 1978 and proceeded to further develop his skills under the mentorship of a well-known artist Celso Duazo Pepito in the Philippines in 1999.

With a good grasp of music and art, Julbert loves to paint music in abstract forms expressing them uniquely in vibrant colours. Julbert has been involved in various domestic and international exhibits over the years as a solo artist as well as group exhibitions.

JF

Exhibition at First Galleria



A photographic exhibition showcasing Malay nationalist Mustapha Hussein, veranda living and Taiping's bungalows was held at First Galleria, Taiping on Friday, November 11. The launching ceremony was officiated by Taiping Municipal Council President, Shahrom bin Dato' Malik and witnessed by nearly a hundred invited guests, which included members of Mustapha Hussein's family.

Mustapha's autobiography, "Malay Nationalism Before UMNO – The Memoirs of Mustapha Hussein" was on sale. The book, written by Mustapha's daughter Insun Sony Mustapha, was based on unpublished records written by the late UMNO stalwart who died a broken man in 1987.

Insun, an accomplished writer in her own right, won the prestigious *Hadiah Sastera Perdana Malaysia 1998/1999* award for her literary effort.

FZB

Wellness

Eye Health – Cataracts

Ipoh Echo's eye health series continues with consultant eye surgeon Dr S.S. Gill talking to us about multifocal intraocular lens implants during cataract surgery.



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

The Multifocal Intraocular Lens (Multifocal IOL)

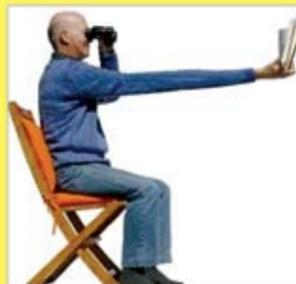
An intraocular lens (IOL) is an artificial lens that is implanted in the eye during cataract surgery as highlighted in the previous issue of the Ipoh Echo. IOLs may be grouped simply as follows:

1. Monofocal IOLs – discussed in issue 131 of the Ipoh Echo
2. Astigmatism-correcting monofocal IOLs (Toric IOLs) – discussed in issue 132 of the Ipoh Echo
3. Multifocal IOLs (Presbyopia correcting) – discussed here
4. Presbyopia & Astigmatism correcting IOLs

In order to understand what a multifocal IOL is, you will need to understand a condition called Presbyopia. The word presbyopia comes from the Greek word presbys meaning "old man" and the Neolatin suffix opia meaning "sightedness".

It is the loss of the eye's ability to change focus to see near objects usually starting around 40 years of age. This loss of power of accommodation to see near objects worsens with age. No one is really spared from this.

The first sign is often the need to hold reading material farther away in order to read a book. You can liken it to a 'menopause' of the eye!



Previously, after a person underwent cataract surgery, he or she would have to wear spectacles to read a book unless he is deliberately made short-sighted in which case the distant vision becomes compromised.

Now, with the advancement in IOL technology, we have presbyopia-correcting IOLs or multifocal IOLs. This would generally help a person see both far and near without glasses, therefore providing the comfort of "spectacle-freedom" most of the time or at least close to spectacle freedom for the daily chores.

Multifocal IOL

Multifocal IOLs are high-tech marvels. Most individuals have a good level of satisfaction when implanted with these IOLs. However, even though there is a high level of satisfaction, it is important to note that these IOLs may not produce ABSOLUTELY crisp vision at multiple distances at ALL times and in ALL patients! Even though the majority of people may not need any spectacle correction and enjoy spectacle-freedom, a small number may still require some spectacle help to read fine print. If you cannot accept this fact, then you are not a candidate for a multifocal IOL choice.

Another phenomenon with multifocal IOLs that you may have to be prepared for is the possibility of at least some glare and haloes around light sources at night. This may occur especially immediately after surgery. Nevertheless, these haloes and glare rarely prohibit night driving. They gradually reduce with time and most individuals do not see any haloes or glare by the end of 6 months if not all by the end of 1 year.

Generally, if you do not have any other eye diseases, you will most likely be satisfied with your vision by the end of 6 to 8 months.

As with anything of premium quality, Multifocal IOLs are about 2-3 times more expensive than a standard Monofocal IOL. Still, if you are a suitable candidate, the long-term savings you gain on the regular changes of reading glasses and multifocal spectacles would be well worth your investment.

Dr Gill will discuss more on cataracts & IOLs in the next issue of the Ipoh Echo.

For more information, contact Gill Eye Specialist Centre at 05-5455582, email: gillyecentre@dr.com or visit www.fatimah.com.my.

Come and Cheer for Ipoh Idols in the Making!



On November 19, 37 enthusiastic young performers took to the stage, solo or in groups, to showcase their talents in the first ever Ipoh (Also) Got Talent Contest, organised by, and held at, YMCA Ipoh. Aged between 10 and 30, these young contestants demonstrated their various talents, mostly in singing and dancing, but also in less common skills such as beatboxing and pipe band. On hand to launch the event and witness this entertaining preliminary round was Dato' Seri M. Kayveas, President of the People's Progressive Party and YMCA President Dato' Daniel Tay.

At the end of the night, 24 contestants remained in the running for Ipoh's Most Talented while the lights went out for the rest. Who will be the most talented of them all??

Semi-Finals on November 26 (7.30 p.m.) and the Grand Finals on December 3 (7.30 p.m.), all held at YMCA Ipoh. More info at 05-254 0809. Entrance is free.

News Roundup

Claim Unsubstantiated, Says YBU

Yayasan Bina Upaya Darul Ridzuan (YBU) dismissed claims by certain quarters, that the foundation was selective when dishing out micro-credit loans to applicants from Manjung District. According to Encik Hairul Mohamed Noor, YBU's Chief of Corporate Services, a total of 140 applicants from Manjung District have received loans from the foundation so far. "The amount disbursed is in excess of RM1.2 million," said Hairul to Ipoh Echo. "In fact, Manjung District is second only to Kinta District in terms of number."

Hairul's response came on the heels of the weekly programme, "Titek Sentuhan" over TV3 which was televised on Sunday, November 13. In the hour-long programme, slated at 9.00 p.m. weekly, a group of *pasar malam* (night market) traders complained that YBU's offering of micro-credits was deceptive, tantamount to hype (*melepaskan batuk ditangga*) to fool the *rakyat*.

"YBU has loaned out a sum of RM800,000 to 76 successful applicants from *pasar malam* traders in Manjung," said Hairul. "The loans are for an array of small businesses such as food processing, retailing and hawking."

YBU targets a wide spectrum of the populace. It does not confine its coverage to a selected group of business people only. The foundation pursues a vigorous poverty eradication programme aimed at improving the quality of life of the poor and the marginalised, regardless of beliefs and ethnicity. This is its expressed objective.

"Single mothers, the physically handicapped, the hard-core poor, the likely to be



poor and not forgetting, the Orang Asli are our targets too," Hairul remarked.

The foundation's role in fulfilling this singular objective is extensive thus people have to appreciate the difficulties it faces daily. "We simply cannot please everyone".

RM

Young Perak

Five sixth-formers from St Michael's Institution, Ipoh, did their school proud when they came out top in the video clip category of The Star Newspaper-in-Education (NiE) Mag Inc 2011 Competition, which was endorsed by the Education Ministry. The theme of the competition was "Speak Out!"

The video, entitled "Stereotyping", by team SPLOOSH, comprising Mabel Low, Jane Lam, Lee Suet Yeng, Kelly Cheng and Beh Heng Jian, was shortlisted along with "Acid Splasher" by team i-INSPIRED from SMK Saujana Impian, Selangor and "What is Love?" by team Absolute Sky from SMK Aminuddin Baki, Kuala Lumpur. These three videos, out of a total of 1,200 submissions, were presented at the finals in Kota Damansara, Petaling Jaya, whereupon the winning entry was declared.

Team SPLOOSH took less than a month to put the video together from scratch. With ideas contributed by all five team members, they were able to come up with an interesting storyline, a good plot augmented by creative cinematography. Utilising free software like Videopad for video editing and Audacity for audio editing, the 3-minute clip was able to effectively convey the message why we should not stereotype others.

Thinking out of the box certainly paid off for Mabel Low, Jane Lam, Lee Suet Yeng, Kelly Cheng and Beh Heng Jian, who each received an Apple iPod nano, a RM100 Pizza Hut voucher and a certificate of appreciation.

EL



Speaking Out

Mass Wedding 11/11/11



A hundred couples, from in and around Ipoh, tied the knot on this auspicious day – 11/11/11 (November 11, 2011). They picked the date for a reason – good luck. "It's indeed a momentous occasion for these newly weds, as the date holds a special meaning for them all," said Dato' Ooi Foh Sing, President of the Chinwoo Sports Association, to Ipoh Echo.

Due to the size of the crowd the ceremony was held over two sessions, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon at the Chinwoo Hall, Ipoh. Forty-three couples were registered in the morning session while the remaining, in the afternoon session. The newly-weds paraded on stage in their wedding attire for a photo shoot and to interact with one another.

Ed



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.

Northern Writers Meeting on Saturday, **December 3**, 10.30 a.m. at Garden Villa, No. 5, Jalan Raja Dr Nazrin Shah (Gopeng Road), Ipoh. All invited. For details, call Pak Peter at **019-574 3572**.

Sanggeethassamrajiyam 2011 an Indian classical music recital organised by Jabatan Kebudayaan dan Kesenian Negeri Perak on Saturday, **December 3**, 8.00 p.m. at Auditorium Jabatan Kebudayaan dan Kesenian Negeri Perak. Free admission. For details call Pn Yamuna **010-397 0264** or Pn Fairus bt Alias **05-253 7001**.

Perak Academy Lectures – "Fact and Fiction in Contemporary Malaysian History: Some Dominant Themes" by Prof Cheah Boon Kheng formerly of USM, Penang, Friday, **December 16**, 8.00 p.m. Venue to be determined. For details and reservations call Wai Kheng at **05-547 5339** or **016-551 8172**.

Swarangal (Musical Notes) by Greentown Indian Cultural Society Ipoh, Friday **December 16**, 7.30 p.m. at Dewan Serbaguna Bangunan SUK Negeri Perak. A live performance of 4 world-best musicians from Mangalore, India. Free Entrance. For information, contact: Subain Singam **012-5056049** or Guna **013-5202655**.

GenY EQ Camp, December 19 to 21 at SUFES Campsite, Tapah. GenY is an organisation dedicated to training and empowering youths with leadership soft skills and to improve their Emotional Quotient (EQ). Limited places available. Call Mabel **05-5469715** or **012-5340063** for details.

Dementia Society Perak Workshop: "Community Care for Clients with Dementia", **December 28** from 8.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m. at Dahlia Utama, Level 4 Pantai Hospital. Registration can be emailed to april@dementia.com.my or registered online at www.dementia.com.my.



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Wellness

EYE CHAT - FROM A RETINAL SURGEON'S PERSPECTIVE

What is Age Related Macular Degeneration?

Most people are aware of cataract as a cause of blindness but not so many know about retinal diseases. The leading cause of blindness in developed nations is a condition called age related macular degeneration (AMD). It is a disease of the macula (the most important part of the retina) and tends to affect individuals over the age of 55 years. Symptoms would include distortion or blurring of central vision (see below).



Normal vision (left) and a central "blind spot" in AMD (right).

There are 2 types of AMD – wet and dry. The more common form (90%) is dry AMD which is slowly progressive and less aggressive whereas wet AMD can cause abrupt, devastating loss of central vision. I shall focus on wet AMD in this article.

What is the cause of AMD?

Wet AMD is characterized by bleeding from abnormal blood vessel(s) underneath the retina. These abnormal vessels are stimulated to "grow" by the presence of a signal protein called VEGF.

The cause remains unknown but risk factors for this disease include age, heredity as well as hypertension and heart disease which have been shown to have mild association with AMD. Smoking has been found to be the most important modifiable risk factor. Studies have shown that up to 15% of people aged 55 to 74 years have some form of AMD and the risk goes up to 30% in people over 75 years old.

Treatment of wet AMD

Before the turn of the century, there weren't any effective treatment options for wet AMD and eye doctors would be helpless as their affected patients progressed to blindness.

A "revolution" occurred in 2005 when a new form of treatment became available and it came about when a very innovative retinal specialist from USA decided to use a drug normally used to treat bowel cancer, and inject it into eyes with wet AMD. This drug, Avastin, is an anti-VEGF i.e. it blocks the action of VEGF and thus, stops these abnormal vessels from growing and bleeding.

Whilst Avastin was used in this "off label" manner to treat wet AMD, research was carried out to design a drug to specifically treat this disease – so Lucentis was born in 2006. Large clinical trials were done and it's efficacy and safety was proven without a doubt. For the first time, retinal specialists had a treatment which could stabilize and halt the disease process in wet AMD in over 90% and even improve vision in up to 40% of patients – something which was never before possible!

The only drawbacks with this treatment (besides needing an injection into the eye), is the frequency and cost of treatment. Lucentis was proven to be effective if injected at monthly intervals and this could go on indefinitely! In USA, Lucentis costs more than \$2000 per injection whereas Avastin costs \$150. This huge price difference has led to a real dilemma for the patients as well as the retinal doctors

The latest "head to head" study comparing Lucentis and Avastin has shown that both drugs are almost equal in efficacy and safety. The safety of Avastin remains "inconclusive" and we await further reports about this.

The experiences of retinal specialists throughout the world have been very similar in terms of the use of Avastin or Lucentis for the treatment of wet AMD. Both drugs work well in properly selected patients and with proper monitoring and informed consent. This will remain the primary form of treatment for wet AMD until better options become available in the future. Rest assured, more research is ongoing for better alternative therapies.



For more information, contact: **Lee Eye Centre Ipoh**
Tel: 05-254 0095 or email: enquiry@lec.com.my. Website: www.lec.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.

Help Make VPY 2012 A Success

The launch of the Perak Tourism Newsletter by Dato' Hamidah Osman on July 26 at Heritage Hotel, Ipoh is most timely in view of Visit Perak Year (VPY) 2012. Hamidah's message in the inaugural issue of the newsletter reinforces the state government's commitment in making the event a reality despite the predictions of the many "doomsayers".

Tourism is a major money spinner and this is a fact. For the

tourism industry to flourish, the assistance of ordinary Perakeans and non-governmental organisations must be sought and galvanised. Organisations such as Rotary International, Lions Club International, Kiwanis International, Y's Men's Club and other leading NGOs, whose membership runs into the millions worldwide, is the icing on the cake. Circulars can be sent to all these organisations inviting them to come to Perak next year.

Y's Men's Club of Ipoh has taken the initiative to do the needful by writing to our headquarters in Geneva alerting them of VPY 2012. A couple, who are members of the Bjert chapter

in Denmark, Beat Junker Hansen and Ruth Elizabeth paid a visit to the Silver state in early November. They were taken to all the published touristic landmarks in the state. The sights that impressed them most were the many heritage buildings in Kuala Kangsar. This was made possible by the availability of Perak Tourism Newsletter Volume 4 which highlighted the royal town of Kuala Kangsar.

My take on VPY 2012: let's join hands and make it a roaring success.

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Book Review

By See Foon Chan-Koppen

Kebaya Tales: Of Matriarchs, Maidens, Mistresses and Matchmakers

I am not much of a reader of fiction but I couldn't put down *Kebaya Tales*, a collection of 13 short stories by Dr Lee Su Kim who was in Ipoh recently to speak about her book to the Perak Academy.

The intriguing subtitle 'Of matriarchs, maidens, mistresses and matchmakers' further piqued my interest and I was prompted to read it as soon as I got home that evening thinking that a quick dip would satisfy my curiosity. Lo and behold, an hour later, I was still reading and the following morning, picked it up again to finish.

Dipping into this book evoked for me another world, the world of the Nonyas, a world that many know little about, a colourful, flamboyant and unique community still in existence today in the former Straits Settlements of Malacca, Penang and Singapore; where life moved at a gentle and languid pace; a world of *kerosang* and *Kebayas*, *babas* and *bajus*, sarongs and slippers.

Full colour photographs of these with sepia prints from her family albums are creatively interspersed amongst the stories, with captions to explain the intricacies of the handiwork or the relationship to the author of the various family members. Coupled with *pantun* and popular ditties, the atmosphere of a bygone era comes alive in her book, the reverberations lingering till well after one puts the book down, wishing for more pictures and more tales to savour.

Her family photographs allow the reader to step into her own story. The photographs of her parents and her childhood are particularly heart-warming. I especially enjoyed the description of the ear-digger which her grandmother would wear in her *sanggul* or bun and when not in use for its actual purpose, would be occasionally used to "poke

the hand of whoever misbehaved especially clumsy, bumbling *nonyas* in the kitchen whose preparation of food was not fine or 'seronoh' enough".

The stories are delightful, and to quote from the back cover, "teeming with fascinating and interesting characters, unexpected twists and turns, cultural rituals,

beliefs and superstitions and poignant events in the life stories of the Peranakans." All the stories are based on or are inspired by real-life events which Su Kim has collected from her *nyonya* mother, grandmother, *bibiks* and *nyonias*.

Obviously, a book voted by readers of the Star newspaper to win 1st prize in the fiction category has to be captivating and it does captivate.

There are 13 tales in all and can be read in no particular order, each rich with the resonance of a bygone era, the conversations coming alive with slang expressions and local jargon. At times funny, whimsical and touching in parts, Su Kim writes fluidly, with an ear to the argot of her *Nyonya* heritage that manages to inform and hold the reader's attention.

The fact that it is a collection of short stories makes the book an easy read, dipping in at one's leisure to read a tale or two; returning to it after a few days without missing a single plot.

I would recommend this book as the perfect Christmas gift.

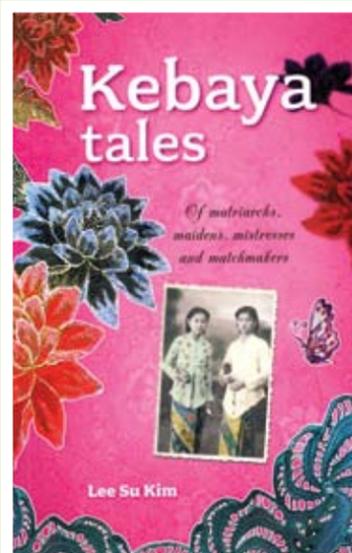
KEBAYA TALES

Of Matriarchs, Maidens, Mistresses and Matchmakers

By Lee Su Kim

Publisher: Marshall Cavendish, 178 pages.

It's now in its third printing and is available at all major bookstores and Perak Academy (05-5478949) at RM34.90.



Sport

FACES Futsal Charity Cup 2011



FACES Youth Society, for the third consecutive year running, organized the FACES Futsal Charity Cup 2011 and mini charity food fair recently and successfully raised RM6,525 for purchase of electrical items for Yayasan Latihan Insan Istimewa Perak.

The champion trophy went to Tai Chong Marine Engineering, and with it a hamper and RM1,500 worth of vouchers. First runner-up went to Perak River Sand, who won a hamper and RM1,000 worth of vouchers with the Most-Valuable-Player award going to En. Mohd Azahar from Tai Chong Marine.

While the futsal competition was in progress, members of the public were busy choosing and bargaining at the mini charity food fair. FACES members, together with volunteers, manned booths selling nasi lemak, snacks, desserts, ice-cream, vegetables, fruits, stationery, toys and DIY hardware.

Yayasan Latihan Insan Istimewa Perak Malaysia is a charitable body founded in 1998 which conducts physiotherapy classes, preschool and learning programmes for 50 physically-challenged and Down syndrome children and adults. The Centre depends solely on donations from the public. The Centre is located on No. 2 Jalan Hor Hock Lung, Taman Camay, Pasir Puteh, 31650 Ipoh.

FACES Youth Society is a charity organization that is dedicated to education and children's needs. FACES would like to welcome passionate people to join their dynamic and fun-loving team. Contact Patrick at 012-3482366 or search for 'FACES' on Facebook. Photo shows Champion Team – Tai Chong Marine and FACES members.

Perak Closed Swimming Championship 2011



Over two hundred youthful swimmers, representing 4 clubs and 25 schools, mainly from Ipoh, participated in the recently concluded Perak Closed Swimming Championship 2011. The event, held on November 12 and 13 at the Ipoh City Council Swimming Complex, was organised by the Amateur Swimming Association of Perak for the purpose of selecting a team for next year's Sukma Games (Sukan Malaysia).

Orca Swimming Club, Taiping Chinese Recreation Club and Kinta Swimming Club sent the largest contingent. Their total of 111 swimmers represented almost 52 per cent of the overall number of participants.

The number of records broken was not substantial but some credible timings were recorded. This bodes well for the state. In the 4x100m medley relay Boys 1, SMK Gunung Rapat broke the old record by almost 12 seconds finishing in 5 mins 19.78 secs. Runner-up Kinta Swimming Club too beat the record touching the wall in 5 mins 21.87 secs. Nur Diana Balquis completed the 50m freestyle Girls 2 blue ribbon race in 29.57 secs. Her winning time, however, was nowhere close to Cindy Ong's 28.25 secs recorded in 1999.

Taiping Junior Football: Educate a Child While Playing

Rain on an early Saturday morning in Taiping did not dampen parents' and children's spirits at the launching of Taiping Junior Football. Perak Queen's Club (PQC) in collaboration with Majlis Perbandaran Taiping (MPT), launched the event in the Padang Esplanade, officiated by Yang DiPertua (YDP), MPT, Encik Sharom Bin Abd Malik. As part of the launch, En Sharom handed to Perak Queen's Club President – Pn Normala Rashid (pic), over 50 training footballs as sponsorship to Perak Queen's Club. These balls will be used throughout the programme during their weekly training.

In implementing and demonstrating PQC's motto of "Educate child while playing" PQC has selected football as the platform to develop the amateur sport at the grassroots level. Taiping Junior Football is a series of football training sessions targeted at both girls and boys under 12. PQC will only open to 50 children (under 12) for this Taiping centre. However, more training centres will be opened as the response and number of registration increases. There is also a similar PQC training centre in Batu Gajah which is currently having more than 100 participants undergoing weekly training.

Some of the newly-registered trainees started their training lead by PQC's Coach Puan Normala Rashid, President of Perak Queens Club and former Malaysian



Pn Normala, President Perak Queens Club receiving sponsored balls from YDP

Women Football player.

Puan Normala also invites major corporations, foundations, business owners, sports organizations, community groups and individuals to show their support for community sports and work closely with NGOs like them to demonstrate the importance of providing continuous support to talented youth.

Parents who are interested in registering their children can do so by connecting to the Perak Queen Club's Facebook or email perakqueensclub@yahoo.com or contact the Club's President, Puan Normala Rashid directly at 012-5380084 or Pn Siti Kamesah at 012-3468711.

Taiping Marathon 2011

Taiping's inaugural International Marathon 2011 was held recently with the start and finishing points located at the town's iconic esplanade. It was organised by Rotary Club of Bukit Larut Centennial with tacit support (technical and moral) from the Perak Amateur Athletics Association.



The event was sub-divided into four divisions ranging from the gruelling 42-km marathon to the easy 5-km run catering to all categories of runners – from seasoned campaigners to beginners.

Over 2,000 participants stood behind the start line before the race was flagged off. Kenyan Frederick Matiu won the International division with an impressive time of 2 hrs 20.1 mins while Penangite Muniandy won the National category with a time of 2 hrs 50.28 mins. They won RM10,000 and RM5,000, respectively.

Executive Councillor for Tourism, Dato' Hamidah Osman was the guest-of-honour. She assured the organisers that next year's race, slated for on September 23, 2012, will be incorporated into the state tourism calendar thus allowing for a larger coverage and sponsorship.

Club President, Ahmad Mirza, thanked the many sponsors for their generosity.

FZB

A record 1,335 participants, local and international, took part in the 10th Powerman Malaysia 2011, a world renowned run-bike-run duathlon held in Manjung recently. Powerman Malaysia, part of the International Powerman Series, is the only Asian qualifier for the annual Powerman World Championships held in Zofingen, Switzerland. Sponsored by Malakoff Corporation Berhad, the event was held at the Mini Sports Complex in Seri Manjung recently.

When the inaugural race was held in 2002, a total of 237 participants from 10 countries took part. In 2007, the number more than doubled to 580 from 30 countries. Last year the figure almost breached the 1,000 mark. The number of entries from European countries this year has tripled that of last year. This is a good indication of the attractiveness of the Malaysian qualifier.

Menteri Besar, Dato' Seri DiRaja Zambry Abd Kadir and Chairman of Malakoff Corporation Berhad, Tan Sri Abdul Halim Ali, were among the dignitaries who graced the occasion. Speaking before the prize-



Powerman Malaysia 2011

giving ceremony, Tan Sri Halim reiterated his company's commitment in sponsoring the annual event. He said that it was part of Malakoff's corporate social responsibility in ensuring that the sport gained a firm footing in Malaysia. Zambry thanked Malakoff for its efforts in placing Perak on the world map, as the sport has a huge international following.

Rob Woestenborghs from Belgium took the Men's Elite category with a time of 2 hrs 40 mins and 15 secs. In the Women's Elite category, Radka Vodickova from Czech Republic was champion for the third consecutive year with a time of 3hrs 3mins and 44secs. Both took home USD5,000 each. Zambry gave away the prizes.

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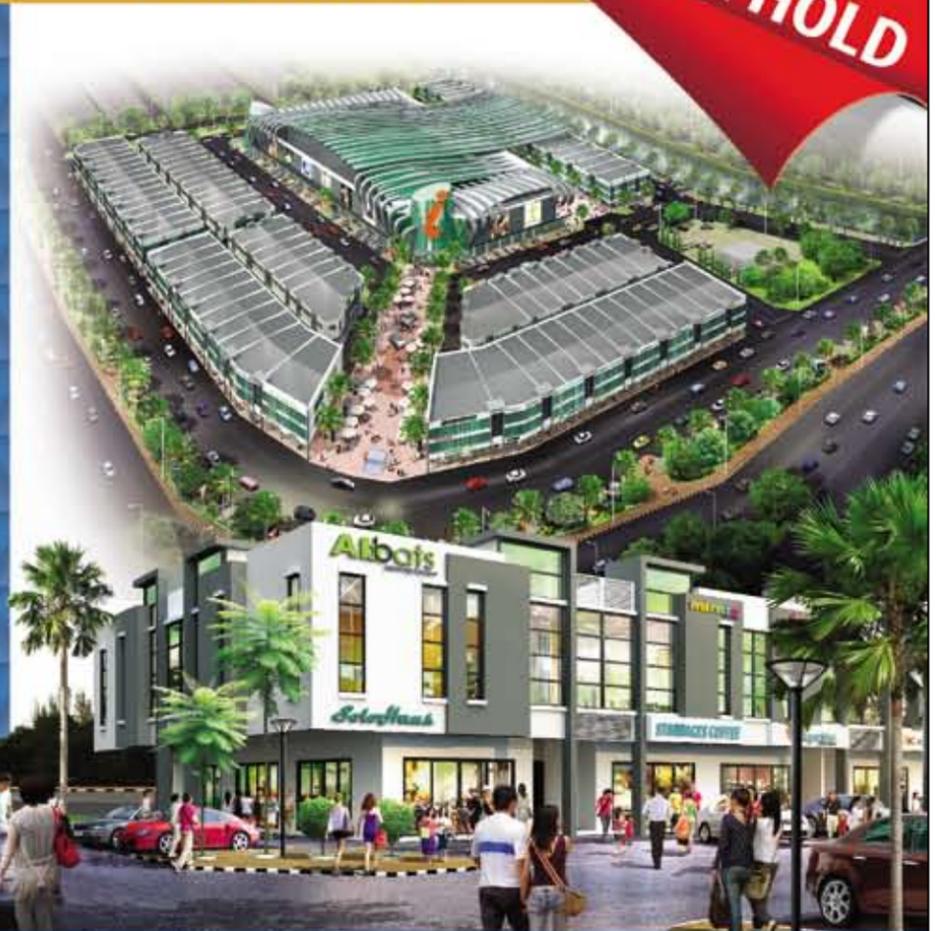
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Community

Spousal Abuse on the Rise

“It’s an accepted fact that spousal abuse is on the rise today,” Dr Sharifah Halimah told reporters after speaking at a forum on domestic violence and child abuse in Jelapang recently. The one-day forum was organised by the Perak State Health Department and assisted by government agencies and non-governmental organisations.

The President of the Perak Women for Women Society alluded to statistics to substantiate her claim. “Over 70 per cent of working women are being abused, mentally and physically, daily,” she lamented. The reality on the ground is most disturbing as such abuses are not confined to women alone but to children, as well. The negativity it will cause is far-reaching as they will have a profound effect on the mental and physical well being of the victims.

“Women must be resolute in countering these abuses. They should not adopt a



passive attitude fearing the loss of dignity and face should they act irrationally,” she reasoned. “Don’t treat women as objects to vent men’s frustration, as punching bags, so to speak. Women’s reluctance to react is not a sign of their weakness. To them, maintaining the family’s integrity is paramount.”

The open forum was targeted at the men folks but, unfortunately, only the oldies were present. Nonetheless, the objective of the discussion was achieved. Beside talks by speakers, well versed on the issue of domestic violence, the audience got to see pictures of abused women and children and posters abhorring violence of all kinds on display in the council-owned Jelapang hall.

Ayob Mohd Hassan, 65, from Slim River commended the organisers for a splendid show. “The forum is very informative,” he said. He, however, blamed technology and modern lifestyles for all the ills that are affecting mankind. “We’ve to fall back to religion to overcome these woes.”

Norashikin Mokhtar, 40, from Taman Jati, Ipoh was pleased with what she saw and heard. “It’s an excellent way to showcase the effects of domestic violence,” she said. She felt that the ones who needed such exposures are the newly-weds. “They should be made to attend this forum.”

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