

Episodes before the WEDDING

This goes back a year in 2015. Hock Lye and Elizabeth became proud parents in law when both his sons decided to get married within a month of each other in Melbourne in April and May 2016.

When his son Vincent and new daughter-in-law Joanne decided to have a celebration in Kuala Lumpur, it gave HL an occasion to have a get together. However, a quandary – he had a restricted number of invites to extend old schoolmates from ACS, KGV, Varsity and former work colleagues.

It looked really simple initially. Lai Cheng was already in Malaysia for her mum's 88 birthday celebration in April. Siang Boon wanted a holiday by the beach. To persuade Lai Cheng to remain in Malaysia for the wedding, HL asked CRO to plan an overnight weekend somewhere the weekend before the dinner. Penang or alternatively Malacca was considered. Hit another complication! It was a long Vesak holiday weekend; Penang and Malacca becomes be the centre of the universe; so not many wanted to chip in to the usual traffic crawl on the NS highway.

Plans for an outlandish weekend were scrapped as there were other priorities - family get together, people away on holidays, hiking up Gunung Tahan; I can't remember. However, from my recollection and various postings, there were an array of eating marathon in KL, PJ, Malacca and Seremban. I imported extra weight just viewing the photos on our ACS chat room and foodie postings on Facebook. Unsurpassed Thai Food, Secret Recipe again for our Durian Durian cake; scoffing our next pile of banana pancakes; Bucket list Pumpkin fritters with salted egg yolks, sweet sour soup with fish maw. This was besides the regular must have favourites. Rojak, Sotong Mee Hoon, Yee Poh loh see fun, Asia Laksa, Beef Noodles and chendol.

One of the highlight eating extravaganzas was a trip to Nilai for sea food and to try the speciality dish sauna prawns. Pauline planned the occasion at a Hakka restaurant called Kee Tek Loy for a belated birthday celebration for Michael as well. He wanted flowers like what Zip got for her birthday. Be careful what you wish for - cos what you say never know which one will come true. From the Group chat – Michael - "Ai yah, birthday no flowers, cauliflower also can lah." ML sent virtual cauliflowers and capsicum from the Perth market for Michael.

That just was the trigger we needed. We made a dash to the market. The cauliflower was neatly wrapped with blossoming choy sum prettied up with a pink ribbon. Looked luscious especially after it was pinned under Zip and Cheng's bosom as they took turns hauling the cauliflower which weighed a kilo. The dinner which saw 18 of us was a steaming winner and yummylicous. Too bad someone missed it and complained I didn't take his call. The earlier downpour meant we did not manage to drop by the cake shop. I remembered we had a left over muffin from our afternoon tea. Topped a candle borrowed from the diners at the next table meant we rustle a symbolic cake. We all roared mad with hilarity as we sang the birthday song and insisted the muffin be cut into 18 pieces. What cheapies we were!

When the fun began it never stops. HL was following the live feed of the performances and an eating spree and karaoke was on the card when he arrived. Even though it was the Vesak holiday and only few of us could make it, trust me – that does not stop us from having a good time. We had sifu Eddie who sang 'Ling Lang Lok' thrice much to Cheng's amusement and Zip grooving it up with Michael. \$30 spent for the 7 hours use of the karaoke room with buffet dinner and porridge supper. What more can senior citizens ask for? Next day was early Yee Poh loh see fun breakfast potentially laced with lard accompanied with a big bowl of spare parts. Thankfully, the cendol store was closed and we went into a \$2 shop where HL, Zip and Cheng picked up their bunny hair bands for a photo opportunity.

Next stop, lunch at Ming Kok for the bucket list pumpkin fritters. HL learnt not to wrestle with Koon to pay for the meal.

Siang Boon fixed her own itinerary and we were exasperated trying to figure out what she was up to as we did not hear from her after the initial flurry of emails. She arrived in KL and went out with her cousins while we were feasting Nilai Sauna Prawns. She had to follow the karaoke live feed from Penang and missed the wedding dinner as she flew back to US a day earlier. Some of us managed to catch her over lunch in Midvalley. SK had earlier organised buffet dinner to catch up with Faizul and company; so that was a bonus for her. A good turn out with Kim Tze, Faizul, Yatha, Guna, Rahimi, HL and Thai Sing.

In the interim, Berne had to be cajoled to travel on her own from Singapore to the dinner. Well done Berne for flying down and taking the train unaccompanied. I will definitely be in touch when I am next in Singapore.

A few of our regulars could not make it, Hoon Peck had to go off to Athens, Tiew Sing and Annie become proud grandparents again and Fui was stuffing his face with pork knuckles in Berlin on a business trip. The girls were dressed to the nine and datuk WK struck jackpot. Zip promised to be on her best behaviour but couldn't resist a photo session with the dashing new father in laws. I was off the beaten track as my feet determined to curl up during the drive in the traffic jam leaving my mobility challenged for most of the evening.

Free flow whisky after most of the diners left; yam seng with Glenfiddich while singing ACS we thank thee brought fond memories. Spare you all the other little details but really wonderful to also see the youthful looking Paul Kit, bashful Faizul, long lost Rahimi, gentle Tham Fong, busy Siew Pheng along with now regulars Lee Choo, Swee Chu, Koon, Felicia, Foo Chee Keong and Peck Yen. Thai Sing and SK were also there with their family.

Hock Lye and Elizabeth, thank you for inviting us to be part of your joyous landmark. You are much loved and appreciated as our webmaster.

Angie Yen

CRO Foot note: I was taken by surprise when Jackpot said "Ah, you are Angie. I have been reading the ACS website". Thus, I was inspired to continue writing the articles as I have told several times that there are friends who we do not know following our antics and envious of our friendship. Wish we are so close like you all. Plus couple of years down; some of us may not remember it all.

On behalf of HL; to those he was unable to invite - it didn't imply that you all mean any less to him, just he had constraints with numbers. Hope to catch up with the rest of you at other reunions and other happy events.