

Headed for Kuala Lumpur

Singapore contrasts ancient and modern

Around the World in 380 Days

Tenth in a series

By STEPHEN FROST Herald Special One of the things I like about Australia is the fact that neither their immigration nor their taxation department know what the other is doing.

My travelling companion, John Paddy, and I both managed to get income tax rebates even though neither of us had work permits. The taxation department just files your return like anyone else's despite the fact that your address is RR4, Georgetown, Ontario. Not only that, but they gave

sense walking in ill-prepared. We had our flight tickets to Singapore with us, and our passports, and these we had to turn over to Immigration while they confirmed that we were indeed going to leave. When he got that straightened out, the official came back with our tickets, but not our passports. Then he started asking embarrassing questions like, "How come you two fellows didn't get your visas extended?" and "Where have you been these past three and a half months?"

JUST NODDED Naturally, I left J.P. do the talking. I only nodded or concurred at the appropriate spots. The official gave us a sideways glance, but said that he believed us. Nevertheless he had to ask questions to make sure people don't work in the country illegally all he had to do was phone across the road to find out if we had collected



A "city of contrasts", Singapore unfolds along its central river as the junks and sampans unload their wares before a futuristic skyline that attests to the city's importance among southeast Asian trading centres.

(Photo by Stephen Frost)

our income tax). He didn't believe us entirely, however, since he took our passports and told us we could have them when we boarded the plane.

We caught a flight out of Perth on Quantas bound for Singapore in the middle of the week. Consequently, the flight was rather empty: 60 people aboard a 747.

Whether it was because the flight was so empty or Quantas is trying to compete with Singapore Airline's incredible service, I don't know, but it was free drinks and a movie all the way to Singapore.

Not only that, but I saw the most spectacular lightning storm out the port window of the plane I have ever witnessed. It was at least 25 miles away, so it had no bearing on our flight.

The view of one of these storms from a great height is fantastic: you see bolts jump-

ing from the clouds to the sea, or the islands, with the sun sinking far to the west behind the clouds.

Landing in Singapore was a treat, despite the occasional horror stories one hears from fellow travellers.

The fellow at the immigration desk had a Canadian flag pin with the outline of Alberta on it; he spotted the Maple Leaf ingot I was wearing around my neck.

"You Canadian, too? From Alberta?" he asked. "Sure," I said. (You have to realize they probably don't know their geography all that well).

He just smiled, gave me the six months' visa I asked for and said "Have a nice stay". We Canadians have to stick together.

We caught a taxi from the airport into the city and took a room in the lovely Kam Leng Hotel at \$14 a night (in Singa-

pore currency - \$6.50 American.)

From my journal: "Fabulous place. This morning, I have three or four minor bites from the bed bugs, J.P. has more being the tastier and meatier of the two of us. Right outside our window we have a picturesque view of Jalan Besar, one of the main thoroughfares, and its accompanying, interminable din. This coupled with last night's heat, 31 degrees centigrade, or for you folks who still believe in real degrees - 88, it was almost impossible to sleep."

Nevertheless, John and I got up, refreshed ourselves with a cold shower (the only type available) and wandered into town.

This is quite a city of contrasts. From the river running through the centre of town, one can see the junks unloading their wares with the city skyscrapers in the background.

The junks keep the city's stomachs satisfied while the city's commercial centre keeps the populace in money and luxuries when the common people can afford them, which is none too often.

"I bought two bath robes today," my journal recalls, "one in blue with embroidery and the other white. They cost about \$10 U.S. each."

John and I decided not to buy much this time around because we would be passing through again and would know better then how our money was holding out.

As far as food is concerned, there are plenty of establishments to enjoy in the city. The most interesting are the food centres. One evening John and I went to the Telok Ayer food centre, which is a conglomeration of stalls laughingly calling themselves restaurants. There are probably 30 or more stalls to choose from.

plus assorted drinks and sweets stalls.

CURRIED CHICKEN The first day there, we ate curried chicken and rice with a curry sauce to make it hotter, and a side dish of cucumber and pineapple with a sweet tomato sauce, all for \$1.50.

Singapore. The quart of Anchor beer was the price of the meat and, surprisingly, it wasn't all that bad.

The establishments name was "Bahamath Muslim Restaurant", owned by R. Shaik Alawudin. It was run by three or four disreputable but friendly fellows of indeterminate origin.

We managed to sleep on our last two nights there. After three hefty Scotches and water, who wouldn't?

One morning, we paid a visit to the Thai embassy to enquire about visas. Unfortunately, it would take longer than we had to spare to acquire them. The

embassy told us, however, that we would receive 15 days automatically when we entered the country.

We spent the rest of the day out on the islands swimming and catching rays. The water was about 30 degrees Fahrenheit, so it wasn't very refreshing. I put some more color into my skin, so I suppose it was alright.

On the way back from the island, we took a cable car (made in Berne, Switzerland) and the view of the city was well worth the wait in the sweltering heat to see it.

The next day, we headed into Malaysia for Kuala Lumpur and a bout with food poisoning. Next week, I'll write briefly about K.L., or the muddy river as it's called, and Penang, an island off the coast of Malaysia with its main town of, curiously enough, Georgetown. Seems those British were everywhere.



Halfway around the world from home, the intrepid globetrotter makes an entry in his journal datelined "Kam Leng Hotel, Jalan Besar, Singapore". Lubricating the flow of words was a bottle of Johnny Walker Black Scotch, purchased there for \$3.50 Australian. (Photo by John Pladdy)

Al's ballooning hobby a 'corporate release'

By MAGGIE HANNAH Herald Special

Acton has been on the road maps for many years but the town is now going to appear on air maps too, thanks to Acton's Rainbow Airways.

While Rainbow Airways' becoming Acton's official airline was just a publicity gimmick to aid in ticket sales for Actario, there is no gimmick to Alistair Russell's balloon port west of town.

Mr. Russell got interested in ballooning a couple of years ago when he noticed a balloon basket behind a factory next door to his own Calgary plant. He talked to the plant owner and found one of their problems was communicating with the ground when they were airborne.

Mr. Russell's company manufactures portable telephones complete with attache cases in which to carry them. He got a balloon ride and demonstrated his product while he was at it. The neighbor bought a phone and Mr. Russell got hooked on ballooning.

BASKET SIZE It's an expensive hobby, he admits, since balloons run from \$7,000 to \$20,000 depending on the type of envelope and the size of basket. Rainbow 1, his first balloon, holds three

people. Rainbow 2 carries double the load and doesn't have anything like the restrictions of the smaller balloon.

Mr. Russell says he took to ballooning as a corporate release. It has turned into a sideline that would keep him busy enough to become a second job if he was willing to devote that much time to it.

Not only do people want him to give them champagne flights in Rainbow 1, companies such as Pepsi Cola want him to fly Rainbow 2 for them as an advertising gimmick at various events.

He has also been asked to sell Raven Balloons, as a sales representative for the company from which his own balloons were purchased. Then he has also been asked to give instruction to prospective balloonists since ballooning instructors are very hard to find. They are so scarce he likens obtaining a balloon licence to obtaining an astronaut's licence. His was the 41st Canadian licence granted.

Ballooning is a very gentle sport, Mr. Russell says, since it can only be enjoyed when wind speeds are around five miles an hour.

It is inconvenient in the sense that these conditions tend to occur very early in the

morning (around 5 a.m. for example), or just before sunset.

This means it can't be taken any time the balloonist has a few spare moments. It also means it is relatively safe since it can only be undertaken in calm conditions.

If something goes wrong and a crash landing is necessary the balloon acts as a parachute and the wicker basket absorbs most of the jolt.

Mr. Russell is into ballooning as a sport as well as for a hobby. He is off to Edmonton to fly in the Klondike Days celebrations this week, then to the Canadian National Balloon Championships in Grande Prairie, Alberta next week.

Following that he has been invited to the Air Canada-Labatt's International Balloon Trophy Competition in Kitchener Aug. 15, 16 and 17.

He was interested in making the first hot air balloon over the North Pole with a friend, but since a couple recently completed the flight, they are now looking at a flight from Nanaimo to Vancouver instead.

Mr. Russell's daughters Toby and Wendy enjoy flying with him and Mrs. Russell not only flies with him but often drives the chase vehicle to go out to pick him up at the end of the flight.

Ballooning has come a long way from the early days in France when peasant farmers thought the balloons were visitors from outer space and put pitchforks through them.

It is from those days that tradition has developed of opening a bottle of champagne at the end of the flight, he said. The pilot provides champagne as a treat for the peasants to pacify them for landing in their fields.

Farmers are surprisingly friendly, he said, and of course he takes the precaution of avoiding their crops when he lands.

'Communications' the catchword at Halton's new conference centre

By LORI TAYLOR Herald Staff Writer

The Halton Hills Centre is perched high on the Niagara Escarpment overlooking much of Milton and Halton Hills, but guests at the centre probably won't spend much time studying the view.

Halton Hills' first conference centre, located off Highway 25, south of Speyside, is open for groups who want to hold conferences there, and for groups who wish to attend workshops and seminars organized by the owners of the centre. These people are also available on a consultant basis outside the centre.

The centre is owned and operated by a management group of David Dineen, Don Cave, Jan Culley and James Dueck. All four partners are from the Kitchener area and all have a background in education and communications.

"The name, Halton Hills Centre, is a little vague," Mr. Cave said. "But then, while it doesn't really say what we are, it doesn't limit us either."

THREE PHASES The centre is a house built almost on top of the scarp and surrounded by trees. Renovations which are being done in three phases, will leave the centre with ten bedrooms and a capacity of between 20 and 25 people. Although the centre is open now, it won't be fully operational until the end of August.

The property was purchased in June, 1979, but the opening has been delayed while the necessary permits were obtained from the town and the Niagara Escarpment Commission.

Mr. Cave said the group is very pleased with their location, because it is centrally located. They expect to have guests from Oshawa and London, and everywhere in between.

"We're very happy with our location," he said. "We feel we're central to five or six million people. We knew we

wanted something in this area between Toronto and Kitchener."

"I fell in love with the place the first time I saw it. There's a real break from the pace out there. It has an ambience - it sets a pace and tells people to slow down."

Any group wishing to hold a conference at the centre can rent the building and run their own conference. The daily rental fee would then cover accommodation and food, and would give the group exclusive use of the facilities, which include a swimming pool.

The other aspect of the operation is the training and development seminar, Mr. Cave said, where individuals and groups can sign up for various seminars designed by the management group.

"To me that's the exciting part," Mr. Cave said. "We can design courses for all sorts of interests. I hope to bring in people that I find interesting myself."

Although some renovations are still underway, Mr. Cave said the group hopes to begin this weekend with a seminar on holistic health. There are still openings in this seminar.

LEISURE AND STRESS Other workshops planned for the summer include stress management for teachers, assertiveness training, weekend parenting, leisure and lifestyle, managing students effectively and the skills and responsibilities of a consultant.

The programs designed by the management of the centre will fall in five basic categories: marriage and family life, personal growth, organizational development, holistic health and alternate life styles.

"We're not too big and not too small," Mr. Cave said. "We're right in the middle. We hope to maintain that intimacy. You can go to a conference in one of those big places and not meet 85 per cent of the

people."

BREAKDOWN ROOT The main ingredient in the centre management is an expertise in communications, Mr. Cave said.

"We're all basically trained and have worked in communications. The root of many, many problems in society is a breakdown in communications."

Dave Dineen has his own consulting firm and does a lot of work for the government.

His interests at the centre include marriage preparation and youth leadership training.

Mr. Cave is a behavioral consultant with the Waterloo board of education. His interests include holistic health and parenting.

Jan Culley has her own consulting firm and conducts workshops on stress, time management and the classroom as a group. Dr. Jim Dudeck is the chief psychologist at the Waterloo board of

education. He is involved in special education and has a masters degree in industrial arts.

"The centre is about prevention," Mr. Cave said. "We're not a mental health clinic, but we're here for people who want to learn something about how to handle things."

BATTERY BOOSTER "We're not psychologists, we're communications and human relations consultants. There will be a lot of intimacy,

acceptance and sharing. It'll be like a battery booster, with an element of retreat about it."

Bookings for any of the conferences or a booking of the facilities can be made by writing the centre at Halton Hills Centre, RR3, Milton, or by calling (416) 492-1749 or (519) 745-6541.

"We don't want to be an institution," Mr. Cave said. "We want to be able to give people something."



Don Cave is one of the partners in the Halton Hills Centre, which is visible behind him. The centre functions as a conference centre which can be rented for a conference, and as a training and development centre, where guests can attend workshops and seminars developed by the owners. Renovations are still underway, but the first seminar, on holistic health, will be held this weekend. (Herald photo)