Teddy bear’s picnic at Sunway

By MARY CHEN

FUZZY bears, papa bears, mama bears and mini bears; Sunway College was over-run by teddy bears of all shapes and sizes last Saturday.

Despite the heavy downpour that put paid to the beautiful Teddy Bear Village, co-organiser Sunway School of Hospitality & Tourism Management students from the Class of April 1999 had painstakingly erected on Sunway College’s soccer field, 1,436 people and 2,359 stuffed bears made it to the impromptu picnic grounds indoors - the Sunway School cafeteria.

The Teddy Bears' picnic 2000, based on the theme Family Fun All-In-One had loads of activities for everybody with contests such as best owner-bear look-alike, smallest and largest teddy, best-dressed teddy, games, food, fun and lots more.

The family oriented event was also to encourage quality family time, strengthen community ties as well as educate the Malaysian public on collecting teddy bears as a hobby. It was also a fund-raiser for the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS).

Certainly, many participants were very passionate about teddy bears, from the owners of the smallest to the biggest - requiring three adults to carry it around.

Some of the teddy bears came bedecked in all their finery. The Thum sisters had a friendly rivalry competing with each other in the best dressed category. 16 year-old Thum Wei Yee’s artistic bear came out tops beating sisters Wei Li, 7, a with wedding bear and Wei Min, 14, with her grannie bear to the first prize. Mohamad Rozaly Daui, 5 was the second prize winner with his Pakistan costumed ‘Pooh’, a bear he has had since he was two-and-a-half years old.

Wong Zhen Zhuen, 6, and his bear, Ted, are obviously the best of pals - they even dressed alike and walked off with the grand prize in the owner-bear look-alike contest.

Seven students pooled their collection and brought more than 72 bears to the fun-filled event. Or was it 75..... and still counting; as the collection of teddy bears on the table grew with each purchase the friends made during the event.

The entrance fee to the event was a teddy bear of any size.

The event earned co-organiser teddy bearLand.com, a place in the Malaysian Book of Records 2000 for hosting the largest gathering of people with stuffed teddy bears. Teddy bearLand.com is a wholly-owned Malaysian Dot.Com company with a website dedicated to teddy bears with sales of bear-related items.

The on-line store was set up in November 1999 with 1,000 bears sourced from Britain, Germany, Singapore and China.