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Long delays clog airport arrivals

By Dhirarat Boonkongsan

PHUKET: Officials have admitted that visitors to Phuket are being forced to wait up to two-and-a-half hours to get through Customs and Immigration at Phuket International Airport because of chronic staff shortages.

Delays are a constant bugbear for arriving and departing passengers and extreme hold-ups occur when two or three aircraft packed with holidaymakers arrive within minutes.

One frustrated airline official emailed the *Gazette*, "It is just unbelievable at the moment how Immigration are treating the passengers at the airport upon arrival."

The man, a local representative for one of Germany's leading tour airlines, described what followed when three planes from Germany arrived within 40 minutes one afternoon last month.

"Our company had to wait three hours until the last passengers could get out of the airport and were transferred to the hotel," he wrote.

"Eight of 16 counters were in service. Where were the other Immigration officers? Do you know how the tourists reacted? 'I will never come to Thailand again', [some said.]

"Do you really want to let all the tourists go to another country to spend their holidays? Hasn't Thailand suffered enough problems with the Sars crisis?"

His sentiments were echoed by another correspondent who said, "Thai nationals, tourists and work permit holders are greeted by a 30 to 45 minute line-up for passing through Immigration.

Continued Page Two



BIRTH ON THE BYPASS: Phuket shoppers are frequently torn between Tesco-Lotus and Big C. This baby, here with her proud parents, was born between them – in a car on the bypass road on the way to hospital. **FULL REPORT: Page Two.**

Visa runs 'are safe' despite violence

By Supaporn Sriptom

PHUKET: Visa runs through Narathiwat are still safe despite a wave of attacks on police, soldiers and schools across provinces close to the border with Malaysia, travel agents in Phuket and Narathiwat said on January 5.

Attacks on January 4 in Narathiwat left four soldiers dead, 20 schools torched and a small arsenal of weapons seized. Two police officers in neighboring Pattani province were killed the following day.

The *Gazette* contacted tour agencies that specialize in visa runs and the general view was that people will continue to travel south to the border because there are few other alternatives.

A spokesperson at one agency, based in the city of Narathiwat, said the attackers targeted police and the army, not civilians or foreigners.

A woman who gave her name as Kanitta, a sales consultant for Royal Silk Travel, said, "There are not so many people booking visa runs right now but I don't think it has anything to do with the unrest.

"We have customers coming all the way from Bangkok and it isn't always easy for them to travel so far, so that sometimes affects the number of people doing a visa run."

Supornparn Tetinpai, a sales consultant for the Queen Air booking center in Patong, said that it might be a few days before everyone became aware that martial law had been declared in three southern provinces.

See Editorial: Page 18



RIDE OF HER LIFE: Prasert and Pascal Taillard (center) with Marie Pascal and dining and driving companions Warbara and Henry Herr.

Special delivery on the bypass road

PHUKET TOWN: They say that good things come in small packages. And while the cabin size of the Toyota Sportrider may be larger than average, it is on the small side for a delivery room.

Prasert Wannaso and her husband Pascal Taillard, of Chal-long, had been enjoying Christmas dinner with friends in Rawai when contractions began. All four piled into the vehicle and sped off to hospital.

Swerving in and out of traffic and running red lights may not be unusual on Phuket roads but this time, a policeman ordered the

vehicle to stop so he could remonstrate with the driver.

"The officer blew his whistle and forced us to stop, came over, looked through the window and saw my wife in labor," Mr Taillard said. "He just waved us on our way."

As they sped down the bypass road, just 17 minutes after K. Prasert's contractions began, she gave birth to a daughter – Marie Pascal – between the Big C and Tesco-Lotus supercenters.

She described labor, for her third child, as "very easy" and said that she needed to push just

once. Marie weighed in at 3.625 kilos at 8:17 pm.

Mr Taillard said, "The doctor was surprised when we got out of the car because he didn't know that the baby had already been delivered. There was a buzz around the hospital and everyone was anxious to know the license plate of the lucky car."

Mr Taillard said, "Actually, many people won from buying lottery tickets with the number."

The family held a "baby shower" party – and little Marie was showered with presents.

– *Supaporn Sriprom*

Hundreds flock to sign up as 'poor'

By Gategeo Phetsawang

PHUKET TOWN: Up to 800 Thais declared themselves "poor" on January 5, the first day of registration at the island's three district offices in Phuket Town, Kathu and Thalang.

The project – part of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's War on Poverty – is being piloted in eight provinces around the country.

So far some 400,000 families, thought to be around 10% of the population in the pilot zones, have registered.

Among those waiting to register was Sa-ard Chaladdee, 40, from Pichit. She told the *Gazette* that she came to Phuket to work as a restaurant dishwasher.

"I came here today with my friends and other people who live nearby because we hope that the government will help by offering lower-cost housing to us," she said.

Sampao Tanyin, 37, from Phuket, said that there are almost



Signing on the poverty line: Phuket crowds take the chance to register as 'poor'.

30 people in his family and in the past they worked five rai in Sampam.

"It's now been seized by a rich person although we lived there for more than 40 years," K. Sampao said. "It has now been judged to belong to that person, not us, so we have to live in rented rooms instead."

"I don't know if the government can help us solve the problem but I just want them to help poor people to have land to live and work on," he added.

Phuket Governor Udomsak

Usawangkura visited Phuket Town District Office and reminded the *Gazette* that Phuket boasts an array of natural resources and has a per-capita income higher than that of other provinces.

"But we also have many poor people at 'grass roots' level who still haven't benefited from the development of tourism on Phuket," said Gov Udomsak.

"The main main reason that people have cited for their poverty is not owning workable land or a house to live in," he continued.

These reasons were echoed by the Chief Administrative Officer of Thalang District Office, Suksun Siengke, who added that people had also registered because of outstanding debts.

"We estimate that around 100 people will register each day until March 31," he said.

"There should be no more than 10,000 people registering as poor in Thalang."

The poor people of Phuket:
See pages 4 and 5.



Join the Phuket queue: every day brings complaints from visitors.

Long delays clog airport

From Page One

"Only half of the immigration counters are manned during peak hours. This goes for both incoming and outgoing passengers."

The Deputy Chief Superintendent of Immigration at the airport, Pol Lt Col Chongrak Wongsakase, admitted a manpower shortage was causing the delays.

Col Chongrak said that Phuket airport has about 10% of the number of arrivals and departures of Bangkok airport. But Don Muang has close to 1,000 immigration officers while Phuket has about 50.

"The word 'international' is in the airport's name and we are expected to have the same services as any international airport, but we do not."

He added, "I have talked with Governor Udomsak Usawangkura [on December 29] about this issue and he will take the matter up with the Royal Thai Police."

The problems highlighted by

the German airline come little more than a week after the airport announced an "All Smiles All The Time" promotion.

Lt Cdr Boonchart Prompoon, Director of the Airports Authority of Thailand (AAT), Phuket, said Phuket needed more officers to achieve its target of processing passengers in a touch-down-to-taxi time of 45 minutes or less. "We have no mandate to do anything about this," he said.

Lt Cdr Boonchart also cited another reason – flight scheduling – as a second problem beyond his control.

"The Air Transport Department (ATD) in the Ministry of Transport is responsible, with Thai Airways," he said.

Lt Cdr Boonchart said that Thai Airways and the ATD accept the most convenient departure schedules from foreign countries, which created a bottleneck at Phuket.

"I don't know why they accept these plans," he said "Passengers get tired of waiting and take it out on us."

Amnesty on vehicle tax

PHUKET TOWN: Vehicle owners have until February 25 to pay outstanding tax – and avoid hefty fines and other penalties, including cancellation of registration documents, the Phuket Provincial Transportation Office (PPTO) announced on January 5.

Prasit Amarapal, Chief of

the PPTO, warned that failure to respond to the deadline would result in drivers having to pay the tax owed plus 20% interest.

Motorists who have not paid tax for years will have liability limited to three years if they pay before the cutoff. Stolen vehicles should also be reported.

CLARIFICATION

We have been advised that our report about Phuket Submarine's pricing structure (*Gazette*, December 20-26) was incomplete. Foreigners holding passports with non-immigrant visas for Thailand will receive the same rate as Thai nationals. The *Gazette* regrets any misunderstanding.

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Five 'clean' venues win new award

By Gategeo Phetsawang

PHUKET: In a move to recognize "appropriate" entertainment venues, the Phuket provincial government has awarded certificates and signs to five entertainment establishments on the island under its new "white entertainment" scheme.

The first to receive the awards are Tai Pan and Banana discotheques, in Patong, and Collector Pub, Timber Hut and Indian *daeng* (Red Indian) Pub in Phuket Town.

Visawa Sasismith, Phuket Provincial Chief Administration Officer (*Palad*), told the *Gazette* that the venues received the awards after scrutiny from a committee of provincial government, district and police officers.

K. Visawa explained that police were asked to exclude any venues that had a history of criminal activity, such as trading after hours or having illegal drugs found on the premises.

Only 33 entertainment venues out of 250 were shortlisted. Venues that did not make the final 33 also included those at first-class hotels because they had already proven to their guests that they pass the criteria, said K. Visawa.

Gay bars and venues staging *katoey* (transsexual) shows were also excluded.

"The committee considered that most people perceive gay bars as immoral and should not be promoted.

"Just imagine walking in to a bar and finding two men hugging each other.

"The bars are not illegal but they may be seen as immoral. I can't say that they don't deserve the certificates but we won't guarantee them as a 'white entertainment' place," he said.

"Such places should not be promoted. They are not good for Thai culture," he said.

Other venues that did not make the grade may apply for certification in the next round, which will be conducted next month, K. Visawa said.

Old rivals face off in Patong election

By Sangkhae Leelanaporn

PATONG: On the first day of applications for the Patong municipal elections, Mayoral candidate Pian Keesin of the newly-formed Rak Patong Team registered his candidacy with 18 other members seeking town council seats under the Rak Patong banner.

Running against him will be Songserm Kebsup, older brother of Phuket Democrat party MP Chalermklak Kebsup, who registered his application along with 18 fellow members of the Patong Progress Team.

The Phuket Election Commission (PEC) has set February 8 as election day and intends to strictly monitor the campaign and balloting.

Patong's last government, composed entirely of Patong Progress Team members and headed by Chalermklak Maneesri, was dismissed after two Provincial Court judges ruled that allegations of cheating in Patong Municipality elections in November last year were proven.

Phunsak Naksena, Chief Administrative Assistant of Patong Municipality and Election Director, explained that Patong is divided into three electoral districts.

Registered citizens cast two votes, one for mayor and the other for a town council member from their district.

Direct election of the mayor became mandatory after the city was upgraded to *tessaban muang* status. Since that time, however, both elected mayors were thrown out of office: Surasak Maneesri was stood down by former Interior Minister Purachai Piemsomboon on October 2, 2002 and his brother Chalermklak, who won the following election, was ordered out – along with 17 team members – last November after judges ruled that the team imported voters from outside the district to take part in the election.

K. Phunsak, who was ap-



BURYING THE HATCHET: Rak Patong mayoral candidate Pian Keesin (left) accepts a handshake from former political rival Surasak Maneesri, who will help the team as a consultant.

Photo courtesy of Yongyot Prucksayak

pointed as Patong Chief Administrative Assistant last October and has also served as Phuket Town's Chief Administrative Assistant, said, "The atmosphere on the first day of applications has been very good thanks to the PEC's involvement and strict attention to election rules."

"I don't think that we will have any problems on election day, as neither team is allowed to set up any fairs or campaign events to help win votes," K. Phunsak said.

He added that brothers Chalermklak and Surasak Maneesri, both former mayors, had been banned from politics for a period of five years.

"I don't think there will be any more big teams registering for this election," K. Phunsak, said "but we could see some independent candidates filing before the deadline."

All candidates, whether for mayor or town council seats, have until 4:30 pm on January 10 to register on the third floor of Patong City Hall.

Chairat Sukbal, an independent candidate for mayor in the last election and owner of the Safari Pub, is running for a council seat as a member of the Rak Patong Party.

As if to prove that allegiances shift constantly in Thai politics, Rak Patong also enjoys support of K. Pian's former political rival K. Surasak, who is helping out the side in the capacity of "consultant".

Meanwhile, observers with an ear for local politics say that Democrat MP Chalermklak, whose family has been targeted in the SorPorKor land investigation, is likely to run as a Thai Rak Thai candidate in District 2 in the next national elections in 2005.

Holiday toll claims pizza delivery boy

PHUKET: A pizza delivery boy was among three people killed on Phuket roads from December 29-January 4 – the same as over last year's holiday period despite a marked increase in the number of police checkpoints and arrests for drunk driving. There was, however, a dramatic decrease in the number of injuries.

Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarangura, speaking to the *Gazette* on January 5, said that all three victims were riding motorcycles.

"Two victims died in separate accidents because they were drunk and not wearing helmets," he said.

"The third, 19-year-old pizza delivery boy Isamaahl Hayimad, was in complete compliance with the law when two pickup trucks driven by drunks collided. One of the vehicles then ran into him," he said.

According to reports, the impact of the head-on collision was so hard that the boy was almost decapitated.

He was returning after delivering a pizza to Koh Kaew when the accident occurred, north of the Tesco-Lotus supercenter on the bypass road.

Although the number of deaths was the same as over the 2002-2003 New Year period, the number of injuries decreased from 408 to 119.

Police stopped 43,000 vehicles and 2,400 people were charged with violations.

B100,000 reward

KAMALA: The reward for information leading to the safe return of 23-year-old dive instructor Phikun "Nori" Srisaksungnoen, missing since November 29, has been doubled to 100,000 baht. Close friend and workmate Marcus Etter is putting up the reward.

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Queer News

Eye-for-an-eye justice

YASOTHORN: The family of an 11-year-old boy in Muang District's tambon Khlum-ngen turned up at the local police station to file charges against the boy's teacher, accusing her of spraying lime juice into their son's eyes as a form of punishment.

Pensri Thongwichai said that her son, Sapasit, developed an eye infection because of mistreatment by his teacher, Ajarn Pannee Kanomjion. The family said that the teacher had noticed some first-grade students were crying, and assumed that Supasit was responsible.

Without questioning him, they said, she whacked him in the back three times before picking up a lime that some children were using to play jacks.

After beating the fruit with a stick to get its juices flowing, she allegedly grabbed Supasit by the hair, tilted his face upward, and squeezed spray from the citrus into both his eyes. Supasit said many students saw the whole thing and would support his story. The parents said that their darling son would never do anything to harm younger children.

When a reporter arrived at the school to get Ajarn Pannee's side of the story, she had already finished teaching and gone home. However, another Grade 5 teacher, Ajarn Sirirat Wechkama, was willing to talk about the incident.

She said that Supasit was a little bully who even picked on older kids. On December 12, she said, Supasit had squeezed lime spray into the eyes of at least 10 first-grade students, getting a kick by making them cry.

When Ajarn Pannee saw his handiwork, she decided to give him a dose of his own medicine. Like most bullies, he cried hysterically when subjected to the treatment he had enjoyed dishing out to others. He then ran home, crying all the way.

A school committee investigated the incident and the school principal ruled that the teacher "had not intended to use unreasonable force" when disciplining the boy.

Source: Khao Sod

Monkeys spurn annual banquet

LOP BURI: For 15 years, monkeys have flocked to a shrine in the province's former capital of Prang Sam Yot to enjoy an annual banquet held in their honor. But this year many of the monkeys avoided the feast, possibly because the occasion was just too overwhelming.

The banquet at Prang Sam Yot was opened with great fanfare by Lop Buri Governor Parinya Udomsap and tourists from near and far waited in eager anticipation by a banquet table 10 meters in diameter, laden with more than two tons of fruit, vegetables, sweets and other offerings.

But despite – or perhaps because of – the huge number of tourists, most of the monkeys did not come, with only a few arriving to sample the fare. Local authorities speculated that the monkeys had been scared off by the grandeur of the feast.

Source: Thai News Agency

The poor

Sangkhae Leelanapaporn and Gategaeo Phetsawang

Poverty can be a state of mind. Some expat residents, struggling to raise the 2,000 baht for a seat at a New Year banquet in Phuket, may consider themselves hard-up. But few expats experience real poverty the way that many Thais do.

Even having a job in Thailand doesn't necessarily mean the person with the job is no longer poor. Pay rates can be ludicrously low, forcing people into a kind of voluntary serfdom.

Often, the worker will be required to appear every day of the week, with only a handful of religious holidays for respite the whole year long. Others will work split shifts, with several hours to fill in between stints in the ice factory or in some other poorly-paid capacity.

The gap between surviving and sinking is slim. Yet poor Thais, in work or out of work, tend to be very good at getting by. They stay afloat on a day-to-day or week-to-week basis, often with the support of family or friends.

In a society where the students all turn out looking neat and tidy in freshly-pressed uniforms, no matter how difficult it is to achieve, how do you tell the rich from the poor?

The three essays on these pages give some idea of the hardships that are often hidden beneath cheerful smiles and impeccable facades. They were written by students applying for government scholarships reserved especially for the poor.

As with drugs, illegal guns and corruption, the Thai Rak Thai government believes it can eliminate poverty in Thailand, and to a deadline – before the end of 2008. This achievement will be



Life may be hard in the shacks of the gypsy village on Koh Sireh, but for the children, each day is a new adventure and smiles come easily.

hailed in many well-to-do Western nations where, despite high living standards and social security of almost every kind, poverty persists.

Those who consider themselves poor have been invited to register during working hours at any district office before March 31.

Visava Sasimit, Provincial Chief Administrative Officer, said that 387 people had come forward already – including about 200 from Thalang. Many of those who registered in Thalang said they did not have land to work, and they also had bad debts.

Local officials will scrutinize the claims to make sure only the truly poor benefit from future government action, which is expected to begin in July.

Some of the most needy cases among the 113 who have registered so far in Phuket Town are the sea gypsies. About 2,000 traditional inhabitants still live on Phuket, most of them in a shanty town by the sea on Koh Sireh.

While only Thais only may register for the anti-poverty project, not all sea gypsies have citizen status.

Pichai Narongtong, Community Development District Officer, Phuket Town District Of-

fice, is overseeing registration in Phuket Town District Office.

He said that about one in 10 Thais would qualify as being poor. Phuket, with an official population of about 230,000 [although the real population may be twice as high as that] so 30,000-plus could eventually be registered as poor in Phuket.

How do you tell whether a person is poor? The government has set out the following criteria, with the real poor likely to meet three or more of these conditions:

- They do not have land to work;
- They have no job, or no home, or both;
- They currently work in an illegal industry;
- They are a student lacking proper support;
- They have lost money in some kind of investment;
- They have debts and are unable to meet repayments;
- They do not own their house and have to pay rent;
- They have other problems that keep them poor.

Documentation about residences, bank accounts and debts is required. Rather than government hand-outs, debt-reduction is expected to be the result.

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people of Phuket

find an underside to the island where for many, survival is the goal of everyday existence.

Around Thailand, 25,367 students received a government scholarship of 10,000 baht. In Phuket, 33 Phuket students were granted scholarships; 12 are Phuket high school students, of whom nine attend Satree Phuket School. Here are three winning essays.

MY NAME is Puttaraksa Prachumpol. I am aged 17 and in Grade 10. My 40-year-old father works by selling drinking water. My parents divorced when I was young. I have to do all the housework that my mother used to do.

My father has to carry many containers of water every day. Each container holds 20 liters. When I began going to high school, my father had to work twice as hard.

He was growing older so my brother and I helped him. He earns about 5,000 baht a month. I use my pocket money to buy books and supplies for my studies.

My father now has a new wife and I live with my grandmother.

Some days my father is not well. I'm not sure if he is seriously ill. He smokes but he will not go to see a doctor. I think smoking is his problem.

When I ask him not to smoke, he will tell me he can't work if he doesn't smoke.

I usually wear secondhand uniforms and my shoes are

handed down from an older relative. Because I don't live in my parents' house, I have to eat after the other people.

When I make a mistake or if people are unhappy with my behavior, they will sometimes scold and hit me.

Since my parents separated, I have met my mother just once. After that, I never heard from her again.

MY NAME is Chareerath Saeju. I am 15 and in Grade 9. My father lost his life in a car accident. My mother passed away two years after my father. Right now I am living with my two uncles, grandma, and grandfather.

Grandma is 62. She is a cook and her monthly salary is 4,400 baht. Of that, 3,500 baht goes on the rent but we still have to cover electricity, water and other bills as well.

My 65-year-old grandfather is

incapable of working because he has asthma. My uncle is ailing, too. My other uncle is a monk. Every baht that I have ever received has been given to me by my uncle, the monk.

Every day I am given 30 baht, and 20 baht of that goes on the bus fare. Five baht goes on buying water. As for food, the school prepares donated lunches for children like me.

The food we eat at home comes from my uncle the monk, who brings us food from the temple, just enough day to day. In the evenings, grandma brings left-over food from work for us to eat at home. At home we don't even have one motorbike to use. We only have my uncle's old bicycle that he received as a gift. I want to lessen the burden

at home. I want to be well-educated but I don't whether my dream will come true.

MY NAME is Palika Amart-ake and I am in Grade 8. I have one sister and a brother. I am the second child. We rent a house for 2,000 baht a month. It belonged to us, before the bank seized it.

My father works at a gold shop in Bangkok, making jewelry. His monthly income is never certain. He send us about

2,000 baht every month. My mother is a traditional Thai masseuse. Every day, after my mother sends me to school, she goes to work at a hotel by the beach.

She comes home about nine or 10 o'clock every night. Sometimes she comes home with only 100 baht.

I am 14 and my dream is to receive a master's degree in language studies, which will allow me to work in Phuket. Perhaps I will work in the tourism industry, because there is enough money and opportunities for a job.

I would like to receive a scholarship for my education so that there is one less responsibility for my family. I will focus on my studies so that the scholarship will be worth what it should be.



Washing day, Koh Sireh: The scene may have charm but elsewhere, machines have ended the drudgery. For some island residents, a washing machine is an impossible dream.



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Gaining face the easy way

Long associated with immigration hassles, dodgy land title documents, and other such messy paper trails, the rubber stamp could very well be the perfect symbol of bureaucracy.

But now there is a shop in Phuket that is trying to put some fun into this otherwise mundane stationery implement – by offering personalized rubber stamps that allow a customer to stamp an image of his or her face on just about any surface.

The stamps, which can be made in about 1½ hours, are available at the Post Net Shop at Tesco-Lotus Supercenter.

Mayuret Inak-sorn, a worker at the shop, told the *Gazette* that the made-to-order rubber stamps first went on sale about eight months ago and have since become a real hit with customers.

The stamps rely on computer-aided design and don't need to be pressed into messy inkpads. Instead they are "self-inking" with one or more inkwells built-in, and a single stamp can use a combination of colors.

"Many different colors are available, including green and red, but black and blue are the

most popular," K. Mayuret said.

The stamps are produced by first scanning a photograph into a computer. Photos with clear, sharply-contrasted backgrounds and minimal shadowing create the best images.

Once scanned, the background is then removed by the computer photo-editing program and the rubber stamp created.

Those interested in getting their hands on a stamp needn't use their own visage.

"The strangest one I have seen was by a customer who brought a picture of her lover and imposed it on a dog's head. It was really cute," K. Mayuret explained.

"Many students order stamps bearing their own face along with their phone number and other cute, cartoon images because the cost is relatively low," she added.

Prices range from 150 to 550 baht, depending on the size of picture and the number of different colors used.

– *Sangkhae Leelanaporn*

Post Net, open 9 am to 10 pm daily, is next to the Bangkok Bank service branch in the Tesco-Lotus supercenter on the bypass road in Phuket Town.



Each stamp makes 10,000 impressions before needing a refill.

On the path to a walkway

Satree Phuket School held a "One Class One Project"

fair to raise money to build an elevated walkway to connect four of the school's buildings – and save students and staff the burden of having to trudge up and down stairs all day.

School Director Pongsri Ruangdit told *The Gazette* the project also served as a good opportunity for students to sharpen their business and management skills.

The covered walkway, about 100 meters in length, is expected to cost about two million baht.

K. Pongsri said that the fair, which featured over 70 individual booths with a wide selection of food and games for visitors to enjoy, raised more than a million baht – and delivered some additional benefits.

"I'm impressed with my students' work, especially their foreign-language skills," said K. Pongsri, adding that students had performed short conversations in languages including German, French, Japanese and English.

Sixteen-year-old Sophida Chailaipun, of the school's Japanese program, said that her group pooled money to buy about 500 roses, which they then decorated

with colorful paper and ribbons before selling for 10 baht each.

"We have taken in over a thousand baht from selling these roses," she said.

"We sold over 200 roses this morning so now we have to buy more."

– *Gategeo Phetsawang*



Second and third prize-winners proudly display their Fancy Dress costumes, made of bristles and bright plastic. Recycling was the aim of the contest. The two-day Satree fair attracted students, parents and hundreds of others who turned up just for the fun of the outing.

WARNING : SELLING ALCOHOL TO PERSONS UNDER 18 YEARS OLD IS ILLEGAL



SINGHA NEW LOOK

Thailand to have '10 Singapores'

Speaking at a Thai Rak Thai seminar, Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak said Thailand will be firmly on the path towards developed-country status next year and will have "10 Singapores" among its provinces in three to five years.

Deputy PM Somkid said that 2004 would be a golden opportunity for the country because Thailand, under the guidance of PM Thaksin Shinawatra, had achieved stability in three dimensions: political, economic and social.

He said that because Thailand had no demonstrations or social turmoil, the government could now push Thailand's status to be that of a first-world country in the same way as Singapore and Taiwan have done.

Garbage power: The government plans to open garbage-burning power plants in Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Nakhon Ratchasima and Rayong. The plan will be submitted to the Cabinet for approval on January 13, said Energy Minister Prommin Lertsurdej.

K. Prommin said the initiative followed the success of the garbage power plant in Phuket, the first of its kind in the country. If the new plants are successful, similar projects will be implemented nationwide.

Environmentalist Thara Buakhamsri called the Phuket garbage power plant a disaster, saying that the trash problem still exists and that the electricity produced doesn't justify the investment. He also said the plant produces the cancer-causing chemical dioxin.

Holiday cheer: While the Thai Rak Thai Party continues its "social order" campaign against improper behavior, it doesn't mean that the party can't invite scantily-clad dancers to entertain at its annual caucus.

Pretty, young women dressed like Santa Claus, one wearing just a string bikini and a Santa hat, drew "oohs" and "aahs" from the male members who attended the event in Pattaya. Some MPs quietly criticized the idea, saying it could put the ruling party on the spot, but most



A huge beer advertisement recently blocked views of the front of Government House in Bangkok, but it didn't stay there long. It was erected by a signboard company to determine the size and location for another billboard – one listing the government's achievements.

seemed to enjoy the entertainment. The idea came from government spokesman Sita Divari, who suggested adding some spice to the gathering.

Safe meat: Food and Drug Administration Secretary-General Dr Supachai Khunaratnaphruk said that US beef arriving in Thailand before its December 24 import ban was safe to eat, adding that the ban was simply a precaution to prevent a possible spread of mad-cow disease after a case of the disease was reported in Washington State.

He said there was no need to send out inspectors to examine beef in supermarkets or restaurants, though he would only guarantee the safety of legally-imported beef.

However, Customs officials at the southern border checkpoint at Sadao, in Songkhla, conceded that the smuggling of Indian beef into Thailand is still a problem.

Brain gain: Deputy Interior Minister Pramual Rujanaseri quoted PM Thaksin Shinawatra as saying the government should search for geniuses under a "One Village, One Genius" project. People would be screened to

identify the most gifted person in each district, and a final group of 800 geniuses announced.

K. Pramual said people who were successful in their careers or were skilled artists were eligible for selection. He added that he had assigned the Communities Development Department to draft criteria for selecting geniuses. The criteria were to be finalized this month.

Juice health scare: The Public Health Ministry has ordered a crackdown on orange juice in sealed cups after all samples from a recent check were found contaminated with harmful fungi that can cause gastrointestinal disease.

Public Health Minister Sudarat Keyuraphan ordered all provincial public health offices to

remove substandard iced orange juice cups from the market.

What a waste: PM Thaksin Shinawatra has ordered Deputy PM Wissanu Krea-ngam to find out why there has been no progress in the investigation into the Klong Dan wastewater-plant scandal.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Prapat Panyachatraksa said his ministry had passed the case on to police, who had failed to take action. Officials in charge of the project stand accused of collaborating with companies to sell public land to the Pollution Control Department at inflated prices.

Fugitive captured: Region 9 police in Songkhla have announced the capture of Asae Moona, 40,

an alleged member of the separatist group Pattani United Liberation Organisation (PULO). Asae was charged with possessing explosives, carrying out a bomb attack on Sri Mahapho temple in Pattani and attempted murder.

He is also believed to have been involved in shooting to death an unspecified number of police officers, extorting money from businesses and plantation owners, and helping to organize bomb attacks against government authorities and businesses. Asae said he had fled to Krabi to lay low. He played down the significance of his role in PULO.

Around the Nation news round-up is sourced from the pages of The Nation and Kom Chad Luek newspapers.

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According to *community magazine*, Koh Samui's English-language monthly, the central government has given the Airports Authority of Thailand just three weeks to submit a location and budget for the construction of a second airport on the island.

This news follows recent reports that the country's new low-cost airlines have been looking for alternatives to the existing airport—built on private land—and used almost exclusively by its owners, Bangkok Airways.

Aircraft not belonging to Bangkok Airways pay a hefty 90,000 baht to land on Samui, compared with an estimated 10,000 baht if the facility was publicly-owned. Estimates for construction costs of the new airport are around 500-600 million baht, excluding the land.

The airport is scheduled to be operational before the end of this year and should mean a large increase in passenger traffic to Samui.

The flip side, however, will be greater air and noise pollution, and more purple-faced tourists

Second Samui airport approved

lying like greased whales on the island's once-pristine beaches.

Tourists (almost) back: With

2003, Sars and the war in Iraq now fading into memory, tourists are flooding back to Samui to soak up the sun, forget their worries and create chaos and pollution, paying for the privilege with their hard-earned dollars. Panu Woramit, Director of the local Tourism Authority of Thailand service center, said that bookings for the Christmas and New Year period filled 80% of the island's capacity, which, according to their last count, was a very precise 11,019 rooms.

which, according to their last count, was a very precise 11,019 rooms.

War on Poverty: According to a government study into poverty on Samui conducted last month, there are 319 people living in poverty on the island out of 666 people who registered as such. The main cause of impoverish-

FROM THE GULF OF THAILAND



By Commander Sammy Swan



Jacques Mury, General Manager of the Central Samui Beach Resort (left), with local students, their teacher and a swing donated to their school by the resort, after the Jack Holt Community Cuts, when Mr Holt kindly cut the hair of 35 students. Stylists also gave advice on basic hair care.

ment was landlessness, with 280 people claiming that they had no access to land that could provide them with a decent income. Another 170 people said that their debts held them in a state of poverty, and 155 people were found to be homeless. A further 36 registered cases were disabled people who lacked appropriate levels of care. With the research team back in Bangkok, those considered officially poor are now left to hope for more than a simple recognition of their plight.

Drug-free Samui: On December 13, local authorities threw a party on Samui to celebrate the successful completion of the War on Drugs. Police and other officials claim there are almost no drugs on the island, and several village chiefs were handed certificates in recognition that those villages are now "drug-free".

Of course, a few measures are still required to eradicate the drug problem completely, but officials assure us that the situation is much improved, and promises

to fight the good fight until there is no corner of the island where it is safe to pop a pill, snort a line or skin one up. Vodka Red Bull sales are expected to skyrocket.

A Phuket Salute: On a recent trip to Phuket, a close friend of mine, Captain Lyle, was surprised to find that it compared very favorably with Samui in many ways. Phuket, he said, appears not only cleaner, but also better organized and cheaper than Samui. The people are friendlier, and less inclined to try for the extra baht, and public areas are well-maintained.

Warning!

Fake 1,000-baht notes have been found on Koh Samui. Please check your money carefully: look for the watermark of His Majesty's head and the metallic strip running top-to-bottom through the note. Be careful not to confuse the 1,000-baht note with the new 20-baht note, unless you want to make a taxi driver your friend for life.

Cdr Swan is a writer with Koh Samui's community magazine.



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This week



KIDDIE CRAFTS: Dr Prasit Koeysiripong, President of the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (rear, in white shirt), with students who competed in Asia Emporio's rice paper handicraft contest at the Big C supercenter on December 29.



SMOOTH AS SILK: Shinawatra Homemart CEO Yowvares Shinawatra (right) presents guest model Chandhra Saengsriratanakun with a bouquet at the Thai silk fashion show, featuring designs by Del Caso, at the stores' new year celebrations on December 27.



CELEBRITY CELEBRATIONS: Royal Phuket Marina Developer Gulu Lalvani (left) and guests Magali Ranieri (center) and fashion guru Kenso celebrate the New Year in style at his villa at the Amanpuri.



GREEN IS GOOD: From left, Tonino Stabile, General Manager, Le Royal Meridien Phuket Yacht Club; Philippe Seigle, Regional General Manager, Le Meridien Thailand Resorts; and Kittikorn Poolsin, Chief Engineer, Le Royal Meridien Phuket Beach Resort, receive the Green Leaf Award for the eco-friendly practices used at the resorts.



MAID OF MORALS: Matthew Hindmarch, General Manager of the Thavorn Palm Beach Resort, presents an Outstanding Service Award to room maid Juthamanee Pimpakorn for her honesty in handing in 6,500 Euros (about 315,000 baht) belonging to guests who had already checked out of the resort.



FUNDRAISING FASHION: Two models pose at The Asian Gallery's recent fashion show at The Courtyard, where 400,000 baht was raised for Wachira Phuket Hospital, the Red Cross and the Phuket Business Women's Club.



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THE TRAIL-BLAZER

How does one go from folding T-shirts to being a concert promoter? It's a mystery – until you meet Anglo-Irish impresario Michael Hosking, who still marvels at how he made it.

The *Gazette's* Supaporn Sriprom finds out what makes him tick.

At 17, fresh out of school and out of work, Michael Hosking found himself trying to kickstart his life and a career. "My mother used to say to my brothers that if they didn't study hard they would end up like me, going nowhere. Well, look at me now," Michael said, beaming.

Appropriately enough for someone involved in showbiz, the actors' cheer of good luck, "break a leg", was what actually worked for Michael and eventually led to success.

"I had a motorbike crash the summer I was 17 and couldn't find any work, except folding T-shirts, because my leg was broken," he said.

He took this experience with him to an unlikely place, Bahrain, and founded Midas, a T-shirt printing company. Not only was it his first enterprise but the business was also the Gulf state's first T-shirt printery. Exploiting a niche market paid dividends.

His first brush with the entertainment industry was when he was asked to print T-shirts for a band appearing in Bahrain.

He was soon making other

small items promoting concerts and he eventually moved up the ladder and began organizing gigs himself.

True to the legend, Midas, now Midas Promotions, grew into one of the largest concert organizers in Asia.

But it hasn't all been plain sailing. Michael recounted one incident when a typhoon wrecked a concert by major American rock group.

"The gig was canceled but the terms of the contract stated that if the band shows up, they get paid," he said. "The band did show up."

"I'd rather not say how big their fee was," he smiled. "Midas also had to refund the punters the cost of their tickets."

A master of understatement, Michael describes this incident as "quite emotionally stressful".

Looking for an accurate description of the world of pop promotion, he said, "We spent one Christmas in a Las Vegas casino and sitting there, at a roulette table, winning and losing money, I suddenly thought, 'Why do I feel like I'm back at work?'"

He explained, "You're



Michael Hosking:

"I tend to be outspoken and get frustrated and overreactive. I expect things to be done my way and when it's not, I get mad."

never certain if the artist will be a no-show, or whether all the tickets will sell." Or if a *force majeure* such as a typhoon is going to hamper plans. Well, the best-laid plans of Midas and men ...

Michael said "We've probably been doing a hundred shows a year for the past 20 years." Not all shows go according to plan, so the bet is constantly on the table.

"Apart from losing money – which nobody likes to happen – we get quite a lot of abuse from the agents," he said. Agents, he added, cancel concerts at the last minute or switch to other venues. Other than that, Michael said, "You just never know what will happen next and I quite enjoy the variety." Another understatement.

Who could complain about constantly meeting rock stars and

great soccer players? Michael is also the co-manager for the popular boy band, called Michael Learns to Rock.

He has worked with top acts including Oasis, Robbie Williams and the all girl group Bond, to name just a few.

Michael, who seems to shun the limelight, said, "I don't want to be famous or anything like that ..." As if on cue, the phone rings and it's *Rolling Stone* magazine. He may evade the limelight but somehow it sometimes seems to catch him in its unyielding beam.

Asking Michael to pick something he would rather be doing besides being a concert promoter is difficult. As he says, "People are born for a reason and I think I've been exceptionally lucky. My life does sound too good to be true."

Suddenly introspective,

Michael said, "I think I've had a great life but I've taken some knocks on the way. I'm not as close to my family as I wish I could have been."

"I tend to be outspoken and get frustrated and overreactive. I expect things to be done my way and when it's not, I get mad," he admitted.

"Other people who don't share the same ideas get offended easily."

Speaking of his luck, Michael said, "I work in an industry that most people only see on television or read about in the papers."

"I can't imagine anything else I could be doing and I don't envy other people."

"There are some people who just seem hell-bent on making your life miserable but most of the time life is great."

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The Gazette Distribution Team – always eager to serve you!

Asked to give his motto for life, the universe and everything, he said, "You should live each moment as if it's your last. It's not a bad cliché to live your life by."

"The guys who take the chances – if they don't die doing it – are the ones who have their lives fulfilled. What I'm trying to say is that I've never heard of anyone on their death bed saying 'I wish I had spent more time in the office.'"

"When it comes to a career I suggest you find one that you are happy doing, whether it pays really well or not."

Micahel said that one of the biggest misconceptions people have about him is that his sole motivation is monetary.

"But that's not true. I look at challenges as opportunities and if there is the chance to make some money from it, then I will. It's all part of the challenge."

Countering this, he says that he undertakes projects where financial gain – or more accurately, *his* financial gain – is not the motivation.

"I'll put the same effort into a fundraiser or the chance to help someone," he said.

"For example, the father of a terminally-ill girl asked me for a favor. He told me that listening to Westlife was the only thing that would cheer his daughter up when she was sad," he explained.

"I was organizing a Westlife concert at the time and I arranged for the girl to go backstage and meet her heroes. She had loads of photos taken and got their autographs, too."

Obviously still moved, he said, "To me it was no big deal. It was easy to do. But for the girl and her father, well, no one had done anything like that for them before."

Future plans include a possible Bryan Adams tour in Asia. Michael says that he will try to persuade artists who already have plans for touring Asia to perhaps make a visit to Phuket.

Midas sees a growing audience in Phuket. Residents who love live performances will keep their fingers crossed.

Phuket is now home and the base for his family.

Now 44, Michael is relaxed and enjoying his rather cool life with his wife and three young children.

"If I drop dead tomorrow, I wouldn't be able to have had it any better," he said.



Off the WALL

With Bruce Stanley

It was a fabulous ending to a troubled year. New Year's Eve 2003 was celebrated around the island in a remarkable variety of ways, ranging from an Austen Powers theme party – with entertainers flown from London for a special night at the Sheraton Grande Laguna Phuket – to big beach parties on the Andaman Sea from Nai Harn to Laem Singh.

The midnight fireworks at Patong drew tens of thousands. But not all of the New Year celebrations were in public. Internet shops across the island did booming business, with sex workers using chat rooms to procure and negotiate with their eager customers.

This inventive method for engaging romance saves the buyer from having to pay a bar fine and the cost of expensive drinks and saves the sex worker from having to spend endless hours sitting in a karaoke or beer bar hoping to catch a client.

Hundreds more hotel rooms are planned for Patong and are being built in the belief that tourists mostly come to Phuket for the entertainment options available at the island's busiest playground.

At the same time, ground rents are skyrocketing, driving



New admirer: Billy takes a fancy to Debbie Dionysius, Destination Marketing Manager, Laguna Phuket.

Who were you with on New Year?

many bars and clubs out of business. One resort that has benefited from the renewed interest in Patong is the Holiday Inn, which recently added the elegant new Busakorn wing of resort rooms with a look to match that found at Laguna Phuket.

General Manager **Wolfgang Meusburger** gave the Life Home Project, a local charity for women with HIV and their children, 130,000 baht to create the beautiful holiday banners that could be seen blowing in the tropical winds from the nearby beach.

"These women create wonderful art and the Holiday Inn wants to support groups in the community that have special needs," he said.

I took a group of friends to the Phuket Zoo over the holi-

days and had a great time. My tour guide was **Stephen Bird**, who has spent 19 years breeding butterflies on Phuket. He's originally from Britain and knows more about insects and the animals at the zoo than anyone.

"The owner, **Goh Lim**, kept a large collection of exotic animals for his own pleasure and finally decided to open the zoo to share his love of nature," Stephen explained.

It's not really accurate to call this a zoo because it's more of a nature park filled with an expansive new aquarium and plants from Stephen's collection of tropical bromeliads, native to Central and South America.

Besides a cluster of camels and young tigers that you can pet, the Phuket Zoo has two large cassowaries – flightless birds the size of emus – that

Stephen says are the closest living relations to dinosaurs.

They have a large toe with a sharp-pointed nail designed to disembowel enemies and feathers, not for flight, but for insulation against the heat in their native Australia and Papua New Guinea.

Tourists pay 500 baht entrance fee at the zoo but if you have a Thai driver's license, you can get in for 50 baht. Enjoy walking around the landscaped gardens with lakes where the animals and birds are kept mostly in natural habitats.

The shows cost no more and includes one with big crocodiles, the highlight being when the trainer sticks his head inside a gaping mouth full of sharp teeth. And you can have your photo taken while kissing **Billy the Orangutan**.

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CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): Love is highlighted this week for Capricorns, and Cupid has your name written on one arrow that is certain to hit the target. If you're in a committed relationship, get ready to be blown away by surprising news. The outcome should be positive, but you may need to take time to readjust to new circumstances. No matter how many birthday candles you have to blow out, celebrations are bound to go with a swing.



AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): Your sensitivity factor will be heightened, so Aquarians should guard against transforming termite mounds into mountains this weekend when not all goes according to plan. Blowing a minor matter out of proportion will have negative consequences, so work on strengthening that "mai pen rai" attitude. After Monday, you will be back to your usual cool, level-headed way of looking at things. The number seven has special meaning mid-week.



PISCES (February 20-March 20): Where romance is concerned, there's every sign that someone is about to take the bait you've been dangling recently. However, appearances are likely to be deceptive and rushing into commitment definitely won't be the wisest course of action. Opportunity is about to ring your doorbell concerning career matter. You will be delighted to discover that you have more options than suspected. It's likely that the best option will involve travel of some sort.



ARIES (March 21-April 20): Arians will be very much focused on sorting out their friends from those who are just acquaintances. An event this



In The Stars

weekend will make you realize that not everyone around can be relied on. As the week progresses, there are signs that sudden changes are in the air, probably relating to work. You may not enjoy being put on the spot, but positive forces are working on your behalf. Gemini asks a strange question on Wednesday.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): The New Year starts to throw a series of challenges in your path, but Taurans probably won't be feeling in the mood for discarding their security blankets this week. You might think that it's easier for everything to stay the same, but an honest look at what's going on in your life now should be enough to convince you that there's plenty of scope for improvement. At work, a point is proved in your favor.



GEMINI (May 22-June 21): Relationship harmony is disturbed this week, and the cause will probably be due to interference from a third party. If this person is a family member, those born under the sign of Gemini should employ a good dose of diplomacy to ensure that the problem doesn't get out of hand. A change of scene should help to calm troubled waters so you may want to consider organizing a day out.



CANCER (June 22-July 23): Your imagination knows no bounds this week. Many of those born under Cancer will be cooking up creative schemes to improve their financial situation. Consulting a friend known to have a strong, practical streak is advisable as you are in danger of getting carried away by an idea that



would be impossible in practice. Your partner's attention is firmly fixed on domestic matters and you could soon find yourself embarking on a house-hunting voyage.

LEO (July 24-August 22): Cash considerations loom large when Leos are presented with bills. If you haven't yet been compensated for work done, now is an auspicious moment to remind those concerned of their debts. The planets will further support you in any demands for a pay rise or bonus as long as you present your case in a cool manner. Perhaps it's time



to re-evaluate your worth. **VIRGO** (August 23-September 23): Romance leads you to explore previously hidden depths, and many Virgoans will be considering how to make a relationship more permanent. When a well-meaning friend tries to give you a reality check, you will be little inclined to listen but there are bound to be a few pearls of wisdom among their words. Where work is concerned, the planets provide a glimpse of your potential that would be foolish to ignore.



LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Those born under the sign of

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Libra will radiate charisma this week. Others will be attracted to you like bees to a honey pot. At least one new friendship is likely to take root and flourish, although this doesn't appear to have romantic connotations. But single Librans won't be too bothered at the moment about finding a soulmate as other interests, particularly of a spiritual nature, take precedence. Take care when dealing with official matters on Wednesday.



SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): You can look forward to receiving an overdue signal to proceed full steam ahead with a new endeavor. From now until the end of this month, those born under Scorpio won't be lounging around smelling the jasmine. Socializing will also have to wait until you have laid firm foundations and worked out just how much important work can be safely delegated.



SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): Unless you want to waste energy trying to swim against a powerful current, it would be better to simply go with the force that is about to start changing your life. Not every Sagittarian will be thrilled by some of the pressure that is being put on them this week, but the natural buoyancy that is typical of your sign should be enough to help you keep your head above water.



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ANNOUNCEMENT

Deliveries of the Gazette Guide 2004, Phuket's English-language telephone book, will start on 19 January.

As always, full-page advertisers are entitled to two free copies of the Guide, and all other advertisers will receive one free copy. These will be delivered on or before 23 January.

Deliveries of all guest-room copies for the hotels will likewise be completed by 23 January.

Retail sales (at the cover price of 140 baht) will commence during the week of 26 January. See next week's *Phuket Gazette* for a list of authorized retailers.



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The biscuit box of love – and other illusions

Archeologists and historians disagree – naturally enough – but the general consensus of opinion has it that about 14 different civilizations have occupied the site of what is now the city of Delhi.

And there are even more within easy reach of the Indian capital, most obviously in the Golden Triangle that embraces the cities of Jaipur, Fatehpur Sikri and Agra.

Each could stand as a destination on its own, but their proximity means that you can see the Pink City's delicate hues, the ancient ruins of Fatehpur Sikri and what is familiarly and with absolute veracity considered the most extravagant monument ever built to love, the Taj Mahal, all within the space of a week.

While the fort, the Pearl Mosque and Jehangir's Palace are all worth seeing in Agra, they shrivel in comparison with the pure, iconic beauty of the Taj Mahal.

Completed with the assistance of French, Italian and Persian craftsmen in 1653 by the emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal, who had died in childbirth, the Taj's white marble dome and minarets look their best at dawn, when there will also be fewer visitors than normal.

Noël Coward fans, incidentally, may rest assured that it does not look at all like a biscuit box. However, there are two tragic ironies associated with the Taj.

First, that Shah Jahan was deposed by his son and spent the last years of his life imprisoned in Agra Fort, unable to visit his beloved wife's mausoleum. Second, that industrial pollution from nearby factories is gradually eroding the Taj's splendor.

A short hop away from Agra, Fatehpur Sikri is a perfectly

preserved example of a Moghul city in chiseled red sandstone, which is stretched out along the top of a ridge and was abandoned in the late 16th century for reasons which remain a mystery.

Exploring its ghostly byways leads you past a stack of royal residences and palaces built in a blend of styles with Hindu columns and Muslim cupolas – one of which, the Birbal Bhavan, was described by Victor Hugo as "either a very small palace or a very large jewellery box".

There are also more ordinary buildings, like the caravan-serai, which was used as a hostel for visiting merchants, a Turkish bath and the specially designed Hathi Pol, or Elephant Gate.

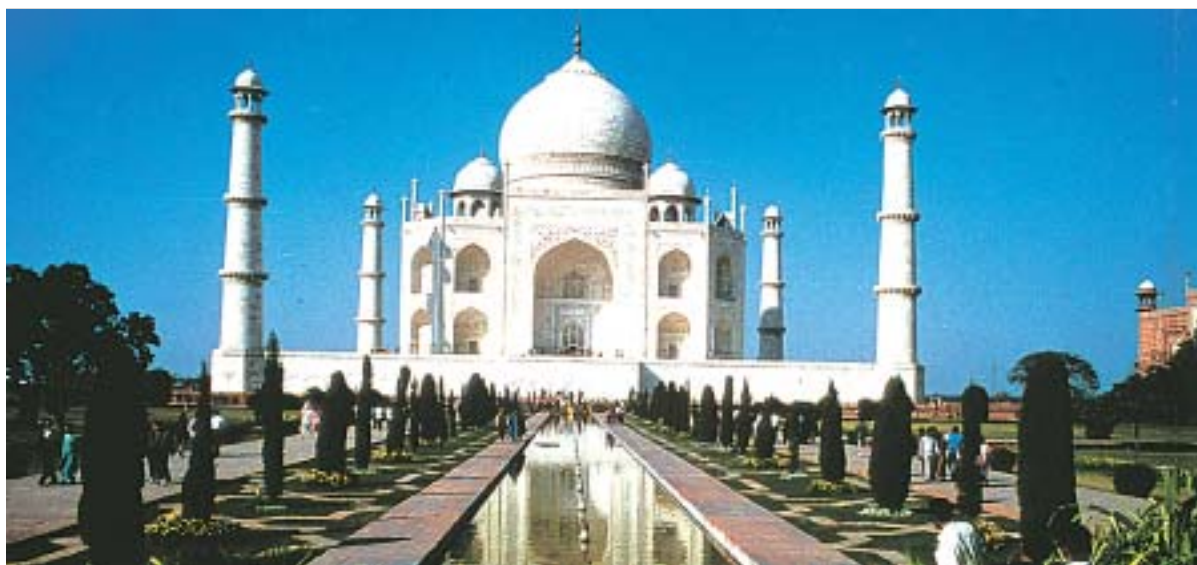
Further to the west, many of the buildings in Jaipur's old city are covered in pink paint, a color associated with hospitality in Rajput culture.

Carefully laid out in a style that contrasts sharply with India's modern approach to urban planning, the city's six rectangular blocks are partially surrounded by a crenellated wall with seven gates.

The Palace of the Winds, or Hawa Mahal, is one of the major landmarks, with its pink, semi-octagonal, intricately honey-combed sandstone windows.

The view from the top over the rest of the city and the barren surrounding hills is quite stunning, and particularly striking in late afternoon when the Pink City takes on a truly magical glow.

This impressive backdrop is augmented in the streets below, where the Rajasthani men parade in outsize pastel turbans and walrus moustaches, with their women in bright mirrored skirts and heavy silver jewelry. If ever there was a scene that just summed up the traditions and ethos of India, it's here.

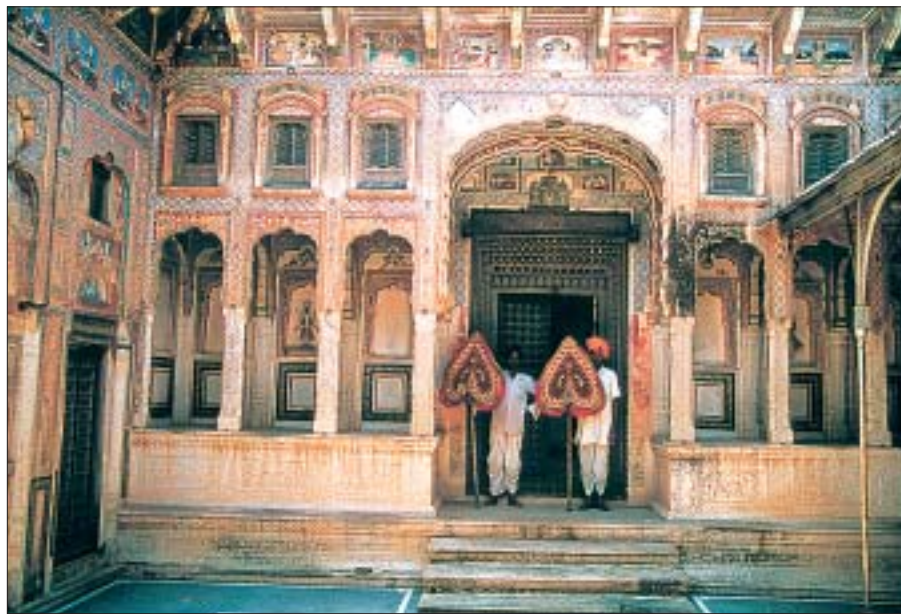


FADED BEAUTY: Industrial pollution from nearby factories is gradually eroding the Taj's splendor.



VISUAL FEAST: Rajasthani Indians with nose rings and dazzling robes walk in procession along the ancient city streets of Jaipur.

The general consensus of opinion has it that about 14 different civilisations have occupied the site of what is now the city of Delhi.



Fatehpur Sikri is a perfectly preserved Moghul city in chiseled red sandstone. For reasons which remain a mystery, it was abandoned in the late 16th century.

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Spot the Difference



Can you find the seven differences between the two cartoons below? And can you find them faster than the rest of the family?



Brain Buster!!

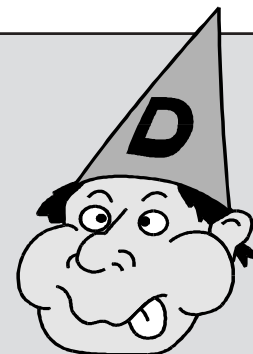
Q. How can you throw a ball as hard as you can and have it come back to you, even if it doesn't hit anything, there is nothing attached to it, and no one else catches or throws it?

A. Throw the ball straight up in the air.

Answers to last week's Monster Quiz

1. North and South Korea; 2. Tarsus; 3. Yoshinobu; 4. 1867; 5. Norwegian scientist-explorer Thor Heyerdahl; 6. Francis Castelluccio; 7. Finger tracings in clay, the oldest form of art known; 8. Argentina; 9. "in the church style"; 10. between the West Frisian Islands and the northern Netherlands mainland. (It's a shallow inlet of the North Sea); 11. Mesopotamia, about 2000 BC; 12. Puss Gets the Boot (1940); 13. Four; 14. Phrygia; 15. Turkey; 16. "fat Tuesday"; 17. Roald Amundsen; 18. Alexandre Dumas; 19. The transistor; 20. A stork.

Get your brain in gear with The Monster Quiz



- Which Brit-pop group wrote the signature tune broadcast by the Mars probe Beagle 2?
- Where did Sherlock Holmes first meet Dr Watson?
- What is Dr Watson's full name?
- What is the diameter of a standard compact disc?
- Nebuchadnezzar was a king of which ancient kingdom?
- John Steinbeck won the Pulitzer Prize in 1939 for which book?
- What is a Lippezzaner?
- How did explorer Sir Walter Raleigh die?
- How far can a skunk spray its foul-smelling deterrent?
- What is a fetlock, and where would you find one?
- Which disease is also known as Saint Vitus's Dance?
- Is salmonella a bacteria or a virus?
- The Kola Peninsula is part of which country?
- Who invented celluloid?
- When did he invent it?
- What are the paper screen room dividers in Japanese houses called?
- What sea lies to the west of Greece?
- How many zeros does one quintillion have?
- When is the Christian festival Passiontide?
- Who was Michel de Notredame better known as?

Answers next week

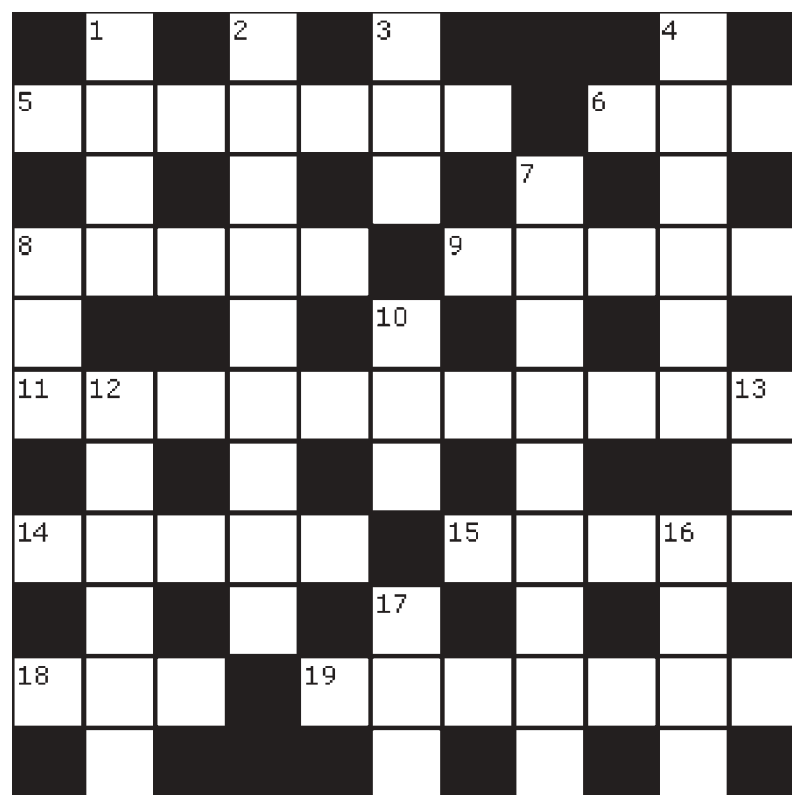
Never a Cross Word!

Across

- Leading Ministers.
- Tutankhamen, for short.
- Main artery.
- Light shade of brown.
- Songful flier.
- Scottish stack of stones.
- German mug.
- Peculiar.
- Not defence.

Down

- Mexican fare.
- Birth blemish.
- Light emitting diode.
- Street robber.
- Recover (3,6)
- Fiery remains.
- Dynamite.
- East African republic.



- A lion's home.
- South American indian.
- Cuban crisis President.

Solution next week

Solution to last week's Crossword

C	O	H	E	R	E	R	S	V	P
L		U		E		A		U	A
O	U	T		L	O	G	I	C	A
S				A		E		C	L
E	G	R	E	T	S		D	U	O
S		E		E		C		M	A
	W	P	M		N	A	B	B	E
C		U		R		T			M
H	A	L	C	Y	O	N		A	L
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Training matters for the triathlete

With new year celebrations behind you and your commitment to keep your resolutions now being tested, if you are thinking of doing the 2004 Laguna Phuket Triathlon, give it serious thought now.

The earlier you start preparation the better, although you have until March 31 to really get serious.

Make a decision by then, and you have about eight months of training ahead. You will need every day of it to be fit for the big event.

If you saw the 2003 triathlon, you will be aware that competitors were aged from 12 to 65 and came in all different shapes sizes. If they can do it, so can you.

The event didn't get a 100% thumbs up from all participants because they all had a little surprise in the 12km run: the last 1.5 kilometers were on the beach. It was tough.

As a spectator, I thought this was great and should be a regular part of each year's event. It gives the finishers extra "bragging rights" and also separates Phuket's race from other triathlons in the region.

Of course, the triathletes cursed and hated it each step of the way. Believe me, they are still telling their friends to this day that some S.O.B. messed with them after hours of punishment by adding a final hell.

Congratulations to all who took part, even those who had to drop out for one reason or another. Some didn't do enough training, others were plagued by

injury and more just happened to be sick on race day.

Training throughout the year, however, doesn't guarantee that you'll be at the starting line or able to finish. My wonderful super-fit wife Pensri, who is turning 50 in a few days, trained and finished last year's triathlon. It was her seventh triathlon, but she didn't have the time of her life.

She was probably wishing I were out there with her – suffering. The 1.8km swim turned into something nearer to 2km when she swam half way to the Similans before realizing she was off course, and by the time she got back on course a little bonus called a current kicked into play. But she finished the course and I heard her later talk in a low voice about re-entering this year.

I mentioned eight months of training time. The Laguna Phuket Triathlon includes a 1.8km swim, a 55km bike ride and a 12km run, which just might include that beach run. Sound like fun? Well it can be if you train properly and well in advance. Otherwise, it can lead to a not-so-fun day. And I've been there, done that, and didn't get the T-shirt.

First, let's presume that you are not a strong open water swimmer as this event requires. If you are not a good swimmer, I would strongly suggest you take some swim stroke technique training now. By doing so you can save yourself a lot of time and effort over the coming months, not to mention on tri-day.

An efficient swim stroke allows you to propel yourself through the water with greater

ease and allows you to conserve energy for the biking and running. The alternative is thrashing around in the water with a bad stroke that will wear you down in time for the bike and running sections. Do yourself a favor: take lessons and start early.

The event starts at 8 am and takes four hours or more to complete, so you must complete some training in the heat. One of my big mistakes in 1998 was to only train in the early hours of the morning. When race day came, it was extra hot and I was extra done-in by 10 am.

If you are a working person and it's difficult to train in the late morning, do some of your training on weekends. Give yourself an 8 am start time because that's when the race starts. Look at doing some training runs at noon during the week, perhaps doing this instead of taking a long lunch break.

Some training guidelines to consider:

- Start your training with only 3-4 days a week;
- Train under race day conditions as much as possible;
- Do weight training twice a week;
- Include good nutritional habits in your plan;
- Take rest days;
- Hydrate – drink plenty of water;
- If you need to lose weight, lose it in the first, not the last, four months of training. Losing it later means you're doing too much.

A triathlete was walking around town one day when his friend, another triathlete, rode up on a shiny new bike. The first chap was stunned and asked, "Where did you get such a fantastic bike?"

The friend replied, "Well, I was running in the forest when this beautiful woman rode up to me on a bike. She threw it to the ground, stripped naked and said, 'Take what you want!'"

The first man nodded approvingly, "Good choice. The clothes wouldn't have fitted you anyway."

Pensri & Joe Lewis are fitness and equipment consultants at Fitness R Us. Tel: 09-8663736 Email: jlewis@loxinfo.co.th.



Fitness FANATIC

By Joe and Pensri Lewis



The long-horn cowfish.

Image courtesy of www.divegallery.com

The udder side to cowfish

I was underwater and preparing to ascend after a sea-horse search off Koh Bida Noi, close to Phi Phi, when a fish swam up and seemed to hold me in its gaze.

The dark-eyed, yellow fish had two tiny horns on its head and a small black-rimmed mouth. Both caudal fin and tail were pointed and it had tiny pectoral fins and a small, spineless dorsal fin.

This was on only my second diving trip in Thailand and the charming creature – later identified as the long-horn cowfish or *Lactoria cornuta* – has since become a familiar sight to me.

Cowfish – there are two species in our area, as well as the box-fish and trunkfish – belong to the tropical-water family of *Ostraciidae*. Another close relative is the pufferfish, found in the *Tridontidae*, or three-tooth, family. Both families belong to the order *Tetraodontiformes*.

The short-horn cowfish – *Lactoria diaphana* – differs from *L. cornuta* not just in prong length but also in body shape. The long-horn has a relatively-flat underside while the short-horn – which also possesses a thorn in front of its dorsal fin – has a rounded and partially transparent belly.

They uncover their prey, usually tiny crustaceans, other small invertebrates and plants, by squirting a small jet of water into the sand.

Ostraciidae, although capable of short bursts of speed, are generally slow swimmers so nature has provided them with a sharp-edged carapace as a defensive measure.

Many species also produce

a toxic mucous capable of killing other fish. This is a particular hazard should one keep them in an aquarium. Their organs contain a potent toxin that can be fatal to humans. The pufferfish has become the most infamous example of this species.

The flesh of the pufferfish is considered a delicacy in Japan and chefs must undergo rigorous training to prepare it for consumption. However, several deaths still occur each year from accidental ingestion of pufferfish neurotoxin.

Cowfish and their relatives scatter large numbers of eggs into open water to be fertilized by males. The eggs float at the mercy of the wind, currents and waves, even after they have hatched into larvae after a week or two.

Although there is little data on the longevity of cowfish, I suspect that five years is about right. You can observe them throughout our region from the Mergui Archipelago South to the Similans, on to the Bintangs, as well as off the coast of Phuket.

Young cowfish, in their larval or juvenile stage, are often found in estuaries and lagoons. However, many of my sightings have been on the top or the in-shore edges of reefs, where they find protection from waves and heavy weather.

Take the time to watch these little fish when diving or snorkeling.

So little is known about their lives that you may be able to contribute to how they are understood. If nothing else, you will gain knowledge about a fish which has only been known to science for 160 years.

EARTH WATCH

By Christine Cogen

Many species also produce a toxic mucous capable of killing other fish – a particular hazard should one keep them in an aquarium

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Swaying the Shogun

Some 20 years ago, James Clavell wrote a big, fat, sloppy novel called *Shogun* that sold a gazillion copies. His hero was John Blackthorne, an English sailor shipwrecked in Japan who, learning the language and culture, rose high in the court of the shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu.

John Blackthorne was based on a real historical figure, William Adams, who has finally received a biography worthy of his heroics: Giles Milton's *Samurai William: the Englishman who opened Japan* (Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York, 2002, 352pp).

Despite its 1,200-page length, *Shogun* is actually quite compressed in time, all the action occurring after Blackthorne's shipwreck in 1600 and the climactic Battle of Sekigahara that same

year in which Ieyasu crushed all his rivals and became the undisputed Shogun of Japan.

The real William Adams had innumerable adventures before and after that year. A talented sailor, fluent in Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish, he was one of only 23 survivors of a Dutch fleet that had attempted to circumnavigate the globe via the Cape of Good Hope.

When his vessel was finally boarded in Japan, he was the only one left standing, the others all being laid low by scurvy. He would live in Japan for the next 20 years, rising to the nobility and proudly wearing two samurai swords.

He died at the age of 55 in 1620, leaving behind a country estate, a townhouse and a Japanese wife, son and daughter.

Adams was by no means the first European to come to Japan. Spanish and Portuguese Jesuits and Franciscans were already well-established, the first Portuguese adventurer having arrived 60 years earlier.

They, like Adams, were stunned by what they found. The author writes of the Jesuit leader, the aristocratic Portuguese Alessandro Valignano, who arrived in Japan in 1579: "He was stunned by the sophistication of the Japanese and found himself admitting that this strange race surpassed the Portuguese in both learning and manners. 'We who come from Europe find ourselves as veritable children ... [and] have to learn how to eat, sit, converse, dress, act politely and so on.'"

Nobody was faster to learn than Adams.

Besides being a physical bull of a man, he was possessed of keen intellect and blunt speech – qualities which endeared him to the Shogun.

In addition to passing on much military, shipbuilding and geographical knowledge, Adams informed the Shogun – who had no idea – of the division of Europe between the Catholic and Protestant religions.

For this the missionaries tried, and failed, to have him crucified. In the end, it was they and their Catholic followers who went to the stake and the cross.

Adams also became a member of the English East India Company and the book is also a history of this rather raffish breed. They spent much of their time at their "factory" in the southern port

Hirado, wenching, feasting and drinking.

"Drunkenness – the men discovered – was a way of life in Japan," Milton writes. "Many Japanese saw nothing wrong in drinking themselves into oblivion and would continue with their revelleries until there was no one left standing. It was one of the few Japanese customs that was eagerly adopted by the English and the only one at which they truly excelled."

Adams continued his heroics in the company's employ, replenishing its coffers by a trading trip to Siam, investigating the deaths of two company men on another sailing voyage to Vietnam, and single-handedly at night rescuing another pair held captive aboard a hostile Dutch trading ship.

William Adams, known as *Anjin* ("the pilot"), died full of official honors but the Shogun eventually imposed a state of isolation in Japan that would last 200 years.

"When [foreigners] did eventually return and explored the pagodas and temples of Tokyo, they were astonished to discover that William Adams's name was still famous throughout the land," Milton concludes. "They told the marvelous story of Adams's rise at court: how he had been spokesman and adviser, tutor and oracle. His title, estate and extraordinary friendship with the shogun had left a deep and lasting impression on the Japanese. As a mark of their respect, they had named an area of Tokyo, Anjincho, in his honor."



Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt

Taking nine steps from hell to heaven

Everyone says they've "done" Pattaya. They have been here, tasted its delights and they have developed a more complete understanding about what is quintessential Pattaya. Well, just for the record, you haven't done Pattaya until...

1. You've been asked by a gobble (or maybe a "gargle") of Beach Rd lady-men to come and inspect their room and get up close and personal with their cat, or join them for a moonlight smoke on the beach.

2. You've had a Thai lady of middling years and portly deportment make you feel like a Plasticine figurine while you lie prone on the beach at Jomtien and she massages you to such an extent that she finds nerve endings you never knew existed and muscles you thought had long ago turned to jelly. And you're paying her for this torture, you masochist.

3. You've been struck at least once on the legs, occasioning light-to-medium bodily damage, by a motorbike going the wrong way up South Pattaya Rd on market day and ridden by a minimum of three teenage boys. Needless to say, they just grin vacuously, mumble "sorry" and ride off into the path of an oncoming tour bus. Also, needless to say, the two brown-uniformed men walking slowly on the footpath take no interest in proceedings as they correctly assess that none of the parties involved have any money.

4. You've been walking past a condo complex and been narrowly missed by a male foreigner, aged anywhere between 30 and 60, who's decided to end his days by launching himself from the balcony after having had an argument with the only true love he has ever known, and she has walked out on him after four days. In response to the rising number of falling *farang*, the city council has considered declaring the streets around some condo complexes as "hard hat areas".

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FROM THE STREETS OF PATTAYA

By Duncan Stearn

5. You've attempted to use the pedestrian crossing on the corner of Second Rd and South Pattaya Rd just after the lights have changed. This exercise in road traversal is usually the final test potential members of the elite units of the armed forces of Thailand, Singapore and the US.

It is considered that anyone able to perform this feat should, in the case of a Thai, be promoted to the rank of brigadier-general and issued with a new row of medals from the Tesco-Lotus supercenter.

For a member of the Singapore armed forces, the man will be given the keys to the Nick Leeson Lounge in the Singapore Stock Exchange while any American soldier will be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Of course, any US service personnel struck by oncoming vehicles are automatically awarded a Purple Heart with Baht Bus cluster.

6. You've been poked in the ribs or tapped on the shoulder at

least 647 times in three and a half minutes while sitting at an outdoor beer bar anywhere within the city limits by a motley collection of people selling watches, flowers, maps, cigarettes, photographs, snakes or other creepy crawly reptiles, elephants, goldfish, and/or their sister, brother or mother.

7. You've been coerced into joining a group of clearly inebriated Thai men in a karaoke bar and singing a duet of *My Way* with the eldest and most alcoholically-challenged of the bunch.

They then proceed to fill your tumbler with Mekong (the famed Thai rotgut made from cremated body parts, buffalo urine, battery acid and the residue of weapons of mass destruction) and a dash of soda, to overflowing, all the while intoning, "*Chok dee, farang.*"

8. You've sat in a beer bar anywhere in Pattaya that has a live band and been regaled with at least one rendition of *Hotel California*, *Smoke on the Water* and *Gorky Park*. Follow the bouncing ball: "Hona dar desen haway/cool win in ma hair/..."

9. You also haven't done Pattaya until you've been the recipient of a beautiful, beaming, and completely genuine smile from a school-age Thai girl or boy. A smile full of the innocence of youth.

Sometimes, when my cynicism reaches overload it's a simple friendly smile, occasionally shy, but always warm, which brings me back to reality and makes me understand just what *is* Pattaya, and why I stay here.



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Running off to war

Wars are easy to start, and Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra clearly understands the principle. He has declared war on illegal drugs, poverty and corruption, targeting in particular "people of influence". But as PM Thaksin may eventually be forced to concede, once a war has been started it is not always easy to conquer the enemy and declare a victory – or even reach a truce.

This is especially true, as the post-Vietnam generation of Americans is discovering all over again in Iraq and Afghanistan, when the entanglements involve local guerillas who know the terrain and have support from a proportion of the local population.

For decades, bands of rebels in Thailand's Deep South have been torching schools, stealing guns from the military and killing police. They have been labeled variously as separatists, extremists, anarchists acting in response to perceived local injustices, plain thugs, or most recently, bands headed by "influential figures".

After so long, it is surprising that the authorities know so little about these shadowy groups and their motives. Even PM Thaksin's appointment of southern Muslim Wan Muhamad Noor Matha as Interior Minister has failed to reduce the violence, the senselessness of which is clearly demonstrated by the continued targeting of primary schools and kindergartens.

With terrorism now constantly in the minds of travelers all over the world, one thing can be said with certainty: this is not a good time for Thailand to be making headlines in this way.

While Phuket is geographically and socially distanced from Narathiwat, it appears perilously close on the small-scale maps used by tourists to decide vacation destinations.

One must hope that, like the Tamil Tigers in their long and savage encounter with the authorities in Sri Lanka, the dispute remains focussed on local issues without turning tourists into targets or kidnapping victims, as has happened in the southern Philippines.

Another aspect of the Narathiwat crisis is that the province is a popular transit-point for expats on "visa runs". These reluctant travelers have been subject to intense scrutiny lately following reports that terrorists have been traveling in and out of Thailand, taking advantage of lax security.

The patrons of the shady companies that recently provided fake visa stamps or carried passports across borders without their owners were at least able to sleep soundly, secure in the knowledge that although they were breaking the law, they at least did not have to cross a war zone and risk their lives for a 90-day ink stamp.

– The Editor

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Letters

The *Gazette* is pleased to receive mail from readers. Please write to us at 367/2 Yaowarat Rd, Amphur Muang, Phuket 83000, fax to 076-213971 or send an email to editor@phuketgazette.net

with your views for publication in our next issue. We reserve the right to edit all letters. Pseudonyms are acceptable only if your full name and address are supplied.

Touts far worse than Patong sex shows

Regarding the controversy over sex shows in Patong [*Issues and Answers*, December 27-January 2], all the superintendent of Patong police needs to do to see what really goes on is to disguise himself and stand at the entrance to Soi Seadragon.

The people who accost you in the street are 10 times more annoying to tourists than the lovely ladies who might have to perform behind a curtain.

The shows will stop from lack of business as soon as the publicity and advertising stop.

Jeff
Patong

There's a joker in this pack of cards

Someone has to say it: this one-million baht "Elite Card" seems dubious and its benefits thin. Influential overseas colleagues agree, and they are a key target of this card.

The immigration shortcuts would be great, but these should really be standard – or better – for everyone. Land ownership sounds attractive, but it is still better to set up a personal investment structure that can include loss insurance and robust contractual protection.

Card promoters say that cardholders can litigate their land "arrangements" rights in the event of a breach. This provides little legal comfort, except for the litigation lawyers. A cynic might suggest that the card should include free legal services.

Then there are discounted

golf fees, free rides from the airport, and hotel discounts. I largely enjoy these already from free or negligibly priced loyalty programs covering not only Thailand, but other countries too.

I seldom play golf and although compulsive golfers may gain some value, that seems to be about it. Our cynic might suggest a name change to the "Handicap Card".

Now there are proposals to double the one-million baht subscription and bar certain people from membership. [Page 21 this issue].

The slow uptake of the "Elite Card" should ring alarm bells about viability and value.

St John Campbell
Karon

Letter writer treated diver too harshly

I am a doctor from Canada, vacationing in Phuket, and read a letter [*Letters*, December 27-January 2] by Richard Leader regarding the recent world diving record attempt. The letter was quite scathing about the diver, who had been injured – and required extensive treatment – making an earlier attempt.

Although not a diver myself, I take an interest in the medical aspects of diving. Is it normal in Thailand for a dive tender to openly criticize one of his patients in a newspaper?

One concern of many divers is the stigma attached to diving injuries. It seems that divers simply avoid admitting injuries because this, in turn, suggests some kind of wrong-doing.

Diving physiology is a

poorly understood science and as such, very little blame can usually be laid at the feet of the diver.

It would do the dive industry a great service if critics like this one were less vocal, or given training in patient etiquette.

Dr W Phillippe
Quebec/Patong

Solo dive part of a sad game

Your editorial [December 27-January 2] seemed to glorify the world record solo dive, adorning it with unwarranted admiration. In reality, it was nothing more than a sad game of Russian Roulette.

Richard Leader
Canada

The hidden meanings of Phuket nightlife

In your editorial, and in Chairat's First Person article [*Gazette*, January 3-9] you emphasize the importance of "Phuket's nightlife" to the tourist industry. I am not sure exactly what is implied by this phrase.

Do you mean the easy access to alcohol and sex? If so, is this not precisely the image that the Tourist Authority of Thailand (TAT) is trying to replace with one of "family-oriented holidays"?

There seems to me to be a conflict of interest here.

Curious Farang

In our editorial we were referring to Phuket's entire nightlife scene, of which alcohol and sex are obviously an important part.
– Editor

Letters conveying views and suggestions are published here. Those seeking comment from government officials and/or business owners are published in *Issues & Answers* on the facing page.

Legal rights made clear under binding leasehold

In a recent article (*Gazette* December 20-26) by William Pinsent entitled *Options for Ownership*, he stated that "a well constructed leasehold is typically of 30 years duration with two 30-year-renewals".

This statement implies that the leaseholder can expect a trouble-free 90-year land/building lease. Under current Thai law, a land lease can be for a maximum of 30 years and each renewal must have a "new" registration at the local land office. Taxes must be paid for each "new" registration and the landowner must agree to the new lease.

When William refers to a "well constructed lease", I assume he means a legally binding private contract between the landowner and the lessee covering the subsequent lease registrations.

However, if the landowner has no further financial incentive 30 years down the line, they could simply refuse to sign any new registration and automatically become owner of any buildings standing on the ground.

The lessee then has the legal right to take the landowner to court for breach of contract but the reality is that such civil actions can take years of expensive legal wrangling. The landowner would hold the legal high ground during this time but the lessee would have no rights at all as the registered land lease automatically terminates at the end of 30 years.

Your readers should also be aware that in the event of the death of the registered lessee, the lease is immediately no longer valid, given that there is a clause in "private" lease agreements that the heritor must register a

Issues & ANSWERS

Want to know how to get something done? Can't understand some of the dafter things that seem to go on in Phuket? Want to pitch an idea to Phuket's authorities or institutions? Then this is the forum for you. Submit your queries or suggestions to us and we'll ask the appropriate people to respond to them.

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new lease with the landowner – who must be willing to cooperate – to ensure the smooth transition of lease registration.

Complex issues have been highlighted and buyers must be alert to all potential pitfalls.

Alex Malcolm

Patong

William Pinsent, financial adviser and *Gazette* columnist, replies:

Unscrupulous landlords, although not unknown, are fortunately few and far between. Sloppily-written leases are however rather more frequent. Many of the points raised in your letter are potential weaknesses in the default conditions prevailing in the existing Land Code as regards to protecting long-term leasehold rights.

These potential pitfalls, including inheritance and renewal options, can be adequately ad-

dressed in a custom-drafted and registered lease including, for example, penalties for breach and conditions set for return of improvements.

The few that cannot be dealt by these means can be covered in a private addendum enforceable under the Civil and Commercial Code.

Key is that all these conditions are clearly stated, recorded and registered, with the terms set such that the landlord's refusal to grant any option to renew becomes such an unattractive path that even the most unscrupulous landlord will not find a breach viable. Cumbersome court procedures should thus never become a concern.

If you are paying good money for a long-term lease, it is a wise investment to pay for good legal advice at the outset – and only take on a property where the landlord is willing to grant you all the protection that your lawyer advises.

How many guns in Phuket?

There has been a lot of talk about gun amnesty recently, but I would like to know: when did registering firearms become mandatory, and how many guns have been registered in each of Phuket's three districts.

Perry Hallmark, Patong.

Supoj Chanakij, Chief, Phuket Provincial Administrative Secretariat's Justice Enforcement Group, replies:

Since mandatory registration of firearms began in 1947, there have been 14,068 guns registered in the province: 2,762 in Thalang; 1,804 in Kathu and 9,500 in Muang district.

STATES&MARKETS

By Thitinan Pongsudhirak

A crystal ball for 2004

Thailand enters the New Year with ever-brightening prospects. Its economy is in high gear. Growth for 2003 is thought to be at 6% or more by most estimates. The index of the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) more than doubled over the past year. The government of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra aims to propel Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth for 2004 to 8% and to steer the SET to top the 1,000 mark, which would represent nearly another 25% rise. The good times have returned in great time, merely three years into PM Thaksin's first term. The year 2004 will feature the acceleration of ongoing trends. Economic expansion and PM Thaksin's re-election bid will dominate the government's overall agenda. Government-directed growth will underpin Thaksin's prospective second term in view of the upcoming election, due by February 2005.

On the economy, the Thaksin government will continue to roll out a mix of new populist measures aimed at capturing the hearts and minds of rural voters. Forthcoming populist policies include the government's registration of the poor and a host of *Ua-arthorn* (Care and Share) schemes as part of the War on Poverty. The poor will be given all kinds of access to capital, including the conversion of their idle assets into collateral for loans. They will be handed land deeds as part of the government's unprecedented land reform drive. The middle classes and the upper echelons of society can increase their wealth in the booming stock market. Massive government spending on infrastructure is planned to ensure that GDP in 2004 will reach the targeted 8%.

THAKSIN TO TIGHTEN HIS GRIP

On politics, PM Thaksin will tighten his grip on power by further consolidating his power bases within the ruling Thai Rak Thai party. The opposing Democrat Party will be marginalized, and so will the smaller parties. The watchdog institutions such as the Constitution Court, the National Counter Corruption Commission and the Election Commission have all fallen into disrepute. Not one of them will be able to effectively check on government abuses. The military and the police will further be brought under PM Thaksin's control with promotions of generals who support him. The Senate will act as a counterbalance to the Lower House here and there, but the Upper Chamber's divisions and politicization will not be able to keep checks on the government's legislative activism. HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej has acted as a voice of national conscience with his most recent birthday speech, but his words appear to have faded in the midst of Thaksin's wild popularity.

Political stability will thus not be a problem. If anything, Thai politics will be so stable that it will seem unstable to some. Thai democracy will thrive only in name, whereas PM Thaksin's authoritarian rule will carry the day in reality. And 2004 is unlikely to see the peak of PM Thaksin's rule. That is to come after he is re-elected. For better or worse, PM Thaksin has cast a spell on Thailand like no one else has done since constitutional rule was introduced in 1932. From afar, Thailand in 2004 will seem bustling, yet anomalous relative to its past.

Beyond the home front, Thaksin will project Thailand's power and resources abroad. Cambodia, Laos and Burma have already been viewed as having fallen within Thailand's sphere of influence on mainland Southeast Asia. PM Thaksin will also seek to make a difference abroad by engaging and cooperating actively with the major powers, including with the US in its war on terror.

NATIONALISTIC CAMPAIGN TO BE STEPPED UP

The Thaksin government will also try to position Thailand as a natural geographical center for international business development, including in aviation, health care, tourism, energy, fashion and food, among the many service industries in which Thailand has a comparative advantage and a competitive edge. As far as his dealings with the outside world are concerned, PM Thaksin will step up his nationalistic campaign. Not since the 1930s has the Thai flag flown so high and so vividly in the eyes of the world, thanks to the Thaksin government's blatant promotion of nationalism.

Indeed, 2004 is set up to be a great year for Thailand. The economy will expand. Business will be brisk. The stock market will bustle. Politics will be stable, and foreign policy will make Thailand count in the international pecking order. This year is one leg of PM Thaksin's remarkable upswing in power. Because of PM Thaksin's policies, Thailand is in the midst of an upturn in the business cycle. Eventually, the upturn will downturn. That won't happen for a few more years. When it does happen, the merits of the prime minister's policies in 2004 will present themselves.

The writer is a lecturer in the Department of International Relations, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University.

Motorcycle taxis: when haggling becomes a hassle

The other day I came out of the Ocean shopping mall on Soi Bangla and walked up to the motorbike taxi rank and asked to be taken to the junction of Sai Nam Yen Rd and Nanai Rd. Motorbike taxi driver number 330 said the fare would be 50 baht.

I told him that motorbike taxis in Patong usually charge 20 baht. He said the fare to Nanai Rd is now 50 baht. Has there been a price increase? If not, what should I do when confronted with a taxi driver who is overcharging?

Mike, Patong.

Pol Capt Sanya Podsalee, Patong Tourist Police replies:

Motorcycle taxi fares are not set rates. The fare depends on how you bargain with the driver. It has always been like that and it is still like that today. If you think that the motorcycle taxi driver is overcharging, then the best thing to do is to simply not get on his motorcycle.

We cannot arrest the drivers as there are no laws enforcing set prices for motorbike taxis. There are often problems with overcharging, especially with tuk-tuk drivers in Patong.

สวัสดีปีใหม่ จากคุณวู้ดดีเบเกอร์



SO YOU WANT TO TYPE IN THAI?

Trick the keyboard

Over the years, many of you have asked how to get Office to "speak Thai" – in other words, how to get Thai characters typed into Word documents or Excel spreadsheets, or even Outlook email messages.

If you have the Thai-language version of Office 2000, XP or 2003, Thai-language support is built-in: plug a Thai keyboard into your computer, and you're off. But many people have English or other versions of Office.

More than that, the thought of switching between Thai and English keyboards several times while working on a single document gives you vertigo.

A little over a year ago, I showed you how easy it is to add Thai-language support to Windows 2000 or Windows XP PCs.

In Windows 2000, you click Start | Control Panel | Regional Options, then in Language settings for your system, check the box marked Thai. You're prompted to insert your Windows 2000 CD.

After an eternity or two, Windows comes back, and on the Input Locales tab, you need to click Add, choose Thailand and click OK.

In Windows XP, you click Start | Control Panel | Date, Time, Language and Regional Options | Add other Languages. Then

KHUN WOODY'S COMPUTER

check the box marked "Install files for complex script and right-to-left languages (including Thai)".

When you click OK, you'll need your CD. When Windows comes back, at the top, where it says "Text services and input languages" click Details, then Add and pick Thai from the Input languages box.

Once you've installed Thai-language support, you switch from English to Thai and back by clicking the En (or Th) box in the Windows notification area, down next to the clock. Alternatively, you can hold down the left Alt key and press Shift.

From everything I've seen, Windows XP's Thai support rocks – the characters look good, they vowels appear correctly above and below the main line of characters (which is to say, the ascenders and descenders are formed automatically and correctly), and it's as stable as can be.

The only problem? It's harder than Hades to type in Thai on an English-language keyboard.

If you're working in Word

or Excel or Outlook or PowerPoint, you can click Insert | Symbol then click, click, click on individual Thai characters, but therein lies madness.

You can unplug your English keyboard and strap on a Thai keyboard, but that's a pain in the neck ... and not much help at all if you have a portable.

I just found an interesting, free utility from the Dark Side of the For ... er, from Microsoft that can show you a Thai-language keyboard on the screen: you type on your English-language keyboard, but look at the Thai keyboard on screen to find the characters you want.

The Visual Keyboard highlights characters as you type them, and it's remarkably easy to use. The main drawback: it only works with Office 2000 and XP; Office 97 and (surprisingly) Office 2003 users need not apply.

You can download the installation file directly from: www.download.microsoft.com/download/office2000pro/VkeyIns/2000/WIN98/EN-US/VkeyInst.EXE.

Make sure you have Thai support installed in Windows (following the instructions earlier in this article), then double-click on the downloaded installation file VkeyInst.exe. A very brief installation routine dumps you back into Windows without any instructions.

Get Word, Excel, Outlook or PowerPoint running. Then click Start | All Programs | Microsoft Office Tools | Microsoft Visual Keyboard. Re-size the keyboard and drag it where you want it.

Switch to Thai by double-clicking the Th icon in the Windows notification area or holding down the left Alt key and pressing Enter.

Then click once inside your document, and start typing. You type in English, look at the screen for the right letters, and what you type appears in Thai. Amazing.

– Woody Leonhard
woody@khunwoody.com

Caution is the keynote for crash-aware

Booyed by improving economic data, especially from the US, most stockmarkets enjoyed a significant rebound from the lows recorded early last year.

This rebound has not yet taken markets in the US or Europe to historical peaks reached in early 2000. Measured by the Standard & Poors 500 index, the stockmarket is still more than 30% below recorded highs and the "tech heavy" Nasdaq is 60% below.

Shortly after 9/11, a TV journalist suggested that perhaps Goldman Sachs would like to drop their estimate for the S&P index for the end of year 2001 from 1430. They complied by moving the figure to 1400; it was still about 300 points, or more than 20%, too high.

During the great bear market in US equities from 2000-2003, profits for US non-financial corporations, when compared with Gross Domestic Product (GDP), fell to their lowest levels since World War II.

Profits are improving and at a rapid rate, but this is from a very low base. Two areas have contributed to this rise: aggressive cost-cutting and productivity growth.

However, company revenues are not reflecting any significant rise. In general, companies are finding it difficult to expand sales and raise prices.

When the effects of a falling dollar and the energy sector are removed, non-financial companies are reflecting revenue growth that is barely positive.

The stockmarket in America is benefitting from extremely low short-term interest rates, which ensures that people holding cash on short-term deposit are losing money when inflation is taken into consideration.

For private US investors, bonds do not look attractive. They feel, probably correctly, that increased economic activity will result in higher mid- and long-term interest rates and result in lower bond prices.

Where does the economy go from here? One possible scenario, deflation, would push bond yields lower and bond prices higher.

However, as the Japanese experience for more than a decade has shown, deflation does not help the stockmarket when corporate profits come under

pressure. The more likely scenario would be for inflation to rise. Fiscal deficits, accommodative monetary policy and rising commodity prices will all contribute.

The US government is not unduly worried about a "little bit" of inflation – it allows companies to raise prices and profits and it reduces household, corporate and government debt in real terms.

However, what is more likely than either of the last two scenarios is that the US by mid-2004 will settle into a low inflation mode, probably 2.5%-3% with moderate economic growth.

This is not a bad situation for the stockmarket but it is unlikely to produce startling returns.

When the stockmarket peaked in early 2000, price earning (PE) ratios were around 50. When one considers that in 1929, just before the Wall Street crash, PE ratios were only 32.6, one can see how overblown the situation had become.

MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson



The worrying item, currently, is that PE ratios are still around 30.

This is far too high.

I am not suggesting that we are likely to have a re-run of the depression of the 1930s for at least one very important reason: economic policy.

After the 1929 crash, US policymakers decided that it was caused by too heavy a dependency on easy credit. To solve this problem, they raised interest rates and made access to credit more difficult.

Combined with a contracting money supply, this forced the economy into depression. Today, economics is a much better understood science and no US administration would adopt a "hair shirt" policy.

However, history does give one very important lesson: it is very unlikely that the current share price gains can continue at anything like that same rate, for any length of time.

For investors who like stockmarkets as a medium of investment it may be wise to consider not placing too much on "long-only" investments. Perhaps hedge funds have their place as part of an investment strategy.

Richard Watson runs Global Portfolios Co Ltd, a Phuket-based personal financial planning service. He can be reached at Tel and Fax: 076-381997, Mobile: 01-0814611. Email: imm@loxinfo.co.th.



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THE NEW OVERSEAS CALL RATES

Destination	New Rate/Old Rate (baht/minute)	
Hong Kong	14/24	Germany/Italy/Holland/Norway
Australia	14/22	Sweden/Switzerland)
UK	14/30	S. Korea
Canada	9/22	India
Malaysia	7/24	Taiwan
US	9/22	Israel
Japan	21/30	Philippines
Europe (Belgium/Denmark/Finland/France)		

Source : Phuket CAT office

Overseas phone call rates slashed

By Dhirarat Boonkongsaen

PHUKET TOWN: Phuket residents will enjoy a number of improvements in government telecommunications services in 2004, according to Pairoj Somsri, Chief Telephone Organization of Thailand's (TOT) Phuket branch.

K. Pairoj told the *Gazette* that TOT had reached a revenue-sharing agreement with rival state enterprise CAT to offer savings of up to 70% on international calls to 27 countries until March 31, when the rates will be reviewed again.

The service, accessible by entering the prefix 001, went into effect on January 1 through CAT and will be offered through TOT's fixed line network from January 15.

Speaking of the agreement hammered out between the two agencies by Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Minister Surapong Suebwonglee, K. Pairoj said it was designed to help both organizations cooperate for the benefit of the country.

He added that cooperation was needed because TOT relied on CAT's international connections in the same way that CAT needs TOT's fixed-line network to route international calls through to local users with land lines.

K. Pairoj said Phuket would see a dramatic rise in the number of land lines and ADSL connections, and the province would become an Internet "gateway" in 2004 – allowing users to tap into the global network directly, without having to make connections through Bangkok. Many service disruptions in 2003 were attributed to technical problems in the capital.

Internet service providers (ISPs) stand to benefit most from the on-going ADSL network expansion, K. Pairoj said. Increased bandwidth would allow them to generate revenue from a greater number of users at no increase in cost. He said that 5,000 high-speed ADSL lines would be added to the existing network in Phuket this year.

Some of the new ADSL lines will be installed under a 7-million-baht budget at the "Software Park" project, which is being set up by the newly-established Software Industry Promotion Agency at Prince of Songkhla Phuket's Saphan Hin campus. The project is intended to attract investment by foreign software firms in Phuket by providing the high-speed connections and skilled local programmers such businesses require. It is in line with the government policy of developing Phuket into an ICT city or "cyber paradise" comparable to Singapore.

To meet increasing demand for fixed lines, TOT Phuket has also been authorized to add 37 more telephone exchanges

to the existing network, which will add 19,530 fixed lines in Phuket this year.

TOT Phuket is now designing the network expansion and is seeking suitable sites to house the exchanges, which must be built within six kilometers of existing ones. There are just 12 exchanges now.

"The new exchanges will increase line quality for both voice and digital data," he said. "The ICT Minister has ordered TOT to provide lines for 80% of those on the waiting list by the end of the year. We will also upgrade the 12 existing exchanges to further improve service. We hope to eliminate the waiting list by the end of 2005," he said.

In reference to accusations that some TOT staff accept bribes in exchange for expedited line installation, K. Pairoj admitted it was a problem. He said that the only way to eliminate the practice was for those who had evidence to come forward and contact his office.

He encouraged those who have been victimized to contact K. Suporn or K. Somchat in the Marketing Department at 076-212222.

"I have to admit that there are ways to 'zigzag' and sell numbers at above the normal rate," he said. "But in March, we expect to set up a new system to prevent such corruption. For it to be successful, however, we need detailed information from people."

He added, "We get a lot of complaints about being overcharged," he said. "Sometimes these are just misunderstandings, but in other cases thieves with technical abilities use their skills to tap into the lines of other TOT customers, causing them to be charged for call they didn't make."

He encouraged those who suspect they have been victimized in this way to contact his office.



K. Panjit K. Tamrong

The photographs of Panjit Pisawong, the new Chief of the Phuket Commercial Affairs Office, and Tamrong Tongtan, the new Chief of the Phuket Treasury Office, were inadvertently transposed in the On The Move column of January 3-9. The *Gazette* regrets any embarrassment and apologizes for the mistake.

Expats will pay double for Elite privilege cards

BANGKOK: Expatriates will be charged two million baht this year for a Thailand Elite privilege card – double the present price – because they can utilize services and facilities more often than members who are foreign tourists or visiting businessmen.

"We originally intended to set the price for expatriates at two million baht because of the many advantages they have but in the beginning, we reduced it to one million baht to build customer interest," Paisit Kaenchan, director of Thailand Privilege Card Co, said on December 30.

Applications from expatriates – foreigners residing or working in Thailand – will not be accepted after the end of 2004 to bring the proportion of expatriates down to 5% of total membership from the present 20% level.

K. Paisit denied the firm was taking the measures because it was afraid of losing money. Income was sufficient to cover the 40,000 baht estimated maximum annual expense for each member, he said.

The price for foreign-based cardholders would also be raised by 20% to 25% within two years from the current one million because facilities and services would be improved and added, he said.

The Thailand Elite card, the brainchild of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, anticipates one million members in five years.

However, since its November 19 launch, only some 200 cards have been sold, at US\$25,000 or one million baht for individuals and \$50,000 for juristic persons. This has forced a cut in the end-of-2003 goal to 300 cards from the initial 1,000.

To achieve this year's sales objective of 100,000 cards, the company has put together a marketing plan that includes a road show at least once a month to Japan, China, Korea and other countries in Asia and expanding its sales network from 20 agents at present to 30 or 40 firms.

Recently, the firm forged an alliance

with Unicef, hoping to attract Hollywood celebrities and top executives from all over the world to become members.

"After reaching the 100,000-card level, the company will suspend recruitment of new members for six months to evaluate all services and every golf course, hotel, spa, restaurant and shopping mall participating in the program," K. Paisit said.

Proceeds from card sales are now placed in bank deposits but in the future an asset management company will be retained to invest its funds in the same manner as the Government Pension Fund.

These idle funds represent 90% to 95% of total reserves and the fund manager must make an annual return from investment of at least 6% to 7%.

The remaining 5% to 10% of reserves will be used to build or take over at least two golf clubs, a boutique hotel and a city club within two years, which will be linked to the future increase in membership fees.

Thailand Privilege Card Co, as a Thai-owned entity, retains proprietary ownership of properties that cardholders buy, but the cardholders can enjoy lifetime use of their land and properties, including renting their units out when they are not in the country.

However, cardholders do not get full commercial rights, such as to develop home or condominium projects.

"The first approval of property purchases is expected in January," K. Paisit said.

Thailand Privilege Card Co would be around for a long time, not only during this government's term, because it is a private company and has members around the world who benefit the country greatly over the long term, he said.

"I'm confident that no [Thai] government would dare to close us. If anyone tries that, he'll get sued by cardholders all over the world."

– **Thanadit Staporncharnchai**
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Phuket athletes set for championships

PHATTALUNG: Twelve athletes from Phuket schools have been nominated to represent the province in the Southern Athletic Games 2004 in Phattalung.

The exact date has yet to be fixed but the competitors – six boys and six girls aged nine to 12 – will compete in a range of track events including the 100-meter sprint, the 600m, and the 4 x 100m and 4 x 300m relays.

The 12 athletes come from Muang Thalang, Plookpanya and Kathu Wittaya schools.

Speaking of the athletes and their abilities, Luechai Kanjan, regional secretary for the Sport and Recreation Promotion Office, said, "These 12 are the new faces of the championships and I know they will try their very best."

– *Nonthawat Disayabutra*



On the defensive in the OrBorJor Cup



Previous OrBorJor Cup champions Phattalung (pictured) beat Phuket on home ground at Surakul Stadium two years ago. Will Phuket this year have what it takes to beat Nakhon Sri Thammarat on the road to retain the championship?

PHUKET: Play commences in the 2004 OrBorJor Cup – now in its fourth year – in Nakhon Sri Thammarat on January 20. The Phuket OrBorJor team will compete against the hosts and 12 other teams representing southern provinces in four disciplines – pétanque, sepak takraw, volleyball and athletics – over the five-day event.

Phuket team manager,

Suratin Lian-Udom, said that competition will be fierce. A source has told them that the home team – which lost out to Phuket last year – has developed a tough training schedule and focused game plans.

"We'll do our best to defend our record and I think the competition will be as exciting as ever," K. Suratin said.

– *Nonthawat Disayabutra*

Children turn to futsal

PHUKET: The provincial branch of the Sport and Recreation Promotion Office will host a Children's Day futsal event to coincide with National Children's Day, January 10.

Kickoff is at 8 am at Gymnasium 1 at the Saphan Hin Sports Center, in Phuket Town.

The Under-13s tourney will feature a maximum 16 teams,

composed of up to 12 players a side. Trophies will be awarded to the victorious teams and spectators are encouraged to attend.

For more information about the event, contact the Phuket office of the Sports Authority Thailand at Tel: 076-250110 or contact Krissada O-In on his mobile phone at Tel: 01-5372990.

– *Nonthawat Disayabutra*

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ANDAMAN SEA RALLY: They're off !



Last year's winner of the Andaman Sea Rally, *Stormvögel*, crosses the start line in this year's regatta.

Annual Andaman Sea regatta gets underway

By John Gilpin

Rakishly trailing the Red Ensign from her stern, the Italian-owned racing yacht *Stormvögel* crossed the start line in fourth position on the first leg of the Kata Group Andaman Sea Rally on January 4.

First over the line was *Rusalka*, followed by Emerald Blue and *El Samali*.

Nine boats are taking part in the 14-day rally from Kata Beach on Phuket to Port Blair in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, a round trip of some 800 miles.

Stormvögel, favorite for the event, has won many international events, including the Fastnet Race and last year's Andaman Sea Rally.

Film fans may recognize her as the boat in the film *Dead Calm* featuring antipodean stars Nicole Kidman and Sam Neil.

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TOYOTA PRIUS HYBRID

Electrifying entry for a new generation

The age of alternative fuels has yet to reach us, due principally to an infrastructure problem. There are as yet no hydrogen refueling stations, although there are plans to build dual-fuel stations in some parts of Europe, particularly Germany.

But it is acknowledged that fossil fuel consumption must be reduced, partly because of the noxious emissions and also because ultimately, we will exhaust our finite supplies.

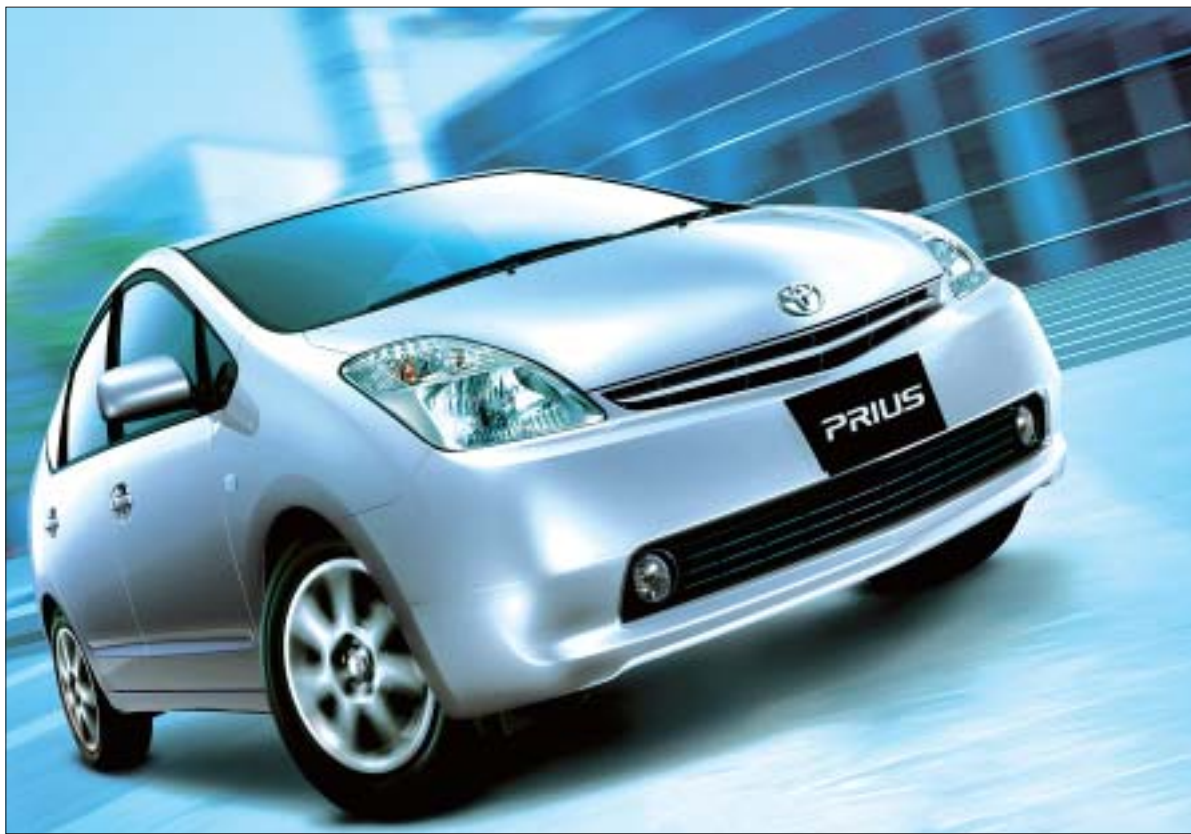
The current thinking is to go the hybrid route, with an electric motor supplementing the gasoline or diesel engine.

Volkswagen has gone on record as saying that it does not believe in hybrids, but other manufacturers, notably Toyota and Honda, are already producing highly successful hybrid cars.

VW believes that the development of better combustion engines and cleaner burning fuels is the way to meet tougher emission rules.

However, the German giant acknowledges that it may be forced to embrace hybrid technology if the stringent emissions standards that are being adopted in California are used elsewhere.

VW's research currently focuses on optimizing the internal combustion engine, using synthetic fuels. A Volkswagen spokesman said, "You can design your own fuel so that even exist-



The new Prius marks Toyota's commitment to producing economical electric-gasoline powered cars.

ing diesels are 5% to 10% more fuel efficient, while simultaneously reducing particulate emissions by up to 50%."

Synthetic fuels are produced from natural gas or from biological matter such as plants. The spokesman added, "The supply of natural gas is almost unlimited, and when produced from bio-mass, you have a near-sustainable energy source."

One manufacturer commit-

ted to hybrids is world number three Toyota, which has just introduced its second-generation Prius, a small car that combines an electric motor with an efficient 1.5-liter gasoline engine.

Toyota has also demonstrated a Lexus concept hybrid, the LF-S, or Lexus Future Sedan. This features a V8 gasoline engine and a high output motor hybrid system and four-wheel drive.

The original Prius, introduced in 1997, was an adapted Corolla. It was the world's first mass-produced gasoline-electric car, with a gas motor and an electrical generator.

The parallel systems take

advantage of the benefits of the two power sources, while compensating for each other's shortcomings. Although hybrid systems use an electric motor, they do not require external charging, as does the other low emission alternative, all-electric vehicles.

The latest Prius is a standalone model, incorporating much of what has been learned about hybrid technology. The system has two motors and – depending on driving conditions – uses only the electric motor or the power from both the electric motor and the engine to achieve greatest efficiency.

Electricity is also generated while running, thus charging the on-board batteries. Other benefits include automatically cutting the engine when at a standstill, reducing the energy that would otherwise be lost.

It also recovers energy that would be wasted as heat during

braking, which is then used to charge the batteries and power the electric motor.

This regenerative braking system, used during engine braking or when operating the foot brake, turns the electric motor into a generator, converting the car's kinetic energy into electrical energy, thereby charging the high performance nickel-metal hydride battery.

The system is particularly effective in city driving, with constant stop-start producing considerable kinetic energy. A display in the center of the dash indicates when it is operating, although after a while the novelty of seeing which way the power is going wears off.

The advantages of the hybrid system extend to such functions as uphill assist control, which prevents the Prius from rolling backwards when the brake is released.

And because the electric motor is sensitive to wheel speed, any loss of traction is instantly detected. Much like a conventional dynamic stability control (DSC), loss of traction is automatically corrected.

To quote power outputs for the Prius would be superfluous because the gasoline and electric motors both have a contribution

to make at different times, but Toyota claims a 32% energy efficiency improvement by using the hybrid system.

And of course, when it is running on purely electric power, emissions are zero.

Despite what VW believes, the next generation of low emission, high efficiency vehicles is likely to consist of hybrids of one kind or another, whether diesel or gasoline-powered.

Jeff Heselwood may be contacted by email at jhc@netvigato.com.

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By Jeff Heselwood

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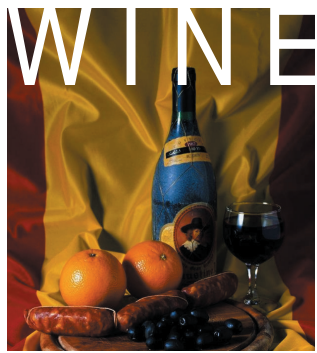
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Wine without worrying about waistlines

The holidays and their excesses are now behind us and your New Year resolutions may include watching your weight. Can wine fit into a calorie-controlled diet?

Take pleasure in the knowledge that wine can accompany and enhance low-calorie meals without enlarging the waistline with excess calories. Losing weight is a simple enough concept and it can begin by using up more calories than your body takes in.

The number of calories in wine is a correlative of the wine's alcohol content; the stronger the wine, the more calories it con-



By Steven Roberto

tains, as this formula shows:

$$c = a \times v \times 0.055$$

c = calories, a = alcohol content, v = volume consumed (milliliters)

If your chosen wine has an alcohol content of 13.5%, each modest 100 ml glass will yield around 75 calories, shown thus:

$$13.5 \times 100 \times 0.055 = 74.25$$

Sweet dessert wines are the exception to this rule and should be avoided by dieters.

Considering just the calorific content of wine is misleading because most of the alcohol is released into your bloodstream as acetate. Of this, only a tiny amount is actually converted to fat. Your metabolism preferentially consumes this acetate over any fat you may have floating around in your body.

To condemn wine as con-

taining only "empty" calories is a false premise. A glass of sugary soda contains many more calories. And wine contains much more than just alcohol.

A glass of wine is packed with minerals – such as calcium – and offers the proven cancer-fighting benefits of bioflavonoids and polyphenolic antioxidants. Wine also reduces calorific uptake from food by lowering blood sugar levels and raising your high density lipoprotein (so-called "good" cholesterol) levels.

Wine also brings enjoyment to the table by enhancing the taste of low-calorie foods yet it contains only trace amounts of

protein, no fat and barely three grams of "carbohydrate equivalents" in a typical glass.

Limiting your calories need not mean shunning wine. Eat a balanced diet, take plenty of exercise and rest, and enjoy wine in moderation. Wine brings many health benefits and much delight; just don't use that as an excuse to go over the top.

Steven Roberto is a winemaker and restaurant consultant from California. He is the Wine and Beverage Director for the award-winning Baan Rim Pa restaurant in Patong. Email: sroberto@lycos.com

Where to go for snow in Patong

There are no mountains to match the Swiss Alps in Phuket but that hasn't stopped the Swiss Chalet restaurant striving for the heights. The cozy restaurant is snuggled on the ninth floor of the Patong Condotel. From there is a spectacular view of Patong.

Reinhard Murer, who founded the Swiss Chalet 10 years ago, is the host tonight, introducing us to flavors that are mountains apart from Phuket.

Mr Murer lives mostly in Bangkok and says that people there tend to be more open to foreign foods, including cheesy fondue. He imagined that Phuket would be a great place to spread the word about the flavor of fondue and other Swiss foods.

He has put a lot of effort into the interior design of the restaurant, including wooden tables and chairs custom-made by Mr Murer, which together give the feeling of being in a cottage on a snowy mountain top.

If that isn't enough to make you feel at home in Switzerland, then take a look at the walls adorned with hats, tools and other original Swiss items that once belonged to his father and grandfathers.

The fondue was the main course (for tonight and many

On the menu with Supaporn Sriprom

Swiss Chalet

more nights to come, when I revisit) and what a sight. If you do not have a large appetite and enjoy salad-munching, don't worry – you can still enjoy a gourmet gathering with a large group of friends or family.

The platter of thinly-sliced pork and beef brought "oohs" and "aahs" because along with the meat, there were 10 small dishes filled with garlic, chili and onion creams as well as pickles, olives and assorted vegetables.

If you do not know how to eat fondue, this is the perfect place to start, to learn and to become addicted. And if you like cheese, the four melted Swiss cheeses are just right for dipping.

"You can cook your own food," Mr Murer said. With little effort, we did just that, and for once, I felt like a decent cook.

While waiting for the meat to be cooked in the boiling water, we dug into the bread and melted cheese.

The Fondue Galore course was only 395 baht for one – but



that was more than enough food for two. Among the many Swiss specialties on the menu are a few Thai curries and rice dishes for about 100 baht.

As well as the fondue, another popular dish is the Al Pler Magrones, which is traditional macaroni pasta topped with cheese, onion and cream cheese sauce for 230 baht.

If you want more meat and less vegetables, then the fillet of beef in whisky brown sauce comes at 395 baht.

Mr Murer, who also imports wine, mostly from Italy, says that many different wine glasses have been imported from Switzerland to marry with the extensive wine list.

Tonight we have a 1,100-baht bottle of La Carletta Viga Fonte, which was recommended for the fondue. But if you just want a good, old fashion Heineken, well, that's only 80 baht.

Nighttime offers a soft, quiet view of buzzing Patong, but away from it all. Towards sunset, you can sit and relax and feast your eyes on the emerald sea.

If the traditional food alone won't attract you to the restaurant, then certainly the setting cannot go without notice.

Swiss Chalet, 9th floor of the (SkyInn)Patong Condotel, 47 Rat-U-thit 200 Pi Rd, Patong. Open daily 5 pm to late. Tel: 076-344311.

The fondue and side dishes dominate the table.

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While the local electric authority continues to promise to install underground power cables, the roads and skyline around Phuket are marred by the cluttering above-ground power cables.



Up the pole without good reason

Why are certain things done differently in certain countries? Watching Phuket's development, one could be forgiven for thinking that one was in a country that made a point of deliberately doing the opposite to most other countries.

It's certainly an interesting scenario in the entertainment world.

Thailand, long famous for its free-wheeling nightlife, seems intent on attempting to solve the drug problems of the local adolescents by shutting the tourist spots down

early. Yet nearby Singapore, long known for its restrictive policies and puritan image, has authorized 24-hour trading hours for bars and entertainment venues.

While the government spouts off about wanting "quality tourists" and promoting Phuket as a retirement destination, its agencies struggle to keep up with the times.

For example, while there is talk of putting power cables underground, the Provincial Electric Authority continues to clutter the roads around Phuket with power poles of all shapes and sizes.

The number of poles is absurd. There are sections of road in Cherng Talay where poles carrying power supply lines are less than 10 meters apart. A stretch along Kamala Beach has huge poles about only three meters apart.

Reasons given in defence of the poles include, "Somebody will dig it up if its underground," and, "People will also tap in to the power illegally and if we don't see where, we don't know where the power is going."

A point perhaps, but I suspect that it is a lot more difficult for a local farmer bent on deceit to tap into an underground cable than to hook up to a post above the ground.

Arguments aside, it's time the Phuket authorities woke up and started thinking about how things will look in the future instead of blundering along, creating a "slum effect in paradise".

Home of the Week Chalong

Discovering space

This two-story, hacienda-style house is hidden away in a quiet soi off Chao Fa East Rd, close to Chalong Circle. The entrance gate and railings are in ornate Thai style and, in conjunction with high walls and a manicured hedge, help to seclude the house from the outside world.

The courtyard and turning circle beyond the gates are large enough for the biggest pickup trucks, and two spacious double-garages – with additional storage facilities – can accommodate more cars or motorcycles, or even a boat.

Through the vestibule, a covered area suitable for dining or simple relaxation, is a 70-square-meter swimming pool, complete with a calming waterfall.

Inside the 350-sqm house, one is greeted by marble flooring, teak finishings and white walls throughout, instilling the domicile with a sense of space and airiness. All windows and doors have metal security trellis-work and mosquito screens.

The house, which is always cool, is built to the highest Western standards and comprises three bedrooms and three bathrooms. Two of these bathrooms are en suite and a third has a Jacuzzi. All three – featuring both shower areas and baths – are finished in sumptuous gray marble.

The ground floor boasts a large open-plan area consisting of Western and Thai kitchens, and a combined living room and dining area. Another room, suitable as a spare or maid's bedroom, or an office, is sited next to the heart of this home.

There are fans and air con-



ditioners throughout and a remote-control system for all major appliances, including interior and exterior lighting.

There is plenty of room at the back of the house, which is used presently for outside cooking, washing, dog kennelling and storage.

The large well-tended garden has a path leading from the main house to a guesthouse at the end of the garden, giving guests complete privacy.

PROPERTY & HOMEZONE

By Graham Doven



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Trove of folk-art delights

In the shaded walkway at Canal Village in Laguna, there are many shops that sell traditional Thai artifacts and souvenirs. What you don't see every day is a shop that sells traditional Western and European folk art souvenirs.

The owner and Managing Director of Art and Gift Gallery, Umavadee Suramanont, sits happily in her new shop. Open the door and a trove of delights is revealed. There are 150-year-old shawls, handmade teddy bears, and assorted knick-knacks and decorations of all kinds to keep a browser occupied for hours.

K. Umavadee said, "This job requires someone who loves these kinds of things. It is unique on this island and that is why what's in the shop sells."

Having said that, she added that as a child she had always been fond of folk-art accessories.

K. Umavadee has her heart in the right shop because all around are folk-art goodies of different kinds from different countries.

"I don't like mass production, so one of the reasons why I like folk-art is because nothing can be replicated. It is all handmade, original and unique," she said.

Some of the items have been brought from Bangkok

Decor Source

By Supaporn Sriprom

while others are imported from Kashmir.

In one corner is a beautifully woven Kashmiri shawl that dates back more than 150 years. She said that it was put there just for show but now people have asked whether they can buy it. At present the price is 100,000 baht but it will most likely eventually go up for auction.

Keeping the item original and your wallet still fat may seem rather difficult but pretty hand-painted Kashmiri papier-mache hearts come for only 100 baht.

One of the most popular items at Art and Gift Gallery are the handmade queen-size quilts. Although these quilts may set you back 10,000 baht or so, they look worth the price just for coziness.

Other popular items are the hand-crafted wine boxes and mobile phone cradles. The wine boxes can be custom-designed and no two boxes are the same.

If you value uniqueness in a gift, you can be sure to find something here. The cradles are about 300 baht while the wine boxes can cost as much as 1,000



Shoppers among the bric-a-brac and the stuffed animals and antique items at Art and Gift Gallery might think they were in Europe. Owner Umavadee Suramanont prefers unique items to mass-production. Among the delights: hand-made teddy bears and a 150-year-old shawl at a price of 100,000 baht.



baht. If you can't find a design that captures your attention, then you can simply make and paint your own on a tea table or another item of your choosing.

K. Umavadee has organized a folk-art painting program which runs every Saturday and

Sunday. If wood doesn't suit your taste, you can also ask her about the handmade teddy bears.

There are hundreds of small gift items ranging from magnets to quilts to choose from.

According to K. Umavadee, the goods are almost all

handmade, with that feeling of "home sweet home."

Art and Gift Gallery, Canal Village Shopping Unit 16. Daily from 10am to 8pm. Tel: 01-8205266 or email umavadee@artandgiftgallery.com

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DECOR SOURCE of December 27-January 2 carried a caption identifying the person in the photograph as Euan Jayanram, owner of Modern Cultured Stones.

It was actually Piyada Pissananant, manager of sales at MCS. The error occurred in editing.

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Property Gazette

Properties For Sale

HOUSE FOR SALE

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LAND IN PRIME

locations. Elevated, safe, Chanote title, ready to build on. Tel: 01-9792901, 076-388073. Website: www.siam-business.com

HOUSE IN KATA

for sale. 158sqm living space, 5 rooms, 2 marble bathrooms, one with Jacuzzi, two fully-furnished kitchens, 3 air-conditioning units, solar water heating system, car port and garden house. Price: 3.8 million baht. Tel: 076-333155. Email: hatzfeld@loxinfo.co.th

HOUSE WITH POOL

Large house for sale in Chermg Talay, close to Laguna Phuket and the beach. Fully furnished and with first-class finishings. 14 million baht. Email: tgspg@hotmail.com

1.25 RAI KAMALA

Panoramic views over Kamala valley. Quiet location, not overlooked. 2.75 million baht. Tel: 01-7374295.

RENOVATED KATHU

house. Recently renovated 2-bedrm home with laundry room, garden and European kitchen. Price 2.5 million baht. Call Khun Bee for more details. Tel: 09-8713360.

CHALONG HOUSE

New Thai "prayuk" style. 3-bedroom home built to European standards of quality and comfort. Located in Chalong and includes pool, landscaping, and security wall. 6.9 million baht. Email: sweetiebee2000@yahoo.com

HOUSE FOR SALE

in Nai Harn. In Soi Naya, 5 mins from the beach. A 2-story, 3-bedroom, 3-bathroom, fully furnished house with office, UBC and 2 phone lines. Asking price 3.5 million baht. Tel: 09-7310283.

BEAUTIFUL HOUSE

for sale. Situated on a quiet Rawai cul-de-sac, this 180-sqm house has 930 sqm of land, a beautiful garden and a nice guesthouse. 6 million baht. Tel: 09-7310283. Email: harrij@loxinfo.co.th

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Elevated position, Chanote, complete infrastructure. 1.7 mill baht. Tel: 01-9792901.

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VALLEY VIEW

in Chalong. New 120-sqm home, on 436 sqm land with Chanote, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, lounge room, dining/family room, Euro kitchen. 2.8 mill baht. Tel: 06-2817605. Email: valleyview2004@yahoo.com

PATONG TOWNHOUSE

2-bedroom townhouse for sale. European standards, lovely ocean views. 4.9 million baht. Tel: 01-569 7616, 076-341871.

CHALONG HOME

for sale. Large family home, three bedrooms and four bathrooms, well-established gardens and plenty of outdoor living space, 4.5 years old. Two supermarkets located within meters of house, and large pool recreational facility. Located in no-through-traffic estate. Urgent sale: 3.6 million baht. Tel: 09-8712972. Fax: 076-282-362. Email: noddy@loxinfo.co.th

FORCED SALE

Furnished, 1-bed, with pool and view over golf course. Foreign title. 800,000 baht. Tel: 09-5944067.

6-BEDROOM HOUSE

in Kamala. An exclusive 6-bedroom house for sale in Kamala, near Phuket Fantasea, only 15 min walk to the beautiful Kamala Beach. Fully furnished, European kitchen, all rooms with aircon/ceiling fan, attached bathroom. Total area of land: 1,252sqm, living area 475sqm plus 30sqm attic area. Spa, own well and drinking water supply, solar system for hot water. Asking price: baht 18 million baht. Tel: 076-279075. Email: fbrun@loxinfo.co.th

LAND PLOTS 4 SALE

Land in Karon with perfect sea views and Chanote title available. Tel: 076-341031.

LAND NEAR NEW

golf course. Beautiful land in half- or full-rai plots, ready to build and direct from owner. Walking distance to Mission Hills golf course, 8 mins drive to Nai Yang, 15 mins to Dulwich. Special price for first 7 plots only 1.5 million baht/rai. Tel: 01-3430777.

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5.3 RAI

for 7 million baht. Nice land, 600 meters from Mission Hills Golf Course. Ideal for small project, ready to build. Tel: 01-5371050.

PATONG

Excellent seaview land. 1 rai 77 sq wah with small, old house and house registration. Price: 7 million baht. Tel: 09-2911112, 01-8957159.

1-RAI PLOTS OF LAND

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mountain and seaview land. 2 rai, 3 ngan. NorSor 3 Gor title. 19 million baht. Tel: 09-291-1112, 01-8957159.

SERVICED LAND

available. Fully-serviced, frontline golf land with ocean view available in 1-rai lots. Call 09-9725226 or email: bgbphuket@yahoo.com for details.

26 RAI ON THE BEACH

Elevated Koh Yao Noi beach land with NorSor 3 title and Thai-style house. Has electricity, lots of water and beautiful view. A perfect location for a resort. Call 076-323284 or fax 072-2758460. Price: 21 million baht.

GUESTHOUSE 4 LEASE

or sale. Fully furnished guesthouse located in the center of Patong Beach is available for long-term lease or sale. Please contact Ms Sue on 06-5954362 or Amy on 01-8675275 for details.

LAND AT ANUPHAS

Land for sale at Anuphas Golf Ville. For full details, please call 09-8718333, 01-6913351 or 076-238916.

KATHU HOUSE 4 SALE

Situated between two major golf courses, 9 minutes from sea at Patong, European-style bungalow in small private development. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, very large living room, kitchen, includes 2 air-conditioned bedrooms. Bldg 128 sqm, approx 63 sq wah. Price only 2.5 million baht. Tel: 076-321954.

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avail separately. Sea views at Nai Yang beach. 3 rai: 2 million baht/rai. House on NorSor3 Gor land: 2.5 million baht. Tel: 01-8918689.

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condos. Studio apartments of 28sqm for 760,000 baht. Also have large apartment of 1 bedroom, living room, bathroom and kitchen for 1.3 million baht. Sea views. Tel: 06-9484490. Email: chotip_5@hotmail.com

LAND NEAR LAGUNA PHUKET

Direct from owner, 1.25 rai in developing, quiet, residential area just 5 minutes from Laguna Phuket. Chanote title, electricity. Near top of gentle slope. Price 2.3 million baht. Tel: 09-8667825. For more information please email: rat_phuket@yahoo.co.uk

BEACHFRONT 4 SALE

23 rai @ 1.8 million baht per rai. 10 minutes from town. Chanote, cheapest. Tel: 09-7298365.

10 RAI 4 SALE

Land with Chanote title near Tai Muang golf course and Tai Muang beach. Tel: 09-728 8311.

LAND FOR SALE

2.5 rai (4,000 sqm). Nice view, very quiet area, Soi Saliga, Rawai. Land price there 6.5-10 million baht. Our price: 5 million baht/rai. Tel: 076-288422.

HOUSE 4 SALE NEAR

chalong. For sale by owner. Located on the way to Chalong. Chanote title, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, living room, fully furnished, TV, three aircons, fully-fitted kitchen and parking. Good and safe location. 24-hr security. 10 mins from Big C, Phuket Town; 30 mins from airport. Priced at 2.5 million baht. Tel: 076-280908.

20 RAI OF BEACH

land. 20 rai of beach and mountainside land with NorSor 3 Gor papers at Koh Yao Yai. Land cleared and ready to build on. Electricity, water and road ready, spring water and coconut trees too. Ideal resort location. 3 million baht per rai. Contact Charlie at Tel: 09-9971855.

KRABI BEACHFRONT

15 rai of Krabi beachfront land with NorSor 3 Gor for sale. Nice view, decent price. Email: krabiland@hotmail.com

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Property Gazette

Properties Wanted

OFFICE WANTED

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LOOKING TO LEASE

rai. Looking to lease rai of land on the bypass road for commercial shop. Owners kindly contact me - no agents. Tel: 01-5353120. Fax: 076-344847. Email: kamontip@hotmail.com

BEACHFRONT HOUSE

Seeking a house on the beach in Phuket for long-term rental of 6-36 months. Will consider a house with breathtaking mountain views and/or private swimming pool. The property must be in quiet surroundings with neighbors at least 30m away. Will pay up to 50,000 baht/month. Please email pics and details. Tel: 09-4700319. Email: peter.persson@prefimek.se

KARON RENTALS

House/condo apartment wanted, December '04. Fax: 076-288681. Email: olav@siam-business.com

HOUSE WANTED

to rent. Accommodation with 2-3 bedrooms and preferably pool wanted. Email: jonahship1@btopenworld.com

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on Kwang Rd. Located in the Prangthong estate. Fully furnished, 3 bedrms, 3 bathrms, 5 aircon, a solar heater, a kitchen w/oven, and living room. Safe and quiet location. 35,000 baht/month. Tel: 01-7872201. Email: phuket8@hotmail.com

KATA HILL RENTAL

Large bungalow with sea view, only 5 min from the beach, up to 1 month. Please call 09-5944017.

PATONG LUXURY APT

Central Patong location, 1- and 2-bedroom apartments. Please email for more information and photos. Email: suites247@yahoo.com

ON THE BEACH

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Accommodation Wanted

HOUSE IN THE NORTH

wanted. Looking to rent long-term a house in the north of Phuket island - Surin/Cherng Talay area. Must have telephone, garden and aircon and be secure for a 30-year-old (not near a main road, for instance). Willing to pay up to 15,000 baht per month (no deposit, you never get 'em back). Will sign long-term contract for the right place. Willing to pay more for a swimming pool. Tel: 01-5351754. Email: trev@funkyguide.com

KATA CENTER

Single male requires bungalow accommodation in Kata/Karon area from last week of January for about 6 weeks. Location important as I have no wish to hire a car or motorbike. Must be about 20 minutes' walk from Peach Hill in Kata. Email: pmarkcrotty@btinternet.com

HOUSE IN KATHU

wanted. Looking for 1- or 2-bedroom house for long-term stay (minimum 1-yr contract) in Kathu. Should have basic furniture, garden, telephone line and cable TV or UBC satellite. Tel: 01-7378523. Fax: 076-385956. Email: roithmayr@loxinfo.co.th

YOGA INSTR SEEKS

housing. Reasonably priced live/work space for 6-month term preferred. Nothing fancy, but clean and quiet are priorities - otherwise I'm flexible (no pun intended). Unfurnished ok, need only cooking facilities. Tel: 09-5522641. Email: rajayoga411@yahoo.com

APARTMENT

wanted from first week of March for 3-6 months. Must be in good condition with the usual facilities. Prefer Patong but will consider anything that's close to Patong. Please send an email with details of price and pictures. Email: james@bentleycc.fsife.co.uk

WANT TO RENT

a room with aircon for 500 baht per night. Email with full details as soon as possible. Email: r_solli@yahoo.no

2-BEDROOM HOUSE

wanted. Would like a 2-bedroom house in Land & Houses Park for 15,000 baht/month. Tel: 07-8893675. Email: jefftd77@hotmail.com

APARTMENT/ROOM

wanted for long-term rental from January. Should be in Patong, Kamala, Kathu or Karon. Fully furnished and with fan ok. Max price 5,000 baht. Tel: 05-1601670. Email: paulivarlarsson@hotmail.com

HOUSE FOR RENT

Looking for accommodation from March 29, 2004. Email: polymath2002@hotmail.com

WANTED IN FEB '04

A 3-person family is looking for a quiet, 2-bed house with pool from February 10-21, 2004. Budget around 50,000 baht. Not Patong area. Email: rolfrankneuh@aol.com

ACCOMMODATION

wanted in Kata for 3 months from Jan 10. Preferably a good, cheap guesthouse. Please email: perfrostholt@hotmail.com

NEED ROOM

or house. Expat seeking room or house. Furnished, phone line, fan/aircon, 7,000 baht or less. Let me know what you have. Email: rogerthai@hotmail.com

NAI HARN

bungalow wanted. Bungalow wanted by expat in Nai Harn area for an initial period of two months. Please email details to: beachcomberwa@yahoo.com.au

VILLA/APARTMENT

wanted. 2 bedrooms, with view, and located close to Patong. Tel: +479 0012055. Fax: +479 4091217. Email: reidar@sundoya.no

ON THE BEACH

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We are in need of a good home construction foreman. We have contracts for four houses and want to proceed immediately. Must be able to communicate in English, build in concrete and building blocks and be willing to learn. Tel: 076-254752. Email: tsc_phuket@yahoo.com

REAL ESTATE

agency wanted. I would like to list. Tel: 01-8921199. Email: rockhard@loxinfo.co.th

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CLEANER WANTED

Part-time cleaner wanted 4 days a week for 3 hours a day at a private apartment. Tel: 09-9723861. Fax: 076-342-713. Email: ba@kivibrian.com

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Card #: _____ Exp. Date: _____ Security Code*: _____

*This is the number on the back of the card, just above the signature.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

E-mail address: _____

Please Deliver To:

Street address

City State or Province Zip Code

Country: _____

Sorry, no subscriptions
within Phuket province!

Island Job Mart



The Islandia Resorts Group & Spa is currently looking for qualified and dynamic persons to join our team:

1. Executive Assistant Manager or Rooms Division Manager
2. Executive Housekeeper
3. Asst. Executive Housekeeper
4. Chief Engineer
5. Purchasing Manager

Experience: at least 5 yrs for position 1, and 3 yrs for positions 2-5.

Please send your CV with recent photo to the General Manager at 502/3 Patak Rd, Karon Beach, Muang, Phuket 83100 Fax: 076-396207 Email: gm@islandiagroup.com

OPERATIONS

Supervisor needed. Positions for Thai male/female with good spoken and written English skills, leadership, team interaction, delegation and basic computer knowledge essential. Excellent package including service, fuel and phone allowance. Tel: 076-270750. Fax: 076-270751. Email: info@pipsphuket.com

MARKETING OFFICER

required. Urgent vacancy. Male or female over 25 years old, with bachelor's degree in marketing or related field and excellent command of spoken and written English. 2-3 years' experience in residential housing development or related field. Your own vehicle is an advantage. Please contact Khun Nun by calling Tel: 07-6289121.

OFFICE

Coordinator. We are an international training company, looking for staff with fair English and a bright personalities for our Phuket and Bangkok branches. Salary between 8,500-15,000 baht. Please call, email or fax to apply. Tel: 076-263737. Fax: 076-224113. Email: recruitment@bowentraining.com

INTERNET STAFF

New shop looking for professional lady to take care, good spoken English is required. Please contact: 09-5944017.

WEB ASSISTANT

wanted. Female, over 18 years old and able to speak English. Must have some computer skills. I will teach and you can earn money. Please contact me for more details. Tel: 06-9525285. Email: mail@heikkis.no

INTERNET STAFF

The following positions are needed for a new European-style cafe/bar in Kata Beach: Bartender (1), Waitress (3). All positions carry good salaries, healthcare insurance and are based on a six-day working week. Please telephone or email for further details. Tel: 01-5353220. Email: mrd68@yahoo.com

PRESCHOOL

teacher wanted. Seeking a native English-speaker with nursery or teaching qualifications and experience with children under three. Please email or fax CV with letter of interest. Tel: 01-8942560. Fax: 076-238756. Email: pamela@greenhouse-phuket.com

OFFICE ADMIN

Ability to handle a variety of admin tasks in small computerized office. Good written and spoken English, computer skills. Honesty, work ethic and driving license are advantageous. Housing and transport to work available. Salary commensurate with experience. Tel: 076-348117. Fax: 076-348119. Email: info@sailing-thailand.com

SALES STAFF

wanted. Sales Manager, 1 position: minimum 2 years' experience and good English skills required. Sales Executive, 1 position: minimum 1 year's experience, some English an advantage. Great package for the right people. Please apply by email or call K. Siriporn. Tel: 076-354027. Fax: 076-233384. Email: info@asianwind.biz

MAID WANTED

Nice Family (Thai and European) at Kamala Beach is looking for a maid. We have one daughter, age 18 months. You can stay with us or outside. All meals are provided. Give us a call if you are interested. Tel: 07-2682118. Email: krr@mailandnews.com

HOTEL STAFF

needed. 4-star hotel in Kamala requires: Guest Service Agent (male), Assist Restaurant Manager, Restaurant Supervisor, Waiter/Waitress, Bar Supervisor, Bartender, Chef de Partie (Italian), Cold Kitchen Commis, Steward (kitchen). Please send your application by fax or email. Tel: 076-279801. Fax: 076-279818. Email: kbstaff@ehotelier.com

RESTAURANT STAFF

We are looking for chef for our beach restaurant. Good spoken English is required, good salary depending on experience and ability. Tel: 09-7247599 or 09-4742201.

EXHIB PRESENTER

Suriyaphu Land Development Co., Ltd. is looking for 2 self-motivated Thai nationals with pleasant personalities and fluent English to represent us at major department store presentations in Samui and international exhibitions in Bangkok and worldwide. Candidates will have experience in sales and promotion of real estate and holiday resort concepts. We offer work on Koh Samui, international travel, a competitive salary and great prospects with a fast-growing company. Email: samrongit@loxinfo.co.th

ONLINE SALES

Small, friendly online hotel reservation group requires reliable staff. Experience essential, must be able to type 45 wpm and know Outlook, Word, Excel, and MS Database. Salary to reflect ability. Tel: 076-236616. Email: siwaporn@hotel-travel-asia.com

NANNY REQUIRED

Thai national over 40 years of age required to look after a 4-month-old baby girl. Live-in position. Tel: 07-2196726. Email: mriley42602002@yahoo.co.uk

WAITRESS WANTED

Small restaurant at Chalong bay needs a waitress, must speak some English. Free room available. Tel: 076-281318.

Employment Wanted

EXECUTIVE

Secretary/PA. I am an Executive secretary/personal assistant with 9 years' experience in the corporate field. I have worked in South Africa and in the United Kingdom for legal and financial entities such as CMS Cameron McKenna and The Financial Services Authority. I would be very interested in a position within a well established company. Tel: 076-279777 or 07-8859110. Email: lizelle@threelittlefridges.com

ENGLISH ARCHITECT

available. Qualified, experienced architect seeking work in Phuket. Lots of experience of projects in tropical climates. Used to work with very high standards in Singapore. Contact for more details of previous work. Tel: 05-1394872. Email: jameson_jamie@hotmail.com

NATIVE ENGLISH

speaker. Looking for English teaching job for May/June 2004 for 1 year or more. Qualified with B. Tech in IT & Telecommunications with honors. TEFL certificate. Currently working for global IT company in Brussels, Belgium. Please contact me for detailed CV. Email: geoffrey_doran@hotmail.com

ANY JOB WANTED

I am a Thai man, 40 years old, looking for any kind of job. Could be live-in gardener. My computer basic is OK. Please leave me a message at this number. Tel: 09-5913996.

SEEKING RIGHT JOB

Language & cooking teacher and a translator. Bachelor's degree, 5 years' experience. Thai, English and German, spoken and written. Looking for work in hotels, schools or office. Tel: 01-0853429. Email: hugbou@yahoo.com

LOOKING FOR WORK

Portuguese, Spanish and English spoken and written, conversational Italian and Thai, professional dive instructor. Looking for work in Southern Thailand. Tel: 06-6822607. Email: mppjo@hotmail.com

PART-TIME JOB

Looking for part-time job. I'm female, Thai, with written and spoken English, and computer skills. Tel: 09-4695164.

HOTEL GM

40ish European hotelier, with experience in Thailand, flexible, energetic, long work record in Thailand and SE Asia seeking new assignment. Property pre-opening experience. No timeshare or similar proposals please. Email: hotelmanager@bigfoot.com

NEED A JOB

Swiss man, 32, seeks work in Phuket. High skills experience in restaurant business, computers and Internet business, shop design and setup, and can work with tourists and Thais. Language skills: German, English, basic Thai. If you need someone to help set up, manage or improve your business, I am the right person for the job and a self-motivated team player who will be a valuable asset to your business. Tel: 09-5593161. Email: 095593161@gmx.ch

Clubs & Organizations

ROTARY CLUBS, PHUKET TOWN

The Rotary Club of Phuket holds meetings in Thai on Wednesday at 7 pm at the Pearl Hotel. Tel: 076-211044. The Rotary Club of Tungka has meetings in Thai on Thursday at 7 pm at the Phuket Merlin Hotel. Tel: 076-210444.

THE ROTARY CLUB OF PATONG BEACH

holds meetings in English every Tuesday at 7 pm at the Aloha Villa Hotel in Patong. Call Sam on 076-222191 or visit www.rotarypatong.org.

LIONS CLUBS OF PHUKET

The Patong-based Lions Club Andaman Sea meets in English every Tuesday at 7:30 pm at the Tropicana Restaurant. The Phuket Town-based Lions Club Pearl meets in English on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 7 pm at the Phuket Merlin. Call Lion Adrienne on 01-4770342.

THE AO CHALONG YACHT CLUB

holds monthly races for members. Other local residents and visitors welcome. Ring Commodore Al Boone on 076-381488.

DIVE OPERATORS CLUB OF THAILAND

deals with current issues concerning the dive industry. Anyone welcome to join. For more details call Alistair on 076-280319 or email: info@doct-phuket.org.

THE PHUKET INT'L WOMEN'S CLUB

meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month for lunch and has coffee mornings on the 2nd Thursday in the Royal Phuket City Hotel. Call Linda (01-8937749) or Joan (01-0814611).

INT'L BUSINESS ASSN OF PHUKET

For details, call O. B. Wetzell on 076-325402 or visit www.ibap-phuket.org.

THE ATIGARO PROJECT

Assist volunteer vets with the capture, neuter and release of the island's stray dogs and cats. Phone Eddie on 09-5910223 for details.

THE SKOL CLUB

holds regular monthly meetings. Contact Rene Hardmeier on 076-294300 or email: hardmeir@phuket.ksc.co.th.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

meets Sundays and Wednesdays at 7 pm at the Mission Hospital, Fridays at 7 pm at Phuket International Hospital, and Fridays at 8 pm at Patong Hospital. Call 076-324258, 01-8954763 or 01-8944370 for full details.

PHUKET ANIMAL WELFARE SOCIETY

Animal welfare volunteers always needed. For details, call 076-263737.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Phuket Group holds regular meetings to discuss human rights issues worldwide. Contact Donna Stephens or Andrew de Bruin. Phone 01-8941530 or email awatea@loxinfo.co.th.

THE MULLIGAN GOLF SOCIETY

meets Wednesdays at 3:30 pm at the Laguna Phuket Golf Club. For membership details, please email: mulligangolf_society@hotmail.com or call 01-8930692.

THE HASH HOUSE HARRIERS

meet Saturdays at 2:30 pm at the Expat Hotel, Patong. Transport to the run departs at 3 pm.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

meets every Thursday at 7 pm in the conference room at Patong Hospital. Tel: 01-7372246. Email: phuketna@hotmail.com.

THE VAGABONDS RUGBY CLUB

trains regularly at Dulwich College. Call Patrick Cotter (076-341927), Ben Hennessy (01-8919307) or Mike Spackman (01-4774792).

ASS'N OF FILIPINOS IN THAILAND

Southern Chapter. For more details on meetings and events, call President Bernadette Sanchez on 01-9798846.

DIDIT

Dogs in Distress in Thailand. To volunteer, call Eric or Linda Wells at 076-321789 or email: diditstrays@hotmail.com.

THE BRITISH BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

meets on the second Thursday of every month. Details may be found at www.bbap.org.

THE SWISS SOCIETY

Meets every last Friday of the month. For further details or program email to ssp@loxinfo.co.th or write to Swiss Society Phuket, P.O. Box 405, Phuket 83000.

THE PHUKET EXPAT GOLF SOCIETY

promotes golf in Phuket. For full information visit www.expatsgolf.com.

PHUKET CONTRACT BRIDGE CLUB

Anyone welcome to join us. We play every weekend. Tuition available. Contact Dr Kamthorn (076-212274) or Derek Priest (076-203001 or priest_derek@hotmail.com).

EDITOR'S NOTE:

This notice board is for non-commercial announcements by clubs, chambers, associations and other affinity groups.

Tout, Trader & Trumpet

Articles for Sale

LADIES GOLF

clubs. Almost new set of graphite shaft Shantra clubs. 2 woods, 8 irons and putter. No bag, 10,000 baht or best offer. Tel: 01-8941530. Fax: 076-238803. Email: avatea@loxinfo.co.th

ORCHIDS

Professionally handmade imitation Thai orchids. Look real, made from long-lasting materials, enhances the beauty of rooms or reception areas. Reasonable prices. Display service for hotels. Shipping possible. To view completed designs and work in progress, call artist Khun Mleal. Tel: 01-4155807. Email: tonyandmlealphuket@hotmail.com

DVDs, CDs

and PC games. English movie DVDs, music CDs, PC games, computer software for sale at a very good prices. Please email for more details. Email: rubina682003@hotmail.com

AUTOMATIC

massage table. Shiatsu process to massage 44 energetic zones of your body, from head to foot. Parallel to the spine. Wire remote. The warming system relaxes your back muscles. Price 60,000 baht. Tel: 01-0907262. Email: at_cornerbakery@yahoo.com

DIVE GEAR

for sale. BCD US Divers Aqualung reg. 3,000baht. BCD Cressi Sub Titan first stage Aqualung; 2nd and Oc Compass SPG Aqualung; Mares fins; Av4 booties; Cressi mask; short and long John 5mm knee pads, wrist and ankle zips. All not even 3 months old; few dives only; for 35,000 baht. Tel: 01-0853429. Email: mppjo@hotmail.com

FOR SALE

Playpen for baby-child. Pliable mini LA bicycle. Tel: 076-345617 or 09-8674277. Fax: 076-345617. Email: erikdidi@hotmail.com

ROAD BIKE

Klein Quantum Pro. Very fast top-level race bike, 52cm, Dura-Ace, looks as new, 7.9kg, new 180,000 baht, selling for 79,000 baht. Tel: 076-229319. Email: Richi.s@bluemail.ch

COMPUTER

software. Latest computer software for sale. Contact for details. Email: micks_2003@hotmail.com

HALCION BCD

Halcion BCD, new with everything. Used in the water only once, for sale at 22,000 baht (price new is 35,000 baht). Tel: 06-2775298. Email: thay_harly@hotmail.com

FOXTAILS FOR SALE

Foxtails are palm trees from Australia that grow very gracefully up to 10 meters tall. Drought resistant. 120 baht for a 1.5-meter-tall plant. Other plants available. Tel: 076-288184.

SILVER FOR SALE

Silver jewelry from Chiang Mai hilltribes for sale. Necklaces, bracelets, rings and more. 15 baht/gram. Only large quantities. Tel: 07-5631994. Email: colombattofabio@hotmail.com

CANON 1000FN

camera. Very good condition, includes Tamron 100-300 zoom lens. Price: 7,500 baht. Tel: 07-5631994. Email: colombattofabio@hotmail.com

DIGITAL AUDIO

tape recorder. DAT, Sony digital audio tape deck DTC-57ES for sale. Perfect for audio recordings, for professionals and home users. 10,000 baht. Tel: 01-5365727.

CANON CAMERA

Eos 1000 SLR camera in excellent condition. Want to upgrade, so offers about 10,000 baht. Tel: 01-085-4514. Email: jwizard345@aol.com

CASIO DIVE WATCH

Twin sensor: depth and thermo. Rarely used. Paid US\$500 new. Will sell for 6,000 baht. Tel: 01-8239448. Email: cjprieur@loxinfo.co.th

MEAT SLICER

Secondhand, Hobart. Price: 6,000 baht. Tel: 07-2849679. Email: g_lovece@hotmail.com

Articles Wanted

MP3 PLAYER

I am looking for an MP3 player, secondhand is acceptable, does not need to look great but must work fine, minimum 6 GB hard drive. Battery does not concern me at all. Contact me by email at: guy@smallearth.org.uk

MONITOR FOR

computer. Computer monitor wanted for my child's computer as the last one broke. Tel: 06-6331207. Email: jl8778@hotmail.com

MODEL SAILBOAT

I am looking for a remote-controlled model sailboat, about 50cm to 1m long. If you have one for sale, or if you know where I might find one, please email me at: bjarnehansen@inet.uni2.dk

NEED 2 AIRCON

units for small rooms, or a portable aircon. Contact with info. Tel: 06-9488139. Email: phuketmotors1@hotmail.com

Boats & Marine



Jeanneau
Sunfast 31
Cruiser/Racer
GBP 38,000
contact
info@thaimarine.com
076-239 111



Thai Flagged
36 ft Flybridge
2 x 200 Yamaha
THB 2,750,000
contact
info@thaimarine.com
076-239 111



Please contact:
Tel: 076-239111, 076-273320
Fax: 076-238974
Email: insurance@thaimarine.com

CHARTER BOAT

and company. 55-foot junk boat, imported to Thailand for use as charter. Company is ready, work permit can be arranged. Daily rental in peak season, approx 10,000 - 16,000 baht. Email: millsdean@hotmail.com

CREW AVAILABLE

I am currently in Phuket and looking to crew on a sailboat. If you need a good deck hand, please contact me. Email: ahalestoned@hotmail.com

FOR BUSINESS

or pleasure. A beautiful restored junk boat, it is perfect for personal use (sleeps 6) or for charter (all permits ready). All reasonable offers considered. Just out of the docks for refurbish and ready to enjoy. Finance available. Email: millsdean@hotmail.com

ANCHOR WINCH

Manual anchor winch suitable for 3/8" long-link chain and rope gypsie. Heavy duty unit, very strong. Price: 30,000 baht. Contact for more details. Tel: 09-5997463. Email: info@fitoutmanage.com

ZODIAC DINGHY

for sale. Model FRB 10. Length: 3.10m. Volume: 940 liters. Weight (empty): 26kg. Max weight: 500kg or 4 passengers. Max allowed horsepower: 10Hp. Price: 35,000 baht. Email: sveisko@ksc.th.com

GREAT BOAT

make an offer. 58-foot, just refurbished, 1945 junk in fantastic condition. All licenses to operate as charter boat. All reasonable offers considered. Payment plan or part ownership available to right partner. Contact for more details. Email: millsdean@hotmail.com

DIVE COMPRESSOR

Aerotecnica coltri mch6. Excellent condition, run by Honda 5.5hp petrol engine. Totally portable. Call Richard at 06-2778131.

16-METER LUXURY

sail yacht. Dutch-built, steel, custom yacht, cutter ketch. 16.2m LOA. Owner from new now resident in Spain, and S/Y Pegasi in Malaysia. Looking to sell her at a huge loss. I am unlikely to ever have time for her. She was on the market at US\$280,000. I will let her go for \$20,000. She has spent the last 2 years on the hard near Langkawi in Malaysia. She needs a new owner. For further information, please see my website at http://194.106.24.44/yacht/pegasi.nsf. Email: mike.scott@es-eclipse.com

SUPER DEAL

Live-aboard, can take 16 passengers, aircon cabin and saloon, just finished shipyard services. Length: 22 meters. Beam: 5 meters. Engine: Hino 285 EK Hp x 2 (diesel). Special price: 2.65 million baht, includes generator, 2 compressors, kitchen equipment, TV, etc. Tel: 01-8948508. Email: boat_phuket@yahoo.com

BOAT FOR SALE

Thai-registered 12-meter boat with sonar and 185 Hp Hino motor. Please contact for more info. Tel: 076-282300 or 07-8868938.

VOLVO DUOPROPS

2 sets of Volvo DuoProps, Type A propellers, size A6. The lot for 20,000 baht. Tel: 076-381717.

BULLETINS

BIFF & BIL 2004
Bangkok International Fashion Fair
Bangkok International Leather Fair

Trade: 15-17 January 10.00-18.00 Hrs
Public: 18-19 January 10.00-21.00 Hrs
At BITEC, BKK, Thailand

The Department of Export promotion, Ministry of Commerce of the Royal Thai Government, cordially invites you to see one of the great events in the Asia-Pacific region, The 19th Bangkok International Fashion Fair 2004 and The 17th Bangkok International Leather Fair 2004 (BIFF & BIL 2004), which will be held from January 15 to 19, 2004 (Trade days: January 15 to 17, 2004/ Public days: January 18 to 19, 2004) at the Bangkok International Trade & Exhibition Center (BITEC), Bangkok, Thailand.

More Information, Please Contact
Tel: (662) 511-6020-30 ext. 740-4
E-mail: biff@depthai.go.th, bil@depthai.go.th
Website: http://www.depthai.go.th, www.thaiiraed.com

Business Opportunities

PUB FOR URGENT SALE !
THE FAMOUS OCTOPUS PUB IS IN A VERY GOOD LOCATION AT THE CORNER OF SOI SEA DRAGON, FACING ONTO BANGKAL ROAD, AT PATONG BEACH.

450 M², 3 FLOORS, TOTAL 1350 M². THE FIRST AND SECOND FLOORS HAVE THE BAR AND DANCE AREAS, THE THIRD FLOOR HAS AN APARTMENT. THE PRICE INCLUDES ALL FIXTURES, FITTINGS AND FURNISHINGS.

TO ENQUIRE, PLEASE CONTACT:
19-21 SOI SEA DRAGON BANGKAL RD, PATONG PHUKET
MOBILE: 09-183448, 01-237082, 01-0940029, 01-6814221

PATONG BAR

for sale. Includes UBC, sound system, and all stock and fittings. Price: 700,000 baht o.n.o. Please call for more details. Tel: 07-2701932.

COMPANY

near beach for sale. Profitable company, located 150 meters from Phuket's longest beach. Buildings and land have freehold title (Chanote), with easy foreign transfer. Includes a 20-room hotel, 25-seat restaurant, several rented offices, 3 work permits and space to build owner's quarters or expansion. Priced for a quick sale. Please email for more information. Email: hotelinparadise@yahoo.com

BUSINESS FOR SALE

Very profitable candle-business in Patong. Price 2.4 million baht. Please call Mr Ocean for more information. Tel: 01-7475874.

THAISTOCKS.COM

Unbiased and objective investment research. Email: contact@thaistocks.com

BUSINESS IN PATONG

The Son Company, shop and 8 bedrooms, for sale or lease. 80% financing available. No key money. Email: thesonapt_2536@hotmail.com. Tel: 09-4740227.

BAR ON KOH LANTA

On the main road 100m from the beach with views of sunset and sea. Land 0.5 rai with a 9-year contract. Price: 2 million baht plus 5 years rent free. Including all equipment. Ready to open and complete with free space to build bungalows. Contact for more details. Tel: 06-0560642. Email: jobrittan@hotmail.com

BAR/RESTAURANT

and guesthouse for sale. Good business. Tel: 01-9792901 or 076-388073. For further information, please see our website: www.siam-business.com

RESTAURANT 4 SALE

Well-located restaurant in Patong. Price: 299,000 baht. Tel: 06-7096415.

Tout, Trader & Trumpet

IDEAL NEW BUSINESS

Bar, restaurant and 2 apartments with 9-year lease, located close to the beach. Fully equipped. Sale due to relocation. Price: 1.5 million baht. Tel: 09-7257591 or 01-0880353. Email: barrest67@hotmail.com

RESTAURANT FOR

lease. Ready-to-open restaurant with fully equipped European kitchen, and beautiful apartment upstairs for lease. Price: 1 million baht. Monthly rent: 30,000 baht. One year's rent in advance. Please call to discuss. Tel: 01-3976590.

HOTEL FOR SALE

Hotel for sale in central Karon. Visit www.maid-in-phuket.com for details.

MAKE YOUR DREAM

come true. Fully-established restaurant/bar for rent. Furnished, equipped, 10-year contract, satellite TV, snooker table, 2 mins to beach, central Nai Harn. Please call for more details. Tel: 06-2761831.

SOI BANGLA BUILDG

to lease. The best location in Patong. 2-story, 8m x 12m (192sqm) available. Call for more information. Tel: 01-8911905. Email: alain@phuketinternet.co.th

RESTAURANT

partnership. Newly-opened Swedish restaurant and bar, well-located in central Karon. Seeking partner for around a 20% stake. Good opportunity to own a restaurant. Please call for more information. Tel: 07-8871675.

CENTRAL CHAWENG

Beach. Three garden bars with 5-year lease. Construction begins in April 2004. Tel: 01-8957276. Email: gringos@isdn.loxinfo.com

Business Services

SPECIAL PRICE 699 BAHT ONLY

Eve Express Visa. Extension in one day at Ranong, including insurance. Best service and safe trip. Available now. Daily trip, start 7:30 am, at KFC Lotus. Tel: 076-289201 or 01-5352637. www.phuketdir.com/expressvisaextension

BUSINESS SERVICE

Company, visa, work permit. Tel: 01-9792901, 076-388073. Website: www.siam-business.com

CARIBBEAN BANK

account. Can be opened using your real name or stay anonymous. Operative within 2 working days and major credit cards, business or private, are available. Please contact for further information. Fax USA: 001-1-4354174354. Email: caribbean@financier.com

FASTEST OFFICE

on the island. Office Xpress is renting out serviced offices at a premier location in Fisherman Way Business Center. We have broadband Internet access, aircon, good coffee, computers (if needed). Please see our website for further information at www.officexpress.org or contact: 076-282403. Email: mike@officexpress.org

AIRPORT ADVERTS

for golf and spa. Interested in advertising at domestic airports? Suitable for golf and spa operators. Call or email for further information. Tel: 01-8924735. Email: noksk@smart.co.th

Computers

INTERNET ANYWHERE

Mobile USB modem now available. Works anywhere with no telephone line needed. Also computer repairs and sales. Call now. Tel: 09-473-5080.

Personal Services

THAI COOKING

Workshop in small groups, Thai teacher. Contact for further information or see our website at www.siam-business.net/cook. Tel: 09-7097482.

NIA YOGA PILATES

Nia Yoga Pilates at the Movement Center. See our website at www.phuketmoves.com. Please call or email for further details. Tel: 076-282408, 01-7975065.

SITE OFFICE 4 RENT

New, insulated and air-conditioned. Price: 4,800 baht/month. Tel: 01-8924804.

THAI LESSONS

at home. Informal conversation for beginners or advanced speakers from charming Thai lady. Please contact for further information. Tel: 01-7971497. Email: churee77@hotmail.com

REPAIR, RENOVATION

and more. Phuket Expat Services has extensive local knowledge and experienced native English-speaking supervision. Tel: 06-2934264. Email: pktxpat@phuket.ksc.co.th

BAGELS

Fresh, authentic bagels, baked at The New Bagels & Beyond Café, located on Ao Chalong road. Tel: 07-2659969.

Personal Services Wanted

PRIVATE ENGLISH

teacher wanted. I would like to learn English conversation privately at home (Land & Houses Park in Chalong). Not necessary to be a native speaker. Available during evenings, 3-5 days a week preferred. Tel: 076-254342. Email: wilalook@yahoo.com

I WANT TO

learn Russian. I am Thai and wish to learn the Russian language. Tel: 09-1968429. Email: amorn9999@yahoo.com

BABYSITTER

wanted. We need a full-time babysitter. Accommodation and meal provided. Right salary for right person. Please contact for more information. Tel: 01-8918082. Email: dianagohlf@yahoo.com

THAI TEACHER

wanted. Thai female is looking for private Thai lessons. I just learned basic in reading and writing and would like to proceed and go on to the next level. I might also be interested in English lessons. Tel: 076-270377. Email: dellapietra@mysunrise.ch

ENGLISH-SPEAKING

nanny. We are looking for a nanny to take of our 18-month-old son. We are willing to pay good salary, bonus and medical package for the right person. We live by the lake in Chuan Chuen Lagoon. Live-in preferred, but will consider live-out. Tel: 01-8932833.

Personals

BACKGAMMON

players wanted for some exciting games. Please call or fax for more details. Tel: 076-386113 or 01-5778443. Fax: 076-386114.

WOMAN SEEKS

true lover. I am 35 years old, beautiful, MBA (US), extensive independent traveling experience in US and EU. Looking for a foreign guy to marry. Please send me an email with picture and short story about yourself. Email: wimon_discovery@yahoo.com

THAI LADY

for fun. Good looking English guy, 50 years old, living in Phuket in own house and have own car, would like to meet Thai ladies who like to laugh and have fun and would like a good time together. You must be able to speak English. If you would like to meet for a drink, please send your photo and phone number by email. Email: relax@mail2hot.com

REAL SWEETIE PIE

Are you a good Thai girl, nice to be with, beautiful and also sexy? Sincere professional male, good looking, respect for life and family, stable finances, would like to get to know you. Prefer to meet a simple but true lady with warm and pure heart. Email: nils_master@yahoo.com

LOOKING FOR LADY

White male living in the UK seeks Thai lady, age 30-45, for correspondence/serious relationship. Email: leorobson@army5343.freemove.co.uk

SEEKING GIRLFRIEND

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