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IN THIS ISSUE

NEWS: Poll watchdogs face huge task; OrBorJor contenders square off after party split.
Pages 2 & 3

INSIDE STORY: Shady business: how fortunes are made on Phuket's beaches.
Pages 4 & 5

AROUND THE ISLAND: Artist at the top of his class. **Page 6**

AROUND THE REGION: Government looks seriously at second airport. **Page 8**

PHUKET PEOPLE: Colorful carnival time as Patong's gay community shows its pride.
Pages 10 & 11

TALES OF A TRAVELER: Oman the place for an undiluted taste of Arabia. **Page 12**

DOWNSIDER: Oh crikey! The Russians are coming.
Page 17

BUSINESS & MONEY: Phuket's property firms form club.
Page 21

SPORT: Intrigue wins Andaman Sea Rally. Plus tennis, swimming, golf, Bimstec games.
Pages 22 & 23

GOOD LIVING: Spectacular serving on the sand; Wine gaffes. **Page 25**

PROPERTY: Home of the Week in Nai Harn; The gorgeous *kopsia*; Graham Doven; Decor Source.
Pages 26, 27 & 28

PLUS

AROUND THE NATION 7; HAPPENINGS 9; HOROSCOPES 14; KIDS 15; MOMMA DUCK, YOUTH 'N ASIA 16; EDITORIAL & LETTERS 18; STATES & MARKETS, ISSUES & ANSWERS 19; COMPUTERS, BOOKS 20; MOTORING 24; CLASSIFIEDS 29-35.

Patong battles earlier closing



Protestors display a sarcastic placard reading (roughly translated): 'Of course midnight closing won't affect tourism. Thank you Mr Governor Who Knows Everything.'

By Dhirarat Boonkongsan

PATONG: More than 400 people from Patong's entertainment industry gathered at Loma Park on January 17 to vent their anger over government proposals to restrict the opening hours of entertainment venues to the period from 6 pm to midnight. The restriction, if approved, is likely to go into effect March 1.

Patong Entertainment Business Association (PEBA) president Somphet Moosopon urged the government to take into consideration Patong's reliance on tourist income and called for the area to be declared a special entertainment district, exempting it from the proposed early closing.

"Before, when Deputy Prime Minister Purachai Piemsomboon was Interior Minister,

we accepted the government's "Social Order" policy, which brought closing times forward from 4 am to 2 am," he pointed out.

Pinning the industry's hopes on an unlikely champion, he added that DPM Purachai's approach, which consisted of enforcing laws to keep minors out of nightclubs, was "more realistic" than closing them to everyone at midnight.

He added that there was still hope the new restrictions could be averted because DPM Purachai has been given the task of reviewing the plan before its implementation.

"Today, we are informing everyone about the new rule and are collecting signatures on a petition outlining our grievances. We will send copies to the Governor of Phuket, to the Cabinet

committee behind the plan, and to the Prime Minister himself," he said.

"The recent [televised] meeting of the Cabinet demonstrated that its members never even considered the information we sent them previously. They see us only as a source of social problems, claiming we introduce minors to such vices as drugs, nude shows and prostitution," he said.

He stressed that Patong's nightlife was developed largely by foreigners for foreigners, and had never targeted underage Thais as customers.

"We just want the government to know how we feel. It's not only bars and pubs that will be affected by this. Related businesses such as restaurants, motorcycle taxis and tuk-tuks, sou-

Continued on page 2

New mayoral contender in bid to have Pian barred from poll

PHUKET: First-time Patong mayoral candidate Songserm Kepsap and three members of the Patong Progress Party filed a complaint on January 19 with the Phuket Election Committee (PEC) against former mayor Pian Keesin, in a bid to have him disqualified from the February 8 Patong mayoral election.

K. Songserm said, "We've lodged the complaint in order to have K. Pian stood down. He has been found to have been corrupt during his time as Patong Mayor, in connection with the purchase of garbage trucks at higher-than-market prices."

In his complaint, K. Songserm claimed to have a copy of a confidential letter from the Interior Ministry's Local Administration Department ordering K. Pian to pay the government 51,869 baht.

The amount, the complaint alleged, was part of K. Pian's penalty for his involvement in the municipality paying 207,476 baht more for the garbage trucks than the market price at the time. Two officials then working for the municipality were also allegedly involved in the deal.

Kittipong Thiengkunagrit, the Director of the PEC, said, "Our officers need to gather all related documents and evidence. We will announce our decision within three days."

K. Pian, leader of the recently-formed Rak Patong Party, dismissed K. Songserm's complaint as "a political game". He told the *Gazette*, "I'll show the PEC officers evidence to prove that I didn't buy the trucks at an inflated price."

He added, "The Administrative Court has made no judgment in this matter - it is still under consideration."

"I'm 100% confident that I have done nothing to prevent me from standing for election."

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Queer News

Death can be instant

KHON KAEN: There are plenty of coffee lovers in Thailand, but one itinerant sugarcane cutter from Khon Kaen took caffeine craving to new heights.

Banjong Singhakul, 45, found that he could bypass the annoying process of mixing the stuff with hot water by simply munching down mouthfuls of instant coffee granules.

Unfortunately, too much of anything is never a good thing, and K. Banjong's habit killed him – not of heart palpitations, but of asphyxiation.

A doctor told Banjong's wife, Hataikorn, that when the body was examined, a big, black bolus of coagulated coffee was found stuck in K. Banjong's

throat, cutting off his oxygen.

Fortunately for his family, K. Banjong had just taken out a one-baht-a-day-insurance policy through the government's new *Ua-athorn* (We Care) program and his grieving, hitherto poverty-stricken wife picked up a useful 300,000 baht in benefits to help ease her loss.

"I knew he liked coffee, but I never imagined he would eat the granules without mixing them with hot water," K. Hataikorn said.

She added that she would spend most of the money on the purchase of farmland and put the rest aside for the education of their youngest son.

Source: *Thai Rath*

Starting 2004 with a jolt

PATTANI: Many people spent January 1 sleeping off the excesses of New Year's Eve, but an ambitious thief in Nongjit district decided to use the holiday more profitably, by scaling a utility pole and attempting to steal electrical cable.

A jolt of 33,000 volts, 150 times stronger than a typical household shock, ripped apart his trousers and left him critically burned after he apparently touched a live cable with a pair of metal pliers.

Rushing to the scene with doctors and a team from the Provincial Electric Authority (PEA), rescuers first turned off the power conducted through the cable then climbed up to find the man

still alive, though unconscious.

He was identified as 30-year-old "Arong" (surname not reported). His profession was given as "freelance installer of electricity meters". The PEA stressed that K. Arong was not an employee, but was more likely a thief trying to make off with some of their cable.

After efforts to tie the victim to a rescue worker failed, he was eventually lowered on a ladder that workers leaned up against the wires in the local fashion.

The spectacle drew great interest from passing motorists along the highway from Pattani to Haad Yai.

Source: *Thai Rath*

January blackout schedule

PHUKET: The Phuket Provincial Electricity Authority (PPEA) has announced its schedule of blackouts for the remainder of January to allow it continue work on replacing high-voltage cables.

The blackouts, which will be from 9 am to 4 pm, are as follows:

January 28, **Phuket Town:** Chao Fa Rd, from Yeetang Complex to Sakdidet Rd, and including Soi Imjit.

January 30, **Phuket Town:** Thepkasattri Rd and Chumphon Rd, both sides, from the PPEA substation to Satee Phuket School, including Soi Patchanee, Moo Baan Thepkasattri, Soi Boonyarak, Soi Siang Tai and Moo Baan Rabarun.

Please note that this information is subject to change without notice. For more information or to check the latest status, call 076-211663.



Students perform a fan dance during celebrations at the Prince of Songkhla University, Phuket Campus, to mark Chinese New Year. The celebrations, part of a fair on January 15 and 16, also featured booths and competitions. The event was organized by students from the International Business China program of the university's Faculty of Service Industries.

Poll arbiters prepare for complaints flood

By Gategeo Phetsawang

PHUKET TOWN: The Election Commission of Thailand (ECT) – charged with ensuring fairness pre- and post-poll – may have its work cut out this year with more than 2,800 local elections scheduled countrywide.

The ECT must investigate thoroughly every complaint – and many are made – before an election result can be confirmed.

Local authority services may be crippled if there are lengthy delays in confirming election results, as witnessed in parts of Phuket following *OrBorTor* elections last year.

Nationwide, more than 1,500 complaints from 715 elections in 2003 are being checked.

ECT chairman, Pol Gen Vasana Puemlarp, admitted, "I can't imagine how many complaints may stem from the com-

ing elections." A quick extrapolation suggests the number could be as high as 6,000.

The ECT held a regional seminar at the Royal Phuket City hotel recently to prepare some 200 officials in advance of local elections scheduled to be held in all parts of the country.

Gen Vasana said, "The seminars are also to help candidates understand their responsibilities, and to advise the public on what free and fair elections are."

"Part of my role is to foster trust in the voting system in order to encourage the electorate to vote. That way people have a say in how their area develops."

While acknowledging that investigations disrupt services, Gen Vasana stressed that the ECT can approve only those elections it deems fair, regardless of how long a delay its investigations may cause. **Editorial: page 18.**

Patong protests midnight closing

From page 1

venir vendors, guesthouses and hotels will all suffer too," he said.

Two days earlier, Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura came down squarely behind Bangkok's push to introduce midnight closing for all entertainment venues, saying that he did not believe the island's tourist trade would be affected because it was Phuket's natural beauty that visitors came to see – an argument repeatedly put forward by his predecessor, Pongpayome Vasaputi.

Gov Udomsak said he believed that opening and closing entertainment venues earlier, from 6 pm to midnight, would help to reduce social problems and would improve the image of Thailand among visitors.

In a move to rally support, K. Somphet said that he was trying to contact counterparts in other tourism hotspots such as Pattaya, Koh Samui, Chiang Mai and Haad Yai, with the aim of exchanging information and fighting the planned changes together.

Most notable among the assembled speakers was Phuket Senator Paiboon Upatising, owner of the Aloha Hotel in Patong and of the Singha Beer distributorship in Phuket.

"People are confused because what Deputy Interior Minister Pracha Maleenond announced in the January 13 Cabinet meeting does not fit with DPM Purachai's previous methods, which clearly stated that earlier operating hours were not the critical factor in achieving better social order [among minors]," Sen Paiboon said.

The 1,700-member PEBA hopes to collect as many signatures as possible from industry workers, tourists and anyone else opposed to the plan. The petition will be presented to Prime Minister Thaksin before the next Cabinet meeting, on February 6.

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No bird 'flu on Phuket, says official

PHUKET: The Phuket Provincial Commercial Office (PPCO) has reassured consumers that no cases of avian 'flu or diarrhea have been reported on Phuket – although millions of chickens elsewhere in Asia have been affected.

Archint Ongsakul, a commercial technician from the PPCO, told the *Gazette*, "Phuket has no problem with this disease."

A watchdog group, the Consumer Force Association of Thailand, was quoted by media as saying that as many as 50 million birds may have died in Thailand from an unspecified poultry disease.

K. Archint also said that Phuket shrimp are free from the "red pox" – of an as-yet-undetermined origin – that has been affecting stock in farms in Phang Nga and other provinces nearby.

The price of shrimp from Thai farms has fallen dramatically in recent weeks to around 90 baht a kilo.

The plummeting price is the result of oversupply in the international market, stemming from caps on import levels in both the EU and the US, combined with increased competition from other Southeast Asian countries.

– *Nonthawat Disayabutra*

Touts rounded up

PATONG: Phuket Immigration officers rounded up 24 foreigners over the weekend of January 17 and 18 and charged them with illegal entry into Thailand and working without permits. They were taken to Phuket Immigration detention cells to await deportation.

Pol Capt Chatchai Hayimana, Deputy Inspector of the Phuket Provincial Immigration Office, told the *Gazette*, "There were 24 arrests altogether – 21 Burmese and three Vietnamese. Most of them were men working as touts for local tailor shops. We'll deport them soon."

Three Thai owners of guesthouses were fined 800 baht apiece for failing to report to Immigration the arrival of guests in their establishments.

BBAP members elect committee

PHUKET: Members of the British Business Association of Phuket (BBAP) have elected Martin Carpenter as their Chairman for 2004.

Others elected to the committee during the BBAP's annual meeting, held at the Evason Resort & Spa in Rawai on January 15, include: Paul Spring, Secretary; Andy Dowden, Treasurer; Howard Digby-Johns, Social Secretary; and general members Chris Hill, Mark Phillips and Paul Moorhouse.

Phuket Air 'won't join fares war'

PHUKET TOWN: Phuket Air will not be joining the cheap-tickets war sparked by the launch of Air Asia, its Chief Executive Officer said on January 17.

Group Capt Patana Tareekes was speaking at Phuket International Airport, where the inaugural flight of Phuket Air's five-times-weekly service, linking Haad Yai with Ranong via Phuket, landed at 10:30 am.

"We are not going to join this fight in the sky. Instead, we are ready to join alliances of airlines."

"Phuket Air does not have cheap flights such as Air Asia's 99-baht seats, but we are not expensive and we offer the convenience and flexibility that I believe is most important to travelers."

"We will not compete by lowering our

prices but by offering a high level of service," he said.

Speaking of the new route, he explained, "The idea is to open a new market in lower southern Thailand by linking it to the upper southern region and to central Thailand."

"The route inaugurated today means that travelers [from the South] can fly on to central Thailand," he added. Phuket Air already has a daily service between Ranong and Bangkok.

Thai Airways International (THAI) currently flies the same Haad Yai-Phuket-Ranong route, but has announced that it will drop it in the coming few weeks. Despite this, Gp Capt Patana said that he expected the route to be profitable.

"The aircraft we use on this route is the

64-seat YS 11/A [a turboprop airplane made in Japan], which we use for short-haul flights," he noted.

The service leaves Haad Yai on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays at 9 am, arriving in Phuket at 10:30 am. It takes off from Phuket half an hour later and lands at Ranong at 12:20 pm.

The return service leaves Ranong at 3 pm on the same days, taking off from Phuket at 5 pm and landing in Haad Yai at 6:30 pm.

For more information call a travel agency or contact Phuket Air at the following numbers: Bangkok head office, Tel: 02-6798999; Haad Yai, Tel: 074-422700; Phuket, Tel: 076-220665; or Ranong, Tel: 077-824591.

– *Dhirarat Boonkongsaeen*

TRT throws weight into local election

PHUKET TOWN: The involvement for the first time of the powerful Thai Rak Thai (TRT) party should add a new dimension to Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*) elections in Phuket, scheduled for March 14.

This development has put two former vice-presidents and colleagues, Samroeng Chaisorn and Wisut Santikun, on opposing teams as rival candidates for *OrBorJor* President.

K. Samroeng will campaign as head of the *OrBorJor* Gao Mai TRT ("New Step TRT") party while K. Wisut will lead the *OrBorJor* Gao Mai Khonbaanrao ("New Step Our People") party.

Both have now launched

By Gategaeo Phetsawang

their campaigns, introducing team members and announcing some of their policies.

"We will continue to develop Phuket," K. Wisut told a media conference on January 19. "We believe that the local administration should have a certain [independent, non-political] standpoint."

He said his party was still open to candidates with the right qualifications. The Chairman of the Phuket Chamber of Commerce, Pamuke Achariyachai, is one person who has been approached, he added.

The current Chairman of the

OrBorJor, Somchai Duangkae, who has sided with K. Wisut, emphasized that the local administration should be independent and able to set its own policies.

"It will be best for the community if [the *OrBorJor*] is run by independents," K. Somchai explained. "If there's a national party behind the scenes, the team will lose its freedom to manage."

"But though we are independent, we are ready to cooperate with all who wish to work for the local community."

The following morning, 200 people turned up at the Phuket Merlin Hotel to hear K. Samroeng speak. A senior figure in the TRT, Pichate Satirachaval, also attended, as did the current *OrBorJor* President, Dr Prasit Koeysiripong.

Dr Prasit is stepping down from the *OrBorJor* and is expected to run as a TRT candidate in parliamentary elections due next year.

K. Pichate said that it was important that local politics be connected with national politics.

"Economic development has to begin from the grass roots, with local administrations such as the *OrBorJor*."

"Then we can carry the work from the local arena to the national arena," he explained.

Island to get new abattoir

PHUKET TOWN: In an effort to improve food safety in Phuket, a 60-million-baht slaughterhouse will be built in Kathu.

The abattoir is a joint project of the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*) and the Phuket Provincial Livestock Office (PPLO).

PPLO Chief Sunart Wongchawalit told the *Gazette* that the facility, to be operated for profit by the *OrBorJor*, would be the first abattoir in Phuket to meet all government standards.

The project, initiated by the PPLO, was approved by Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawang-kura on January 9. A request to the SME Bank for a loan to build

the abattoir is now being prepared by the Livestock Development Department in Bangkok.

K. Sunart expects the loan to be approved because the SME has earmarked a nationwide total of 5 billion baht for the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives as part of the government's food safety initiative.

The *OrBorJor* will get about 150 baht per animal slaughtered, which in theory will allow it to repay the loan within five years.

"We plan to build the abattoir on 15 rai of land in Kathu. This is the most central location on the island," K. Sunart added.

– *Dhirarat Boonkongsaeen*

Phuket summit talks postponed

BANGKOK (*The Nation*): The inaugural summit of five Asian nations scheduled to take place next month in Phuket has been postponed indefinitely after India's Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, canceled his attendance due to internal politics.

PM Vajpayee's Bharatiya Janata Party is gearing up for general elections in April or May.

A new date for talks between the leaders of the Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation (Bimstec) forum will be fixed when India is ready, the Thai Foreign Ministry said.

"We agreed not to proceed with the summit without India, which is deemed an important element of Bimstec," said ministry spokesman Sihasak Phuangketkeow.

However, meetings of economic and commerce ministers and foreign ministers of the group will go ahead from February 6 to 8 in Phuket, the spokesman said.

Thailand hopes the summit can still be held later this year, the spokesman said.

The international sports events planned for the period of the talks (see page 22) will take place as scheduled.

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SHADY BUSINESS

As tourist numbers increase, Phuket's popular beaches are becoming bigger businesses. Sun-beds alone can generate income of more than 600,000 baht a day. Sangkhae Leelanapaporn and Gategao Phetsawang survey the scene.

Sinee Tohlang has seen the island change every season. For 18 years, she has worked as a masseuse on the beach at Nai Harn. She has watched the tides rise and fall, and the monsoons come and go, along with the tourists, and the once-secluded sands become a regular source of income for many.

Beach accessories appear to spawn in the off-season and return in greater numbers each November. Like most of the beaches along Phuket's west coast, Nai Harn now has a long row of beach loungers, umbrellas and tables, stretching off into the distance in a colorful arc.

On Patong and other popular beaches, a constant passing parade of vendors sells everything from ice cream to time-share apartments to eye tests along two strings of beds and gaudy umbrellas.

Given the rate at which the tourist numbers increase and the loungers and umbrellas reproduce, a third string seems inevitable, and perhaps eventually a fourth and a fifth. The day may dawn when the vendors will also be offering cheap air tickets and motorcycle spares.

Before long, the pristine stretches of Nai Harn sand that Sinee Tohlang remembers so clearly may be just a memory.

Already in Khao Lak, local authorities, learning from what they apparently view as Phuket's mistakes, have taken a stand in an effort to preserve the natural beauty that drew tourists there in the first place. They have barred sun loungers and umbrellas from their beaches.

Paradoxically, it is the visitors to Khao Lak who have com-

Harn, which still rates among Phuket's least-spoiled beaches, there are now 28 massaging members of the Rawai Old Style Massage Club and nine operators controlling the beach bed business.

Clubs benefit from most beach business activities, with the benefits being recycled back to members in the form of sickness and welfare payments. Each masseuse pays just 500 baht a year to the club – but nothing to the local Tambon Administration

to buy or replace.

Potentially, then, the total value of the sunbeds at Nai Harn on a busy high-season day is 48,000 baht.

Along the coast at Kata-Karon, the numbers rise considerably. About 85 people operate 1,500 twin-bed sets on the beaches there. A total of 158 people are involved in giving massages, painting nails and braiding hair, and nine operators control 14 speedboats.

As with Nai Harn, the cost

erator who has about 60 beach loungers. Each sun bed owner must pay 3,000 baht a year to the club, as well as income tax. K. Dum said that the municipality limits the number of loungers. Other businesses are also strictly controlled.

Suthep Buasri, 28, oversees 160 chairs across 90 meters of sand. "My family has run this business for more than 10 years," he said. "We reserved this area a long time ago, just like other business owners on this beach."

One masseuse, Ka-neung, 54, said that there are more than 200 masseuses on Patong beach. "There are eight groups, and we keep to our zones by wearing different color shirts," she explained. "We have a Patong Masseuses Club to which we each have to pay 980 baht a year."

The Patong Municipality also licenses masseuses – and only people

who have been trained and know how to treat tourists correctly. Vendors are also strictly controlled.

"We have to register with the municipality and then we receive a yellow waistcoat with a number on it," one Patong vendor said. "There are about 67 vendors who sell snacks, drinks, ice cream, etc."

"Other vendors who haven't registered can't sell on the beach. If they do, the municipal officers will fine them."

Long-tail boat owner K. Deen, 37, comes from Kamala, but has worked in Patong for 15 years.

He told the *Gazette* that 55 long-tail boats operate off Patong beach, mostly from the southern end. Another 25 long-tails use Kamala beach as a base.

The rates for foreigners and Thais varies, with the long-tails – capable of carrying 12 passengers – costing Thais about 100 baht a trip on average, while foreigners pay about four times that.

K. Deen said he makes about 5,000 baht a week during the high season. "We have a Long-tail Boat Club with 80 mem-

NUMBER OF SUN LOUNGERS

Nai Harn	480
Patong	2,800
Kata-Karon	1,500
Surin	1,000
Kamala	600

Clubs at each beach determine membership and beach business owners also benefit from health and other welfare provisions.



plained most loudly about the bar – they don't want to be forced to lounge on the hot sand with no shade.

Before a similar debate breaks out at Nai Harn, a soothing massage from K. Sinee might calm the participants – although perhaps on Phuket, with up to 20 million tourists predicted annually within five years, the argument has already been lost.

Small beach businesses appear to be multiplying, too. At Nai

Organization (*OrBorTor*) – for the privilege of operating on public land.

"Everyone has to pay 500 baht a year to help with such things as the Children's Day fair or scholarships for poor students," said K. Sinee, 45. "We also pay tax."

K. Sinee makes her money from five or six massages a day at 300 baht a time. Her income dries up in the low season when the tourists disappear. As a community benefit, the club members keep an eye on vendors from outside Rawai to make sure that tourists' belongings are safe on the beach. The club meets formally at least once a year.

The owners of the beach beds, who earn considerably more than K. Sinee, also pay only 500 baht a year to the club for the privilege of operating businesses on the public sands.

There are 480 sun lounge sets on Nai Harn and one operator told the *Gazette* that the standard fee for tourists for two loungers, a table and an umbrella was 100 baht a day. "I have about 50 sets," he said. He added that each set cost about 7,600 baht

to businesses occupying public land is just 500 baht a year, paid to a beach club.

One lounge attendant, overseeing 30 beds, told the *Gazette*, "We don't pay income to anyone because we have been working here for more than 10 years. All of the businesses are run by local guys from Kata-Karon."

"We just give 500 baht a year to the club for activities such as Children's Day or Loy Krathong, and to develop the Kata area," he added. Some operators have as many as 200 beach loungers along these stretches of sand.

The mathematical equation in Kata-Karon is similar to Nai Harn in terms of expenditure and income: the 1,500 beds have the potential to bring in 150,000 baht on that outstanding (although perhaps apocryphal) high-season day when every lounge is occupied.

Further north, at Patong, the equation changes. The Patong Beach Umbrella Operators Club, the Patong Masseuses Club and the Patong Vendors Club take a larger chunk of earnings.

Dum, 48, works for an op-

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bers who own boats in Patong and Kamala," he said. "Members can borrow money from the club to pay for repairs to their boats."

"During the tourist season, I make at least 600 baht a day. But it is only for five months. So in other months, we have to find other work. I work as a security guard for a housing project."

Like all the other beach operators, long-tail owners pay no municipal fees.

At the southern end of the beach, tour boats tend to berth at the Chok Aree pontoon. The 43-year-old owner of the pontoon declined to reveal her name or the cost of berthing but said that about 10 boats a day used the facilities, most of them taking on divers and other tourists for trips to other islands, including the Similans.

"I've run this business for 23 years," she said. "This pontoon belonged to my mother and is named after her. It's the only one on the beach."

A Patong beach lounge owner, who gave his name as Lo, said, "I have 100 beach chairs and about half of them are rented on any day in high season."

I make about 5,000 baht a day."

There are 2,800 lounge sets

on Patong, with a potential maximum revenue of 280,000 baht a day.

Others earn money from renting six sailing boats and 10 surfboards. At Patong, the cost of a sailing boat is 600 baht an hour and a surfboard is yours for 300 baht an hour.

Up the coast at Surin, the number of beach vendors trekking the sands has increased, according to Wuthi from Krabi, who runs a beach stall there.

He shares the little shop with a friend and has been selling drinks and clothing for about four months. His income varies considerably, from 200 baht to 2,000 baht a day. There is no fee for setting up the stall on the beach.

Bee, 33, is a Surin masseuse who also works for a beach chair owner. According to the *Gazette* survey, there are about 1,000 sun lounge sets on Surin – total potential revenue: 100,000 baht a day.

Bee says the local *Or-BorTor* permits only existing traders to operate on the beach and discourages others. About 100 masseuses are members of the club, including people from Chong Talay and Surin.

"We pay 200 baht for mem-

bership," Bee said, "and the money provides benefits when members are sick or when relatives die."

Surin is also home to one of the controversial jet-ski businesses that the governor hopes to abolish within seven years. Aree, 44, who has run jet-skis for more than 15 years, said, "I have four jet-skis and there are only seven jet-skis for rent on the beach."

"The cost is 1,000 baht for 30 minutes. I earn about 4,000 baht to 5,000 baht a day."

Another man, who declined to give his name, operates two speed boats, one parasailing boat and one banana boat.

Waterskiers pay 800 baht for 15 minutes and a speed boat can cost 2,000 baht to 2,500 baht an hour.

A trip to Raya Island – where the beach lounge sets cost 200 baht a pair per day – is yours for about 10,000 baht.

Kamala, where the *Gazette*



survey came to an end, has more than 20 food stalls on the beach, each bringing in about 5,000 baht a day. Most are run by people who live in Kamala.

There are 600 sun lounge sets (60,000 baht potentially) on Kamala and 100 masseuses who, according to one of them, 45-year-old Lila, share the income from eight to 10 tourist customers a day.

Eight jet-skis ride in the

hands of Lee, 23, who said, "The rate varies from 300 baht to 500 baht an hour. I take in more than 10,000 baht a day."

So while tourists sun themselves or zoom about on or above the water, others on the beaches are raking it in – and we don't mean sand. The likelihood is that the beaches will become even more crowded, and more profitable, with each successive high season.



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By Dhirarat Boonkongsaen

Having spent more than 20 years as an art teacher at Satree Phuket School, Prasit Intana could easily be forgiven for trading in his easel and brushes for golf clubs when he retired early from the civil service in 1999. But now, with more time, K. Prasit has simply become a more prolific artist.

As a young man, K. Prasit graduated with a degree in art from PohChang School of Art, now known as the Rajamangala Institute of Technology Poh-Chang campus, in Bangkok.

After college, K. Prasit started work as an art teacher in Chumphon province, where he stayed for five years. After that, he signed on at Satree Phuket, where he taught from 1977 to 1999.

They say teaching is the best way to learn a subject, so after 22 years of teaching, K. Prasit set up a studio to devote himself to his craft. But at the start, it was just a hobby.

"Actually, at first I was raising chickens and selling the eggs – but I got fed up with chickens after a while," he said. "Then I met a friend who has an art business in Patong. That inspired me to create many art works, one after another.

"The building I now use to exhibit my work was originally bought by my wife, a teacher at Phuket Wittayalai School, to set up a business. But that didn't pan out, so now I use it as a studio and private gallery," he explained.

Artist comes top of his class



Prasit Intana at work: Original ideas, good skills and the ability to be creative in non-destructive ways.

When asked if his artistic ambitions had been stifled by having spent so much time teaching, he said the experience had given him a good chance to hone his skills.

"I have been teaching and

working in art for about 20 years. I think that's good enough for me. It gave me a chance to work with students and do a lot of promotional artwork for the school, such as painting banners, making displays to commemorate national

holidays, special events and things like that," he said.

K. Prasit doesn't mind if people stop by his home on Sakdidet Road to check out his creations, which include paintings and sculptures.

He stressed, however, that his gallery was not just a show-room but a private collection – and that not everything on display is for sale.

"I create in my free time because that's what I love to do. It makes me feel good to see my own works. Some people ask me to produce sculptures or paintings for their businesses, many of which are hotels and resorts.

"So some of the things I make I keep for my personal collection, some I sell, and some I give away," he said.

"Now I am working on an exhibition that will go on display at the Phuket Public Library for two weeks in May. It's an ongoing modern art exhibition that began last November and runs through August. Seventeen Phuket artists are featured," he said.

Speaking of people who had inspired him, he named Professor Silpa Bhirasri, an Italian who once taught at Silpakorn University in Bangkok, Thailand's premier art school.

"To be a great artist requires three things at least," he explained. "Having original ideas; the requisite skills to manifest them as art, and the ability to create in ways that are creative, not destructive or harmful to others."

People interested in viewing K. Prasit's private collection at 29/5 Sakdidet Rd in Phuket Town can call Tel: 076-391674 to make an appointment. His work will also be on display at Phuket Public Library on Phuket Rd in Phuket Town for two weeks in May. For further information, contact the library at 076-212465.

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SINGHA NEW LOOK

Thaksin: poor must repay their loans

The poor can expect help from the government in restructuring, refinancing or rescheduling their debts with moneylenders – but not a moratorium, says Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

The poor should be given a fresh start, but they must resolve their own financial obligations, he said, adding that the government would also help them find jobs to turn around their lives. The announcement comes as the Interior Ministry continues to register Thailand's poor, which at last count stood at 1.89 million people.

Crazy for condoms: Bangkok Senator Meechai Viravaidya said he will seek cooperation from Immigration Police in dispensing condoms to foreign tourists arriving during the coming World Aids Conference, to be hosted by Thailand in July.

Sen Meechai said he would also ask taxi drivers to ensure that condoms and audio-cassette tapes on HIV/Aids prevention were available in their vehicles.

He added that only hotels with condoms in the guestrooms and staff knowledgeable about HIV/Aids prevention would be chosen as suitable for visiting delegates.

High-profile participants will include soccer player David Beckham, golfer Tiger Woods and UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Mountains to molehills: A group of environmentalists appealed to PM Thaksin Shinawatra to stop rock-grinding by quarriers in Kanchanaburi, saying the quarrying was causing severe environmental damage and air pollution and having an adverse effect on the province's tourism industry.

Pinan Chotrosserani, head of the Kanchanaburi Conservation Group, said rock-grinding businesses had destroyed the beauty of local mountains.

A public hearing on the issue concluded that local residents, government officials and tourism

LUCKY MONKEY: A rare albino monkey is on display at the Lop Buri Zoo to mark the Year of the Monkey. The four-year-old, a mixed breed of rhesus and crab-eating macaque, has striking ruby-colored eyes and is considered extremely lucky by residents of the province, which has long been associated with its primate population.



business operators wanted the quarrying stopped.

Opponents of quarrying said PM Thaksin would have a chance to see the damage during a January 23-24 mobile Cabinet meeting in the province.

Backpackers arrested: Immigration Police searched 13 guesthouses in the area around Bangkok's Khao San Rd, arresting five foreigners who failed to produce passports and claimed to be Russians or Nigerians.

The operation was aimed at reinforcing Article 38 of the Immigration Act of 1979, which has long been ignored by many guesthouse owners.

Under Article 38, they must update immigration officers daily about their foreign guests. All 13 guesthouses were found to have broken this law and the owners were fined 800 baht each.

CEO ecology: Former Trat governor Amorn Anantachai said national park regulations should be amended to make it easier for CEO governors to develop parks for tourism.

K. Amorn said the principle of forest management embodied in the 1961 National Park Act conflicts with present development strategies, which focus on making use of forest resources.

Arguing that the law was issued before the country relied on tourism, he said the regulations should be eased to bring a better life to Thai people.

Under current laws, which aim to conserve forest areas, all development is banned within national parks. Tourism is allowed within national parks but only if it is small-scale and friendly to the environment.

Catwalk control: The Culture Ministry plans to set up a committee to regulate the behavior of models during fashion shows as part of its crusade against nudity in the industry.

The new committee would

comprise members of government agencies such as the Public Relations Department, the Royal Thai Police and the Consumer Protection Board.

Models who cross the line could be denounced and slapped with higher taxes, said Culture Minister Anurak Jureemas. The committee would draft regulations for fashion shows to prevent models from indecently exposing themselves, K. Anurak said.

Model Methinee Kingpame said the plan was "ridiculous" and contrary to the government's plan to turn Bangkok into a fashion city.

From honcho to cog: The Interior Ministry is drafting new legislation to reclassify *kamnan* and village headmen (*puyai baan*) from elected local officials to representatives of the central government.

The revamp is meant to eliminate overlapping duties among *kamnan* and village headmen and officials with tambon administration organizations. At present, all are elected local officials.

Under the draft, *kamnan* and village headmen will be appointed as assistants to district chiefs, who are central government employees.

As state employees, they will stay in office until they turn 60 – provided they pass regular evaluations by the communities they represent.

Gastropod graveyard: The Mineral Resources Department reported the discovery of a huge bed

of fossilized shells in Lampang on land currently on concession to the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand for lignite mining.

The fossil-shell graveyard covers more than 43 rai and extends 12 meters below the surface. Remarkably, all the fossils come from the same species of ancient snail.

The Mineral Resources Department, which says the fossils are 13 million years old, plans to propose the area as a World Heritage Site. Department Director-General Somsak Potisat said he thought the site was one of the world's wonders and that tourists would flock from all over the world to see it.

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

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Map showing location near Kamala and Kathu.

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Second airport under scrutiny

On January 8, a delegation of businesspeople, government officials and representatives

from the Koh Samui Tourism Association went for a day to Bangkok, where they met Wechet Kasengthong, from the Ministry of Transport, about the construction of a second airport on Koh Samui.

The group supports the swift construction of a second landing strip, which they say will bring competition, resulting in lower fares and more tourists.

Little has been said in opposition to the plan, although recent figures for tourist arrivals have caused some local people to question the need for two airports on such a small island, when the place is still running at only 80% capacity during peak periods.

FROM THE GULF OF THAILAND



By Commander Sammy Swan

Some local figures have suggested that there may not be enough passengers to go round, and have expressed concern that

a second landing strip might eventually cause the demise of the popular Bangkok Airways.

But K. Wechet apparently has no such doubts, and was scheduled to visit Samui on January 18 to inspect the proposed site for the multi-billion-baht project. Presumably he will have to decide whether to take the bus or the train from Bangkok.

Samui is Safe: Police have assured visitors and residents that there is no threat posed to the island by violence in southern Thai provinces. The Chief of Police said that everyone arriving and leaving was being monitored closely, and that so far nobody looked even the slightest



SISTERS ON SAMUI: The Sisters held January's lunch early so that they could take the opportunity to say thank you and au revoir to K. Michelle, who left the island for her native Australia on January 13. We are told that Kleenex shares almost tripled in price as a result of the farewell lunch.

est bit sinister, or had demonstrated any anti-establishment tendencies.

However, he urged the public to keep an eye out for people acting suspiciously, and report their suspicions to police immediately. Unfortunately, he did not define "suspicious behavior". So if covering your body in henna tattoos, wandering around half-naked, approaching strangers in bars or trying to get into someone else's hotel room qualify as suspicious behavior, then the authorities may soon have to open a special area at the Samui prison to accommodate suspected insurgents.

Talking yachts: On January 8, representatives from all of Koh Samui's public departments sat down with coffee and cookies to consider the construction of a public yachting harbor or marina on the island.

There have already been several failed attempts made at a workable plan, the last of which resulted in a small boat pier, which is still under construction a year later off Big Buddha beach.

This time, however, the Harbor Department came to the meeting armed with a design, a budget and a well-staged presentation.

The only issue left to discuss

was the location – surely not a huge task. Three sites were suggested: the same location as the new pier (and therefore not suitable); an area exposed to the open sea, which could cause problems; and a site on one rai of land, even though the design requires five rai.

After much scratching of chins, a fourth location, involving the renovation of an existing fishing harbor, was suggested, and the harbor department officials reluctantly said they would look into the possibilities.

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



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This week



CORAL CARE: Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura (blue tie); Udom Bhatiyasevi, Deputy Director General, Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (standing, 4th from left); Dr Prasit Koeysiripong, President of the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (standing, 3rd from right); and Rear Admiral Amnard Boonyapaiboon (in uniform) officially open the Phuket Marine Biological Center's coral regeneration program, which included the release of 80 young sand sharks.



LEARNING TOGETHER: Sombat Atiset (left), President of the Kusolsongkroh Foundation, which runs Thai Hua School in Phuket Town, and Dr Chane Sooksawee, Chairman of the School Board, Stamford Institute in Haad Yai, exchange "English partner school program" agreements at a signing ceremony on January 11.



STATELY STAY: Zhu Guangyao, Vice-Minister of China's State Environmental Protection Administration (left), is welcomed to the Cape Panwa Resort by General Manager Poomiphat Navanukroh during his recent stay on the island.



TADAAA! The Conrad Phuket Resort & Spa pre-opening management team, led by General Manager Martin van der Reijden (3rd from right) celebrate the launch of the resort's pre-opening office on January 12, when the existing spa-resort, The Panwaburi, closed for a 10-month, US\$15 million-dollar redevelopment to transform it into one of Phuket's most exclusive resorts.



FOR THE KIDS: Alasdair Junor, General Manager of The Evason Phuket Resort & Spa (right), hands 15,000 baht to Ajarn Chaiyot Prommat, Director of Wat Sawangarom School, Rawai, for schoolchildren's lunches. The resort also donated 1,000-baht scholarships to 30 students and toys worth 8,000 baht, to mark Children's Day.



FAMILY FROLIC: Alexander Rozin, the Slovak Republic Honorary Consul to Thailand (2nd from left), and his family enjoy a toast at Le Royal Meridien Phuket Yacht Club with General Manager Tonino Stabile (left) during their recent stay at the resort.

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In keepers

The passion that grew and grew

By Supaporn Sriprom

After 12 years in the hotel business, the story that sticks in the mind of French-born Frederic Flageat Simon is the one about the village chief and the television set.

As general manager of a hotel in Indonesia, Mr Simon befriended a village chief in Lombok and offered him any gift he wanted for the village.

"The chief said he wanted a television," Mr Simon said. "Most of the other villagers had never seen TV, so I set it all up for him."

Four weeks later, when he revisited the village, the TV was no longer in the public sala. It was in the chief's home.

"The chief was a very wise man," Mr Simon said. "He wanted to keep the sala as a place for the villagers to get together and talk, not to fight about which channel to watch."

"I have had a lot of fun experiences working in the hotel industry," he said, "but I have never really had any embarrassing situations."

Well, there was the case of the Japanese guest and the honeymooners in the bathtub.

"In one hotel, a Japanese guest entered the wrong villa and there was a couple in the bathtub. They were on their honeymoon and were enjoying a 'private moment', but they hadn't locked the door.

"He was sure that it was his



For Frederic Simon hotels are palaces and worthy of his passionate approach to life.

room. It was very difficult to convince him otherwise.

"That was a lot of fun – explaining to the guy what had happened. Once he realized ... you know, the Japanese are really polite and apologetic.

"It took him a long time to understand, but once he did, he had this expression on his face that was really funny."

Mr Simon tuned in to the hotel business when his parents took him to hotels that looked to the young boy like palaces.

"I remember walking into a hotel one time when I was 13 and thinking, 'Wow, this is beautiful,'" said Mr Simon, who is still captivated.

He was one of Accor's youngest GMs when he opened the Novotel Lombok in 1996, and in 1998 he moved to Malaysia's Sofitel Palm Resort, one of the largest resorts in Asia.

Now 32, he is Managing Director of Singapore-based Alila Hotels and Resorts, overseeing all the hotels under the company's flag.

The continued growth of Alila, he said, will see the group take on 15 hotels in Asia over the next three to five years.

Mr Simon firmly believes

that things can always be done better. "I think you survive today by continually looking at how you can improve, personally or as a company.

"I learn every day and I think it is important to learn and continually challenge myself. Always trying to find ways to become a better person is a Buddhist way of looking at it [life]."

Another thing that makes him successful, he believes, is the passion he has for his work.

"To me passion is everything in this job," he said, adding that it is also important for others to see that passion.

His next step in life? He laughs. "I don't know. To have children, maybe."

By Bruce Stanley

Phuket Pride, a four-day celebration of dancing, dining, art and sport, opens at the Royal Paradise Complex in Patong on January 29 and culminates with the annual Phuket Gay Pride Parade on February 1.

Poonsak "Daeng" Sanchan, coordinator for Phuket Pride, has organized the major entertainment clubs off Rath-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd to provide non-stop entertainment every evening.

There will also be a more serious side to the fun: "This year, Bangkok Phuket Hospital will sponsor a seminar on the latest developments and therapies for HIV, on January 31 at 3 pm," he said.

"This should be of interest to the entire community, especially those working in the sex industry or living a non-monogamous lifestyle," said K. Daeng.

Phuket Pride has been enthusiastically supported in the past by the Patong Municipality as another important event that brings visitors to the area and creates revenue for local hotels and places of entertainment.

"Each year, Phuket Pride attracts more people from Hong Kong, Singapore and Bangkok to enjoy the parties and the great fun," explained Kenya, who runs the well-known Sea Hag restaurant off Soi Wattana.

The 2004 festival opens with an art exhibition at Jochen's Bar and Gallery, featuring oil paintings by a variety of Thai artists who celebrate the human form.

On Friday, January 30, the Fifth Annual Gay Pride Festival Volleyball Tournament begins on Patong beach in front of the Sea Rescue Center, near the Immigration Office. Finals will be held the following afternoon.

Boat trips to surrounding islands are scheduled for Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

The Thursday tour explores hidden bays down the west coast of Phuket with sunset at Laem Promthep. Friday brings a tour to Raya Island and the Saturday cruise goes to Koh Kai Nok, with an afternoon of snorkeling and a beach barbecue. Reservations can be made at Connect Tour, Tel: 076-294195.

The climax of Phuket Pride will be the colorful parade that will sweep around Patong beach on Sunday, February 1. Various

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The pride of Patong



Outrageous, uproarious, riotous – whatever adjectives are applied to Phuket Pride, the emphasis is always firmly on fun.

entertainment businesses each sponsor a decorated truck and costumed dancers.

The parade begins on the beach road and ends at the Royal Paradise Complex, to be followed by a night of dining and dancing.

For a more detailed listing of events Tel: 076-296204 or send an email to information@phuketgaypridefestival.com

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Above: In addition to the famed parade, Phuket Pride includes many other activities, including a beach volleyball competition.

Below: Poonsak 'Daeng' Sanchan, coordinator of Phuket Pride 2004 (left) with event stalwarts Kenya of the Sea Hag Restaurant and Dr Reto Stoffel, who travels from Switzerland every year for the festival.



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TALES OF A TRAVELER

By Ed Peters

An undiluted taste of the real Arabia

For many people, the Middle East begins and ends with the mega-hyped charms of Dubai. However, the up-and-coming destination is un-touristy Oman, which has a lot more to offer than just shopping malls and golf courses.

At first sight, Muscat, the capital, looks remarkably modern. The broad, flat highway sweeping out of the airport into the city races past fast food and car franchises, and the vehicles on the road all look brand new – perhaps because dirty vehicles are illegal here.

But a glance above the neon signs reveals the granite peaks of the Al Hajar mountains, hemming the city in to the coast. True, there's a skyscraper and a mall or two, but much of Muscat is divided into villages of sandstone houses.

At the market in Muttrah, one of the oldest parts of the city, the fishermen land their catch in the early mornings to be sold straight away to a gaggle of merchants and housewives – still a current term here – much as they must have done for generations.

A huge arch along the corniche gives way to the cool recesses of the souk, fragrant with incense and stacked with merchandise that reflects the sultanate's history as a stop on the old spice route to India.

Most of the shopkeepers are Indian; chatty and eager to



please, they offer Omani antiques at what they claim are knock-down prices.

In the goldsmiths' street, women shrouded in black haggie over bracelets and necklaces that look as if they weigh a quarter-kilo apiece.

Just inside the entrance gate, Omani men loll in splendidly white dishdashes, sipping tiny cups of cardamom-flavored coffee, their mobile phones the only concession to modernity.

Foreigners are rare, for tourism is new in Oman. For decades, the old sultan kept foreigners at bay, and ensured his people

were protected from outside influences – including the problems of wealth.

A bloodless coup in 1970 installed his son, Qaboos bin Said, as ruler and the young sultan introduced reforms and other modernization programs. His word, however, is law, and he endures none of the tabloid tattling that, for example, the Windsors have to in Britain.

Being new to tourism also means that Oman does not have package trips, hordes of shoppers or coachloads of lens-faced tourists.

Statuesque forts, many built by the Portuguese, dot the landscape like beacons, each guarded by fearsome old warriors carrying equally ancient Lee Enfield rifles.

The south of Oman, blessed by an annual monsoon, has lush



Left: smiles from children at an oasis. Above: Portuguese forts dot the landscape. Below: one of the many gorgeous and almost deserted beaches on the Indian Ocean.



valleys and pastures that back onto beaches where loggerhead turtles lay their eggs while whales and dolphins thrash through aquamarine seas.

Stretching endlessly away into the interior is the desert, the indisputable Oman where the Bedouin still use camels, sleep under the stars and observe their tribal law and customs with devotion.

Take a day trip out there, or spend a night or two on an organized caravan, and you're part of an Arabia that has altered little in centuries.

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For a list of guide retailers outside Phuket, see page 35 of this issue of the Phuket Gazette.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): True love is put to the test and any relationship that is flawed will fail. This may be the chance that unsatisfied Aquarians have been looking for to make their escape. Those celebrating a birthday this week are advised to take care of the party planning. It's likely that a friend's ideas about what rocks your boat are more likely to sink it. The color purple brings you the strength to make difficult decisions.



PISCES (February 20-March 20): Your self-confidence reaches an all-time high. There doesn't seem to be any challenge that Pisceans can't rise to, and you will be feeling unusually reckless. Make the last week of January one to remember by exploiting all this positive energy to the full. Finances receive a boost, but you should remember any forgotten debts, no matter how small, before splashing out on treats. An Arian friend could become much more.



ARIES (March 21-April 20): A determined matchmaker has been seriously busy on your behalf and a walk on the wild side leads you to discover



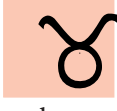
In The Stars

by Isla Star

What the future has in store for you...

a new side to romance this weekend. Single Arians could soon be saying goodbye to their independence. If this is fine, there is nothing to lose by plunging into deep water. If you prefer to travel alone, this could be the right time to book a one-way ticket.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): The heat builds up where career and work are concerned. Those born under the sign of Taurus may find it hard to keep up with the many changes that are fast coming to the boil. Deep down, you should realize that it's time to move on and leave a rather stagnant situation behind. This year will see most Taureans finally having their talents truly appreciated. Your lucky number this week is nine.



GEMINI (May 22-June 21): A much-needed opportunity to re-

lax comes your way this weekend. This may take the form of a simple afternoon chilling by the pool or a surprise sailing trip. In any event, those born under the sign of Gemini should not use work as a reason to refuse. There's nothing that can't be delayed for a couple of days and you will definitely benefit from some time spent doing nothing in particular.



CANCER (June 22-July 23): Your transmission is stuck temporarily in reverse and no matter how hard you try to shift into first gear, this week is not the right time to make progress. It could be that the planets are encouraging you to sit back and contemplate whether you are heading in the right direction. Cancerians should now focus on how to extend the range



of possibilities. More choices will mean more freedom.

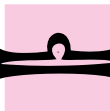
LEO (July 24-August 22): Those born under the sign of Leo will be using their imagination to good advantage this week. What appeared to be an impossible dream last year now appears strongly feasible, but you will need to seek expert advice before putting it into practice. Tuesday and Wednesday are low-energy days when you shouldn't force yourself to do more than necessary. Sagittarius is gathering confidence to make an approach.



VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Positive astrological influences mean that Virgoans are able to take a few risks this week. If you have been considering whether it's time to seek promotion at work or take on new projects, there's no time like the present for making that move. In the field of romance, a relationship is set to blossom and you may soon be on the threshold of serious commitment. The color amber will bring you luck.



LIBRA (September 24-October 23): An adventurous journey is forecast for Librans this weekend. Regardless of whether this takes the shape of a jungle trek or a road trip to previously unexplored territory, you will benefit from exposure to the



unknown. Planetary influences are about to sharpen your instincts. As this week unfolds, others are surprised by your newly honed ability to get straight to the heart of the matter. Thursday is your best day for making offers.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): Potential new friends are standing in the shadows, just waiting to be introduced to you. As January draws to a close, many Scorpions will be expanding their social circles to include people who will have a leading part to play in their futures. You will be considering ways of changing your home situation. If this involves buying property, there are signs that impetuous decisions should be avoided. The number five has special meaning on Monday.



SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): Creative and artistic skills are highlighted this week. But not every scheme you hatch is guaranteed to be fertile, so keep some eggs on one side. Your reputation as a good listener is spreading, but you won't want to hear everything that one person wants to say. Putting your foot down now will help to avert a sore ear later. If a romantic relationship is failing, you should know deep down what needs to be done.



CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): Financial disagreements could disturb your peace of mind this weekend. There doesn't appear to be any easy answer.



Another person's idea of what is fair just isn't the same as yours. Cautious Capricorns will think of a compromise that suits all concerned, rather than spark a situation that could turn into a rift that can't be closed. Any new health regime that you adopt this week is set to succeed.






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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. A girl who was learning to drive went down a one-way street the wrong way, but didn't break the law. How come?

A. She was walking.

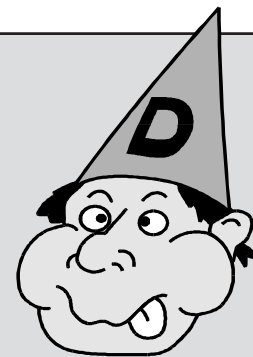
Answers to last week's Monster Quiz

1. Lady Godiva; 2. William of Occam; 3. George Orwell; 4. Albrecht Dürer; 5. Sir Walter Raleigh; 6. Leonardo da Vinci; 7. King Asoka; 8. Napoleon Bonaparte; 9. Winston Churchill; 10. Catherine the Great of Russia; 11. William Blake; 12. Francois Rabelais; 13. Euripides; 14. Madame Curie; 15. Joseph-Michel and Jacques-Etienne Montgolfier; 16. Octavian; 17. Robert Falcon Scott; 18. Julius Caesar; 19. King Louis XIV of France; 20. Kemal Ataturk.

Solution to last week's Crossword

I	N	D	O	N	E	S	I	A	N
S	E	A	X	D	O				
T	U	S	K	S	T	W	E	E	T
U	T	I	R	A	E				
C	O	S	C	A	R				
K	I	E	V	A	A	C	H	E	
	A	S	P	E	N			L	
Z	E	C	P	T	V				
E	N	T	E	R	I	R	A	T	E
R	A	A	C	X	R				
O	P	T	I	M	I	S	T	I	C

Get your brain in gear with the Monster Quiz



- Which country is the world's oldest surviving republic?
- How many bytes are there in a kilobyte?
- Which country was founded in 1867?
- Which country is officially led by a dead man?
- Which country still has Latin as an official language?
- If your geographical position was 0° latitude, 0° longitude, where would you be?
- Julius, Arthur, Leonard and Herbert were the real names of which famous brothers?
- What do Tal, Alekhine and Capablanca have in common?
- What did Publius Quinctilius Varus do in 9 AD?
- What did Stanley Pons and Martin Fleischman claim to have invented in 1989?
- In a URL, which country does ".tv" refer to?
- From which direction does the *mistral* blow?
- Where would you find malleus, incus and stapes?
- The caduceus is the symbol of which profession?
- By what name was François-Marie Arouet better known?
- Who failed to finish *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*?
- Dr Joseph Bell was the real-life model for which fictional character?
- Of the 206 bones in the human body, how many are there in the hands, feet, wrists and ankles?
- "It is an Ancient Mariner, And he stoppeth one of three." Three what?
- The atabal, bocu, darabuka and rebolo are all types of what?

Answers next week

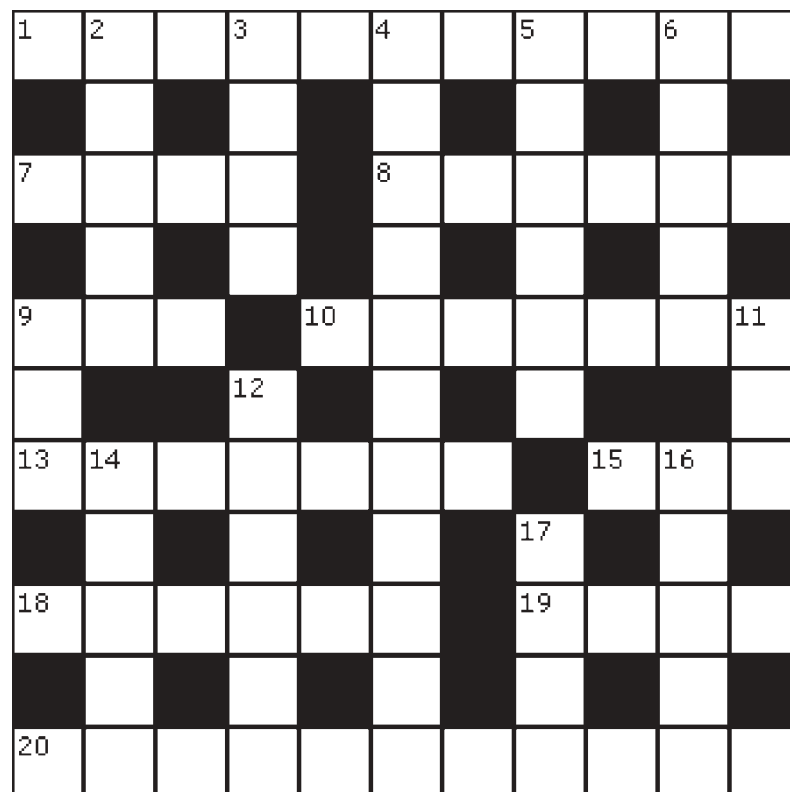
Never a Cross Word!

Across

- Old German currency.
- State between Indiana and Pennsylvania.
- Means, opportunity and *****.
- Definitely not science.
- Imitation.
- Intellectual.
- Request.
- Two-part bathing suit.
- Not all.
- Bin Laden's current home?

Down

- Old anesthetic.
- Between walk and canter.
- A mixture of two or more.
- Neo is it's hero.
- Moon or Ping, for example.
- Stomach muscles, in short.
- Hairy Himalayan ox.
- From Gdansk, maybe.
- Boss.
- Country north of Jordan.
- Where to take the waters.



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A boot from the elephant's hind legs

Dear Momma Duck,

I hear a lot about Thai culture, but I still don't know that much about it. Recently someone told me that a famous Thai *ajarn* (teacher) once actually wrote down a set of rules for how Thai women should behave and that his teachings were actually part of Thai school curriculum.

I was told that Thai women were once expected to prostrate themselves in front of their husbands and request permission before coming into bed. Is that true? Who was the scholar? In what year did he write these rules?

Is there a copy available in English? Do the rules still have relevance to women in modern Thai society?

Befuddled in Bang Tao

Dear Befuddled,

There is indeed a book which tried to teach Thai women how to develop "ideal female behavior". It was – naturally – written by a man and represented an ideal in the eyes of a Thai man.

A *Maxim for Ladies* (*Ovaht Krasattri*), was written in 1844 by Sunthorn Phu, a famous Thai poet, and some of his writings still form part of the school curriculum.

His advice to women still continues to be wistfully cited by Thai roman-

tics, again mostly men. I would like to quote from his writing, repeated in a book called *Culture Shock!* written by my friends Nanthapa and Robert Cooper.

"Walk slowly. While walking, do not swing your arms too much. Do not sway your breasts and do not run fingers through your hair. Don't talk ... Do not stare at anyone, particularly a man, to the point where he can tell what's going on in your mind. Do not run after men. Love and be faithful to your husband. Be humble in front of your husband.

"When your husband goes to bed, *wai* him at his feet every night without fail. When he has aches and pains, massage him, then you may go to sleep. Get up before your husband and prepare water for him to wash.

"While your husband is eating, sit and watch him nearby so that when he needs something he does not have to raise his voice. Wait until he finishes before you eat."

This, of course, represents a man's fantasy and a woman's nightmare. Much



Momma DUCK

By Wanida Hongyok

has changed, though in modern Thai society women are still seen as inferior by many men.

One common metaphor is that Thai women are "the hind legs of the elephant," which implies that they are equal to men in terms of economic contribution but that their proper place is at the back, supporting their men.

On the positive side, an article in the November issue of *Elle* magazine reports that 59% of Thai women are "open to new ways of thinking" and "are proud of themselves".

This is the second highest figure in Asia, after India. In general terms, 47% of women responded that they are very happy with their lives.

I believe that this is because we can stand on our own financial feet. Another factor is that women are constantly learning and are more open to new things. This includes being broad-minded and getting along with other people easily.

In today's Thailand, most of the Thai women I know clearly think that Thai men need to make considerable adjustments,

especially in how they think about women, and that there should be truly equal rights in law for both sexes.

I think that the majority of Thai women know how to love and respect themselves and are optimistic and ready to accept changes. I still respect the Thai way of life, customs and traditions and believe that this can be done without accepting an inferior position in society.

For example, the *wai* before bed time is hardly practiced by modern Thai women but they do, by and large, still respect their husbands.

In my opinion, we have become superwomen, fulfilling many roles in our day-to-day lives, many more than most men. We are now liberated to enjoy better prospects and are spreading our wings of freedom in many ways. To follow outmoded, male chauvinist practices is not the way to a modern Thailand.

By and large, Thai women are empowered in the main economic and career sectors, except for the powerful provincial/district governing structures and police. These last bastions of male supremacy must change.

In the social sector, although much has changed, dual standards relating to sex still reign. Thailand can only benefit from women taking an equal place in a modern but still Thai society.

The dangers of tobacco, lemmings and ponies

Meet Johnson. He's 14, male – or so he appears (sometimes there's just no telling). Johnson is a student with an active social life. Or for the most part he is – a student with an active social life that is, not just a male. He does not drink alcohol, does not smoke substances of any kind – and he likes ponies.

Whatever the case, Johnson is different. He is not just another "casualty of social conformity" – in fact there is a biological term to describe exactly what he isn't. He is *not* a lemming.

For those of you who don't get *Discovery Channel*, lemmings are little rodents in Scandinavia that have a habit of

following each other in running off cliffs and other forms of mindless, self-destructive behavior. If one lemming does something stupid – such as smoke or drink – other lemmings automatically follow suit.

It's important to note that real lemmings do not actually smoke or drink. This is just an analogy. Instead, in real life, lemmings do things like forming Harley gangs, terrorizing the corridors of Norwegian houses by speeding along them, and generally causing mayhem.

Why do people want to emulate lemmings, following each other in such undesirable indulgences, or for that matter, in desirable indulgences? If a man

likes cheesecake and were to consume it all day, hell, all week long, would it make Johnson strange not to do likewise?

I submit that he would still be normal even if he failed to conform to such behavior. However, as is the current case, should Johnson not conform by refusing to taking up drinking and smoking, he is dubbed an oddity and comes under pressure to follow, lemming-like.

That's not right. Social pressures which tend to appear most often in societies that have freedom of choice, are fickle. In fact, they are caused by this freedom of choice, as social pressures emerge from popular activities that many people indulge in.

Yet the minority who choose not to indulge find that their freedom of choice is perhaps not as free as they would like. They find the rest of society breathing down their necks – or in one of this case exhaling smoke down their necks, a sight more frightening than the exhalation of normal breath.

Conformity to popular social ideals isn't always a bad thing, a case in point being extremist



Youth 'n ASIA

By Eric Lacey

types – you know, the "cool" people who are always trying that much harder to be different, yet still smoke and drink.

Just listen to the teen-angst-laden lyrics of "alternative" music that MTV constantly bludgeons us with. One man in particular that I know comes to mind when I think of this. He makes me sick. We shall call him Buttercup, because beneath everything he tried so hard to make himself appear to be, that's all he

really is – a little queer-looking and an easily-trodden-upon flower. Except that he is not as pretty as a flower.

Buttercup is completely nonsensical in his aversion to "social pressures", deliberately not following them so as to appear "different", when really he's just another buttercup.

Johnson is nothing like Buttercup. He is unaffected by the need to be "different" when he chooses not to drink or smoke – or when he rides a pony. He knows the health risks related to all three activities – he learned them at a tender age when his great grandfather was riding a pony and got eaten by one.

Johnson is sensible in his approach to non-conformity to social pressures. He does engage in some popular activities: he listens to horrible rap music, reads boring books like Harry Potter and he makes fun of our friend Buttercup.

Thus it is logical that you simply cannot force yourself to follow certain conformities in society today because they just *are*. By not following them, you effectively end up excluded from society: not watching the news, not reading books, not talking to people and most likely roaming around the countryside partaking in all manner of risky activities, such as pony riding.

Fellow members of society, there is a very serious point being made here. Please do not take offense, but realize that this reflects only what an objective look at society has uncovered: those damn ponies be demons.

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That's right! The Russians are indeed coming and they are wasting no time. If you think back just 15 years ago, the Soviet Union was just coming to an end and our friend, Mr Yeltsin, was dancing and boozing his way towards what was known as "reform."

In 1972, I visited the Soviet Union – a journey, I can assure you, very few were taking at the time. I was actually arrested there for committing the crime of getting onto the wrong train and was placed under house arrest for two days.

When I say house arrest, I was in the finest hotel in Moscow. As I was a student at the time, they didn't want to give me the wrong impression. What I most remember – other than the friendliness of the people – was that the whole country could be best described as *film noir*. There was a dark, sinister depression about the place.

The simple act of farting was considered "harmful to the State". Walking down any street in Moscow was almost impossible because everyone wanted to buy your jeans or your American dollars – and was prepared to pay a fortune for both.

The population, on the whole, was downtrodden and permanently forlorn. They seemed happy, but in the same way a prison inmate can convince himself of happiness.

It was a country of queues. You queued up for everything. Russian women had constructed a whole social subculture and behavior that had the queue as its central theme.

The reality was that there was nothing really worth joining a queue for. "Produce" was nothing but a dribble of barely edible rubbish, kept in antiquated coolers and all purchased with the ruble, at the time nothing more than an economic practical joke.

Going to the Bolshoi ballet was the equivalent of attending a rock concert. Brezhnev was in power and Nixon was his Western playmate. Both had an unbelievable amount of nuclear hardware pointed at each other – and both had dysfunctional, corrupt personalities.

That I am here, writing this, without a urine-colored nuclear haze surrounding me is truly amazing. Boy, how things have changed.

I was sitting in my local the other night when I walked five huge pink men followed by five tall, stunning women, all half the men's age – a combination not uncommon here, except that these women were Caucasian.

The men were of the type that have more hair on the back of their necks than on their heads. Anyway, in they walked, to be greeted by the host who, as usual, was disarmingly charming.

"Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. How are we tonight?"

"EAT!" barked one of the men.

"I beg your pardon, sir?"



The Russians are coming!

"We want eat food. You have food?"

"Well sir, by an immense stroke of luck on your part, we are both standing in a restaurant."

"FISH!!" came another bark.

"I beg your pardon, sir."

"FISH!! You have fish?"

"Yes indeed Sir, we have lovely fish."

"SHOW ME!!!"

"Show you? The fish or the menu, sir?"

You get the drift of how things were going to go. After a short period of indecision, highly animated conversation and argument among themselves, they agreed to sit. Menus were handed out and general confusion began to reign.

"FISH!!!"

Oh, not this guy again.

"Bring me fish."

"Very good, sir, but would you like to order wine first?"

"No wine. CHI WAS! Wine is SHEET." Came the reply

"I beg you pardon, sir?"

"CHEEWAS!!!" He belatedly. "We are wanting Cheewas."

"Oh! You mean Chivas, sir. Chivas whisky."

It is said the Russians try to emulate the French but at a distance of 50 years. Not only did they drink Chivas, they drank the whole distillery.

Rounds and rounds of Chivas were set upon the table, followed by entire schools of FISH, FISH and more FISH.

As the "Cheewas" flowed, the tempo started to pick up at the table and so did the volume. The five Russian men started to roar with laughter at any excuse.

Downsider

By George Bentick

The waiter appeared again and asked if anyone would like to order dessert.

"FISH!!!" echoed the reply.

"No, sir. I mean, would you like something sweet?"

"What! You also is have sweet fish?"

A roar of laughter rose up from the table, with a lot of backslapping. They were now in full swing. Through all this, however, the women sat motionless, as if caught in the headlights.

This scenario was obviously played out at every meal or every social interaction, for that matter. By now, the men were starting to include the restaurant staff in their "Cheewas joy."

Slowly, what had started off as a dark Pasternak novel was now a full-on infectious good time. The boys were in full throttle, the women were rolling their eyes.

The Cheewas market had been cornered and all was well with the world. Others in the restaurant, who had earlier looked down on the whole situation, found themselves swept up in the interaction. Everyone was now having a riot.

This was a long way from the Russians of old. Gone was the vodka-and-potato mentality and in had come the malt whisky and fine dining. This was the new Russian, affluent beyond their dreams and feeling stunned by the experience, unsure how to flaunt their new-found wealth by means other than designer labels and expensive scotch.

The bill arrived and – you guessed it – nothing short of an interrogation broke out, with the waiter standing in the firing line, sheet-white with fear.

A mass of calculations was thrown back and forth across the table until finally the largest wad of US currency I have ever seen appeared from the pocket of one of the gentlemen.

He started to peel bill after bill from his roll and, with it, left the largest tip the restaurant has ever received.

With this, the whole place broke into a Thai-Russo love-in,

and that's the heart of this commentary. What started as a playground bully session ended nicely. No Evil Empire here.

Russians are warm, funny, gregarious, generous people, just a little out of place in a lifestyle that was unavailable to them until fairly recently. As they left, they crushed the waiters with bear hugs and went out, laughing.

As they left, one waiter thanked them very much.

"GOOD TO EAT YOUR CHEEWAS AND GOOD TO DRINK YOUR FISH!" came the reply.



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Promote the value in each vote

One has to feel a little sorry for Pol Gen Vasana Puemlarp, Chairman of the Election Commission of Thailand (ECT), whose job it is to investigate all allegations of misdeeds in all elections throughout the nation.

Listening to his patient explanations at a recent seminar in Phuket, it was plain that he has come under fire from all quarters for moving too slowly to declare disputed elections either legitimate or void.

He and his team are still ploughing through 1,500 complaints arising from 715 elections held last year. This year he is facing four times that number of elections which, if 2003 is anything to go by, will mean that no fewer than 6,000 complaints of allegedly nefarious activities will have to be examined.

It is widely recognized that many of the complaints made to the ECT are filed by bad losers. Often the complaints have no chance of being upheld, but the irritation they cause must bring great satisfaction to the complainants.

The ECT is surely aware of this and, it might be argued, would be justified in throwing such complaints in the trashcan after the most cursory of examinations. The fact that it does not do so is a good sign that at least this part of the Thai democratic system is working and is being taken seriously.

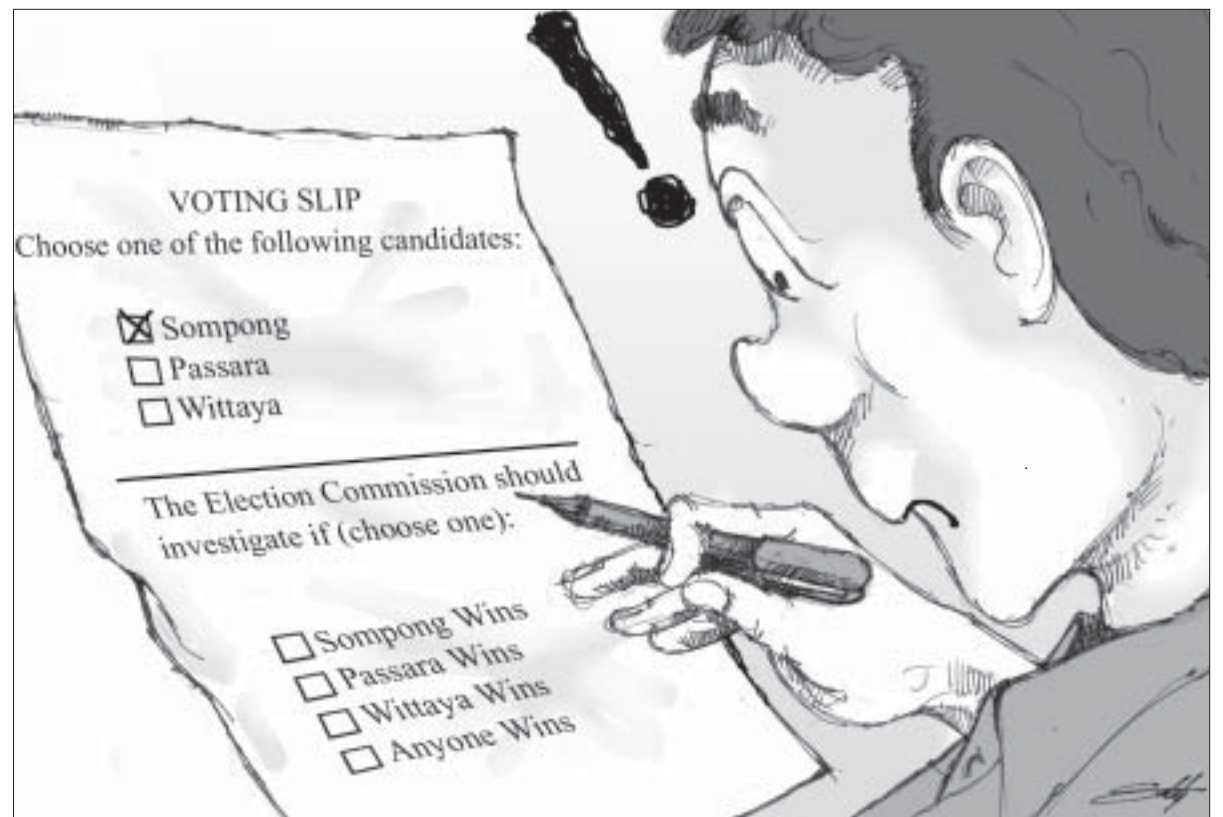
On the downside, the lengthy wait for judgment means that many local authorities will be able to deliver only the most basic of services to the communities they are supposed to serve.

But this is surely one of the costs of democracy. If the commission allows itself to be rushed into delivering its judgment, mistakes will be made and greater numbers of corrupt politicians will be able to hold onto their ill-gotten seats and all the returns they expect to accrue from their "investments" in winning. The ECT must stick to its guns, not to be swayed from its purpose by public impatience, nor lose sight of the reasons for its existence.

It is also to be hoped that the government – not renowned for its deep well of patience – will refrain from ordering the ECT to take shortcuts. If the government does take any action, it should be to help the commission by allocating sufficient resources to allow it to do its job properly and promptly.

The short-term inconvenience will be far outweighed by the medium- and long-term gains for the country that will come with having men and women of good will and good moral fiber elected to positions that so deeply affect essential services to society.

– The Editor



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.

Secret deals behind 'no-show' bar scene

The gangs of sex show touts at the entrance to Soi Seadragon damage business for the whole street. It was the busiest street in Patong. Now it is one of the quietest.

"No-show" a-go-go bars in Patong first had to remove all the dancing poles. Then, after payment of a "fee," they could be replaced. People were told to keep doors closed – then to keep them wide open.

Most damaging of all was the enforcement of a "no-bikini" edict, especially unfair when Bangkok, Chiang Mai and Pattaya still have bikinis in their a-go-go bars. As most people say, "You can see more on the beach, only 100 meters away."

Local police and Tourist Police know which bars are performing sex shows and use this knowledge.

Early this month, a small a-go-go bar in Soi Seadragon was caught providing a sex show but after paying a "fee" reopened the next evening with more sex shows.

Almost every week, a Soi Seadragon doorman is arrested for having sex show menus yet, after paying a 500-baht fine, goes straight back to work.

Doormen are paid 10 baht to 50 baht commission for each customer and often (possibly unknown to the bar's owner) they also charge the customers 250 baht to 500 baht to see sex shows (three fast shows that last no longer than five minutes, total). That explains why there are so many doormen.

The "no-show a-go-go"

bars can't compete with the sex shows, even though the sex shows are operated with a "here today gone tomorrow" attitude.

You you farang
Patong

Early closing times behind the times

The suggestion of cutting short opening hours at Patong night spots is taking a step into the dark ages.

As a regular visitor to Patong, I keep coming back for its natural beauty, wonderful people and – to complete the package – Patong's amazing nightlife, where you can meet the friendliest people in the world.

In the very few other countries where closing times have been reined in, the policy did not achieve the desired result. Instead, it created a lull in the evening, during which people with nowhere to go for entertainment got up to mischief.

More importantly, many local people needlessly lost their jobs.

I call on the government to listen to the community on this issue and help the wonderful people of Phuket by leaving things as they are.

David Kelly
Melbourne

A disaster looms

If Patong closes at midnight it will be a disaster for the bars and tourism. Phuket is certainly a pretty place but most tourists come for the night life.

Wide awake
Patong

Out go the lights for Phuket nightlife

Looks like the Thaksin government is implementing its new law and order policy. It's detrimental to the whole tourism industry in Thailand.

Why? The government has taken the wrong approach to applying law and order to drugs and social responsibility. It's going to cost jobs and hurt tourism.

Concerned foreign tourist

Stay-away promise of midnight closing

I visited Phuket in December and January and thought the nightlife was great.

I was planning another trip in June, but if the government introduces midnight closing, I will not return to Phuket.

Is the Thai government trying to kill the tourist industry?

Nigel Flitter
United Kingdom

Nightlife is the real beauty of Phuket

The Governor of Phuket must be living in a fantasy world if he thinks most tourists go to Phuket for its natural beauty.

Most people I know who travel to Phuket go there because of the culture and nightlife.

They think the island is filthy and spoiled, but enjoy the nightlife and the crazy, care-free atmosphere. I think 2 am is a very reasonable time to close the bars and clubs.

Adam Hend
Australia

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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.

How much booze is too much?

With the police getting serious about drinking and driving I would like to know: How much can you actually enjoy over how many hours (your body burns a certain quantity of alcohol per hour) before you pass the legal limit? Does anyone have a table or rule of thumb?

Steen Erik Jansen
Patong

Ampaipan Pawawattananu-sorn, of the Phuket Provincial Health Office, replies:

I would advise people not to drink any alcohol at all if they intend to drive. But if you feel you must drink, a rule of thumb is as follows:

In the two hours before driving, a driver should not consume, in the first hour, more than two cans or small bottles of beer, or four cans or small bottles of light beer, or six 15cc tots of liquor mixed with soda, or two 80cc glasses of wine.

In the second hour, the driver should not drink more than half of these amounts.

You should understand that

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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the effects of alcohol differ from one person to another. For example, some people who limit their intake to the amounts mentioned above may still be over the legal limit if breathalyzed.

Pol Lt Col Teeraphol Thipja-roen, Deputy Superintendent and Chief of Traffic Police at

Phuket Town Police Station, notes:

The legal limit is 50 milligrams/percent in the driver's breath. If his breath contains more than 50 milligrams, he will be prosecuted.

The maximum penalty is three months in jail, a fine of up to 10,000 baht, or both.

A horror of mosquitoes

I was staying recently at a resort in Patong, and the area was full of mosquitoes at night, even though the ponds and even the flower vases have small fish in them.

It is unbearable. The mosquitoes even seem get into the air-conditioned rooms.

As you know, disease can be spread by mosquitoes. I hope the health authorities in Phuket can do something before there is an epidemic.

Frustrated tourist
Singapore

Amphet Chatpunyanon, Assistant Chief of Health and Environment with the Patong Municipality, replies:

First of all you have to know which type of mosquito comes out to feed when.

If they are mosquitoes that come out at night then they are most likely to be what we call

"annoying mosquitoes" (scientific name *Culex Tritaeniorhynchus*).

The type you should be worried about are not these but the ones that come out during the daytime, which are the yellow-fever mosquitoes.

I think that the mosquitoes that tourists complain about are mostly the normal annoying mosquitoes.

Why do hotels have so many mosquitoes? It's because they plant so many trees and other flora. Annoying mosquitoes like the shade and darkness that the flora provides so they can reproduce.

You also need to understand that our sewage system is not fully developed and, on top of that, there is still a lot of construction in Patong. Standing water, even in bottle caps, provides an environment where mosquitoes can lay their eggs.

We have reduced the mosquito population in communities by going in and overturning or emptying water in places likely to provide an environment where mosquito larvae can thrive.

Although that reduced the yellow-fever mosquitoes, now we have to find a way to deal with the population of annoying mosquitoes.

We sympathize with people who call us to tell us about mosquito problems, but places like hotels are private property and the owners are therefore responsible – they are the ones who must ensure there is no standing water.

If they want assistance, they can contact us for advice on how to deal with mosquito problems at their hotel.

Meanwhile, you should use mosquito repellent and avoid wearing dark clothing, which tends to attract mosquitoes.

One-year permit to stay

I am married to a Thai man and have a one-year permit to stay based on this fact.

I have found a job and have been issued with a work permit. I read recently in the *Gazette* that anyone working in Thailand and receiving a salary of less than 35,000 baht [in the case of a Swedish citizen, which I am], cannot obtain a one-year permit.

My permit to stay is not based on the fact that I work, but on the fact that I am married to a Thai. Does this mean I can work for less than 35,000 baht and still keep my one-year permit?

Sara Ceedigh

Pol Capt Krissarat Nuesen, Deputy Inspector of the Phuket Provincial Immigration Office (PPIO), responds:

The regulations for considering a one-year permit for a foreign woman, based on marriage to a Thai, are different from those for a man applying on the basis of being married to a Thai woman.

In the foreign man's case, it is more complicated – we take his salary into consideration.

In the case of a foreign woman, however, the salary is irrelevant to the qualifications for a one-year permit.

Missing dog

Our dog, Bentley, disappeared recently. We are offering a reward of 25,000 baht, which is being advertised in the *Phuket Gazette*. What else can we do?

Michael Seely
Thalang

Pol Maj Cherdpong Chiewpreecha of Phuket Town Police Station replies:

You can report your dog as missing at your local police station. You should provide as much information about your dog as you can, including a photo of him, to help officers in looking out for him.

STATES&MARKETS

By Thitinan Pongsudhirak

Assessing violence in Thailand's Deep South

The most recent spate of violence in Thailand's southernmost provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala has left the government of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra in a quandary. Quelling such violence requires a reliable assessment of its sources. Were the violent attacks against Thai official installations mere acts of banditry? Or did they originate from longstanding separatist movements? Or perhaps they had something to do with terrorism undertaken by elements tied to Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), the regional outpost of Al-Qaeda?

The answers to these questions are crucial to the Thaksin government's appropriate and effective response. Failure to assess the instability in the Deep South correctly could backfire and eventually wind up as a liability to Thailand's overall economy.

It is difficult to overlook the organization, coherence, strategy and level of force employed in the most recent attacks. Soon after New Year, 20 state-owned and operated schools in Narathiwat were torched in unison, while a military camp in the same province was looted almost simultaneously, with four army sentries being killed.

Evidence suggests that the perpetrators numbered at least a few dozen and that they had planned their operations carefully. Just days after the attacks in Narathiwat, Pattani was shaken by bomb blasts that took the lives of two police bomb disposal experts. Hours later, a police station in Yala was attacked.

These acts of violence involved the theft of small arms belonging to the Thai army and police. This led some officials to conclude that bandits were responsible, that the stolen arms were proof of the culprits' commercial motives. Leading government officials were quick to dismiss any link to regional terrorism, masterminded by JI, which has caused havoc in Southeast Asia in recent months.

However, the severity and relative frequency of the violence did not fit the "banditry" explanation. The four army sentries who were killed in Narathiwat had their throats slit. The heinous nature of that act is inconsistent with past patterns of small arms thefts.

A MORE CONVINCING EXPLANATION

A more convincing explanation was that separatist movements, including the Gerakan Mujahideen Islam Pattani (GMIP), were behind the attacks. Separatists such as those from the GMIP have committed violence in the South periodically in the name of an independent state and in protest at various policies from officialdom in Bangkok. It would not be surprising if they were the culprits.

Yet the timing and targets of the attacks beg further questions. Separatists were placated and re-integrated into Thai society through an amnesty program in the 1980s. No pretext exists to suggest why they would renew a call for an independent state at this time. A more worrying explanation has to do with international terrorism. The arrest in August of Hambali, a ringleader of JI, followed by Thailand's closer alliance with the US in the latter's war on terror, may have made Thailand a more attractive target for regional terrorists.

The Deep South, predominantly populated by Thai Muslims who may have felt alienated by recent government policies, is a fertile area for terrorists to operate. If a link to regional terrorism shows up in the near future, the recent spate of violence should be of utmost concern to Thai officials. Terrorists are naturally dedicated. If they can bomb and torch the state's southern installations, they can commit the same acts of violence elsewhere in Thailand, where conditions are suitable.

That would put a brake on the government's various programs to promote rapid economic growth. A blast in Phuket or Bangkok would also devastate tourism and deter foreign investment.

MECHANISMS FOR AIRING GRIEVANCES

To pre-empt the escalation of such violence, it is essential for the government to improve its intelligence to ascertain the sources of discontent in the South. Since the government disbanded the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Center and the Combined 43rd Civilian-Police-Military Command in favor of increased powers for the National Security Council and the National Police Office, the situation in the Deep South has deteriorated markedly.

These two bodies were instrumental in airing and resolving the grievances of southern Muslims. What's more, Bangkok's repressive tactics, including its violent war on drugs and dark influences, have resulted in a growing list of Muslim grievances. Indeed, the government's effort to exert political control over the South by using the police force as instruments of policy may well have backfired.

A way forward in handling the violence is to re-establish mediating bodies such as the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Center and the Combined 43rd Civilian-Police-Military Command.

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

Everything about Nearly Everything

The first word you'd reach for in trying to describe Bill Bryson would probably be "genial". He is one of the great modern day travel writers. Unlike some such as Paul Theroux or VS Naipaul who thrive on being nasty, Bryson doesn't seem to have a mean bone in his body.

His narrative style is humorous, laid back and conversational – traits very much shared by his fellow American Mark Twain. He is best known for his travel books on Great Britain, the United States and Australia: *Notes from a Small Island*, *Notes from a Big Country* and *Down Under*.

But he also has a scholarly bent and has written a very perceptive book about the English language, *Mother Tongue* and another about recent US history, *Made in America*.

His latest book, *A Short History of Nearly Everything* (Doubleday, London, 2003, 515pp) was three years in the making and continues on this scholarly vein. It is nothing less than a compendium of the latest scientific knowledge in astrophysics, cosmology, geology, biology and paleontology.

He pored through a staggering amount of research – his notes and bibliography total 75 pages – and traveled all

over Europe, the US and Australia tracking down and interviewing leading experts in their fields.

He has excavated thousands of nuggets of fascinating information and described fondly the wild eccentricities of their discoverers.

Here he is, for example, on Issac Newton: "Newton was a decidedly odd figure – brilliant beyond measure, but solitary, joyless, prickly to the point of paranoia, famously distracted (upon swinging his feet out of bed in the morning, he would reportedly sit for hours, immobilized by the sudden rush of thoughts to his head) and capable of the most riveting strangeness."

Bryson opens his book with a word of welcome to his reader and congratulations that he is alive:

"Not one of your ancestors was squashed, devoured, drowned, starved, stuck fast, untimely wounded or otherwise deflected from its life's quest of delivering a tiny charge of genetic material to the right partner at the right moment to perpetuate the only possible sequence of hereditary combinations that could result –

eventually, astoundingly, and all too briefly – in you.



Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt

the time we finish it may feel as if it is."

In this he is only partly successful. There were times when I found the book heavy going and became afflicted with the dreaded MEGO syndrome (My Eyes Glaze Over).

But this is really because of my own limitations rather than any fault of Bryson's narrative verve. I'm intensely interested in cosmology and human paleontology, less interested in bugs and earth science. I'd say Bryson kept my attention riveted about three quarters of the time. Which is pretty damned good.

He opens his history at, appropriately

enough, the Big Bang, then moves on to the creation of the Earth, the separation of the continents, the rise of microscopic life, the age of the dinosaurs, how they went extinct, the rise of mammals, and the quick diffusion of *Homo erectus* out of Africa throughout Europe and Asia, a hugely strong predator: "the velociraptor of its day".

"*Homo erectus* is the dividing line: everything that came before him was apelike in character; everything that came after him was humanlike. *Homo erectus* was the first to hunt, the first to use fire, the first to fashion complex tools, the first to leave evidence of campsites, the first to look after the weak and the frail."

Bringing us up to date, he concludes: "We have arrived at this position of eminence in a stunningly short time. Behaviorally modern humans have been around for no more than about 0.0001 per cent of Earth's history – almost nothing, really – but even existing for that little while has required a nearly endless string of good fortune."

"We really are at the beginning of it all. The trick, of course, is to make sure we never find the end. And that, almost certainly, will require a lot more than lucky breaks."

Windows 98 is dead... Long live Windows 98!

Q I can't believe that Microsoft has officially killed Windows 98. What other choices do I have, or am I forced to change to Windows XP?

JB, Bangkok

A The press has made such a big deal about Microsoft "abandoning" Windows 98 that I'm ready to scream.

"Microsoft announced last year that it would stop supporting Windows 98 from January 15, meaning that millions of users will soon be left exposed when new exploits and vulnerabilities are discovered" reads an article in one of the big computer trade publications.

I wouldn't dare reprint the drivel I've seen in the Asian press. It's a crock, from beginning to end.

First of all, Microsoft "abandoned" Windows 98 a long, long time ago. There haven't been any major updates to Win98 – apart from security patches – since Windows ME, and that's a com-

COMPUTER Q&A

Ask the experts. Email chris@phuketgazette.net

pletely different can of worms.

Second, Microsoft didn't drop *all* support for Windows 98 on January 16. It dropped the old pay-per-incident telephone-based support for Windows 98 and 98 Second Edition. That's all. (Free telephone-based support disappeared in June of last year.)

So where's the beef? How long has it been since you called Microsoft for Win98/98SE tech support, gave them your credit card number to pay for the help, then got a response that was worthwhile? Gimme a break.

Third, Microsoft will continue (for the foreseeable future) to make all Windows 98 and 98SE patches available for download from their website at: windowsupdate.microsoft.com. That means you don't need to panic – the patches are there, the old Knowledge Base articles are there, even the Developer's Network articles are there.

There are plans afoot to put all the major patches and support files for Win98, SE and ME, on a free CD, which should be widely available. Keep an eye on www.microsoft.com/downloads.

Finally, Microsoft hasn't promised that it will continue to provide new security patches for

Windows 98 and SE security holes, but I bet they will. (Assuming any new holes are discovered – the latest security patches have been for Internet Explorer, SQL Server, Windows XP and 2000, with very few Win98 or 98SE specific exploits surfacing.)

Why am I so confident? Because Microsoft discontinued support for Office 97 more than a year ago, much as they're doing now with Win98, and they've published two specific security updates for Office 97 since then.

So if you've read that big, bad Microsoft is beating up on poor old Win98 users, take it with a grain of salt. Certainly you should apply all the latest patches to Windows 98 and 98SE.

By all means, upgrade to Windows XP if you can – just for the stability, if not the new features (which are great). But you don't need to do anything special to guard against Microsoft "abandoning" Windows 98.

Q Why do you plug your books so much in your column?

DL, Patong

A Not for the reason you think. Royalties run about 10 baht for each of my English-language books sold in Thailand, and half that much for books that have been translated into Thai.

I have a much more insidious motive than the pecuniary. In the book biz, it's called "pull through."

Why does Khun Woody plug his books? Because the more books you buy – whether his or not – the more books become available.

When I moved to Phuket three years ago, I was very disappointed by the quality and quantity of computer books available on the island, both in Thai and in English: I could find copies of *Windows 95 with Office 95 Step by Step* (by Step by Step), but nearly all the computer books on the island were years out of date, and covered topics that were, shall we say, far from mainstream.

Times have changed a lot. The Se-ed book store next to HomePro now has an entire section stocked with solid, well-written, up-to-date computer books. Se-ed above Tesco-Lotus doesn't carry as many recent titles, but

some of them have been translated into Thai.

Yes, sure, you can find *Windows 98 with Office 97 Step by Step*. But because more and more of you are buying recent books from top-notch publishers – the "pull through" – our choices here in Phuket have expanded greatly.

You keep buying, they'll keep selling. And the prices are considerably less here than you would pay to ship the same book in with Amazon.com.

If you know of other troves of computer books in Phuket, write and tell me about them.

– Woody Leonhard
woody@khunwoody.com

Property businesses form club

By Sangkhae Leelanapaporn

PHUKET: Phuket's real estate businesses have formed an industry club so that they can deal collectively with government bodies – and at the same time help to preserve the island's environment.

The Phuket Real Estate Agents' Club (PREAC) was established in December and now has 26 members, with 15 committees to examine various issues.

Phummisak Hongsyok, Managing Director of the Anuphas Group, was elected first chairman of the club.

He told the *Gazette* that the idea came from the new governor, Udomsak Usawarakura, who called in the real estate people so they would be aware of provincial policies, especially ecological concerns.

"We want to be the center for real estate agents and people involved in real estate," K. Phummisak said. "We also want to talk together about ideas for the real estate business in Phuket."

"Most important is contact with the government side. We don't want to have a situation where unfair action is taken. If the gov-

ernment and the agents know each other, we will get fair treatment from the government side," he said.

Good environmental practice is another aim. "After tourism, property is the main business of Phuket, so we have to be careful about environmental issues," K. Phummisak added.

He said that, in the past, governments had had a habit of accusing real estate businesses of cheating their customers and ignoring their responsibilities, and had taken issues to the Office of the Consumer Protection Board (CPB) in Bangkok.

"The CPB was usually strict and often made life difficult for the real estate agent in order to protect the home-buyer, so we want to discuss with buyers how to make projects work," he added.

He said prices in Phuket were rising for a variety of reasons. Land prices were up almost everywhere, despite attempts to prevent the market becoming overheated.

"On the positive side, the people who invest in land on Phuket will protect the local environment because they want to protect their capital," K. Phummisak added.

He said that in Phuket the markets for shophouses, houses under a million baht and top-end luxury houses were especially good.

K. Phummisak's company is about to start work on Baan Anuphas Pirom, a luxury project on 86 rai near the Phuket Country Club. The 49 homes will each be priced at 22 million baht and up.

"We [the PREAC] plan to become an association in the future," he said. "We don't have foreign members because, under Thai law, only Thai people may register real estate companies."

The first meeting took place on December 20 when members chose their chairman and appointed the committees. Annual membership of the club, which holds general meetings once a month, is 3,000 baht.

Members include Senator Paiboon Upatising of Phuket Villa, Boonkeng Srisansuchart of Sri Suchart Grand View and Pitaya Tantipiriyakij of LH Muangmai (Land & House).

The PREAC office is at 13, Soi 1, Phuket Villa 3, Yaowarat Rd, Phuket Town. Tel: 01-6933000; fax 076-218399.

On the Move

The new chief of the Phuket Agriculture & Cooperatives Of-

ice is **Thanatsanee Sawatdirak**, 52, from Prachuap Khiri Khan province. K. Thanatsanee has a degree in business management from the Thai Chamber of Commerce University in Bangkok. Before moving to Phuket, she worked in the office of the Permanent Secretary for Agriculture & Cooperatives in Bangkok for 26 years.



Nicola Coccia, 24, from Italy, has joined the Regatta Italian restaurant at Le Royal Meridien Phuket Yacht Club as Executive Chef. Mr Coccia studied hotel and food services at the E. Maggia Str-



sa school in Italy, followed by a six-week wine course at Westminster College in London. Before coming to Phuket he worked at the Lo Scalo and Del Lago hotels in Italy and at Le Meridien Grosvenor House Hotel in London.

Achim Brückner, 43, from Germany, has been appointed Resident Manager of Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort. Mr Brückner, who served his apprenticeship as a chef more than 20 years ago at the Hotel Jensen in Lübeck, comes to Phuket from the sister resort of Le Meridien Babarons in the Seychelles, where he was General Manager.



Been promoted? Made a career change? Know someone who has? Let us know by email to onthemove@phuketgazette.net.

Making money out of money

Currencies have a tendency to move in an exaggerated manner. They overreact. This can be positive for investors who recognize when this is happening and can take advantage of profitable situations.

Here are some examples of recent currency movements: the Australian dollar fell to below US\$0.50 and the New Zealand dollar to below US\$0.40. They are now trading at US\$0.77 and US\$0.68 respectively.

In percentage terms, this is a rise of more than 50% for the Australian dollar and 70% for the New Zealand unit. It is also net of foreign exchange costs for those switching currencies.

The Euro fell to about US\$0.83 and less than two years later is valued at more than US\$1.28, a rise of more than 50%. In all cases, as well as exchange rate gains, there is the bonus of interest on the capital.

All these cases assume that the investor's home currency is US dollars or a related currency with a fixed rate of exchange against the US currency, such as the Hong Kong dollar.

When dealing with currencies, the investor must keep in mind a fair value for this currency against any other currency that has perhaps become too cheap.

A good example of this is the Sterling-US dollar exchange rate, known to foreign exchange dealers as "cable". The commonly accepted rate of exchange between the two currencies is US\$1.50 equals £1.

Every time there is a significant departure from this level, there is opportunity for profit. In the early 1980s, the dollar reach-

ed a peak of US\$1.07 to £1. It was vastly overvalued – and quickly retreated.

The early 1990s saw the pound rise to touch US\$2 before sinking back. The late 1990s saw the pound at US\$1.70 before it overshot on the downside – to US\$1.38 at one stage.

Today, with an exchange rate above US\$1.85, the pound



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

is overvalued again. That does not mean it has reached its peak but already there is an opportunity for profit.

Many of these "profit situations" apply only to an investor with a US dollar currency base. However, there is a way of accessing a profit regardless of one's "home" currency – by investing in either a fund holding traded endowment policies or in the Brandeaux Fund, which invests in UK ground rents, student accommodation and commercial property.

Both funds offer investors a choice of three currencies: US dollar, Euro or Sterling. If the investor has US dollars as a home currency, it would probably be wise simply to invest in the US dollar category.

This will yield about 8% – and the currency exposure has a built-in currency hedge. For a Sterling investor, one can stay in the Sterling fund or invest in the US dollar fund to obtain the high yield available, together with the currency profit, before switching back to the Sterling fund to capture the gain.

Tactics for the Euro investor who wishes to benefit from higher-yielding investments are simply to use the Euro category, which also has an inbuilt currency hedge.

How much further will the US dollar fall and when will it start to recover? The first question is difficult to answer because currencies overreact and only by sheer luck can one pick an absolute bottom. However, there are limits, especially with the US dollar-Sterling exchange rate.

The Euro has, over the past six months, kept an almost limpet-like link with Sterling. During this period, both currencies have moved up in tandem against the US dollar.

Sterling must reach its peak at around US\$2, if it goes that far, but the Euro may move further on a percentage basis. The Euro zone will feel increasing pain as it rises, even from current levels. Britain is already having problems, especially with corporate profits.

The most likely time for currencies to stop appreciating

against the US dollar is when the US Federal Reserve starts to raise interest rates in America. This can reasonably be expected sometime this year.

The Japanese government is watching the situation with growing concern. It is estimated that Japan bought US\$180 billion in 2003 to slow the decline of the dollar against the yen.

In the first two weeks of 2004, an estimated US\$40 billion has already been bought. Tokyo has stated that, if necessary, it is prepared to buy US\$500 billion-plus for the whole of 2004.

Pressure on the US dollar may continue into 2005. Nothing is certain on the timing.

In the meantime, investors who use high-yielding investment vehicles while they wait for currency "neutrality" will continue to profit.

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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Why the green is grassier on the other side

In the early days, the only machines cutting golf greens were rabbits. Clever little bunnies they were, too. Not only did they cut the grass nice and short where required – in the grassy hollows where the holes were cut – but they converted the cuttings into fertilizer and spread it on a daily basis to ensure a healthy playing surface. That's an environmentally-friendly machine.

Today we spend thousands of dollars doing this artificially.

But are we really playing on better putting surfaces than our golfing fathers and grandfathers?

I believe consistency of maintenance has improved over the years. A higher percentage of courses have greens in good condition these days.

However, according to my memory and extensive research, overall putting experiences presented on golf courses today are not very different from those of 50 years ago. With all the advances in turf grass cultivars and maintenance technology, I hear you saying, how can this possibly be the case?

I will first present my case according to a patchy and deteriorating memory. I first visited the Royal St David's Golf Club in Harlech, North Wales, as a 10-year-old urchin caddy.

St David's was the Blue Canyon of North Wales coast



Jon Morrow

golf courses. Much as we resented their superior attitude, they had ample justification.

This was a magnificent links course, bordered on one side by spectacular windswept sand dunes and on the other by the imposing 12th century castle, standing sentry hundreds of feet above the second green.

But to me the most notable difference between St David's and Porthmadog, our little course

across the Glaslyn estuary, was the incredible quality of their putting greens.

So perfect and uniform was the turf that only the hole offered a mark on which the eye could rest. The hole's edges were so sharp that only a perfect putt would fall. Yet

once a player got accustomed to the billiard table like speed, it became evident that a putt took an eternity before the event was confirmed.

This slow-motion effect magnified the resulting emotion, depending, of course, on who had struck the putt.

One remarkable aspect was

that the course was maintained with a staff of just five.

Over the years, however, the greens lost their magic. Perhaps not coincidentally, their deterioration seemed to follow investments in more modern methods.

The first blow was the automatic sprinkler system, which encouraged overwatering and allowed coarser grasses to flourish. Previously, greens would be watered only when absolutely necessary. "Only when the footsteps start to shine" was how the head greenkeeper so beautifully described his signal.

This was done by flooding greens in a matter of seconds. Water was pumped from ponds dug behind each green. The system encouraged firm greens and only the finest grasses with deep root systems.

The second strike was the purchase of a ride-on mower to replace the slower walk-behind mowers. The ride-on, operated by one man, could cut the greens in front of the first group of players. But the size of the machine meant that the rollers had to be very light, which resulted in a less smooth surface.

Enough nostalgia – back to what passes for solid science. As is probably the case at courses across the golfing globe, my bosses at Loch Palm have re-

cently been taken prisoner by the dreaded "stimp meter".

This is a primitive device used to calculate green speed. A ball is rolled onto the green, falling from a notch in a "track" about a yard long. The roll is recorded in opposing directions; the average is the "stimp" reading.

Having learned that greens are not worth putting on unless the stimp is at least nine, we are now subject to weekly testing and review.

Today's greens are "on the edge" during tournament conditions. They have such shallow root systems that they have to be heavily watered to stay alive.

On the plus side, the greens have gone from slower than a Thai Immigration line to nearly acceptable speed. Unfortunately, several of the greens designed with more slope (to create putting interest) will become unplayable if the greens actually hit the magic nine.

Having taken a more scientific approach through (heavily skewed) research, I have con-

cluded that even though greens are now being cut at less than half the height of 50 years ago, "real" green speeds have not changed much in tournament situations.

Golfing folklore records the green speeds at Oakmont in the 1953 US Open as being off-the-charts fast, yet the most advanced mowers of the time could cut the grass only to a quarter of an inch. This is the cutting height of the *fringes* on some courses today.

This agronomic mystery can be explained because, like the grasses at St David's in my youth, the longer, finer grasses could collect more sunlight and water and so had stronger, deeper roots.

Healthy grasses like this can survive longer without water, so when the water was turned off, the greens became dry and firm. In this condition, rolling the greens would make the grass leaf "lie down".

Putts downhill were frighteningly fast. Several players were reported to have putted off the greens.

Having said that, putts against the grain were extremely slow, presenting different problems. Today, reading and playing the grain is largely an obsolete skill. That's a shame.

Other good things happened when greens dried out. As the ball had to be kept below the grain, players able to reach the green were rewarded more than they are today.

Today's greens are "on the edge" during tournament conditions. They have such shallow root systems that they have to be heavily watered to stay alive.

In turn, this allows professional players to pepper the flag from any angle, even from the rough, unless the rough has grown to be so long that players can't even find their feet. This is no fun for the pros, let alone long-suffering hackers.

More relaxed standards would allow maintenance costs to be drastically reduced, would reintroduce long-lost putting skills, and would result in many great old courses recapturing their strategic interest.

More than anything else, it may just make golf more fun – and more affordable – for regular golfers.

Jon Morrow is a golf course design and construction consultant. Tel: 01-7284492. Email: jonmorrow63@hotmail.com

Win a trip to Dublin!

Junior IMPAC Dublin Literary Awards for Thailand

Topic: "Portrait of a Young Thai"

Write either a factual or fictional account that draws on your experience of life as a young Thai; or, for foreign writers, your perceptions of life of a young Thai.

Language: English

Length: 800-1,200 words

Age: Between 14-18, up to April 1, 2004

Closing Date for submissions: February 27, 2004

Prizes:

The winning essay in each of the two categories (Thai and non-Thai) will earn the author and one parent a trip to Dublin where they will attend the senior International IMPAC Dublin Literary Awards ceremony, which confers the richest literary prize in the world, and take part in a reading with the winning author.

There will also be five merit awards worth Bt10,000 each. All prizes will include a certificate.

Judging Panel:

1. Her Excellency Sirikom Maneerin, Deputy Education Minister of Thailand
2. His Excellency Daniel Mulhall, the Irish Ambassador to Thailand
3. Assistant Professor Chusak Pattarakulvanich, English lecturer and critic, Thammasat University
4. Ms Ngarmphan "Jane" Vejajiva, writer and translator of the Harry Potter series
5. Mr Pana Janviroj, editor, The Nation

The contest is open only to children (Thai or non-Thai) attending schools in Thailand. Entries should be sent to:

Portrait of a Young Thai
Office of The Editor
The Nation
44 Moo 10, Bangna-Trad Highway 4.5 km
Bangkok 10260 or
email: portrait@nationgroup.com

Please include your full name, address, telephone number, email address (if any), and the name of your school and the address. The results will be announced in The Nation, Nation Junior, Krungthep Turakij, KomChad Luek, and Phuket Gazette newspapers at the end of March, 2004.

Summit provides soccer fans with excitement

PHUKET TOWN: While the leaders of Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand Economic Cooperation (Bimstec) nations play politics at Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort next month, Under-19 teams representing member nations and two guest countries will be playing soccer at Surakul Stadium.

Although not full Bimstec member states, Bhutan and Nepal are also fielding teams in the February 3-8 tournament.

This will be the first time the teams have met in Thailand and competition for the 1st Bimstec Cup is expected to be energetic but friendly.

On January 15, Bundit Sotethipalarit, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Thai Foreign Affairs Ministry came to Phuket to check the readiness of Surakul Stadium to host the event, especially in terms of security.

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra is expected to attend

the final and present the winning side with the championship trophy on February 8. Leaders of the other Bimstec nations are also expected to attend.

K. Bundit was accompanied by Kiatdee Attanawatayanon, Director of the Phuket Sport and Tourism Office, and Songsak Kitakarakul, head of the Sports Authority of Thailand, Phuket.

He said physical security at the stadium met requirements, and that he was satisfied with Phuket's ability to provide adequate security.

"I was very impressed with the security provided by the Phuket-based security detail at the Apec summit meetings in Bangkok. It was very strong and reliable," he said.

Given the results of other regional tournaments in recent years, the Thai Team, playing on home turf, must be considered favorites to win the event.

– Nonthawat Disayabutra

Andaman honors won by Intrigue

KATA: After 14 days and 800 miles of sailing, Gary Foster and his crew on *Intrigue of Stornoway* have beaten defending champions and this year's favorite, *Stormvogel*, captained by Robin Taylor, to win the Overall Event prize in the Andaman Sea Rally 2004.

Stormvogel won line honors in the first leg from Phuket to Port Blair in the Andamans, but was relegated to third, with *Intrigue* promoted to first place and *Rusalka*, with Kevan Perrins at the helm, coming second.

On the return leg, *Intrigue* claimed line honors, but was relegated to second place, with *Stormvogel* taking the top prize and Captain Philippe Roolant and his crew on *El Samali* coming third.

The overall standings: 1st *Intrigue of Stornoway*; 2nd *Stormvogel*; 3rd *El Samali*.

Foster and the *Intrigue* crew also picked up the top Additional Overall Event prize, a Radio 100 satellite radio receiver.



Stormvogel skipper Robin Taylor (2nd from left) with crew at the awards ceremony at Kata Beach Resort on January 18.

Wolfgang Riessbacher and his crew on the rally control boat *Mozart* won the Overall Events prize in the Multihull class.

Next year, the Andaman Sea Rally will be held from Janu-

ary 9-20. Entries close on December 20 this year.

For more information contact Yacht Solutions. Tel: 076-239114. Fax: 076-239139. Email: info@yachtsolutions.net.

Tennis: the top 16

PHUKET TOWN: Sixteen Phuket tennis players have qualified to represent the province in competition with top young tennis players from throughout southern Thailand on January 24 and 25, event organizer Panya Raktak-ngam announced after the January 17 round of the Phuket Amateur Tennis Tournament 2004.

Boys qualifying: Under 11: Krisada Nilbordee, Chanwarut Janthakarn and Thanachot Sopaphon; Under 13: Chaipapruet Chuaychian, Chonlakarn Thammamongkut and Wasurat Udomsab; Under 15: Nattapol Wittayarungroj, Watee Jaiboon and Komsan Leesakul; Under 19: Thammasak Chusuwan, Ruj Uraphan-anan and Athiawat Leelapattanakul.

Girls qualifying: Under 13: Kochakorn Jiwekok and Pichaya Siwapetchayakorn; Under 15: Loythip Sa-nguanpanon and Angsana Romin.

Big swimming meet

SAPHAN HIN: More than 200 swimmers from 14 southern provinces are expected to converge on Phuket for a meet to be held from January 31 to February 1.

The event, organized by the Phuket Swimming Club and the Sports Authority of Thailand's Phuket office, features races in 10 classes from Under-7s Open class.

For details, contact Narongleak Dilokpat, vice-president of the Phuket Swimming Club at Tel: 076-211624 or 01-6912713.

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Jaguar's Retro Rocket

A radical face lift for the Jaguar S-Type was unveiled at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit this month. New styling, new engines – including a diesel – extensive use of lightweight materials and improved safety features contribute to what is an almost completely new car.

Launched in 1999 and styled loosely on the Mark II of the '60s, the S-Type is Jaguar's retro model. Continuing critical acclaim for this much-sought-after car has kept sales high – around 200,000 to date. Jaguar has not rested on its laurels but has introduced a new S-Type for 2004.

Improvements to the front introduce a host of other discreet modifications. A lightweight aluminum hood replaces the earlier steel version, giving improved weight distribution. A deeper front air dam and a new, wider grille give the front of the car a sportier image. Adding to this, the trunk line is raised and features a tiny spoiler on the lid.

Jaguar's design director, Ian Callum believes too much detailing in a car becomes confusing. "The S-Type has a focal point and it's clear what that is – the grille and twin headlamps," he observed.



BEHIND THE WHEEL

By Jeff Heselwood

focus has to be as simple as possible, and the extensive changes for 2004 are designed to achieve precisely that."

One of the biggest changes to the Jaguar is under the hood, with the new range of engines. From a Ford-sourced 2.5-liter V6 to a three-liter V6 (which equipped the original S-Type) to a potent 4.2-liter supercharged V8 producing a bracing 400 bhp (298 kW).

The V8 powers the mighty S-Type R, which can reach 100 kmh in a shade over five seconds with a top speed electronically-limited to 250 kmh. A 2.7-liter diesel will enter markets mid-year.

"But to make it work, everything around that

The interior of the new S-Type has also received attention with an optional aluminum finish to the instrument panel and round, chronograph-style dials redolent of the '60s-vintage Jaguars.

S-Type buyers can even specify an interior entirely devoid of wood paneling, choosing cloth, leather or perforated leather. Wood options include bronze madrona (an evergreen tree native to North America), gray bird's eye maple, or the classic burr walnut.

Topping the list is the "high luxury" pack which makes extensive use of walnut veneers, including a half-walnut, half-leather steering wheel. A whole new range of colors, with contrasting interior shades, is also available.

Standard equipment on most models includes electrically-adjustable front seats, automatic dual-zone climate control with air filtration, a premium multi-speaker audio system and an electrically-adjustable steering column with a tilt-away entry and exit feature.

'The S-Type has a focal point and it's clear what that is – the grille and twin headlamps.'

A front park-assist system is now fitted, complementing the rear one already available. Speed-sensitive, it switches off above 15kmh in order not to detect vehicles in relatively slow-moving traffic.

Adaptive cruise control, a refinement of the standard version fitted to existing Jaguars, can detect vehicles ahead and slow the S-Type as necessary, speeding up again as other traffic does so.

A new, intelligent airbag system determines whether to deploy the airbags partially, fully or indeed at all – depending upon the severity of the impact. Pyrotechnic seat belt pretensioners are fitted, while the front seats incorporate an anti-whiplash mechanism.

The V6 S-Types are available with either a five-speed Getrag manual gearbox or a six-speed ZF automatic transmission.



From the body styling to the instrumentation, retro is the word for the new S-type Jaguar.



Top-of-the-range 4.2 V8 models, either normally aspirated or supercharged, have the ZF-built six-speed automatic transmission fitted as standard.

All automatic models have an electronic parking brake which releases when the driver selects Drive, but holds the car until the throttle is applied, even on steep inclines.

The latest generation ABS is fitted across the range, as is brake assist, which detects emergencies and increases brake line pressure. Traction control and dynamic stability control are both standard.

The new S-Type goes on sale in Europe and North America in April, and will undoubtedly find a host of buyers willing to take this big cat home.

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

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A case of uncorking bottled-up emotions

Imagine the scene. A dignified sommelier at a fashionable wine tasting, resplendent in his crisp white shirt, chose an ah-so – a two-pronged cork-puller – instead of the traditional corkscrew. He pushed the ah-so so hard that the cork was forced into the bottle causing red wine to fountain over not just him but also over guests gathered close by.

At another event, a guest was presented with the cork from a bottle of wine she had just ordered. Eyeing the cork with bewilderment, the guest suffered a few uncomfortable moments before deciding on what

she considered to be the correct course of action. She promptly licked the cork and pronounced the wine fit to drink.

These two anecdotes go to show that wine can be enjoyed at many levels, from the sensory to the *schadenfreude* of not having made such a social gaffe.

Readers may enjoy this assemblage of anecdotes and verbal faux pas taken from my travels and work around Asia.

For example, a drinker felt their wine possessed a “Deep moaning flavour that comes from within.” A novice connoisseur reported a wine as “A nice balance of fresh and tasty tastes.”



By Steven Roberto

One notable establishment, not on Phuket, described itself as “We are a wine you can drink Restoran.”

Then consider these memorable questions presented to me by cognoscenti dining in restaurants where I have worked.

“What is wine?”

“Can you recommend a wine I won’t find insufferable?”

And, about a wine priced at 62,800 baht a bottle, “Do you have this by the glass?”

One diner, obviously sure of his own mind, said, “I want a wine, something red or white, not too expensive or cheap, that goes well with food but that I can drink alone; not sweet but not too dry, either. Maybe something from France or England. Do you have anything like that?”

But my favorite story concerns the case of a renowned Sun Valley wine tasting. A well-known Spanish winemaker methodically visited every table, chatted with her guests, stealthily filched each coveted souvenir tasting glass and put them into her purse.

Who says wine cannot be fun?

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

A spectacular serving on the sand

On the
menu
with
Stephen Fein

A la Carte

For those in search of a different dining experience, eating out on a silver-service table on the sand at Surin, with the sea and the moonlit sky for surroundings, may prove hard to top.

When you think about it, location is almost as important to the enjoyment of a meal as it is to achieving the right price for a chunk of real estate.

A la Carte, a recently established catering firm with an eye for romantic backdrops, offers personalized menus that can be enjoyed in just about any setting: at home, on one of the many islands surrounding Phuket, or on your favorite beach.

The “creative organizer” of A la Carte is Lausanne-born Claude Sauter. He has been involved with fine cuisine and hospitality for most of his life.

After graduating with a degree in hotel management, he moved to Phuket in 1994 and held several senior positions before joining up with creative chef Arkom Polyiam to launch A la Carte about five months ago.



Strawberries and mango pearls with cream made a gem of a dessert.

K. Arkom’s resumé includes Le Meridien, Sheraton Cape Panwa, the Hilton, and a reputation for culinary excellence in restaurants, earned first at The Wall in Rawai and more recently at Naka Flavors, close to Patong.

It was these skills in taste and presentation that the *Gazette* dining club had the good fortune to enjoy recently. After being escorted to a sturdy wooden table set upon mats and covered from above with thin Indian fabric to create a canopy, we started with *yam ma-muang* (mango salad) with *larb kai* spring rolls.

A garnish of fresh apple slices and tomato skin cut to resemble a rose, the perfectly

blended delicate flavors were complemented by glasses of soft Bellingham chardonnay from South Africa.

Second course was a light organic salad with cherry tomatoes and chilled prawns in a zesty vinaigrette sauce. Claude explained that he went to great pains to source organically-grown vegetables.

When asked if he enjoyed cooking, Claude explained that he couldn’t bear the strong smells of

the kitchen and endless hours of preparation involved in creating gastronomic works of art, adding that in his opinion chefs like K. Arkom who have that “willing-to-die-for-my-art” quality must be considered a little eccentric.

All conversation quickly ceased, however, when we were presented with fresh strawberry shakes made with Calvados apple liqueur and garnished with mint.

These, Claude explained, were meant to fill our “Normandy Hole”, a French expression that apparently means “to prepare one for the imminent arrival of the main course”.

The strawberries, liqueur, and mint had the perfect refreshing effect, clearing our palettes and preparing us for the main course: grilled white snapper in a light *tom yam* sauce, garnished with asparagus spears in crescent-shaped wedges of roast pumpkin and “pearl vegetables”.

Accompanying this were tiny balls of turnip, zucchini and carrot all served in a small basket made of lightly fried potato.

Even the basket was a good counterbalance to the vegetables, in keeping with K. Arkom’s belief that all garnishes should be

edible, delicious and complementary to the dish as a whole.

Pleasant conversation followed, buoyed by the sound of the waves gently lapping on beach. Claude explained that the meal we four were enjoying would probably cost 2,500 baht each, but added that costs go down with larger groups.

He said he could call on his hotel contacts to cater for groups of just about any size, but that the optimum number was between 80 and 120 diners.

No meal is complete without dessert, and ours was the perfect ending for the best dining experience we had enjoyed in a long time.

Strawberries with mango “pearls” in a ring of fresh cream, garnished with fresh mint and sprinkled with cinnamon.

Perfection.

Claude Sauter should be contacted at least three days in advance. Entertainment, including music, is also available. For a full list of A la Carte services, please contact Claude at Tel: 076-278019 or 01-8958985, or by email: claudes@phuket-catering.com.

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Gardening

with Bloomin' Bert

Gorgeous, but a shame about the growth

This week, I thought I'd break the mold and write about a plant that comes from South-east Asia.

The *kopsia fruticosa* fits the bill perfectly. It's a shame there aren't a few more of them about because this plant sports a gorgeous flower. It has pale green leathery leaves, and the delicate five-petaled flowers are white or a very pale pink, with a vivid crimson center.

The first one I saw was in a wholesale garden center, where there was an enormous example in a pot. I pleaded with the man there to sell me the whole thing, but he couldn't be parted from it for any amount.

Cuttings are notoriously reluctant to take root and the best offer he could make was to sell me a recent attempt in a small pot. He said that he'd taken and planted 20 cuttings in total. The other 19 had failed miserably, so he only charged me a few baht and even felt guilty doing that.

That was about three years ago, and it's still going strong. I'm surprised how little it's grown in that time, probably about 30-40 centimeters in total.

In Britain, I would consider that growth rate somewhat spectacular. In tropical areas such as Phuket, though, 10 centimeters a year is rather pathetic.

Eventually it should reach around a couple of meters, but



Beautiful, but slow – the *kopsia fruticosa*. – Picture courtesy of www.TopTropicals.com.

that will take a while. The best way to deal with the *kopsia fruticosa* is just to let it grow. Unlike many other plants, frequent pruning stunts its growth. Trim it too often and it looks like it's smoking 60 cigarettes per day.

Watering rules for this plant aren't standard, either. Go for it – water it incessantly if you want. It actually quite likes waterlogged conditions, and will thrive in a soggy bed, rather than give up in disgust like most other plants.

Make sure it gets plenty of sun, too. It won't even bloom with full vigor unless it sees the sun for at least half a day.

As unusual as this plant is, it's a lot more common than its cousin, the Singaporean *kopsia*, which has been listed as an endangered species.

Here in Phuket, the local variety of *kopsia* is alright – you just have to look for it. Don't expect it to take over your garden overnight, though.

Home of the Week

Bijou by the beach

Just three minutes' walk from Nai Harn beach, the Sands apartment complex is always popular. Its four modern townhouses are always much sought-after when they reach the market and this one will be no exception.

The owners have made valuable improvements to the property, which at 175 square meters is considerably larger than neighboring apartments. Improvements include a newly-designed Western kitchen with plenty of work surfaces, a cooker extractor hood, superior bathroom fittings and finishings, and dimmer switches for intimate lighting.

The property has a two-car driveway and a small lawn at the front. A door leads into an airy living room of white walls and terracotta floor tiles, with the dining room beyond this and an L-shaped kitchen to the left. The quality kitchen units are in teak and the room features stylish and practical downlighting and a two-ring gas hob.

On one side of the dining room, sliding aluminum doors open to a small, rear courtyard, suitable for outdoor storage and laundry. A solid teak stairway leads to the first floor, which has two good-sized bedrooms with en suite bathrooms of high quality marble accessories.

Stairs from the first floor lead to a pleasant sundeck on the roof. With a barbecue area and small sala overlooking the



The elevation of Baan Thai Surin Hill homes, with panoramic views over Surin and Bang Tao beaches, ensures a cool tropical retreat. A blend of classic Thai lines and contemporary Asian influence, with water features and landscaped grounds, guarantee privacy and tranquillity.

A number of interconnected pavilions make up each property with suite bedrooms, kitchen, dining room, lounge, outdoor shade decks and poolside sala. Construction and materials are of the highest quality, a theme that runs throughout the project.

The interiors set these properties apart, each living space optimised, with functional luxury the underlying philosophy. A mix of soft, neutral tones, with subtle use of natural stones and woods, creates a lavish and luxurious ambiance, and a finish of superior quality. A selection of finishings is available, allowing each buyer to customise their property and make their own personal paradise.

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Property Classifieds
See pages 29-31

Nai Harn



This apartment at The Sands in Nai Harn combines the convenience of living in a townhouse with the space usually found in a home – only three minutes' walk from the beach.



lake, this is an ideal place to relax and entertain.

The house has four air conditioners and fans but these are rarely used because high ceilings allow air to readily circulate throughout the home. Other features include UBC/TV, a telephone line, a well and a septic tank.

The windows and sliding

doors are finished in high-quality dark aluminium and have mosquito netting. The interior finish is white, giving a light, open feeling which lends itself to a range of furnishing options.

The property has Chanote title, is in first-class condition and is ready to move into. It would make an ideal retirement home or second home and could easily

be let when the owner is not in residence.

Price: 9 million baht plus maintenance fees of 5,000 baht a month.

For more information about this week's home, contact Siam Real Estate. Tel: 076-280805. Website: www.siamrealestate.com.

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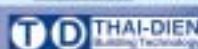
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Decor Source

By Supaporn Sriprom

Where art meets style

Atrium Arts, snuggled on the ground floor of The Courtyard on Chao Fa West Rd, is a treasure trove of ideas for hunters of striking home décor.

The Swiss owner of Atrium Arts, Michael Maynic, and the Managing Director, Sivalla Maynic, have had the shop for more than 16 years – it was at Le Meridien Phuket before moving to the Courtyard two years ago.

Mr Maynic is a designer, a profession that led him to open Atrium Arts. When you step into the quiet room and feast your eyes on its contents, you begin to appreciate the time and effort dedicated to the shop.

The vast collection contains unique items, some dating back more than a century. These include imported Chinese cabinets and Japanese paintings. Some of the furniture has been custom-made to look and feel antique.

Also on display are a number of unique jewelry pieces designed by Mr Maynic.

There are hundreds of items – too many to count – for home decoration or for gifts. The lowest-priced items are the intricate paintings on squares of pure cot-



Ceramic elephant with handmade jewelry and box designed by Mr Maynic.

ton, featuring themes ranging from Thai village life in the old days to Buddhist religious motifs, which cost about 200 baht apiece. Gold-painted jewelry boxes are about 450 baht.

At the other end of the scale are items with six-figure price tags. Along with Chinese antique

furniture, there are authentic Thai sarongs woven with silver and gold thread. The price for a single garment can soar to 8,000 baht.

Other old Japanese and Chinese paintings were collected through Mr Maynic's taste for art. Pick any authentic painting, said K. Sivalla and it is almost certain to cost more than 100,000 baht.

K. Sivalla stressed that it was important for customers to really understand the quality of the artifacts to fully appreciate them.

Most of the items have been collected over the years by Mr Maynic. Some have been imported from China, while others are from Europe.

The couple stressed that the prices are not as relevant as the artifacts themselves because they tend to be bought by collectors who delight in being surrounded by beauty.

Many of the customers at Atrium Art have become regulars over the years.

The regulars are discerning. "If we have nothing that strikes them as something they like, then they will not buy," K. Sivalla said.

K. Sivalla said that when purchasing an antique, a buyer should first make sure of its authenticity. Atrium Arts offers a certificate for all antiques sold.

Atrium Arts, The Courtyard, 90/5 Chao Fa Rd West. Open Monday to Saturday 7 am- 6pm. Tel: 076-264471, Fax: 076-264472.



HOME-CARING HEROES: The Phuket Home Services squad.

Mission possible for domestic task force

Faced with a pressing maintenance or repair problem, many people find frustration instead of a fixer. They are told that finding a team to *build* a house is easy but finding one to maintain it is a different matter altogether.

Many companies that take on maintenance work seem happy just to sit and wait for a "golden" building contract to land in their laps.

Filling this void is Phuket Home Services, a specialist team or "task force" as they like to think of themselves, ready to tackle any job and at any time, night or day.

Co-founder and director Vison "Chuat" Rutanarungson – a woodworker of more than 20 years' standing – explained that each member of the PHS team has a different specialty.

From general building, car-

pentry and plumbing, to landscaping, pond maintenance and air conditioning, PHS can cover every eventuality with a team of 10 artisans and 30 contractors.

K. Chuat understands that people want repairs and maintenance carried out at their convenience, not at that of the maintenance team. "We're on call 24 hours a day," he said. "We even did emergency tiling around a hotel pool at midnight once, because it fitted into their schedule."

Cassius Rolfe-Johnson, managing director and co-founder of PHS, says, "Building the right task force comprising the right people for the job at hand is critical." He adds that the company has a simple mission statement: "The quality of the work should never vary."

This attitude reminds me of a Queensland man who could find no one to repair the staircase in his house. He finally fixed it himself after his wife fell through the breach and broke her leg.

Afterwards, he bought a truck, painted "The Stair Man" its side and went to work fixing staircases and wooden verandas throughout Queensland. He now has 30 franchises around the state.

Let's hope PHS achieves an equal measure of success.

PROPERTY & HOMEZONE
By Graham Doven

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Property Gazette

Properties For Sale

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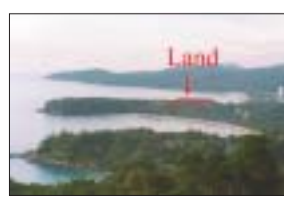
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LUXURY BEACH

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 FOR SALE

Directly on Banyan Tree Golf Course (Laguna property). 1,050sqm (262.4 sq wah). 7.872 million baht. Contact for more info. Tel: 076-239864. Fax: 076-239865. Email: hktmkt@ksc.th.com

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Property Gazette

Properties Wanted

HOUSE/APT WANTED

Feb 13-May, or longer. Furnished, pool/garden. Best possible for 30,000 baht. Call Larry (Canada) 07-8915719.

THALANG RURAL

land wanted. Seeking 0.5-1 rai of NorSorGor or Chanote land in Thalang District. Must be in a very rural location but still accessible via public road or track. Electricity not required but do need water supply (spring). Email: simon@link77.com

RENTAL SOUGHT

for late January. I am looking to move to Phuket at the end of January. I am initially looking for clean, inexpensive living in the Patong area, preferably with swimming pool (or access to one) and aircon. Will start with a rental of 1-3 months, and thereafter a yearly contract. Email: yakuza@gol.com

LAND NEEDED

in Phuket. We need land in Rawai, Nai Harn, Chalong and Cape Panwa. Also any beachfront land or seaview land 15 minutes from Dulwich or Phuket Town. Please email photos, description and price. Agents also welcome. Tel: 09-8715192. Fax: 076-244-561. Email: info@phukethomes.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

LOOKING TO LEASE

Looking to lease 1/2 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

GARDEN & POOL

Dutch/Thai couple with plans to build own house are looking for a nice, luxury house with pool and private garden to rent for 12-15 months. Nice views and good neighborhood is a must. Email: buurmanb@hotmail.com

Accommodation Available

AIRCON ROOM

25% discount on room with air conditioning: 580 baht/night. Room with American breakfast: 640 baht. Email: paradizo@paradizo.com. Please visit our website at: www.paradizo247.com

CLICK AND FIND

your apartment. Fully furnished apts, from 1-bedroom studio to 75 sqm. Seaview penthouse, quiet and cool Patong hillside location, for long-or short-term rent. Swimming pool and pool-side bar. Tel: 076-296621, 01-978-5501. Fax: 076-344689. Email: baansuanvilla@hotmail.com. Please visit our website at: www.baansuanvilla.com

NANAI RD

2-bedroom townhouse on Nanai hillside. Fully furnished, phone, cable TV. Min 1 year rental. 22,000 baht/month. Tel: 076-294363, 01-270-5374. Fax: 076-294363. Email: orcella@phuket.ksc.co.th

PATONG LUXURY APT

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

ON THE BEACH

Kim's Club in Patong offers luxury rooms, motorbikes, tours and a bar open till late beside Baan Boa Resort. See you there! Tel: 01-0881456. Fax: 076-292241. Email: office@knyss.com

PENTHOUSE + CAR

rental offer. Penthouse to let on Patong Beach. Minimum 2 weeks' let. Deal includes Kia 4WD car. Please contact me for more details. Tel: 09-972-3861. Fax: 076-342713. Email: ba@kiwibrian.com. Please visit my website at www.kiwibrian.com

Accommodation Wanted

APARTMENT IN BKK

needed. Need long-term contract for rental of 2-3 bedroom apartment in Bangkok. Bangna Trad area, Thana City preferred, or any apartment that has easy access to expressway. Please email, preferably with photo. Email: chatchada@phuketinternet.com. Tel: 01-8946403.

QUIET HOUSE

or apartment wanted in Phuket Town or very near, for 6 months from April. Email: eunson101@yahoo.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. Unfurnished ok, need only cooking facilities. Tel: 09-552-2641. 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

NEED ROOM, 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

Expat is seeking a to rent a bungalow in the 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

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

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: rolfkranepuhl@aol.com

2-BEDROOM HOUSE

wanted. Would like a 2-bedroom house in Land & Houses Park for 15,000 baht/month. Tel: 07-889-3675. Email: jefftd77@hotmail.com

HOUSE FOR RENT

Looking for accommodation from March 29, 2004. Email: polymath2002@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/mth. Tel: 05-1601670. Email: paulivarlarsson@hotmail.com

Property Services

HARDWOOD FLOORS

Change your old floor to new-look hardwood floor in 1 day. It's pre-varnished, real hardwood, no dust, easy to install. Teak, maple, *maka*, etc. Prices from 900 baht/sqm. Tel: 01-4241354. Email: vira@tropical-decor.com

RENOVATE

plus repairs. For home, office, garden. Call 06-276-1504. Website: www.sea-business.com/renokit

Property Services Wanted

FOREMAN WANTED

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.

Household Services

INSURANCE SERVICE

For travel, accident, car, home, business, health & life. Tel: 076-344521. Email: agentsmithr@hotmail.com

Building Services

THAI KITCHEN

Original build plus equipment. Call 06-2761504. www.sea-business.com/renokit

phuket home services

repairs • maintenance
renovation • building
air conditioning
woodwork • stonework
metalwork • electrical
plumbing • gardening
pressure cleaning
window cleaning

Tel: 076 324 400
Mobile: 07 282 0200

EQUIPMENT HIRE

Generators, jack hammers, concrete cutting saws, welders, pressure cleaners, scaffolding, containers, etc. Tel: 01-1251873, 01-892-4804.

Would you like to keep up on what's happening in Phuket - the good, the bad and the bizarre? Let us share it with you - every week!

TO: The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd, 367/2 Yaowarat Road, Amphur Muang, Phuket 83000, Thailand.

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Events Calendar

it probably isn't one.

List **YOUR** event now - **It's free of charge.**

phuketgazette.com/calendar

Island Job Mart

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Our growing practice requires us to seek staff for the following positions:

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Minimum 3 years' experience

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Tel: (66-76) 296-881-4 Fax: (66-76) 296-885 www.LegalThai.com



Sales Professionals (Phuket)

Do you want a rewarding career that offers security and exceptional income opportunities?

Bartercard is the world's largest business-to-business trade exchange, with operations in 16 Countries, including offices in Malaysia, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, Sri Lanka and the USA.

With five offices already established throughout the Kingdom of Thailand, our Phuket office will commence operations in early March, 2004.

We now invite highly motivated individuals who enjoy a challenge, are not afraid of hard work, and enjoy being a part of a successful team to submit their applications.

We offer a generous retainer and bonus scheme along with excellent career opportunities to the right individuals.

English language skills are not a requirement for this position. Minimum age: 28 years.

If successful, you will need to be available for pre-employment training from mid-February. Please forward your resumé by fax, post or email by close of business January 30.

The Managing Director, Bartercard Phuket.

E-mail: michael@bartercard.co.th www.bartercard.co.th

Fax: 076-323596

SECRETARY WANTED

for a tour company. Must have experience of Internet, and speak English. Should be tall with an outgoing personality. Tel: 09-5944017.

SALES EXECUTIVE

Leading property development company requires a female for a sales position. Minimum 2 years' experience, good command of English essential. Contact Khun Colin. Tel: 01-6949850. Email: info@tropical-life.com

GENERAL MANAGER

General Manager for resort and spa in Kamala needed. Must have at least 5 years' experience, good spoken and written English skills required. Please send your CV by fax to apply. Fax: 076-261128.

THAI DIVE MASTER

required. Dive shop in Kata is looking for Thai men or women to work in the dive shop. Free training up to dive master. Please call for more information. Tel: 09-8749147.

STAFF NEEDED

Admin officer, 1 position; Sales representative, 1 position. Requirements: bachelor's degree, good command of English. Able to use MS Office (for Sales Representative), own car is an advantage. Tel: 076-354162.

STAFF NEEDED

for resort on Koh Yao Yai. Required: male for guest relations officer and one waitress. Please call to apply. Tel: 09-4743463.



This is your opportunity to join the largest international property consultant firm and build up your career in the property industry with CB Richard Ellis. CB Richard Ellis is expanding our market presence to cover the international resort market. We are looking for a high caliber Sales & Marketing Manager and Sales & Marketing Officers for luxury resort and villa development in Phuket.

Sales & Marketing Manager (Thai or Expatriate)	Sales & Marketing Officers (2 positions)
Qualifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Age about 30-45 years of age with Bachelor's degree or higher - Fluent in English - Strong managerial skill - Computer literate – Excel, Words, Power point - Experience in sales and marketing is necessary - Able to work extra time, weekend if needed & able to work full time in Phuket 	Qualifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Age about 25-29 years' with Bachelor's degree or equivalent - Fluent in English - Computer literate – Excel, Words, Power Point - Experience in sales and marketing is necessary - Able to work extra time, weekend if needed & able to work full time in Phuket

Interested persons, please send application letter, full resume, present salary and recent photo to the address below:

Office Manager

CB Richard Ellis (Thailand) Co.,Ltd.
87/2, 46th floor CRC Tower, All Seasons Place, Lumpini,
Pathumwan, Bangkok 10330
Tel: (66-2)654-1111 Fax: (66-2) 685-3300-1
Email: supattra.boonyachan@cbre.com
<http://www.cbrichardellis.co.th>

ONLINE RESERVATION

staff. WiredDestinations online hotel reservation service is seeking an online reservation officer. Your duties will include responding to incoming booking requests by email, phone, chat. Must be a Thai national and hold a university degree, have a good command of written and spoken English. Experience in the travel industry is an advantage. We pay an excellent salary and offer a great working environment. Application by email only. Email: robert@wired-destinations.com

THE OLD PHUKET

The Old Phuket Hotel is now seeking the following positions: Sales and Marketing, Restaurant Manager, Tour Desk Operator. Please send your CV with expected salary by email or call Personnel Department to apply. Tel: 076-396353. Email: reservation@theoldphuket.com

SECRETARY

One secretary needed. Female, bachelor's degree, experience, Internet skills, and good English. Please call for details. Tel: 01-6916230.

SALES STAFF

wanted. Sales Manager, 1 position, minimum 2 years' experience, good English required. Sales Executive, 1 position, 1 year's experience, some English an advantage. Great package for the right persons. Send application by email to Khun Siriporn. Email: info@asianwind.biz

ACCOUNTING STAFF

for new marina development. Female Thai national with degree in accounting and experience with computerized accounts required. Knowledge of QuickBooks an advantage. Excellent salary for the right applicant. Please email your CV to apply. Tel: 076-239755, 01-9581055. Email: info@royalphuketmarina.com

ENGLISH SUMMER

school. Dulwich International College requires English summer school teachers from March 27 to April 17, 2004. If you are keen, enthusiastic and qualified, please respond by emailing a single page of CV to the Director of Summer School. Closing date January 31. Email: summer@dulwich.ac.th

ACCOUNTING STAFF

WiredDestinations, an Internet hotel reservation service, is looking for a cost accounting officer. The successful candidate should be a male or female, Thai national, age 23-30. Must hold a bachelor's degree in accounting, at least 3 years' experience and a fair command of written and spoken English. Call or email for an appointment. Tel: 076-254-766-8 ext 111. Email: robert@wired-destinations.com

MAID WANTED

Trustworthy part-time maid wanted to service private house in Nanai Rd, Patong. 4 hours/day, six days/week. For nice Thai/farang couple. Good salary for the right person. Please call to apply. Previous references preferred. Tel: 01-9780657. Email: gthansen@pacific.net.sg

ACCOUNTANT

required. Must hold a diploma or bachelor's degree in accounting and have 1-2 years' experience. Should also have English-language skills. Tel: 076-239111. Email: philippe@thaimarine.com

Island Job Mart

STAFF NEEDED

The Hotel Travel Network, a world leader in discount hotel reservations, is expanding its business and offering an exciting work environment with opportunities for career growth. Applications from candidates with the following qualifications are now being taken for our Phuket office: French, German and Japanese speaking customer service agents. Our customer service agents are responsible for communicating with our customers using different media. You should be enthusiastic and service minded, and able to work calmly in a highly active environment. Applicants should be fluent in French, German or Japanese, both written and spoken; have a good command of English and translation skills, have basic computer skills and experience with MS Office software (Word, Excel, Outlook); have experience in the tourism industry, Internet and/or e-commerce businesses. Thai nationality would be an advantage. Interested applicants should submit their application with CV or employment certificates to: employment@hoteltravel.com or call Khun Wiparat at Tel: 076-282808.

SECRETARY

urgently required. Very good in English communication, able to use MS Windows, MS Office. Working hours: 8 am-5 pm, Monday to Saturday. Please contact: Electrical Marine Co Ltd. 20/9-10 Phuket Boat Lagoon, Moo 2, Thepkasattri Rd, Koh Kaew, Muang, Phuket 83200. Tel: 076-239112. Email: damian@electrical-marine.com

BEAUTY CLINIQUE

World-class beauty clinique requires a Shop Manager: must speak excellent English, be attractive, have a pleasant personality, and be able to manage staff. Mature, age over 30 is preferred. Good salary plus commission. Junior hairdressers: 2 weeks' training given in Bangkok. Beauty therapists: should have knowledge of facial and body treatments. Please fax your resume to apply. Fax: 076-271191.

WHITEBAY

International, the most successful vacation ownership company in Thailand, is currently recruiting sales reps for our Phuket venue, The Andaman Beach Suites. Quality leads, up to 15% commission, relocation benefits. All nationalities welcomed, especially German speakers. Please call or email for more details. Tel: 076-341474, 076-341427. Email: hr@vipphuket.com

SECRETARY WANTED

for a tour company. Must have Internet experience, and speak English. Should be tall with an outgoing personality. Tel: 09-5944017.

Nerntong group
We require the following staff for our resort and steakhouse:

- Restaurant Manager
- Executive Sales and Marketing (Female)
- Chef/cook

Westerners and Thais may apply.

We also need captains, waiters, bartenders, kitchen staff, purchasing staff
All candidates must speak good English and have experience.

Phone Ron King 09-8683801. Email: kingrw80@hotmail.com
Thai applicants phone Khun Ja 076-341726.

5 OPC Positions
Can you speak English or German?
If so here is the perfect job for you. You get to work outdoors and get paid O.T.E. Earn from 10,000 baht up to 40,000 baht per week.
Thais and Foreigners Welcome
For more details call Pinky or Yuni on 076-294339 or 01-8959613. Between 10.30 am - 4 pm Thursday-Tuesday

Blue Water Air Co., Ltd.
Accountant Required

- Female 22-27 years of age
- Bachelor's degree
- Good command of spoken & written English
- Knowledge of computers
- Minimum one year experience
- Thai is an advantage

100/196 Moo 5, Chalem Prakiat Rd, Rassada, Muang, Phuket 83000 Thailand.
Tel: 076-354710, Fax: 076-354899, Mobile: 09-9726979.
Email: swaporn14@hotmail.com

DIRECTROOMS.COM
Reservations and Customer Care officers

DirectRooms is an Internet hotel reservation company, providing services throughout Asia. We are expanding fast and need staff to join our friendly and highly-motivated team. **Full and part time** vacancies exist for people with the following:

- **Good spoken and written English**
- **Basic computer knowledge and experience**
- **Enjoy being part of a team and are diligent**
- **Able to work within our 24-hour, 7-day rota**

Staff with a positive and enthusiastic attitude is very important to us and full training will be provided. Applicants are invited to submit a resum in English to:

8/51 Moo 3 Rasadanusorn Road, Rasada, Muang, Phuket 83000
Email: recruit@directrooms.com
Tel: 076 241 145 Fax: 076 241 021

THE ISLANDIA RESORTS GROUP & SPA
The Islandia Resorts Group & Spa is currently looking for qualified and dynamic people 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

ONLINE SALES

Dot com business in smart office in Phuket Town requires online sales staff. Required: speak English, own transport, experience, flexibility. Typing 45 words/minute, computer skills on Word, Excel, database. Tel: 01-8913039. Email: siamuk@loxinfo.co.th

OPERATIONS

supervisor. Position for Thai male/female with good spoken and written English skills, leadership, team interaction, delegation, and basic computer knowledge is essential. Excellent package including service. Tel: 076-270750. Email: info@pipsphuket.com



2 x Office Professionals

Bartercard is the world's largest business-to-business trade exchange, with operations in 16 countries, including offices in Malaysia, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, Sri Lanka, and the USA.

With five offices already established throughout the Kingdom of Thailand, our Phuket office will commence operations in early March 2004. We invite applications from suitably qualified persons for the following positions.

Administrator/Personal Assistant

We now invite highly organized and motivated individuals with strong communication skills, who enjoy a challenge, are not afraid of hard work, and are committed to exceptional standards of operations, to submit their applications.

You will be responsible for running all administration in this exciting business, managing reception, providing full Personal Assistant support to the Managing Director and controlling the work flow for all other team members.

Monthly reports, function, office maintenance and purchasing, make this position a variety filled and challenging opportunity.

Your university degree in a business discipline, and accounting experience is an advantage. Competence in Windows, Microsoft Word and Excel is highly desirable, together with typing of 60 wpm + a high level of English-language skills is an essential requirement for this position. Minimum age: 28 years.

Business Development Manager

The person we are seeking must possess a true desire to succeed, be service oriented, enjoy meeting and dealing with business owners, have some business and negotiation skills, along with an ability to build relationships with clients.

University education is an advantage but not essential. However, candidates must have a reasonable command of both written and spoken English. The successful applicant will be responsible for servicing a client base of 80 to 100 businesses, acting as a marketing and purchasing coordinator as well as creating new sales and purchasing opportunities for their client base.

As part of our commitment to our employees, we provide extensive and ongoing training. Your salary will be negotiated on qualifications and experience. Minimum age: 28 years.

Applicants for both positions should be available for pre-employment training from mid-February. To apply, please forward your resum  by fax or email, by close of business January 30.

The Managing Director, Bartercard Phuket
Email: michael@bartercard.co.th www.bartercard.co.th
Fax: 076-323596

CHEF REQUIRED

One of Patong's most successful pubs requires the services of an experienced chef to manage their kitchen and a small team. Must be able to speak English. Good working conditions. Interested parties should apply by contacting Terry. Tel: 01-8938697. Email: rgreg@loxinfo.co.th

PROPERTY

secretary needed to coordinate between owners, government departments and various professionals. Required: skills in English, Excel and Word, and own transport. Salary: 9,000 baht. Tel: 01-8913039. Email: siamuk@loxinfo.co.th

The Phuket Gazette

the island's English-language newspaper

The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following position:

Reporter. The successful candidate will be a Thai national with initiative, an outgoing personality and plenty of curiosity about the world and how it works. Also essential are the ability to communicate in English, both spoken and written, and a car driver's license.

Applications should be submitted by email to alsadair@phuketgazette.net

Tout, Trader & Trumpet

Articles for Sale

GENERATOR

from Germany, secondhand, 125KVA, 225KVA, top condition (90%). Contact for further information at Rothermann 1998 (Thailand). Tel: 02-618-5925 or 01-6176313. Email: roterman@cscoms.com, wattana@rothermannthai.com

MOVING SALE

Western family in Phang Nga wants to sell household items. For new mums: wood baby crib and cupboard set 15,000 baht; rocking chair 2,000 baht; fold-up stroller 1,500 baht; and many other items new or as new – 25,000 baht for the lot. Other household items include: crockpot 800 baht; suki pan/fryer 1,000; Sony pre-amp speakers 2,000 baht; electric whipper snipper 2,000 baht; 2 surfboards: 9-foot longboard 5,000 baht; 6-foot shortboard 10,000 baht; Alva skateboard 6,000 baht; Red Line 21-speed mountain bike with child seat and child and adult helmets 15,000 baht for the set. Please call if interested. Tel: 01-8955523.

SNOOKER TABLE

Snooker table, 10 x 5 feet with new cloth, for sale at 25,000 baht. Please call to view. Tel: 06-2774179.

MOVIES

Movies in English for children for sale at very good prices. Email: micks_2003@hotmail.com

Articles Wanted

GPS WANTED

Only to hire/ borrow. Need a GPS or altimeter for a very short period that can tell distance above sea level. Want to simply check some land plots to establish 80 meters height. Tel: 06-2747434. Email: mail@seftonhanley.com

ACCORDION

and double bass wanted. Is there anyone who has an accordion (chromatic, button keyboard - chromatische knopfgriffhordorgel) and would let me practice on it a couple of times between January and May? I have to prepare myself for a concert in May and don't have my instrument here. Also looking for an acoustic double bass - same purpose. Tel: 076-270-377, 01-0909642. Email: dellapietra@mysunrise.ch

BABY CAR SEAT

I would like to buy a baby car seat. Tel 09-7180350, 06-2723391. Email: watchreec@yahoo.com


Boats & Marine

BOAT FOR SALE

29-foot fiberglass motor yacht with Thai registration. 2 x 280hp Mercruiser engines. Price: 3.5 million baht ono. Call or email for more details. Tel: 076-239864. Email: hktmkt@ksc.th.com

DIVE EQUIPMENT

for sale. Regulators and BCD, 15 sets for sale. Call for info. Tel: 09-8749147.



For a FREE OF CHARGE INSURANCE QUOTE FOR YOUR BOAT COMMERCIAL OR PLEASURE

Please contact:
Tel: 076-239111, 076-273320
Fax: 076-239874
Email: insurance@thaimarine.com

MARINE SUPPLIES

Marine supplies (almost new). 14 x 50kg Danforth anchors, 3,000 baht each; 2 x 14kg foam/H₂O fire extinguishers, 2,000 baht each; 3 x 80 C aluminium scuba tanks 3,500 baht each; 1 ice chest/cooler bin, 500 baht; 2 lifesavers, 250 baht each; 3 x 10lb CO₂ fire extinguishers, 2,750 baht each; 10 x 100-ft lengths 3" braided line, 12,000 baht total; 4 x 100-ft lengths 1" nylon line, 4,200 baht total; 1 coil of 1" nylon line (approx 500ft), 5,250 baht; 3 x 'throw bag' for water safety, 800 baht each; 1 handsaw, 250 baht. Please call, fax or email for further information. Tel: 076-211447. Fax: 076-213604. Email: sstpkt@phuketksc.co.th

SPEEDBOAT

for sale. 36 feet long, with 2 x 200hp Yamaha engines, cabin, kitchen, WC. Price: 650,000 baht. Tel: 06-2713407.

24-METER DIVE BOAT

for sale. 24-meter live-aboard dive cruiser with 15 berths for sale. 6 air-conditioned cabins, spacious lounge and galley area, 3 bathrooms, sun deck and well-appointed kit-up area. Features full navigational equipment, tender dinghy, two Bauer air compressors and 20 tanks. Price: 3.9 million baht. Contact for more info. Tel: 075-637064. Email: hedley@loxinfo.co.th

SPEEDBOAT 4 SALE

Fiberglass speedboat. Length: 5 meters, for 6 people. 70 hp Yamaha. Price: 230,000 baht. Tel: 06-2713407.

Business Opportunities



PUB FOR URGENT SALE !
THE FAMOUS OCTOPUS PUB IS IN A VERY GOOD LOCATION AT THE CORNER OF SOI SEA DRAGON, FACING ON TO BANGLA 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:
18-21 SOI SEA DRAGON BANGLA RD, PATONG PHUKET
MOBILE: 09-1855449, 01-2616992, 01-0640029, 01-6818021

BUSINESS IN PATONG

The Son Company, shop and 8 bedrooms, for sale or lease. 80% financing available. No key money. Tel: 09-474-0227. Email: thesonapt_2536@hotmail.com

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 to expand. Priced for a quick sale. Please email for more information. Email: hotelinparadise@yahoo.com

BUSINESS CENTER

Business center in Rawai, turns a good profit. See our website at: www.siam-business.com or call for details. Tel: 076-388073, 01-9792901.

MASSAGE BUSINESS

for sale. Nice new shop on the main road. Complete with 3 new aircons. All else needed. Price: US\$18,750. Please call or email for more details. Tel: 06-6828010. Email: pritchah@hotmail.com

RENOVATION

company for sale. Large range of new tools and including new 4WD Toyota. 13 employees and contracts for at least the next 2 years. Please contact for more details. Tel: 01-8921250.

PATONG RESTAURANT

A fully equipped restaurant in Patong is available for sale or rent. Please call Khun Mike for more details. Tel: 01-828-9329.

PARTNER

for hotel wanted. We want to extend our well-known, 17-room hotel (Patong Beach) to 35 rooms with pool. Best net yield. Please call or email for more information. Tel: 06-6848758. Email: partner@phuket1.de

PRIME LOCATION

Bar in the middle of Soi Bangla in Patong for sale. Immediate takeover possible and seller can accept downpayment. Call or email for info. For further details, please see our webpage at <http://phket.loxinfo.co.th/~bajen> Tel: 07-292523. Email: cal@algonet.se

BAR FOR SALE

The Viking Bar, middle of Soi Seadragon, in the center of Patong, is for sale. UBC, HiFi, VCD, all staff and everything included. 1.4 million baht. Please call for more info or visit me at the bar. Tel: 09-5881401.

BAR IN PATONG

for sale. Bar in busy Patong soi for sale. Deal includes all fixtures and fittings, stock, sound system, and UBC for 750,000 baht. Call for details. Tel: 09-1967345.

BUSINESS PARTNER

wanted for new restaurant and minimart. Looking for partner with 200,000 baht investment. Please call or email for further information. Tel: 07-8866757. Email: dhanrak@csloxinfo.com

CANDLE BUSINESS

for sale. Very profitable, high-quality, hand-carved candles. Work and retail shop in Patong, all for only 1.8 million baht. Please call Mr Ocean for details. Tel: 01-7475874.

FOR SALE

Restaurant located in a nice part of Kata, opposite Club Med, fully-equipped European kitchen. Tel: 09-5426218.

BAR FOR SALE

Located in Soi Bangla, 20 years left on lease, fully stocked. Price: 1.8 million baht. Please call for more details: 01-0880353. Email: barrest67@hotmail.com

VENTURE CAPITAL

wanted. We want to build up a new resort with 35 bungalows on Phuket Island. Best net yield. Please call or email for more details. Tel: 06-6848758. Email: joerg@1nj.de

FOR SALE OR 50% PARTNERSHIP

French-managed dive center on the beach on Koh Samui for sale or 50% partnership on offer. Includes 42-ft American speedboat, big office and new equipment. For details, call Tel: 01-8331508 or visit: www.lesboucaniers.com

FOR RENT

Shop premises in Kathu for rent. Large area, good location. Please contact for details. Tel: 076-258460, 06-9474330.

PATONG BUSINESSES

for lease. Bar near beach: key money 550,000 baht, rent 400,000 baht/year. Internet cafe: key money 700,000 baht, rent 300,000 baht/year. Restaurant with 3 bedrooms and 3 toilets: key money 650,000 baht, rent 360,000 baht/year. All premises fully equipped. Call or email for more info. Tel: 01-9683771. Email: thureewan@hotmail.com

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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

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Computers

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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.

INSURANCE AGENCY

offering health, accident and travel insurance with no age limit, and property insurance. Please call or email for details and quotation. Tel: 076-296-594. Email: euthai@web.de

Personals

BACKGAMMON

players wanted for some exciting games. Please call or fax for more details. Tel: 076-386113 or 01-5778443. Fax: 076-386114.

ADVENTURE LADY

wanted. Coming to Thailand for two weeks and looking for a lady to join me. I'm 39, fairly fit, fun, and keen on nature. Email: davidtheteach@yahoo.com.au

ENGLISH GUY

Single, mid-forties, seeks Thai lady to take to dinner. Email: planf888@aol.com

Pets

PUPPIES FOR SALE

Yorkshire terrier puppies 2-month old. Please contact for details. Tel: 09-8749147.

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TOYOTA COROLLA

1997 GXI model. One owner, 160,000km, electric windows, perfect condition. 325,000 baht. Tel: 075-631-994, 06-8202664. Email: colombattofabio@hotmail.com

DAIHATSU MIRA

1995 Daihatsu Mira 4-seat hatchback for sale. New paint, rebuilt engine, brakes, exhaust, etc, plus service history. Just passed police inspection. 12 months' registration. 120,000 baht. Tel: 076-289-182, 09-5931188. Email: islanderbar3@hotmail.com

'89 HONDA ACCORD

89 Honda Accord. 168,000 km. New paint, tires, clutch, battery, aircon compressor and 30,000-baht Sony stereo, which is still under warranty. Price: 185,000 baht. Tel: 07-8893675. Email: jefftd77@hotmail.com

'96 TOYOTA COROLLA

1,600 GL (auto). Gray. Good condition. 330,000 baht. Call 09-4742945, 01-7375467.

HONDA ACCORD

2.2 V-TEC 1996 Honda Accord for sale. Blue color with automatic transmission, power steering. Everything makes the car look as new, at the lowest price of 550,000 baht or best offer. Contact for more info. Tel: 06-6829191. Email: vagabond802000@yahoo.com

TOYOTA CROWN

Old Toyota, 4 cylinders, runs perfectly, good engine, gearbox, aircon, brakes, needs new paint. Price: 65,000 baht. Tel: 06-9488139. Email: phuketmotors1@hotmail.com

MAZDA MX-5

2002 Mazda MX-5, as-new condition. Only 17,000km, metallic blue, 6 gears and detachable roof. 1.7 m baht. Please call or email to arrange viewing. Tel: 076-325251, 01-0915910. Email: steveru@phuketinternet.co.th

MISUBISHI LANCER

1995 Lancer, excellent condition, metallic blue. Manual 1.5, electric windows 250,000 or ono. Tel: 01-5351778. Email: jb@jbxel.com

VOLVO 240

White Volvo 240 in good condition. 1987 model. Recently fitted with new brakes, spark plugs, distributor and battery. Engine and aircon run very well. We've used it for local driving and several long trips. Price: 125,000 baht ono. Tel: 076-202208. Email: info@sunrise-divers.com

Pickups

EXCHANGE ISUZU

for Cherokee. I would like to exchange my Isuzu Rodeo 4-door pickup for a Jeep Cherokee. The pickup is in the best condition, with a 3-liter turbo diesel engine. It is a 2001 model and has run about 65,000km. As I do not need a pickup anymore, I would like to change to a "closed" family car with auto gearbox. Tel: 06-2819200. Email: johanh@loxinfo.co.th

NISSAN NV SLX

Nissan NV SLX. 1994 model, alloy wheels, power steering 145,000 ono. Tel: 01-272-1123. Email: ganokitty@hotmail.com

4 x 4s

JEEP CHEROKEE

for sale. Jeep Cherokee 4.0L 1998. Dark blue, automatic, 4WD, leather seats, great condition and good service history. Price: 490,000 baht. For more info please call. Tel: 076-383-418, 01-5365727.

ARMY JEEP

Genuine US army jeep. 1952 body, raised suspension, big wheels/tires, roll bar. Looks very cool. Diesel motor, many new parts. Very well-looked after. Offers around 90,000 baht. Tel: 075-637603, 06-5255864. Email: pat@thaipaintball.com

4X4 KIA SPORTAGE

Kia sportage 4x4 car for sale. Very good condition, sale by original owner. Contact for more details. Tel: 076-341-099, 09-1968429. Email: amorn9999@yahoo.com

KIA SPORTAGE 4X4

1997, automatic, gold color. 350,000 baht or nearest offer. Please email to: andys@royalphuketmarina.com

Motorbikes

HONDA VFR 400CC

motorbike. V engine, four-cylinder racing motorbike that is colored beautifully and does 0-100kmh in first gear with 5 more left to play with. 60hp racing engine, pro-arm (one back arm), everything in perfect motoring order. It is restricted to 180kmh but that is easily undone. The VFRs are known for reliability and handling like a dream. Search the Web to see how impressed people are with them. Farang owner and a good reason for selling (I don't want to sell it). Registered with over 6 months of tax and insurance left on it. Located in Phuket Town. 59,000 baht ono, which is 20,000 baht less than what a shop would sell it for. Tel: 06-6331207. Email: j18778@hotmail.com

1993 SUZUKI

Suzuki Impulse 400cc. From Bangkok. Perfect condition. New tires, battery, tune up. Retro-style, similar to Honda SuperFour. White/blue. Very nice bike. Same owner past 7 years, well-maintained. No reg. 55,000 baht. Tel: 09-499-4050. Email: tilac1@yahoo.com

HONDA DJ1-R

Small Honda DJ1-R. Clean, good condition, regularly serviced and running fine. Electric starter. Colorful paintwork. Fine for around town. 10,000 baht or nearest offer. Tel: 06-2747432. Email: mail@seftonhanley.com

HONDA STEED 600

Honda Steed 600, 1993 model, in top condition with many extras, new tires and service history. Not a Phuket rental bike but moved south from Bangkok one month ago. Registration included at 160,000 baht. Tel: 076-296621, 01-978-5501. Fax: 076-344689. Email: baansuanvilla@hotmail.com

KAWASAKI KX125

motocross. Just modified: New tires, brakes, new Renthal handle bars, new clutch, etc. Very good condition. Will sell cheap. Tel: 076-344852, 01-0798065. Fax: 076-344852. Email: thaigerd@ji-net.com

HARLY DAVIDSON

Dyna superglide custom 2001. Very nice bike for sale. A lot of extra parts. Selling for only 550,000 baht. Tel: 06-277-5298.

Rentals

QUALITY RENTALS

Braun RentACar – comfortable, professionally-maintained Honda City cars, and Suzuki Vitara and Suzuki jeeps for rent at budget prices. Every car comes with full first-class rental insurance, aircon and 24-hour backup. Tel: 076-296619, 09-8735947. Email: stuart@braun-rentacar.com

MANY MOTOBIKES

for rent. Honda Dream, Honda Wave, Kawasaki Cheers: 3,000 baht/month. Honda RS, Kawasaki Boss: 300 baht/day, all with electric starters and in good condition. Tel: 01-0861060. Email: spiefilme@gmx.net

PICKUP FOR RENT

Toyota Sport Cruiser for rent. 4WD, 4 doors, 2500cc, turbo, good aircon and full first-class insurance. Good price: 1,500 baht/day for rentals of at least one week. Tel: 01-8927687. Email: cheetah_th@hotmail.com

NEW TOYOTA D4D

Brand new Toyota Sport Cruiser with zero kilometers for rent. Full options, including 10-stack hi-end stereo, mirror tint, and 2.5-liter turbo. Full insurance. This is a very nice piece of kit. 1,200 baht a day for 1-month contract, much less for long term. Major credit cards accepted. Don't worry if you're not quick enough; we'll get another, your choice of color. Tel: 076-28235, 01-6072805. Email: mikebike@phuketinternet.co.th

Wanted

WANTED

Honda Super Four motorbike or any classic model. Reasonable price and good working order. Tel: 07-2777857. Email: pandu_s_lulu@yahoo.com

WANT 250CC UP

I want a motorbike, 250cc or up. I have only 15,000 baht cash, but I can make monthly payments. If you're interested in selling to me, please call or email me. Tel: 01-8953185. Email: phuket@coolza.com

CHOPPER WANTED

Expat wants chopper-style motorbike – Honda Steed, Shadow, anything in 400-800cc range. Must be in good order, reliable and realistically priced. Phone or email with particulars. Tel: 01-0806254.

In addition to 60 retailers in Phuket, The Gazette Guide 2004 is also on sale at:

Krabi/Phi Phi

Ao Nang Supermart..... 164/5-6 Moo 2, Ao-Nang. Tel: 075-637341
 Ao Nang Tourist Center..... 172 Moo 2, Ao Nang. Tel: 075-637551
 Kong-Peng Bookstore..... Muang (downtown). Tel: 075-611307
 Ocean Mart..... 121/1 Moo 2, Ao Nang. Tel: 075-637527
 Seng Ho Bookstore..... 6 Maharaj Soi 7, T. Pangnam, Muang. Tel: 075-622951
 The Books..... 78-80 Maharaj Rd, Muang (downtown). Tel: 075-612693

Phang-nga/Khao Lak

Bangniang Beach Resort..... Moo 5, Kuk-Kak, Khao Lak. Tel: 076-420175
 Coconut Minimart..... Khao Lak Laguna, Kuk-Kak. Tel: 076-420221
 Nang-Thong Minimart..... 13/9 Moo 7, Kuk-Kak. Tel: 076-420092

Suratthani/Koh Samui

Atlas Minimart..... 162/49 Moo 2, Chaweng Beach, Koh Samui. Tel: 077-413234
 Bookazine Samui..... Chaweng Beach (opp McDonalds), Koh Samui. Tel: 077-413616

Bangkok

Bookazine Sukumvit..... Nai Lerd Building, 87 Sukumvit Soi 5, Klong Toey, Wattana, Bangkok.



For a list of guide retailers in Phuket, see page 13 of this issue of the Phuket Gazette.

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100/2 Moo 5 Chalemprakiat Rue 9 Rd. T. Kasuda, A. Muang, Phuket 83000.
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