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Doubt cast over jet-ski ban plan

By Dhirarat Boonkongsae

PHUKET TOWN: Following Governor Udomsak Usawarang-kura's announcement in late December that jet-skis will be phased out in Phuket over a seven-year period, the Phuket Marine Office (PMO) set a January 31 deadline for jet-ski owners to register their machines.

With the expiry of that deadline, the PMO is to begin cracking down on unregistered machines, underage riders and other violations.

But the man responsible for bringing order to the unregulated industry, which has claimed the lives of two foreign tourists in recent months, seems daunted by the task.

Newly-appointed PMO Chief Kritpetch Chaichuay told the *Gazette* that efforts so far have focused only on registering jet-skis and promoting their safe use. He said that phasing them out completely, as Gov Udomsak has ordered, could harm tourism.

He admitted that he felt it would be impractical to enforce long-ignored regulations requiring tourists who rent jet-skis to have Thai Helmsman Level 2 licenses, a qualification that requires two years' documented proof of experience aboard a Thai-flagged ship.

Although jet-skis are a major cause of complaints from foreign tourists, he said that getting rid of them entirely could harm tourism in Phuket.

K. Kritpetch, assigned the task of bringing order to an industry that has defied similar attempts in the past, acknowledged that, legally speaking, any tourists caught operating a jet-ski without a Helmsman's 2 license



A small child heads for the 'swimmers only' zone at Patong Beach while a jet-ski awaits another customer.

Photograph by Sangkhae Leelanapaporn.

should be liable to six months imprisonment, a 5,000-baht fine, or both.

But he said it would be impractical to enforce such a law because it would mean the overnight demise of the jet-ski rental business in Phuket.

He said, however, that regulations allowing customers under 17 years of age to ride jet-

skis only as passengers would be strictly enforced.

K. Kritpetch said that many jet-ski owners had been unable to produce the import and sales documents needed to allow them to register their craft.

"The deadline is January 31," he said. "[As of January 22] we have registered about 30 to

Continued on page 2

Pian gets green light for election

By Gategaeo Phetsawang

PHUKET TOWN: The Phuket Election Committee (PEC) has dismissed a complaint against mayoral candidate Pian Keesin, allowing him to stand in the Patong mayoral poll on February 8.

Kittipong Thiengkunagrit, Director of the PEC, told the *Gazette* on January 23 that the PEC had carefully considered the complaint, lodged four days earlier by rival candidate Songserm Kepsap.

K. Songserm presented the PEC with a copy of a confidential letter from the Interior Ministry's Local Administration Department, ordering K. Pian to pay the government 51,869 baht after K. Pian - who was mayor at the time - allegedly bought garbage trucks for the municipality at above-market prices.

The PEC has ruled that K. Pian can run in the election, however, because he has not been found guilty of corruption while holding public office.

"K. Pian was never dismissed from his duties as mayor because of corruption," explained K. Kittipong. "He has also not been found guilty of benefiting personally from the garbage truck contract."

K. Kittipong pointed out that the Office of the Auditor General may order local authority figures to reimburse the government in cases where they pay inflated prices, but that only the National Counter Corruption Committee (NCCC) may rule on corruption allegations.

K. Pian's case is still under consideration by the NCCC, so the PEC must consider him innocent of the charges until proven guilty, K. Kittipong explained. "I don't know if [the complaint] is a political game," he added.

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Queer News

Victims of fashion

BANGKOK: Protection against the elements for students was once just a plastic rain poncho but recent brawling among scholars of rival vocational schools – which left some innocent bystanders dead – has caused parents to take extra measures to safeguard their children when they step out to study.

The latest brainstorm – unveiled earlier this month on Children's Day – is a range of youngster's protective clothing and accessories from the Bang Rajan Project vigilante group. Caps, vests, shoulder bags and folders are lined with a bullet-proof material capable of withstanding just about all the slings and arrows a Bangkok student could expect on a school bus: knife thrusts, sharpened sticks, projectiles from *beun pakka* (zip guns) and even shotgun blasts.

Developed with a grant from the National Research Council of Thailand, the lightweight protective gear is reasonably priced at 600 baht for a bag. A vest costs about 1,000 baht.

Gen Songpol Iam-bunyarit, head of Bang Rajan's research team, said the reinforced clothing was a sign that Thai creativity was not inferior to that of foreigners.

The general encouraged parents unable to afford the scholastic combat gear to make sure their children carry thick books, which can also be effective at minimizing the impact of the weapons favored by warring students.

It was not reported if there was any plan to market the innovative garments in Thailand's troubled southern provinces.

Source: *Kom Chad Luek*

The buffalo skin hunter

BANGKOK: A man from Buri Ram province who went on a three-day drinking binge over New Year returned to his job in the capital with a terrible pain in his abdomen – which he apparently tried to cure by operating on himself.

The man, identified as a 32-year-old Sanan Jodrum, did what most low-paid laborers in Bangkok do over the New Year holiday: he boarded a bus and went back to his hometown to see family and friends.

After saying a brief hello to his wife, he joined a *wong lao* (literally, a "whisky circle") with his rural friends, drinking continuously for three days and three nights – without eating.

When he returned to the capital, he suffered from terrible stomach pains. He consulted a doctor who told him it was the result of excessive alcohol intake and lack of food.

The doctor gave him a couple of injections but these did not help. Now that conventional medicine had failed him, K. Sanan became convinced that the cause of his gastrointestinal woes was sorcery.

According to a local superstition, it is possible to curse a person in such a way that an indigestible strip of buffalo hide somehow finds its way into an enemy's stomach, causing great pain followed by agonizing death.

On the morning of January 7, K. Sanan was found dead. Arriving on the scene, investigators found his lifeless body lying face-up in a pool of blood, a single knife wound, apparently self-inflicted, running from the top of his ribcage to just below his navel.

His intestines had burst though the wound. No buffalo hide was recovered.

Source: *Daily News*



At the launch of the Junior Impac Dublin Literary Awards for Thailand are, from left, Irish Ambassador Daniel Mulhall, *Phuket Gazette* Managing Director Rungtip Hongjakpet, *Nation* Editor Pana Janviroj and Dr James Irwin, Chairman of Impac University.

Student writing contest launched

BANGKOK: Entrants in a new English-language essay competition for high-school students in Thailand could win a trip to the Irish capital, Dublin, to attend the annual International Impac Dublin Literary Award ceremony.

Dr James Irwin, Chairman of Impac University, which is organizing the Junior Impac Dublin Literary Awards for Thailand, explained, "Ireland has been the home of writers of the highest caliber, including James Joyce, Seamus Heaney, WB Yeats,

George Bernard Shaw and Samuel Becket."

The competition for Thailand-based students was being launched, he said, because, "we hope ... to see more Thai authors nominated for this award."

Two trips to Dublin are up for grabs. Five merit awards of 10,000 baht will also be made.

For details of how to enter the competition, turn to page 17. Results will be announced in the *Phuket Gazette* and *The Nation* at the end of March.

Envoy seeks one-year visas for Filipinos

PHUKET TOWN: Filipinos who work in Phuket should be able to obtain one-year visas instead of three-month or six-month visas, the new Philippines Ambassador to Thailand, Antonio V Rodriguez, said at the end of his first official visit to the island on January 26.

Making the plea in talks with Vice Governor Niran Kalayana-mit, he noted that many entertainers and musicians were among the 300 to 400 Filipinos who work on Phuket.

The group is substantial enough to have formed its own association, he added.

Another issue raised by Mr Rodriguez was the conditions under which Filipino fishermen were hired to work on Taiwanese boats sailing out of Phuket.

"Some of the workers are not paid according to their contracts and their passports are held by their employers," he said.

The ambassador, appointed in September, also asked about bird 'flu and was assured by V/Gov Niran that Phuket is free of the disease.

Doubt cast over jet-ski ban plan

From page 1

40 jet-skis in Patong, but just as many remain unregistered because their owners failed to submit proper import and sales documents. We have registered 24 more at Bang Tao beach and 34 at Karon."

"Owners who fail to meet the deadline and continue to use unregistered jet-skis after January 31 will be fined 10,000 baht each time we catch them," he warned. They would not, however, be sent to jail.

He said officers would distribute brochures at beaches to ensure that everyone was aware of the regulations, adding that

Patong would be the primary focus of the enforcement effort.

Other measures were being taken, he said, to protect swimmers and tourists who rent jet-skis.

"We have already zoned swimming areas along beaches, and we will put up signs warning tourists about the potential dangers of jet-skis," he said. "The signs will also list guidelines for their safe operation, such as the need to wear life jackets." He noted that many tourists drive jet-skis recklessly.

K. Kritpetch said all sides need to work together to improve safety and that no single agency could improve the situation on its own.

"Without a continuous effort, jet-ski operators will just fall back into their old ways," he added.

"Regarding the current plan

that [aims to] put all jet-ski operators out of business in seven years, we will have to review the situation two or three years before that deadline to see if jet-skis are still a major cause of injury and complaints by tourists and a common factor in crime cases.

"If that's the case, the province will probably have to go ahead and ban jet-skis altogether," he said.

Vice-Governor Pongpow Ketthong reiterated that the government was committed to riding the island of jet-skis within seven years. He told the *Gazette* that regulations would be strictly enforced and that any jet-ski seen being operated by a minor would be seized immediately.

But he also dismissed the idea of enforcing the law requiring the Helmsman 2 license as impractical because the qualification is available only to Thais.

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A chunk of change for good karma

PHUKET TOWN: A pair of good Samaritans returned two cash checks with a combined value of 526,000 baht to their rightful owner after discovering them beneath a car on January 19.

Swede Fredrik Klingvall, owner of O'Malleys Irish Pub on Montri Rd, and his Thai friend Kraiwut Kunbaan had just finished eating lunch at a restaurant on Yaowarat Rd when they noticed the two checks lying on the road beneath Mr Klingvall's four-wheel-drive vehicle.

The checks, one for 500,000 and the other

for 26,000 baht, were issued by the Chokchai Concrete Co. It was later learned that an employee from the company had been on his way to cash a total of five checks when he dropped two of them while getting into his car.

With the help of the Phuket Town Police, Mr Klingvall and K. Kraiwut on January 22 returned the checks to the company.

Mr Klingvall said he believed that returning the checks would improve his karma and bring him good luck.

— Supaporn Sriprom



Fredrik Klingvall: 'Returning the checks will bring me good luck.'

More tales from the dog pound

PHUKET TOWN: The dog pound design that turned out to be a dog's breakfast has been cleaned up, say officials.

Capable of holding 1,000 animals, Phuket's pound will open for business on March 1 at the latest, the Chief of the Phuket Provincial Livestock Office (PPL), Sunart Wongchawalit, told the *Gazette* on January 23.

There was consternation last year when officials discovered that work on the pound, at Bang Kanoon forestry plantation, had begun on the wrong site.

Sorting out the mess is costing more and taking a little longer than anticipated.

"After some parts of the shelter had been finished, it was found to be too small and not built to specification," K. Sunart said. "We had to adjust some parts of the plan, such as [the use of] barbed wire that could not keep the dogs in."

The original budget of 1.6 million baht was increased to 2.8 million to expand the size of the pound to cover four rai.

Local municipalities will take responsibility for rounding up strays and bringing them in. (Estimates of the number of strays on Phuket range up to 13,000.)

"On arrival, the dogs will be separated into females and males, and all will be sterilized. Dogs that are savage or sick will be kept in isolation," he said.

"We will also have a service — like a dog hotel — allowing dog owners to leave pets when they are away from home for an extended period. The owners will have to pay for this service," he said.

"There will also be a training center for dogs to learn the proper behavior for them to be adopted by families.

"Others will be trained to work with police as drug sniffers and for other duties."

— Dhirarat Boonkongsan

Police seize fake watches in Karon raids

KARON: About 300 fake luxury-brand watches with an estimated retail value of more than 500,000 baht were seized in two "sting" operations in the Karon area on January 23.

Pubate Mingkwan, legal representative in Thailand for a number of well-known brands, joined a team led by Phuket Police Deputy Commander Pol Col Apirak Hongthong as they hit the streets of Karon.

Officers observed from a distance as K. Pubate bought a fake watch from vendor Montha Taiprasert at a stall on Patak Rd. Police then arrested Montha and seized about 200 watches.

Just 15 minutes later on the same road Wiroj Jongwitayaprom, owner of the Nong Mild Watch Shop, was arrested following a similar "sting". About 100 phony watches were seized.

One dead, 11 hurt in Patong pileup

PATONG: One man died and 11 others were slightly injured in a pileup that paralysed traffic for an hour at one of Patong's major intersections on January 26.

A truck laden with construction tools and bags of cement crashed into a pickup truck laden with workers and a mini-bus outside Wat Suwankirirong.

The impact threw the workers in all directions and killed the mini-bus driver, Wiwat Iamsa'ad. The driver of the truck, Samniang Sennawa, was arrested.

Crackdown causes long lines for driving licenses

PHUKET TOWN: A crackdown by Phuket police has sparked a rush by car drivers and motorcyclists to apply for licenses, with the number of applicants jumping from an average of 65 a day to around 120.

Another factor in the increase has been a change in national policy that allows people registered as living in other provinces to take a test in Phuket.

Pol Lt Col Teeraphol Thipjaroen, Deputy Superintendent of Phuket Police Station, said that police were now strictly enforce-

Five held for killing of 15-year-old boy

By Gategaeo Phetsawang

PHUKET: Five teenagers are being held by police and two more are being sought over the savage execution-style murder of a 15-year-old youth on Koh Sireh.

Khajornkiat Tongdeesuk was tied and beaten before being taken, early on January 17, to Naamsai Beach where his killer fired a shotgun into his head.

Police allege that another 15-year-old known as "M" fired the shotgun, apparently in reprisal for a previous attempt by Khajornkiat to shoot him. Those being held are aged 14 to 18 and officers say all have confessed.

Superintendent Pol Col Paween Pongsirin told the *Gazette* that seven teenagers in a white van first captured "Lek", a friend of Khajornkiat's, and forced him to reveal where Khajornkiat was planning to go that night.

Two teenagers then left the group. Col Paween said, "From 2 am to 3 am, five people in the van cruised around Phuket Town until they spotted the victim. He was on his motorbike with his girlfriend on the back, out riding with five friends who were also on motorbikes."

The van pursued Khajornkiat to the Sapam Chinese Shrine, in Tambon Koh Kaew on Thepkasatri Rd. With the van closing, Khajornkiat stopped his motorbike and ran, Col Paween said, but was soon caught. His girlfriend escaped to alert police.

"The gang tied and gagged Khajornkiat," Col Paween said. "They beat him up in the van. Then they stopped the van in Koh Kaew, where 'Ab', one of the gang members, lived."

The other gang members dispersed as Ab and M lifted Khajornkiat onto a motorcycle.

Missing divemaster: still no clues

KAMALA: The whereabouts of divemaster Phikun "Nori" Srisaksungnoen, 25, remain just as mysterious as they were two months ago, when she disappeared into the dark at Kamala after drinks with colleagues.

Police inquiries since K. Nori's disappearance on November 29 have so far failed to establish what happened to K. Nori. A friend and former colleague

has since posted a reward of 100,000 baht for her return alive.

The missing woman's sister, Thanachat Srisaksungnoen, 23, remains convinced that foul play was involved.

K. Nori, who was born in Kamala, shared a property there with her two children and her estranged husband.

"Her slippers were in the house, and she left her cell phone and her car behind," K. Thanachat said. "I asked her husband, 'Did she go out in bare feet?' We doubt it."

K. Thanachat, who has already paid one visit to Crime Suppression Division police in Bangkok, is planning a second trip there in an effort to have the case investigated more thoroughly. She said she thought police were "passing the buck."

Pol Lt Col Pisit Cheunpetch, the inspector in charge of the case, denied this. He said that local police were continuing to look for clues to what happened to K. Nori.

"We can't class it as an investigation," he said. "It is a missing person case."

"We have to find more evidence as to what happened to her

and we [officers] don't want to be blamed as being on any particular person's side."

Marcus Etter, K. Nori's colleague and close friend at Merlin Divers, posted the 100,000-baht reward. He said, "We have been waiting for news. I still have no idea where she is."



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TOP: At Ao Phuket, Klong Bang Yai has a broad beginning.

LEFT, TOP: Above Ta Yai Restaurant on the way to Dibuk Rd, Phuket Town.

LEFT, MIDDLE: Thepkasattri Rd at Tipkeeree Bridge.

LEFT, BOTTOM: Behind the Seventh Day Adventist church.

RIGHT, TOP: Near the Klong Bang Yai bridge, in Phuket Town.

RIGHT, BOTTOM: Closer to the source, running alongside Loch Palm Golf Course in Kathu.

FLOATING PAST

Phuket Town's historic Klong Bang Yai is to undergo a transformation. Nonthawat Disayabutra dips his toe in and looks out for crocodiles.

There was a time when the waterways in many of the world's great cities were little better than sewers, or in some cases, not even that clean. Fish died from factory waste dumped in the water and no one wanted to live nearby because of the stench.

Phuket Town's Klong Bang Yai was never treated quite that badly. But the largely man-made waterway, which in its heyday allowed goods to be transported from the coast to the hinterland and rural produce to be taken to the coast, was no longer treated with respect once roads became a faster and more fashionable medium of transport.

Just as many of the world's great waterways have been revitalized, so the klong is now being brought back to life, with a little help from Phuket's friends among the municipal authorities in the US city of Portland, Oregon.

Before long, the people of Phuket will have a say in the future of their waterway. What happens to it will be decided by public vote, says Dr Tasanee Aikwanich, Coordinator of the Bang Yai Canal Scenery Development Project.

The plan doesn't have a specific limit on its budget. Over the next two years, as various ideas are suggested and reviewed, the future of the once-proud waterway will be mapped out with care. Several local authorities and corporate sponsors are already backing the project.

The aims include reducing pollution, making sure the klong water is clean, and dealing with problems caused by flooding. "It's like a jigsaw," Dr Tasanee said. "We haven't specified how the

klong might look yet, but gradually it will come together."

Efforts are being concentrated on the eight kilometers of the 20-kilometer canal that come within the boundary of Phuket Town, with meetings on the fate of the section from Phuket Bay to the Ta Yai Restaurant scheduled for the next few weeks.

Already there's talk of gardens with brightly-lit paths along the banks of the klong to improve the quality of life in Phuket Town.

Old-timers remember when medium-size boats could travel up the klong from the bay right into the heart of Phuket Town – something that is no longer possible because roads have been built across it at levels not far above the waterline.

Locals realized how useful a canal would be about 120 years ago and gradually enlarged the small natural stream to suit their purpose.

How the canal got its name makes an interesting piece of history.

Phuket historian, Ajarn Pranee Sakulpipatana, says that, way back when, senior government officials from Bangkok came south to draw a map of Phuket. They asked the locals, "What is the name of this canal?"

One local, having never had to bother with such details, replied "Bang Yai" – big waterway. The folk from Bangkok, ever happy to accept a quick solution, inquired no further. Big Canal it was, and so it remains.

Phuket must have been remote and very beautiful in those days. The trip from Bangkok took four days by boat and the island must have seemed jungly and unsophisticated, inhabited as it was by Chinese traders and adventurers.

The people who chose to

live along the canal had to be prepared to move during the monsoon season because they knew that floods would drive them out.

"When I was young, I saw big floods," says Ajarn Pranee. "People would drown. After a flood, people would sell small crocodiles in front of the Sanguan pharmacy in Phuket Town. The crocodiles were from the mangroves that grew alongside the klong. Natural resources were rich."

Ajarn Pranee says that some of the Chinese traders settled in Phuket because of its excellent *feng shui* – according to Chinese necromancy, the flow of water from inside and outside across the land indicated a good flow of money, too.

With a wry touch, she adds, "Recently, Phuket hasn't had much luck with rainwater and it would be good if local politicians also managed to improve the flow of the money."


Chaiyuth Pinpradab, of the Phuket Culture Council committee at Rajabhat Institute Phuket, says that the canal had its natural beginning high up in the Kathu hills and grew rapidly on its twisting downward journey to the sea at Saphan Hin.


In the past, tin miners and farmers sometimes diverted water from the klong for their own use, leaving it dry and useless.

But there were also better times when fishing boats could sail to market and ferrymen from Phuket Town could punt vessels upstream to Kathu, picking up and dropping off passengers along the way.

"Restoring it as a waterway will be difficult because of the bridges and the seasonal changes in water level," he says. "But it can be turned into a fine scenic attraction."







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An Italian slice of Phuket

By Gategeo Phetsawang

Any Italian who decides to change his life and move to Thailand should understand Thai people, their culture and their laws, says Olinto "Lupo" Barletta, President of the society, Club Italia Phuket.

Mr Barletta, 50, from Florence, set up the club with a handful of other Italians who have made Phuket their home. "There are about 4,000 Italians in Thailand, and more than 200 live in Phuket," he said.

"The club already has 60 members, but it's just started so

many people still don't know about it."

In his view, the most important thing for Italians who decide to live on Phuket is that they must respect Thailand, Buddhism and the Thai royal family, all according to Thai tradition.

"Improving relations is the most important thing between two cultures living together," Mr Barletta said. To this end, club members meet on the second Sunday of each month at the Holiday Inn Resort, on

Thaweewong Rd in Patong, to discuss Thai culture, working in



"Improving relations is the most important thing between two cultures living together," says Club Italia Phuket President Olinto "Lupo" Barletta.

Phuket and other aspects of life on the island. The first meeting was on December 15.

Mr Barletta explained that the meetings, which are open and

informal, start with discussion about the latest news from Italy, followed by an open session in which members raise issues or relate recent experiences. "Most Italians who live here own Italian restaurants, are graphic designers or work in the software industry. We can learn from all our members because everyone has different experiences to share."

While the most popular topics at the meetings are cultural or social issues, local laws are also discussed. "At our last meeting we explained to members the national campaign against drunk-driving. "We need a club where we can inform Italians of the laws. Some people might make mistakes because they do not know what the laws are."

To facilitate better communication between Thais and Ital-

ians, Mr Barletta said that the club will soon hold Thai and Italian language courses for members.

Anyone can join the club, even non-Italians, and families are welcome. To become a member, people must attend at least one meeting and donate at least 100 baht, which goes towards a local community project supported by the club, such as the Patong Child Care Center.

For non-Italians, the club also teaches Italian culture, including the nation's long history and famous personages as well as traditional Italian customs and cuisine.

The next Club Italia Phuket meeting will be on February 8. For more information, contact Mr Barletta. Tel: 09-8719739. Email: clubitaliaphuket@hotmail.com.

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SINGHA NEW LOOK

Billionaire PM still cashing in

The government downplayed growing concern over the ballooning wealth of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra as it was revealed that the worth of his business empire soared to a staggering 425 billion baht last year, nearly 9% of the Thai stock market's total capitalization. The big jump in stock values – from 146 billion baht in 2002 – was a major topic at a recent closed-door discussion among 30 leading academics, social workers and journalists in Chiang Mai.

Vendor crush: The Government Lottery Office rescheduled the distribution of 10 million lottery tickets following a stampede that left two people injured, one of whom needed hospital treatment. The tickets were issued in addition to the regular quota for the February 1 draw. Thousands of vendors lined up before dawn at Rajamangala Stadium, the ticket distribution center in Bangkok, to wait for the doors to open. Vendors rushed through the doors for tickets, distributed on a first-come-first-served basis.

Sewer tragedy: A two-year-old boy died from injuries resulting from being trapped in a sewer in



ROLLING INFORMANTS: More than 1,500 taxi drivers and telephone operators attended a police training course in Bangkok to learn how to recognize crimes and suspicious acts. The drivers were encouraged to look for suspicious activities involving drugs and report them to Metropolitan Police. There are about 80,000 taxi drivers in the capital.

Nonthaburi's Bang Bua Thong district. Akkarawit "Beckham" Thanomsaard was found with his head submerged in a sewer after an hour-long search. His heart had already stopped beating by the time he reached a nearby hospital, but medical workers were able to revive him. He died from his injuries a few days later after being in a coma.

The boy's mother said she was busy selling vegetables from her stall when she noticed the toddler was missing. Residents said that this was the second incident of this kind. They blamed local officials for failing to cover sewer openings.

For the birds: Thai soldiers arrested a Burmese man attempt-

ing to smuggle 13,000 bottles of the drug ketamine into Thailand. A patrol from the 4th Infantry Division found the drugs on a long-tail boat at a pier in the Mae Sot district of Tak province. Two men on the boat jumped off and swam back to Burma, but Thai soldiers managed to arrest one of them when he later returned to Mae Sot. He claimed the drugs had been brought in as a cure for chickens suffering from avian 'flu.

The drug, which goes by the local name ya K, was stored in 16 boxes and had an estimated street value of 13 million baht.

Big teeth: The inventor of dentures fitted to an 80-year-old elephant, allowing it to eat normally, has applied for a patent for the device. Somsak Jitniyom, of the Mount Chayarat Center for Re-

search and Technology Transfer, said the artificial teeth were a big success, allowing cow elephant Morakot to resume eating properly. K.Somsak said his invention was patented in Kanchanaburi province, and that ownership of the patent would be transferred to the Thai Elephant Association.

College costs: Tuition fees at state universities can be expected to increase at least eightfold in two years' time when the government stops subsidizing university level education in favor of offering educational loans for all academic levels. Prof Rangsan Thanapornphan, of Thammasat University's Faculty of Economics, said the government would stop subsidizing tuition fees at state universities once the planned education loan system is in place.

Prof Rangsan, a member of a special government committee charged with drawing up the new education loan framework, said that if the government approved the system, it would become effective in the 2005 academic year.

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

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The high season finally arrived, but in what seems like the blink of an eye, it has gone again. The late start to the season saw hotels still with vacancies in Christmas week. The Yuletide and New Year holidays brought hectic full houses, but by the second week of January, hotels and restaurants were again faced with vacancies. One resort reported a drop in occupancy from 100% to 50% in one day in mid-January, without any improvement in room rates since.

Nor have the customers been setting any records for spending. One local businessman called this the Year of the *Khee Neow* (stingy people). Common stories from restaurants, hotels and tourist businesses attest to the stinginess of this year's average customer.

Beer Chang is the flavor of the season while Heineken and more expensive drinks are shunned. It is not uncommon to see customers buy large bottles of Chang at the local mini-mart to drink in a restaurant, saving them a whopping 15 baht.

One restaurateur pointed out that his sales of wine and cognacs are down 70%. Another restaurant owner priced his New Year dinner at 200 baht after his Christmas dinner saw sluggish sales with it priced at 300 baht. I can't remember when Christmas dinner was considered overpriced at 300 baht.

One veteran restaurant

The Year of Being Stingy

owner reported that two customers each ordered a Corona imported beer. The price listed on the menu was 120 baht, more expensive than the other beers at 60-70 baht.

When the bill came the customers refused to pay because they believed the price was 12 baht. You probably can't get a glass of beer in Mexico for that. They refused to pay more than 12 baht for each imported beer.

On average, trade for

most businesses in the area is down about 30% from last season, and the fear is that the best months are behind us. If so, it might be time for a reduction in some of the sky-high rents of properties on the Ao Nang beachfront because nobody could make a profit while paying the present rates.

Taxing times: One unforeseen consequence of the drop in business is the shortfall in tax revenues it has created. Several businesses have received less-than-friendly visits from tax officials who accused the owners of not reporting income.

For local businesspeople struggling through another "soft" season, this is a double whammy.



ACROSS THE BAY

By Gus Reynolds



SIGNS OF THE TIMES: Tight-fisted tourists and a tax collection crackdown have seen hotels and restaurants scrapping for whatever customers they can get – before it's too late.

The tax collectors have threatened

several businesses with large fines. One *farang* business owner was told that he would have to pay a large fine as a penalty for not reporting income from two of his businesses.

If the authorities had taken a few moments to check, they would have realized that both of the businesses in question were closed last year. Even after being told this, the tax man still insisted on imposing the fine.

As a result, the owner may

close his third business rather than pay tax on his non-existent businesses. Somebody up in the hierarchy of the tax division must really be cracking the whip.

Mundane matters: One downside to living in Ao Nang has been the need to drive 17 kilometers to Krabi Town to shop for even common items. There is nothing more frustrating than having to drive that distance just to make a simple transaction.

This is changing slowly as businesses are opening in Ao Nang to serve local merchants,

who in turn serve tourists. Several banks have opened local branches, including the Bank of Ayudhya and Siam Commercial Bank. Now even simple businesses, such as photocopy centers, have filled a need and made local merchants' lives easier.

I usually don't get excited about the opening of a photocopy shop, but Green's Copy Center is the delight of the town. Mr Green, who opened Ao Nang's first bar, Green's Bar, years ago, has an excellent full-color copy center.

His attention to detail and quality equipment have garnered him respect and lots of customers. He is a hard worker, too, staying open late to complete special projects when needed. Ao Nang can do with more businesspeople like Mr Green.

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This week



BENZ BOUNTY: Karl-Heinz Heckhausen (left), President and CEO of DaimlerChrysler Thailand, congratulates Man Sooksawee, Managing Director of Benz Phuket Co Ltd at the recent opening of the ID1 Pre-Owned Vehicles Showroom on Phuket.



ASIAN ART: Dr Prasit Koeysiripong (2nd from right), President of the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization, was guest of honor at the recent Art to Nature exhibition at the Dusit Laguna Resort. Also present were Sam-Erik Ruttman (right), General Manager of the resort, and other distinguished guests.



VINEYARD VISITORS: The Boathouse Wine and Grill greeted Drs Aniello Iannuzzi and Paraskevi Tsironis (left and 1st from left) from the Mount Eyre Vineyard earlier this month. With them are Thanis Potchapornkul (right) of the Splendid Surplus Co Ltd and Rodolphe Gay of The Boathouse.



WAI WEDDING: Anthony and Gila Elis (in white), were wed in a Thai ceremony during their recent stay at the Hot Springs Beach Resort in Phang Nga. They were joined by resort owners Mr and Mrs Dusit Mayakarn (rear, left).



WONDER WOMEN: Thipvibha Guna-Tilaka (2nd from right), Managing Director of Bangkok-based PR agency Image Impact, celebrates the opening of the agency's Phuket office with Phuket General Manager Santana Charoenpongse (2nd from left) and other senior staff.



BUACHAN BEANFEAST: Buachan Caff, a new Thai cuisine and Western food restaurant in Kamala recently enjoyed its opening party. Together with special guests are Buachan Luangnaren (pink headband), the caff's managing partner, and Iain D. Campbell, restaurant partner (left).



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Russians in, where angels fear to tread

Perhaps this season's most welcome visitors have been the Russians who have taken to the abundance of cheap T-shirts, CDs and pleasure.

I've gone to Patong almost every night just to surround myself with the strange sounds of the Russian language, mixed with simple English when ever-accommodating Thai sales clerks try to make transactions.

While at the My Way gay bar getting details of Sunday's Phuket Pride Parade, I encountered a group of middle-aged Olgas and Ludmillas, bidding for the attention of the male go-go dancers. It appeared they all wanted to take a special memory of their visit to Phuket back to Russia.

The Thai boys' normal clients - elderly Western men - looked none too happy to be outbid by jolly Russian women.

Smileage allowance: I have been visiting friends in hospital, victims of our local driving cus-

toms. The elderly German couple, now wrapped in bandages, were on a leisurely motorcycle drive when they were run down by a car. The driver had obviously had too much to drink.

"And the police wouldn't even arrest him," one of them explained. "They just wanted to know how much we wanted the driver to pay for our injuries."

"When we asked what the normal punishment was for drunk drivers, they just gave us a blank look and smiled and said nothing. And what is this smile supposed to mean?"

"The Thai smile means many things," I said, smiling.

Spot check: I was also at the hospital to have my annual check-up - which included a visit to the new Skin and Rejuvenation Center at Bangkok Phuket Hospital to check for possible skin damage from the sun.

Dr Orawan Kitchawengkul, one of Thailand's foremost dermatologists, is responsible for keeping Bangkok's society ladies free of wrinkles. Now she has opened a clinic in Phuket to help those of us who are not aging gracefully.

"Please remove all of your clothes for the examination," she began.

Let me explain that Dr Orawan is a very attractive woman and it has been a long time since any

woman asked me to remove all my clothes. She was joined by an equally attractive nurse.

"Now you know how women feel when they have to go to a male gynecologist," a female friend told me later.

I removed my clothes and the good doctor began the most thorough examination of my body since a particularly memorable drug trip I had back in 1968.

Anyway, she discovered



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Kirsten and Mark Kindermann in Chalong make the best bagels this side of New York.

that I had two small pre-cancerous spots on my face (why couldn't they have been on my bum?) and with her laser gun, they were gone in minutes.

Piyarat Kulvanich, Director of the Health Tourism Program at the hospital, told me, "When we opened the aesthetics program at Bangkok Phuket Hospital, less than 10% of our customers were men, but today it is more than 50%."

A quiet beach: The beaches are so full of sun worshippers and irritating vendors now that anyone

wanting to get away to the beauty and quiet of a clean stretch of sand and water should head toward Nai Harn.

Just past the Kata lookout there is a turn-off to Nui Beach, a little piece of paradise down a two-kilometer dirt track. Nui Beach is about the same size as the Laem Singh but at Nui you can pretend you are lost on an almost deserted island. Even better, there are attendants who bring you fresh fruit and drinks.

No vendors, no litter. It's paradise. There's an admission fee to enjoy the privacy, but it's

well worth it. You can also get to Nui by long-tail boat from Kata Noi or Nai Harn if you're not up for the walk. Check it out before it's discovered by the masses.

Lunch munch: Kirsten and Mark Kindermann have opened Bagels & Beyond, just beyond Chalong Circle on the road to the pier. Mark grew up in the eastern US and learned to make authentic bagels in culinary school.

"Bagels are the rice of the east coast," said Mark. "We are offering a menu of sesame, garlic or onion bagels, and a variety of cream cheeses."

This welcome addition to Phuket also sells healthy soups, salads and light Mexican *burritos* and *quesadillas* as well as fresh juices and smoothies.

Kirsten also teaches Ash-tanga yoga four times a week upstairs at Bagels & Beyond. This is a great place for lunch – the best bagels this side of New York.

Model citizens: I was delighted to hear that the final tally raised for charity from the recent Asian Gallery fashion show was a whopping 650,000 baht.

The money will go to Wachira Hospital, the Red Cross and the Phuket Business Women's Association, and to help fund an orphanage in Phuket, which is much needed.

The generosity of the Phuket community never fails to impress me.

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What a swell time on Raya

The trip to Raya (also known as Racha) Island starts as it always has, at Chalong Pier. A few years ago, departing from here was an adventure, with a long and often precarious walk along the rotting wooden jetty.

These days, travelers simply wait at the shore end and a large open bus arrives and whisks you to the other end within minutes.

We were soon off on the *Racha Explorer* – heading south through a strong easterly, with the swell increasing as we passed Coral Island.

Alex, an old friend and guide, was smiling widely as he announced, "It will get rougher, too ... but don't worry. It's calm on the journey back in the afternoons."

After 30 minutes or so of rocking and rolling, we entered Ao Batok, the main bay on Raya. If you are a prone to sea sickness, take a large ferry boat like this one instead of attempting the more hectic and sometimes wilder transfer by speedboat.

The Raya, a small new deluxe resort managed by the Sanc-

tuary group, is under construction on the island, and as soon as we arrived in the bay, we could see the difference.

Gone were the many local restaurants and small bars that used to be on the beach under the coconut palms. In the distance, up the hill, we could see the roofs of the new villas as well as a large crane. Things were certainly changing.

Ten villas have been completed and we checked into ours. A pair of large glass sliding doors opened onto the patio, which overlooked the whole bay.

We spent the day there, watching day-trippers on the beach – the speedboats to-ing and fro-ing, off on their snorkeling trips to the south.

The sea around Racha is still breathtakingly clear. In the main



CRYSTAL CLEAR: In Racha's main bay, Ao Batok (pictured), shoals of fish can be seen darting around in the emerald waters, even if the sea is rough further away from the island.

Photograph: Alasdair Forbes

How to get there

Racha Explorer: round-trip transfers, 700 baht including bus and boat transfer. Departs Ao Chalong 10 am daily, returns from Racha at 4 pm. Day tour including lunch and use of snorkeling equipment, 1,100 baht. Tel: 076-280811.

Raya Resort Co, based in Rawai, runs daily round-trip transfers by speedboat for 650 baht. Snorkeling tours, including lunch, cost 1,200 baht. Tel: 076-288271.

Where to Stay

Raya Resort: Basic fan bungalows in the hill overlooking Ao Batok, 900 baht a night. Seaview bungalows overlooking Siam Bay, 700-900 baht a night.

Baan Raya Resort, Kon Kae Beach (south west of the island): fan rooms from 1,000 baht, air-conditioned rooms from 1,600 baht. Excellent for snorkeling and diving but not a sandy beach.

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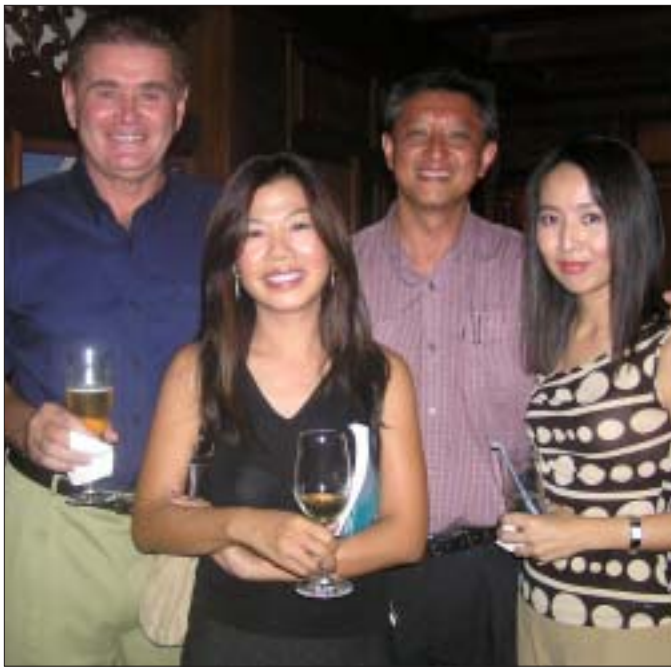
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Gazette Guide gets triple liquid launch



The *Gazette Guide 2004* received three public launches this week, at Baan Rim Pa (above left), Don's Café (left) and Pepper's (above). Those attending the launch parties were able to buy the *Guide* at a 50% discount – and knock back a free drink to celebrate their good fortune.

This year's *Gazette Guide* contains a record 456 pages, nearly 10% more than in 2003.

It is available from a wide range of outlets in Phuket and neighboring provinces. See <http://www.phuketgazette.net/guide/vendors2004> for a full list.

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HEARD & scene

The *Gazette's* Nonthawat Disayabutra and Supaporn Sriprom went out and about and asked,
What's the worst purchase you've made as a tourist?



Sunantha Pinyo
Age: 43
From: Chachoengsao
Occupation: Grocer

There are two that stick in my mind. I came to Phuket as a naïve tourist many years ago and saw a shirt for sale in Patong. I really liked it and paid 500 baht for it. But when I went to Phuket Town, I kept seeing the same shirt for a quarter of that price. I washed it once, it shrank, and I couldn't fit into it again. I was ripped off again when I bought a beautiful blanket from Chiang Rai. I thought it was a bargain until I saw an identical one – for half the price – at another stall.



Jeni Salmela
Age: 29
From: Finland
Occupation: Network specialist

I found – here or in Cambodia, I can't remember which – a pirate copy of a CD by Massive Attack. I was really excited because it was supposed to be their new album and I put it in my player as soon as I could. It wasn't Massive Attack at all, but some horrible English singer. This was not what I was expecting, but I guess that's the risk you run when you buy pirated stuff. It cost me about two Euros so I didn't feel too ripped off when I threw it away.



Krissada Praisun
Age: 20
From: Nakhon Sri Thammarat
Occupation: Student

I went to Kunming in China last March to study for three months and on my last day there, my friends and I went shopping. As well as souvenirs, I bought a big suitcase – a bargain at only 100 yuan (550 baht). Well, I thought it was a bargain but I cut my hand on it the next day and I bled all the way from the dorm to the airport. When I got to the airport, my "bargain" suitcase fell apart, dumping my clothes on the floor. I had to ask my friends to help carry everything.



Elizabeth Seda
Age: 29
From: Belgium
Occupation: Waitress

I found a lovely pair of sandals in a shoe shop in Bangkok and asked the assistant if they came in a size 40. I was really happy when she produced a pair of size 40s and I bought them without trying them on. Of course, I didn't realize that the Thai shoe sizes are different and by the time I tried them on, just before dinner in my hotel in Pattaya, it was too late. They were the prettiest shoes I saw in Thailand and I ended up giving them to my niece. They fit her perfectly.



Wattana Nunman
Age: 30
From: Phuket
Occupation: Administrator

I went to the Kimyong market in Haad Yai and found exactly what I wanted – my favorite aftershave – for 550 baht. The stallholder would reduce the price by only 50 baht but I bought it anyway. A year later, I visited the market again and saw the same woman selling the same aftershave for just 250 baht. She recognized me and remembered her small "discount" from before. We both laughed and this time she offered me a bigger discount, so we were both happy.

In the Stars

by Isla Star

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): You will have no trouble cooking up schemes this week, but are unlikely to have thought through the consequences. Your partner has ideas that are worth listening to.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): Appointments are subject to cancellation on Monday, which could work out to your advantage. Many Pisceans will be thinking of making changes to their domestic situations.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): A series of events is about to unfold that will shake off the cobwebs. At work, your suggestions will be appreciated, which could lead to promotion.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): Time is still on your side regarding an unsolved financial problem and the outcome could very well be better than you think. Problems stemming from cultural differences need tactful handling. Your lucky number is nine.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): The only shadow on the horizon could arise from overestimating the size of your wallet. Curb your impulse to spend. Wednesday is auspicious for a meeting that could be of benefit to all involved.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): Schemes you were involved in last year will take on a life of their own and you could find yourself having to prioritize. If your romantic life has been barren of late, let your hair down.

LEO (July 24-August 22): Family visits are on the agenda. This week should bring news of an imminent arrival. On Tuesday, Scorpio makes an interesting suggestion that will be hard to refuse.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Believe in your vision of the future. Others may doubt the wisdom of your plans but as long as you have done your homework, there is no reason for failure. Hearts and flowers are on the agenda toward the week's end.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Quality time spent with family gives you satisfaction whereas work matters will test your ability to maintain a cool heart. Wear soft shades of green to promote a calm atmosphere.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): Your wits are sharp this weekend and you should be able to spot any negative factors connected to business deals. At

home, do not try to fix anything that isn't broken. On Thursday, a friend may accept your offer of help. Clarify how far you're prepared to go.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): Beware of being over-sensitive in personal relationships. Your partner's words on Sunday need to be taken with a generous pinch of salt. Pisces is poised to make a surprise move.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): This week should provide the perfect time for for chilling out, but a romantic scenario is gently brewing in the background. The number 5 has special meaning on Wednesday.

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KIDS

THE FUN PAGE
FOR ALL
THE FAMILY

Hidden Words

Hidden in the grid below are at least 20 boys' names. The words may read vertically, horizontally or diagonally. They may also read right-to-left or down-to-up.

See if you can find more than your family or friends.

Score: More than 10, good; more than 15, very good; 20 or more, excellent.

C	N	J	K	Y	B	N	V	A	E	D	A	U	A	P
I	H	J	A	M	E	S	L	G	R	B	C	L	C	J
V	Z	A	J	F	T	A	F	A	A	P	G	A	Q	J
A	I	Q	R	J	N	P	H	J	C	E	U	N	S	O
E	W	Q	E	L	P	R	I	O	R	A	S	D	Y	M
D	R	A	W	D	E	F	J	N	J	M	S	R	O	I
G	K	R	D	G	L	S	O	P	L	N	N	E	D	T
A	C	R	M	B	Y	N	O	Q	X	E	V	W	W	C
R	M	U	A	D	S	F	S	S	H	Q	X	R	G	H
R	F	U	G	M	H	I	Y	E	A	W	E	E	A	R
N	E	H	P	E	T	S	C	D	L	M	E	T	D	I
T	H	S	W	V	V	J	U	N	N	I	A	E	J	S
X	I	F	T	R	F	N	Z	F	A	X	G	P	Z	T
W	M	R	G	P	C	T	Q	B	C	R	Y	O	M	O
V	A	P	U	A	T	V	N	W	D	C	F	S	Q	P
Z	K	P	N	Z	L	W	E	U	P	R	A	J	O	H
F	N	V	P	C	R	I	C	H	A	R	D	N	A	E
C	U	T	Q	X	S	A	A	A	F	K	A	F	T	R
Q	V	E	J	J	D	H	Y	H	H	I	Q	F	P	E
Q	L	G	K	X	C	C	G	S	A	X	R	H	F	T
C	D	I	O	E	O	M	G	N	T	C	D	K	O	O
M	M	D	I	X	L	O	A	Y	O	I	A	Y	O	J
Z	A	U	M	N	F	S	D	J	N	T	P	V	M	D
G	V	S	Z	K	M	J	A	E	N	H	O	J	P	B
F	D	N	K	C	W	I	A	O	C	D	H	T	P	R

Brain Buster!!

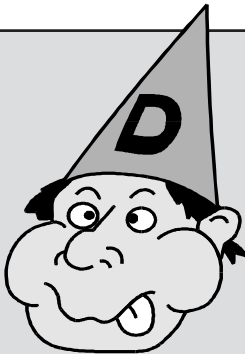
Q. Two students are sitting on opposite sides of the same desk. There is nothing between them but the desk. Why can't they see each other?

A. They are sitting with their backs to each other.

Solution to last week's Crossword

D	E	U	T	S	C	H	M	A	R	K
T		R		O		A		I		
O	H	I	O		M	O	T	I	V	E
E		T		B		R		E		
A	R	T		M	I	M	I	C	R	Y
B			P		N		X			A
S	C	H	O	L	A	R		A	S	K
H		L		T			S		Y	
B	I	K	I	N	I		P	A	R	T
E		S		O		A		I		
A	F	G	H	A	N	I	S	T	A	N

Get your brain in gear with The Monster Quiz



1. Which three composers were born in the year 1685?

2. Augustus Caesar was born in September in 63 BC and died in August, 14 AD. How old was he at his death?

3. From which language are the words "hickory, dickory, dock" in the nursery rhyme probably derived?

4. The largest land mammal that ever lived, Indricotherium, is most closely related to which mammal existing today?

5. The Mach numbers that are often used to measure aircraft speeds are based on the speed of sound. At approximately what Mach number does light travel?

6. The Rev Charles Dodgson, better known
- as the author Lewis Carroll, was an Oxford University lecturer in what field?

7. *Dromond*, *xebec* and *proa* are all types of what?

8. Which is the third-largest planet in the Solar System?

9. What was the greatest achievement of French archeologist Jean-François Champollion?

10. Which classic adventure book includes among its characters Ben Gunn, Israel Hands and Dr Livesey?

11. In British legend, what was the name of King Arthur's father?

12. Who invented Polaroid photography?

13. What is the term for the study of animals whose
- existence has not been scientifically verified?

14. What was unusual about the Consul Incitatus, appointed by Roman Emperor Caligula?

15. In 1666, London suffered a great fire. What disaster had befallen it the year before?

16. Who devised the theory of phrenology?

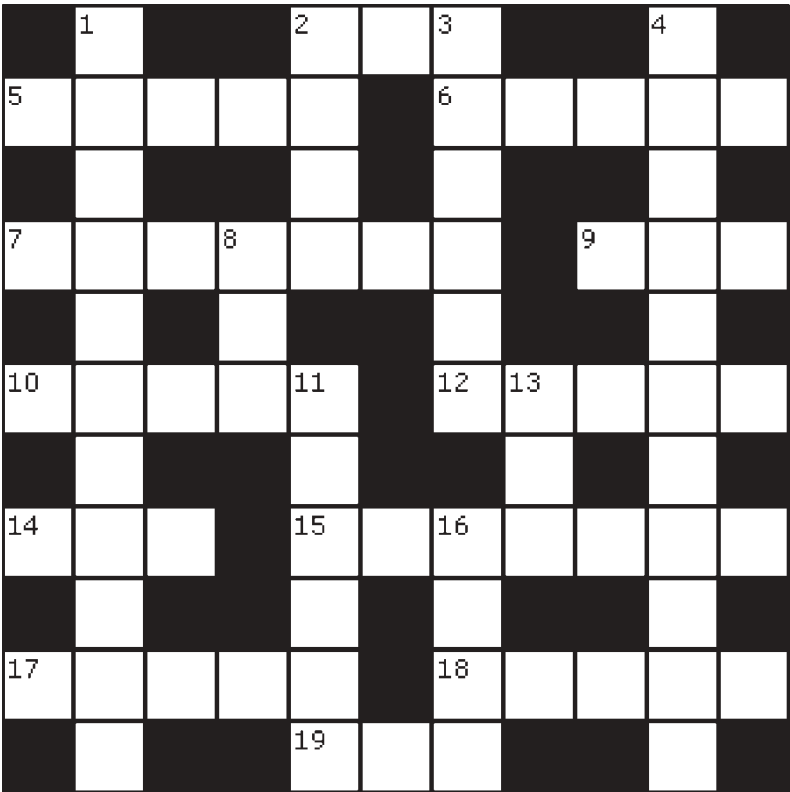
17. Which country is the world's leading producer of silver?

18. Where would one find the kingdom of Brobdingnag?

19. Where in your body would you find the corpus callosum?

20. In the tale of the Trojan War, who fired the arrow that hit Achilles' heel?

Answers next week



Never a Cross Word!

- Across

2. Work.

5. The Buddha's country of birth.

6. What louts drink?

7. Ring master.

9. Cousin of the ostrich.

10. Quietly, in music.

12. Nasty smell.

14. Rule of society.

15. Uranium or copper, for example.

17. River on which Liege sits.

18. Greeting.
19. In addition.

Down

1. Drunk.

2. Green stone.

3. A chameleon does this with its background.

4. Forever.

8. Relatives.

11. Egg dish.

13. Belly.

16. She loved Narcissus.

Solution next week

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S MONSTER QUIZ

1. San Marino; 2. 1,024; 3. Canada; 4. North Korea; 5. Vatican City; 6. In the Atlantic Ocean, near Gabon; 7. Marx Brothers; 8. World chess champions; 9. Committed suicide; 10. Cold fusion; 11. Tuvalu; 12. North; 13. In your ear; 14. Medicine; 15. Voltaire; 16. Charles Dickens; 17. Sherlock Holmes; 18. 106; 19. Wedding guests; 20. Drum.

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NASA's Mars Exploration Rover is sending spectacular shots of the surface of the Red Planet (from NASA/JPL/Cornell, marsrovers.jpl.nasa.gov). Breathtaking pictures – if you have an unlimited Internet account. But if you have to pay by the byte, watch out!



'Softies have the last laugh with Windows 98

Last week I told you about Microsoft discontinuing paid telephone support for Windows 98, and how the press turned the “non-event” into another excuse to bash the ‘Softies. I say “non-event” because Microsoft abandoned Windows 98 years ago.

The latest announcement merely ended pay-per-call telephone support. I repeat: when was the last time you called Microsoft, pulled out your credit card and offered to pay for official help on running Windows 98? Gimme a break.

Turnabout being fair play, Microsoft decided at the last minute to continue to provide paid telephone support for Win98, and the press ran ecstatic.

An Associated Press report included this gem: “‘While we’ve done an excellent job communicating our life cycle policy for most of our products, we have found that we could use more time to communicate those guidelines in a handful of smaller markets,’ including Kazakhstan, the Ivory Coast and Slovenia, Microsoft spokesman Matt Pilau said.”

That report was parroted, verbatim, in major newspapers all over the world. One problem: I’ve never heard of Matt Pilau. I ran a Google search on his name and came up with nothing. I ran

KHUN WOODY'S COMPUTER

Microsoft's own search engine on microsoft.com for Pilau but didn't get a single hit. And – get this – *pilau* is the national dish of Kazakhstan. Methinks somebody in Microsoft's PR agency is laughing himself stupid.

Brushing aside the fact that Microsoft's brass don't give a rat's patoutie about Win98 in Kazakhstan, it's easy to see why Microsoft is continuing support for Win98: appearing to “support” Win98/SE/ME amounts to good publicity that costs the company almost nothing. By continuing to “support” Win98 the ‘Softies hope to improve their image and reduce the defection rate, not only among Win98 users, but among those who run older systems.

Microsoft isn't playing this tune for the benefit of the folks in Kazakhstan, the Ivory Coast or Slovenia; it's playing it for people in Munich, Israel – and Thailand.

The city of Munich and the country of Israel have both taken official steps to reduce their dependence on Microsoft software. Those who watch Microsoft (either for a living or simply as a bad

habit) are keeping close tabs on how well Munich and Israel fare against the Microsoft machine.

It may be hard to believe, but Thailand was one of the first – and most successful – governments to stand up to the Redmond giant. Thai Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Minister Dr Surapong Seubwonglee and his staff convinced Microsoft to reduce the price of Windows XP and a stripped-down version of Office XP to a level that people could afford, as part of an ICT computer project. It was a stunning achievement.

On a completely different topic, GPRS mobile phone access to the Internet – whereby you plug a mobile phone into your PC – took a turn for the worse this month when DTAC stopped offering its 999 baht always-on unlimited Internet accounts.

DTAC now offers accounts with a 50-megabyte monthly cap. To put the limitation in perspective, NASA's latest – and great – photo of the surface of Mars is 13MB. If you download that picture four times, you'd blow your entire monthly allowance.

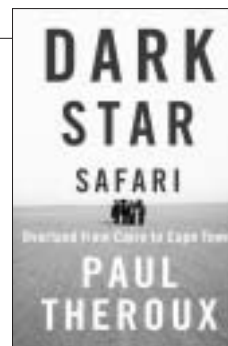
However, AIS has come forward with an outstanding promotion: mobile phone service plus unlimited GPRS Internet access for 1,200 baht a month. I've heard that the folks at Telewiz, in the basement of Big C, know all about the service and how to set it up.

Be aware that not all GPRS phones are created equal. Some mobile phone manufacturers are gaining a reputation for selling phones that are supposed to connect to the Internet, but don't.

After you buy the phone and open the box, you may discover there's no way to connect the phone to your PC. One reader said that he had to buy a separate, custom cable for his Nokia phone. It cost 3,800 baht and had to be shipped from Bangkok.

This is a classic bait and switch. If you buy a phone and intend to use it to connect to the Internet, open the box and make sure a USB cable is included. If you don't see a USB cable and software in the box, put your money back in your pocket.

– Woody Leonhard
woody@khunwoody.com



African odyssey is Theroux's best

Paul Theroux is nothing if not prolific. He has published 22 novels and eight travel books. Apart from *The Mosquito Coast* and *The O-Zone*, his novels are rather slight. But he is a masterful travel writer.

His railway excursions have taken him throughout India and Southeast Asia, Russia and China, North and South America. He has circumnavigated the Mediterranean and paddled a canoe among the islands of the South Pacific.

And now he has written his best travel book, *Dark Star Safari: Overland from Cairo to Capetown* (Penguin Books, London, 2003, 495pp). Never before has he been so attentive to the natural world around him or more sympathetic to the people he meets.

This may well be because of the very arduousness of his journey, mostly in battered vehicles on very bad roads, and possibly also because he has mellowed with age.

The former wunderkind of American literature, who published his first novel just a couple years after leaving the Peace Corps, celebrates his 60th birthday at the end of his journey.

Now why is this rich, famous, soon-to-be sexagenarian embarking on a dirty, dangerous and exhausting overland trip from Cairo to Capetown?

In a way, it's a homecoming. In 1963, Paul Theroux joined the Peace Corps and served as a teacher in Malawi, followed by three more years in Uganda.

“All news out of Africa is bad,” he opens his account. “It made me want to go there, though not for the horror, the hot spots, the massacre-and-earthquake stories you read in the newspaper; I wanted the pleasure of being in Africa again. Feeling that the place was so large it contained many untold tales and some hope and comedy and sweetness too – feeling that there was more to Africa than misery and terror – I aimed to reinsert myself in the *bundu*, as we used to call the bush, and to wander the antique hinterland. There I had lived and worked, happily, almost 40 years ago, in the heart of the greenest continent.”

Stage one is a breeze: down the Nile on a luxury riverboat. For-

tunately, Theroux has not lost his trademark nastiness: “Wealthy people too lazy to read love cruises for the anecdotal history and archeological chitchat that later serve them to one-up their listeners in boasting bouts after they go home. The Nile cruise passenger is someone in the process of becoming a licensed bore.”

But as he comes to the roughest part of his journey, overland through Ethiopia and northern Kenya, he is befriended by a wide assortment of Africans. He warmly admires a couple of Catholic nuns who pick him up.

“If the stereotype of a missionary is of a strong, dull, smiling person with endless patience and no libido, possessed by a conversion mania, Sister Alexandra was the opposite: tenacious, certainly, but also temperamental, opinionated, open-minded and passionate. And after I got to know her better, I discovered that she was a gourmet cook.”

Theroux vents his greatest spleen on what he calls “the agents of virtue”: international aid workers who cruise about in air-conditioned Land Rovers and never pick him up: “They were, in general, oafish self-dramatizing prigs and often, complete bastards.”

The high points of his trip are crossing Lake Victoria on a steamer with a jolly crew of Tanzanians and paddling down the Zambezi in a canoe with two African companions: “Protected by Karsten and Wilson, I was the nearest thing on earth to Huck-leberry Finn.”

The overall message of his book is sombre. Africa everywhere is in headlong decline. He is heartbroken to visit his old school in Malawi and find it in near-ruins. Corruption is rampant, so is Aids. Cities have exploded into crime-ridden slums. Countries have been dragged to ruin by power-mad tyrants – the latest being Zimbabwe.

“The worst of them stole from foreign donors and their own people, like the lowest thieves, who rob the church's poor boxes,” he concludes. “The kindest Africans had not changed at all and even after all these years the best of them are bare-assed,” he observed.

Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt

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Problems of beaches being tackled

I have received many complaints from tourists and entrepreneurs serving the tourism industry. Some problems, such as airport limousines, taxis and tuk-tuks, have already been dealt with. I will next try to bring similar order to the beaches around Phuket.

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra mentioned problems with the beaches the last time we met, saying that he was aware of some tourists who have returned home with a poor impression of the island.

Many beaches on Phuket seem to suffer from too many services of one kind, or from facilities not really suited to the beach, or from insufficient numbers of basic services such as toilets.

I saw this problem first-hand recently when I visited Nai Harn Beach. In addition to the many beach chairs, someone had set up a company – on the beach – called the Thai Cuisine School.

I also noticed the high number of masseuses at Nai Harn, although tourists appear to appreciate this service and perhaps it does not constitute a problem.

But there are too many sunloungers. One of my ideas is to allow each operator a maximum number of beds. Or I may introduce a policy whereby sunloungers

must be stacked away – out of sight – until a customer wants to use one.

The tambon administration organizations must take greater responsibility for what is done on public land and must enforce regulations more rigorously.

Another of my plans is to improve public areas at Mai Khao Beach, some of which have suffered encroachment. If the provincial government does not manage development there, further encroachment is likely to take place.

I have given the chiefs of the Phuket Town, Kathu and Thalung district offices the task of putting the beaches in their respective jurisdictions in order. A careful balance must be met between serving the needs of tourists and providing sufficient work for local people.

Vice-Governor Pongpaw Ketthong and Suksun Siengke, the Chief Administrative Officer of Thalung District Office, are responsible for a pilot project at Surin and Bang Tao beaches. I will report later on this, and on the construction of 11 public toilets at Phuket's beaches.

One-stop check: I would like to talk again about the planned development at Tah Chat Chai. Officers from the police and

provincial departments will check vehicles for contraband, including drugs, plants and meat, as well as illegal workers.

I expect the construction of this project, which will include a rest area for tourists, to begin at the end of this year.

Slow service: Some tourists have reported that the procedure at the Chalong Bay one-stop immigration and harbor service for

yachts takes too long. A number of people have claimed that registration took up to 90 minutes. This is too long and I have made it clear to those manning the office that the service must be streamlined.

Sporting chance: Many people have told me that a sports center in the north of the island to serve the Phuket-Phang Nga-Krabi area is a good idea. I have now put my proposal to Santiphab Techavanich,



THE GOVERNOR'S LETTER

chief of the Sports Authority of Thailand, and look forward to discussing this matter further with him.

I want to see some real action taken soon, such as a study of the area or the drawing-up of plans, and I will push to achieve my goal.

Helping the poor: Finally, more than 6,600 people registered as being poor in the January 5-17 period. Of these, the vast majority – 4,897 – said that they did not

own the house they lived in. Debt and having no arable land were next on the list of reasons given by those registering.

This registration scheme lasts until March 31 and I will announce more findings at that date.

Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura

Strategies for easing extremes of PMT

Once a month, as they count down to the red dot days in their diaries, many women become sensitive to the slightest upset and are liable to wreak havoc as premenstrual tension (PMT) takes hold.

PMT manifests itself with symptoms including depression, mood swings and paranoia, and sufferers are potentially tetchy and, at times, seemingly irrational. For anyone not familiar with PMT – itself part of a wider group of conditions called Pre-Menstrual Syndrome (PMS) that affects one in two women aged 20 to 50 – here are two examples:

"In the week before my period, life loses all color and seems pointless. I feel like s*** and am depressed about feeling depressed ..."

"I become a control freak; telling everyone how to do things and wanting everything done just so. I must be a nightmare to be with."

PMT is one of more than 150 recognized symptoms of PMS. Most of these are physical rather than psychological, and the effects range from negligible to severe enough to affect everyday activities.

Symptoms of PMS include headaches, irritability, restlessness and insomnia; tenderness in the abdomen and breasts; diarrhea; increased appetite; dizziness; water retention; and fatigue.

And the cause? Some researchers believe that fluctuations in progesterone and estrogen levels are responsible. An-

other theory links it with sudden changes in the body's level of natural opiates.

Yet another theory – as you've probably guessed, PMS research is big on theory, short on evidence – links vitamin B6 deficiency to the depression and mood swings of PMS. However, it's possible to overdose on B6, so look to taking it in natural forms – nuts, bananas, bread, even Marmite or Vegemite if you can find them on Phuket – rather than relying on supplements.

While there is no cure for PMS, many women – and not all of them old wives – have developed their own modern folk remedies. One such remedy proposes eating heaps of carbohydrates in the week before your period.

The theory is that complex carbs help the body dispose of excess progesterone. Pasta and other forms of complex carbohydrates may also increase levels of serotonin in the brain, resulting in a calmer mood.

Chocolate, which contains iron, magnesium and milk, can work wonders. Iron helps with tiredness and irritability, and magnesium can help to regulate moods. Milk contains calcium, and as far back as the 1930s it was noted that blood calcium levels were significantly lower in the week preceding menstruation. So far, calcium is the only supplement to show a positive effect on the symptoms of PMS.

While chocolate can be a girl's best friend, so too can a glass of wine. Alcohol acts in a

similar fashion to benzodiazepines and barbiturates by enhancing the effects of a neurotransmitter in the brain called GABA (gamma aminobutyric acid). Increased action of GABA has a relaxing effect, as anyone who opts for a vodka martini with lunch knows.

Exercise is frequently cited as a remedy but in this instance what we're dying to mention is sex. It's better for you – and more

fun – than aerobics. An orgasm relaxes the abdominal muscles and releases helpful hormones.

Space allows just a cursory glance at PMS, but by way of farewell, consider: homeopathy, especially Rescue Remedy from the Bach Flowers range; pampering yourself at one of Phuket's spas; doing nothing, except curling up to watch a romantic movie; sleeping; and if you have a part-

ner, helping them to understand how you feel.

Now, where is my king-size bar of Toblerone?

Dr Wanpen Ungpinitpong is a doctor at the Mother & Child Center of the Bangkok Phuket Hospital, 2/1 Hongyok Utis Rd, Phuket Town, Tel: 076-254421, email: info@phukethospital.com



Dr Wanpen Ungpinitpong

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 Sirikorn 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 its address. The results will be announced in The Nation, Nation Junior, Krungthep Turakij, Kom Chad Luek, and Phuket Gazette newspapers at the end of March, 2004.

The Phuket Gazette
- Since 1994 -

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What a wild child needs

Sadly, the shocking "execution" of 15-year-old Khajornkiat Tongdeesuk on a deserted beach on Koh Sireh is just the latest in a series of incidents of appalling violence among Phuket's troubled youth.

Police have cracked down on delinquent gangs with some success, particularly in the Saphan Hin area of Phuket Town. But it may be that in addressing the problems of that specific location, the police have simply forced the gangs to move elsewhere.

The mayhem occasionally spills over into the general population but more often – as in the case of Khajornkiat – the most extreme violence is between teenagers pursuing vendettas. A spiral of violence results, in which every act must be answered by a bloodier reprisal.

Police attention, by its nature reactive, seems to make little difference in the long term because of the revolving-door policy of juvenile detention facilities and the inability of the courts to try, as adults, the minors who commit the most heinous crimes. Are there any long-term solutions, or must gang violence be regarded as an inevitable and incurable social ill?

To take this view would be an admission of defeat. No society, especially one which prides itself on the compassionate principles of Buddhism, could ever accept such violent behavior among its children – and at just 15 years of age, Khajornkiat and his alleged assailant are still just that, children.

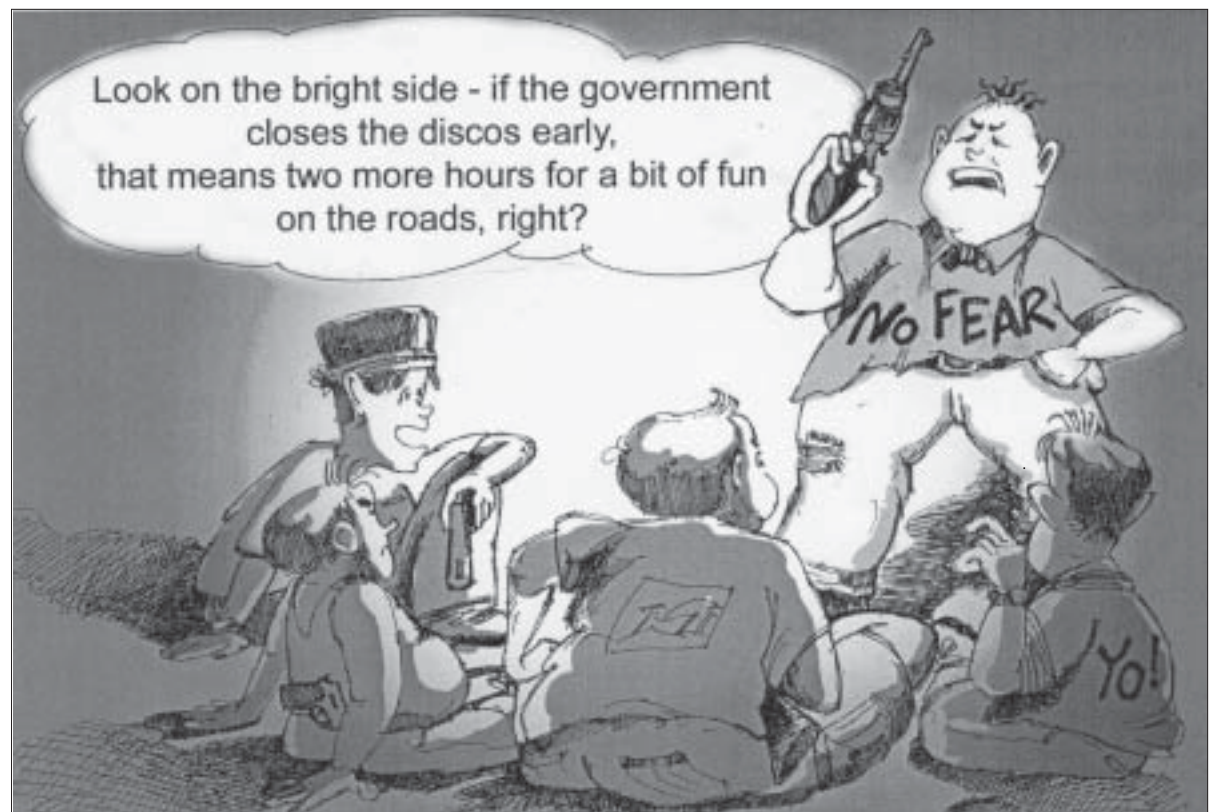
It's frightening to think that some of today's five-year-olds could emerge as vicious criminals in just 10 years, but that is the sad reality Phuket is facing. As with so many societal problems, the answer lies in good parenting, real educational opportunities and an enlightened governmental attitude to the exuberance and energy of youth.

For better or worse, children receive their moral values – good or bad – from their parents. Schools should also play a vital role in reinforcing positive values. Governments can oppress youth or provide them with opportunities for personal development and growth.

Adult society needs to take more responsibility for its youth, but this will require greater effort. It's often easier for parents to slap wayward children rather than to sit down with them and explain why they have done wrong. Yet in impressionable young minds, this only reinforces the idea of violence as a means of conflict resolution.

For teachers, it is easier to pretend problems are insoluble and should therefore be ignored. For the government, it is simpler to close teenagers' hangouts early, or completely, then pretend that this will cure the underlying problems.

– 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.

Tolerance losing out in modern Thailand

In a country with an huge number of gay people, I find the comments from the provincial chief as quoted in your online "clean venue" story [*Gazette* January 10-16] bizarre.

You can't walk a block here without seeing a couple of guys, probably straight ones, arm in arm. Women are hand in hand the whole time.

Same-sex partners just don't seem to do this, showing the official's comments to be spurious and ill-informed.

My gay brother-in-law and his partner were going to join us from San Francisco for the Patong Gay Pride Festival this month, but they have canceled.

They would have spent time and money in restaurants and shops all the way from Chiang Mai to Phuket. They would have gone diving and trekking.

My wife and I, after making an annual visit every year for nine years, will also think very hard about whether we will return.

We read of the furore surrounding a B-list celebrity who made a comment about premarital sex, or something equally anodyne. We've seen inherent racism developing further still, as well as discrimination by Thais against their own people. This homophobic bullsh*t is the last straw.

We'd like to recommend that Thais pull their collective thumb out of their collective *ss and decide just what kind of country they want.

Forgive this rant, but most

of the latest examples of prejudice would be illegal in developed countries. Thailand was once extremely tolerant.

Dr D Washburn
Kata

Going where the sun just doesn't shine

I was astonished by the *Gazette* story [January 10-16] about government awards for "clean" entertainment venues.

When I go to a bar, my goals are to drink, get a little silly and perhaps shake some booty. Whether a venue is "clean" does not affect my decision-making.

If I want to go somewhere "clean," I choose church, or my grandma's house. Really, I wonder whether the owners of the bars that received this award will view it as a blessing or a curse.

And regarding the exclusion of gay venues from the survey: one wonders if the millions of baht these places generate for the island – not to mention the revenue to be earned during the gay festival this month – could similarly be considered too "dirty" for the government's tax collectors. Somehow, I doubt it.

If I were running a gay bar, I'd tell the tax man just where he could put my loot – and believe me, it wouldn't be a clean place.

Lana Chanhom
Chalong

End of the soi for rotten-egg Patong

Will the bar owners and the licensing authorities take a good

look at what they've done to Patong now that the specter of enforced closing is in the news again? No one there seems to abide by the licensing laws, but instead do as they wish – with help from a friendly contact in the police or local government.

Soi Bangla, once the main shopping area, is now almost full of bars. Other places have bands until 4 am but without a live music license.

Soi Katoey is a freak show with he/shes leaving nothing to the imagination. And don't forget the daytime a go-go bars, illegal foreign workers, and minimal levels of tax paid.

Many bar owners have enjoyed a good run and as soon as the government tries to impose a closing time, all Hell breaks loose. You are hypocrites, all of you.

Mr Wright
Patong

In at the deep end

I'd like to respond to Dr W Phillippe's recent letter questioning my alleged breach of confidentiality in expressing my disapproval over the recent world-record depth dive off Patong [*Gazette*, January 10-16].

I was a volunteer tender and my personal opinions do not represent the chamber. I apologize for any confusion.

I felt a moral responsibility as a professional diver to speak out in regard to such reckless behavior. Anyone who understands the physics and physiology of deep diving knows how absurd 300-meter dives really are.

Richard Leader
Canada

The Phuket Gazette

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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.

We don't need 'white awards'

A "white entertainment" certificate may be a good thing to have but as bars like mine were not considered, I am not especially bothered whether we are granted one or not.

As far as I am concerned, the reasons for excluding gay and *katoey* bars were a little flimsy, but that's up to them. Given that we are a part of normal society, it would be good to be treated as just another group within our community.

And why shouldn't we be? We are as law-abiding as everyone else. We cooperate with police officers whenever they come to the bar.

We open and close the bar on time. We follow all the rules. We support all activities when the municipality needs the help of everyone who is involved in the community, including the Patong Carnival and blood donations.

Even without police visits, we follow government policy by taking part in the movement to reduce the use of illegal drugs.

Plenty of overseas visitors enjoy the gay bars of Patong and I am sure they will keep coming

FIRST PERSON

Awarding five Phuket venues the new "white entertainment" awards recently, the judges declared that most people perceived gay bars as immoral and for that reason they had been excluded from the competition. "Such places should not be promoted," one official added. "They are not good for Thai culture." Kittipong Wongkittigul, owner of the My Way bar in Patong, begs to differ.



back whether or not we have a "white entertainment" certificate.

These people are men and women from all over the world. We do not worry whether they are heterosexual or homosexual.

As long as they enjoy themselves and perhaps have fun watching a cabaret show, that's enough for us. We are open-minded and would never exclude

anyone on the basis of their sexuality.

Gays are very tolerant. They are easy to talk to and non-threatening, and most people these days have no difficulty in understanding them.

There are about 20 gay bars in Patong and they attract probably 500 patrons each night, a sizeable contribution to the economy of the local community.

Actually, My Way was the first bar in Patong, although it was not considered a gay bar then. It opened more than 17 years ago.

It's also interesting to note that the official figures show that almost four million tourists came to the island in 2002. I estimate that about one in 10, or a total of 400,000 of those visitors, is gay.

As for Thailand itself, well,

would someone like to start counting the number of gays and let me know how many millions they reach when they stop?

Katoeys are everywhere. They contribute to every part of society. Many more gays prefer to not declare their sexuality so openly. It will come as no surprise to readers to learn that there are gays in the army, in the police force and even in politics.

How many Thai women are only too happy to share their secrets with good friends who just happen to be *katoeys*? Many gays become noted for their capacity for hard work and for introducing fun into everyday life.

The whole entertainment business would be lost without them. Gays are usually extremely creative, sensitive to the needs of others and a delight to be around.

As far as I understand, there is no Thai law that says it is illegal to be gay.

Some people in older generations may still find it difficult to accept gays in society. That is up to them. Fortunately, their sons and daughters recognize that gays are here to stay.

— compiled with
Sangkhae Leelanaporn

Who is responsible for my leaky roof?

I had a villa built on Phuket that was completed in January 2003 at a cost of more than 17 million baht. During the monsoon rains in October, I discovered that the roof leaks.

The tiles do not fit together well and the thin plastic sheet under them allows pockets of water to form when it is windy and rain enters between the tiles.

I have a letter from the project manager stating that the project was developed by a competent professional design and construction team that would provide management, project delivery, quality control and security for my investment.

In my agreement with the construction management company is the wording: "In performing the services, the construction manager shall: exercise reasonable skill, care and diligence, which is to be expected of a com-

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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petent construction manager, experienced in carrying out work of a similar size, scope and complexity in Thailand; apply its knowledge, ideas, experience and abilities to the execution of the services stated in appendix one."

However, I know that an engineer employed by the construction manager queried the project manager about the use of poor-quality plastic — but no one informed me directly.

I think that, as the villa cost

more than 17 million baht, the roof should at least be waterproof. Who is responsible?

Name and address withheld

Friedrich "Sam" Fauma, Senior Partner of the International Law Office, replies:

It is difficult to give an exact answer without seeing the contracts between you and the various parties.

Depending on the contracts you have with the parties involved, the constructor may be liable to repair the roof if a guarantee period is given, or the designer may be at fault if the roof design allows leaks.

Most importantly, however, the surveyor who represented you should be responsible if he accepted the building as complete, along with the faulty work, especially if there was a dispute about poor quality materials.

Rules for customizing cars

What are the regulations regarding the customizing of cars? Are there stated limits on modifications to bodywork, suspension, engine and gearbox?

Dave Everitt
Phuket

Theerayuth Prasertpol, Chief Land Transport Technician at the Phuket Provincial Transport Office, responds:

Internal modifications, such as to the engine and gearbox, will usually be accepted without any inspection. However, more obvious modifications affecting bodywork, vehicle height and handling require authorization.

You must hire a qualified engineer to make detailed drawings of your modifications and to calculate any risks likely to be caused by the alterations. This plan must be sent to the Department of Land Transport (DLT) in Bangkok for approval.

If the director of the DLT approves your plans, then you may alter your vehicle, but only as detailed in the approval. Unsanctioned modifications are illegal.

You should carry the approval document with you to show to police officers or other officials on demand.

That said, I advise you, for your own safety, not to modify your car at all. The vehicle was engineered to work in a certain way without any modifications.

Why do I have to do my banking in person?

I have a Bangkok Bank account at a branch in Bangkok. I work about 1½ hours' drive from the branch, and I work from 6 am-6 pm. The bank is open from 10 am-3:30 pm.

Anything to do with banking requires me to go to this branch. Why is this necessary?

In my home country, New Zealand, getting new ATM cards and other matters can be dealt with over the phone or by mail without going to the bank at all.

Howard Rickman

Mayuree Sukomboon, Manager, Bangkok Bank, Phuket Town Branch, replies:

If it is not convenient for you to come to the bank, you can give written authority to a representative you trust to come on your behalf. Your representative must bring his or her ID card or passport and the written authority, which must include your signature, your account number and a statement of what your representative is empowered to do on your behalf.

Only a few matters must be dealt with in person. For example, to be issued with a new bankbook you must go to the bank where you opened the account because other people cannot provide what we require, such as your original signature.

Another example is having a new PIN number issued for your ATM card. You must contact the branch where your account is held. As a security measure, bank policy prohibits a single branch keeping both the

ATM card and the PIN code for that card. We keep them separate for customers' security.

The Thai banking system is different from other countries, but everything we do is according to the rules of the Bank of Thailand in order to ensure that customers' accounts are secure.

Some foreign customers do not understand why Thai banks use such security measures, and they look down on us for being inconvenient, but it's for their security.

Taking a wild ride to the far side

A motley crew of sailors were cavorting at the Kata Beach Resort the other night to celebrate their return from the Kata Group Andaman Sea Rally, a two-week round trip to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which are in Indian territory.

One of the best-provisioned of the 10 yachts that took part was *Intrigue of Stornoway*. In addition to carrying enough slabs of beer to build a bank, the luxury yacht – flat screen TV, leather upholstery – was also said to have taken on board 130 kilos of meat to keep her stalwart salts in trim. The only greens to balance their diet were the colors stamped on the cans of Carlsberg.

The old boys must have done something right because the yacht confounded its competitors by taking the trophy for overall winner of the event.

In second place, *Stormvogel* was miffed at being squeezed out of the prize on account of her handicap.

To add insult to injury, the first announcement made at the prize giving ceremony had *Storm-*

EDGEWISE

By John Gilpin

vogel as the overall winner. Only after a re-calculation was the decision reversed.

Of course, the competitors should not take the results of this sort of boat rally terribly seriously, especially as the yachts switch on their engines when their speed under sail drops below about five knots. The important thing is taking part.

One passenger on another yacht, *Emerald Blue*, told me that sailing at night under a canopy of stars and the silhouette of a full rig was the sailing equivalent of listening to Wagner. *The Ride of the Valkyries*, no doubt.

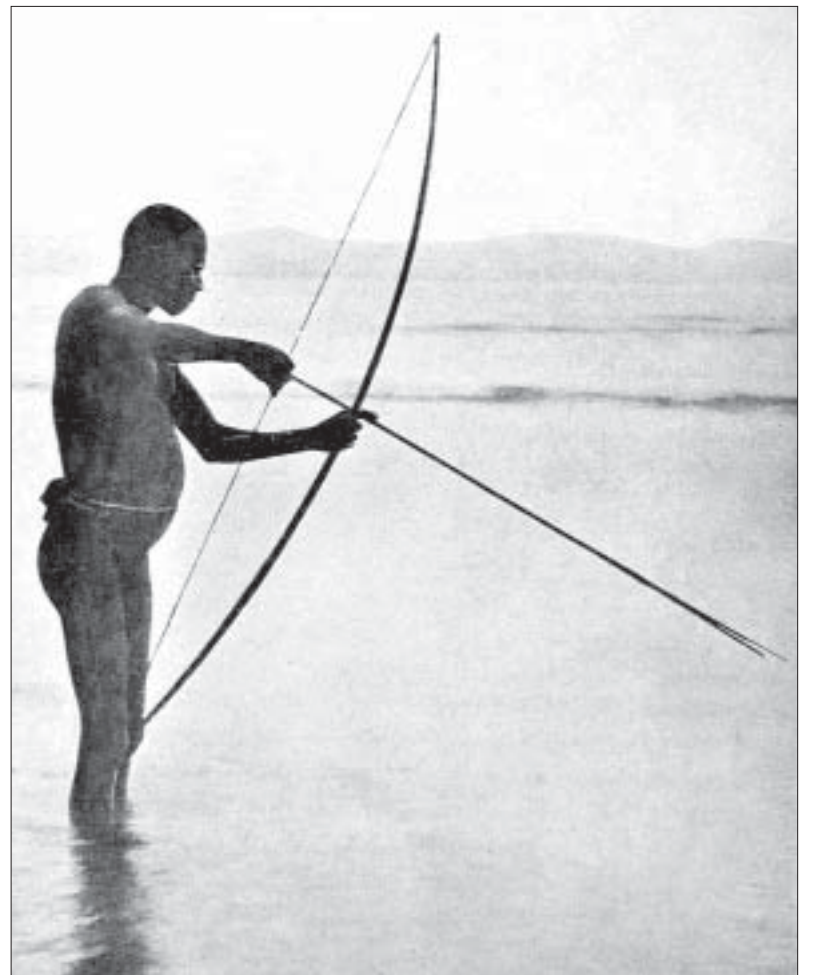
On *Emerald Blue* were owners Nick Band and his wife, Marilyn, an artist. Marilyn found inspiration for her sketches in the colorful, ramshackle back streets and markets of Port Blair, capital of the Andamans, where yellow and black Ambassador taxis (modelled on the old Morris Ox-

ford of 1950s Britain) share potholed roads with sleeping dogs, holy cows and women dressed in brilliant saris.

Seasoned scribe Terry Blackburn and intrepid snapper Travis Rowan, billeted aboard the good ship *Mozart*, set out to explore the beautiful island of Havelock (dubbed by some rude salt as Havelick), the most “touristicated” area of the Andamans outside Port Blair. It’s hardly touched by tourism since the total number of non-Indian visitors to the Andaman Islands each year is not much more than 5,000.

After hailing the Indian equivalent of a tuk-tuk, a three-wheeled motorized taxi, the intrepid duo, Terry and Travis, were bowling along through the palm trees when a cow stepped onto the road. The tuk-tuk driver maintained speed, figuring that the cow would be safely across the road by the time he reached it.

What the driver did not see was a rope attaching the cow to a palm tree on the far side of the road. The rope went taut. Brakes squealed. The tuk-tuk contraption



TIME AND TIDE: A native Andaman fisherman of yesteryear hunts for his supper.

came to a premature halt, and keeled over on its side.

Travis’s leg was trapped under the tuk-tuk and his cameras thrust upwards into his face. Terry and the driver were unhurt.

The driver pushed the tuk-tuk upright and proceeded onwards to Havelock’s No 7 Beach.

There, Dr Ian Nicholson, plastic surgeon, owner of *Intrigue* and a winner in more ways than one, treated Travis’s wounds.

Apart from that mishap – and the time-wasting bureaucratic procedures entering Port Blair – a fine time was had by all.

Tea bag deprivation leaves expats stewing

I am beginning to hate Tesco’s. Last year, you will remember, they stocked proper English chocolate digestive biscuits for about 10 minutes. They fooled us into thinking we had hit choccie bikkie nirvana. Not so.

Every week I take a long and lonely walk down Disappointment Alley but the biscuit aisle is always bereft of anything resembling a proper choccie cookie.

Sure, they have millions of other brands allegedly made of chocolate but these are what we call in England “Chocolate-Flavored”. That’s Reason Number One.

Now Reason Number Two: for two months, they have had no stock of their own brand of tea

bags. Every time I go, the shelves are bare and no one knows when they will have stock in again.

This is appalling for a giant retailer. I am now forced to drink flavorless Lipton’s. Life is too short to wait for things with strings to stew. What will we be deprived of next? Bread?

Come on, guys – one of the few prices we pay for living in a paradise is the absence of some favorite foods. Before Tesco’s arrived, we adjusted to living without, or compensated, or built an infrastructure that ensured some sort of supply. I was a notorious tea-bag smuggler.

But to actually sell us the stuff, get us hooked, then take it away on a whim is simply not cricket. Sort it out.

Garden party: Hot on the heels of last month’s column, when I was talking about how beer gardens seem to doing very well, a new one opens.

Anton’s on Soi Sea Pearl is a restaurant, pool hall, hotel and beer garden with live music nightly. Owned by Anton and Sheila (of Sheila’s Pies), the place looks set to be a winner.

Naturally, the place looks fab. Anton is an old Thailand hand and for years ran what, for me, was the best a go-go in Nana Plaza. Like many, he’s glad to be out of that business, even though it was very good to him.

They have a BBQ buffet each night. The steak is great for the price, with a wide choice of beers including those Australian classics, Fosters and VB. (When will other bar owners realize that this stuff sells and start stocking it?).



By Konrad Stalin

The tunes are excellent, too. Anton is a former DJ at a classy disco so he knows what he’s doing. They have a full program of activities planned over the next few months – including a beauty pageant. Drop by for more details.

Idle tongues: The rumors that the former Chicago’s, now VIP, has been bought and is being turned into an all-night fast-food joint, pool hall or whatever else you may have heard, are all false.

The place is still available for rent and redevelopment. On your marks, get set – go!

Quiz versus quiz: The quiz at the Two Black Sheep has really picked up these days. There’s free top nosh for quiz players every Monday night at 8-ish.

The Green Man quiz has consolidated its position as the highbrow choice and Pepper’s last week had nine teams – approximately 40 people – and a cracking night it was, too.

The island is holding its breath for the much-touted showdown between the champs from The Green Man, known as the Skeleton Crew, and Pepper’s winning Designated Drivers. If it happens, I’ll keep you posted.

The Green Man quiz is on Thursdays between 9 pm and 10 pm. Pepper’s is on Tuesdays at 9 pm.

Konrad Stalin may be reached at konradstalin@hotmail.com.

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Infant bodycare firm targets Phuket

By Supaporn Sriprom

PHUKET: Catherine Arfi, founder of Australian-based company babyWORKSHOP and the booming Aromababy line of infant body care products, was in Phuket last month to investigate local market potential with a view to launching direct sales at first-rate spas on the island.

Mrs Arfi launched baby WORKSHOP nine years ago after discovering a demand in Australia for her self-formulated, all-natural babycare products.

Today, Aromababy products are available from hundreds of retailers in Australia. The company has seen phenomenal expansion in South Korea, where its products are available from 600 retailers. It has an additional further 50 agents in Hong Kong.

Annual company growth is currently 40%, which Mrs Arfi said is restricted only by manpower.

The move to enter the Thai market in Phuket follows baby WORKSHOP's launch in Singapore through a partner company there that is responsible for product distribution throughout Malaysia and



Catherine Arfi: 'We want 5-10% of the upper market.'

will be the supplier of Aromababy products for Thailand.

Mrs Arfi told the *Gazette* that Phuket was chosen because of the many high-quality massage services on the island and its close proximity to Singapore, from where the products will be shipped.

"We're interested in world famous spas, such as at the Ban-

yan Tree and the Kata Spa. There's a range of possibilities and we're open to discussion. I think three or four outlets will be enough for now," she said.

During her visit, Mrs Arfi also held discussions with Hide-Away Spa, which has a spa at Patong and another at Laguna, as well as a store in Chalong.

Mrs Arfi explained that in addition to selling the 24 Aromababy products, ranging in price from about 300-1,050 baht, she would like agents

to provide babycare services.

"We would like to have a partner that would be responsible for introducing the idea of pregnancy massage, postnatal care and infant massage to the many tourists who come here," she said.

Looking beyond the baby market, Mrs Arfi said that although her products were origi-

nally developed for infants, they are appropriate for anyone and are recommended for pregnant women and for people with highly sensitive skin. "Since the products are 100% pure, they're fine for anybody," she explained.

Mrs Arfi added that she expects the unscented skincare products, including the sunscreen and the after-sun and skin-moisturizing lotions, to be the best-selling lines on Phuket.

"We are aiming for about 5-10% of the local [bodycare] market. We want 5-10% of the upper market."

Mrs Arfi explained that another potential market is health professionals on the island. "There are hospitals in America that use our products, as well as hospitals in Hong Kong and Dubai. Our commitment to that industry and to caring for babies is very strong," she said.

The appeal of Aromababy products outside the infant market has inspired Mrs Arfi to develop a new product range, called Pure Spa. The new range of about 10 products, due to be launched later this year, is targeted at women.

On the Move

Supot Suwannachote, 51, from Songkhla, has been appointed Chief of the Phuket Provincial Land Office. A law graduate from Ramkhamhaeng University, K. Supot arrives in Phuket after working in the Trang Provincial Land Office for several years as a land officer.



Michel Camy, 43, has been appointed Le Meridien Phuket



Beach Resort's Executive Chef, fresh from a similar position at the Hilton International in Jakarta. Mr Camy completed his

apprenticeship in the town of Villeneuve de Marsan in his native France before moving to Asia. This marks a return to Thailand as Mr Camy previously worked at the Shangri-La Hotel in Bangkok.

Narong Promjitta, 35, from Chiang Mai, is the new Managing Director of BMS Event Organizer Co Ltd. K. Narong has a master's degree in public administration from the National Institute of Development Administration and a degree in fish farming from Kasetsart University. His most recent position was Manager of Nava Language School in Phuket Town.



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

Unravelling the tangle of bonds

Bonds are one of the most important financial products for the average investor. At the same time, they are one of the least understood. Indeed, most investors have money in bonds but are unaware of it. All pension funds hold bonds as a major asset class.

I wrote an article about bonds recently and several readers asked for more information.

What is a bond? Basically, bonds are fixed-interest securities that pay a fixed rate of interest (usually twice a year) until maturity. Bonds, superficially at least, are very simple financial instruments. A bond comes into being when an entity, be it a country or large corporation, makes the decision to borrow money from the public and corporate sectors.

The better its credit rating, the lower the interest rate the borrowing entity has to pay for use of this money. Bonds are usually issued for five- to seven-year periods, though governments often issue bonds for 10 years or more.

The price that one can obtain for a bond when sold before maturity is not guaranteed. For example, let us say that an investor buys a seven-year bond, issued by the World Bank, that is paying 5% interest a year.

The investor gets the 5% a year and the World Bank guarantees to repay the capital in full

at the end of seven years. Instead of waiting, however, our investor decides to sell the bond after holding it for just one year.

The bond still has six years to run before maturity and will continue to pay 5% interest every year until then. The law of supply and demand plays a role in determining the market price of the bond but the major determinant of price is the interest rates prevailing in the economy at the time of sale.

To digress slightly, central banks determine short-term interest rates, which they use to guide the future of the economy. Long-term interest rates, however, are set by the market.

When an economy is experiencing low-to-moderate growth with low inflation, long-term interest rates are likely to be modest.

On the other hand, when an economy is growing too rapidly and inflation is rising, long-term interest rates will also rise.

Returning to our example, the price that the seller can obtain for the bond depends on prevailing interest rates.

If, a year later, the market demands that the interest rate paid on World Bank bonds be 6% rather than 5%, then the amount the market will pay for our investor's bond will be lower than its original price.

The market is demanding a 6% return whereas the bond in



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

question is paying only 5%. The only way a buyer of that bond can get a return of 6% is if the market value of the bond falls sufficiently so that the yield rises to 6%.

Conversely, if interest rates fall, the seller will make a capital gain because the market will pay a premium on the bond's previous value.

Such ups and downs occur only in the secondary market. The original face value and maturity value of the bond – and the interest rate stipulated by the issuer – do not change.

Bonds have a variety of uses. For an investor who wants to invest money without taking a risk, a bond bought and held to maturity will achieve that aim. For a retired person wanting to be guaranteed an exact income for a fixed period, bonds are ideal.

Here are terms commonly used in the bond market:

Coupon: The annual interest rate earned from the bond.

Running yield: The annual interest received as a percentage of the price paid for the bond (as opposed to its face value).

Yield to maturity: Running Yield, plus or minus any capital gain or loss at maturity (due to

the difference between face value and the price actually paid for the bond) expressed as an annual percentage.

Junk bonds: Bonds in the market issued by borrowers whose credit ratings have since declined to below "investment grade" (as determined by rating agencies such as Standard & Poors). Junk bonds offer higher interest rates, but carry a higher risk of the capital not being repaid in full.

Zero coupon bonds: Plenty of investors do not want regular interest payments during the life of the bond, preferring instead to look forward to a guaranteed lump sum at maturity.

They buy the bonds at a considerable discount on the face value, but receive full face value at maturity.

The discount is equivalent to the interest that would have been paid over the remaining life of the bond, had it been a conventional bond.

Bond funds: These are generally unit trusts or mutual funds that invest solely in bonds.

Money market funds: Although they normally invest in a range of money market instruments, these funds often incorporate short-dated bonds (bonds that are close to maturity) to enhance returns.

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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Theerapol takes Ford cup

KATHU: Theerapol Pongpitayapairoj scored 71 off the stick around the testing Phuket Country Club course to win the Ford SUV Phuket Amateur Open 2004 on January 25 ahead of a field of more than 100 entrants.

Playing on his home course, the experienced K. Theerapol managed to shrug off the other would-be island amateur champs without too much trouble.



Experience shows: Winner Theerapol Pongpitayapairoj

Trophies and golf bags were presented to category winners at a dinner at the PCC restaurant that evening. The Ford SUV, the prize for a hole-in-one, was not won – but Bunprasert Udommangkorn was closest to the pin at two of the four designated holes.

Results: Overall Low Gross: Theerapol Pongpitayapairoj 36-35, 71; **Overall Low Net:** Manote Manajira 37-40, 77. **Flight A:** Low Gross, Surin Bamrungpol, 36-37, 72. Low Net, Ryu Keun Beik, 40-40, (handicap 8.4) 71.6. **Flight B:** Low Gross, Hans Schaefer, 43-41, 84. Low Net, Peter Grainger, 43-45, (16.8) 71.2. **Flight C:** Low Gross, Georg Held 46-45, 91. Low Net, Weerachai Ariyaudomkij, 49-45, (22.8) 71.2. **Flight D:** Low Gross, Kamol Kaewpradab 49-49, 98.

Low Net, Aree Hall 49-53, (30) 72. **Booby Prize:** Janpen Arno Magee, gross 140. **Nearest-the-pin:** Bunprasert Udommangkorn (two holes), Theerapol Buasri, Somchai Jinda.

Tangkwa takes bronze in uni games

CHIANG MAI: Phuket native and world Soft Tennis Association 9th-ranked girls' youth player, Withita "Tangkwa" Jang-Iam, took third place in the annual Thailand University Games held this year in Chiang Mai from January 11-17.

Montinee Tangpong, from Bangkok University, came first, followed by Marisa Niroj, from Sriprathum University in Bang-

kok. Both are members of the Thai national team.

K. Tangwa, a first-year student in Chiang Mai University's Faculty of Medicine, beat many opponents on her way to the bronze, including National Youth Team members Suchanan Wiratprasert, Napaporn Tongsali, Wilawan Chobtang, Marisa Niroj, Montinee Tangpong, and Khonramontri Sirirutaiwattana.

Yes, it is racket science

Spin is not just derived from the way you hit a tennis ball. Every new piece of kit hits the market with its own cast-iron claim that it will improve your game beyond measure. There is, however, some science behind the spin.

Always buy the best racket you can afford. Racket technology – whether we like it or not – is the key to today's game.

Modern rackets are lighter and more powerful, so embrace this technology. Lighter means better results from less effort and fewer injuries.

Go for an all-graphite frame, not an aluminum composite, and choose a small grip. Small grips are easier to build up to a comfortable size than large ones are to cut down. Don't go for looks; always choose function over form.

Dedicated tennis shoes offer strong lateral support, essential to avoid injury and to improve your game. Tennis shoes are generally heavier and more stable than regular running or fitness shoes so they may feel a little strange when first worn.

They shouldn't feel tight and I recommend that you try them on when your feet are hot and puffy. If your new shoes feel comfortable after you have trolled around the shops all day, then they should feel comfy when you are on the court.

There are so many comfortable high-tech clothing products on the market nowadays that value-for-money and durability are the most important factors to consider.

These quick-drying fabrics may enhance your performance by making you feel more comfortable. They actually draw perspiration away from the body, essential to lessening the draining effect of Phuket's tropical climate.

Have fun making your equipment choices. They can, with practice, help to improve your game.

Sean Panton is the Peter Burwash Tennis & Recreation Director at the JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa, Tel: 076-348300, Email: sean.panton@marriott.com. Sponsored by Adidas Thailand.



By Sean Panton

Hocux Pocux triumphs in Phang Nga Bay regatta

By Andrew Craig

PHUKET: Superb breeze, torn spinnakers, collisions and exciting racing were the marks of the 7th QBE Phang Nga Bay Regatta from January 22 to 25.

A fleet of 34 yachts in four classes enjoyed some of the best sailing conditions in years, with blue skies and strong winds throughout the event.

The larger yachts and multihulls led the way in Race 1 while the smaller yachts struggled to make it upwind against the 12-knot breeze to the first mark.

Securicor Somtam Express, however, managed to stay in touch with the larger keelboats and, about halfway through the race, the breeze eased in the lighter vessel's favor.

During the race, catamaran *No Fixed Address* on starboard tack went unnoticed to all aboard the 58-ft steel sloop *Beyond Rotto*. Their calls also appeared to go unheard as the larger yacht ploughed straight into the side of the cat, tearing a huge hole in her port side.

No one was injured and both boats retired that day. To the credit of *No Fixed Address's*, they sailed in the next three races and finished fourth overall.

Race 1 results: Racing: 1. *Hocux Pocux 2*, 2. *Rhythm Stick*, 3. *Securicor Somtam Express*. Cruising A: 1. *La Samudra*, 2. *Emerald Blue*, 3. *Fi Tuen*. Cruising B: 1. *Fat Cat*, 2. *Blue Moon*, 3. *The Four Winds*. Ocean Multihulls: 1. *Charro*, 2. *Image Asia Cyrene*, 3. *Slipper 1*.

In Race 2, from the southern end of Koh Yao Noi to Railey Beach, in Krabi, the breeze swung, limiting the fleet's chance to use spinnakers.

Swells of up to 1.5 meters pushed through the bay as the tide changed, allowing only the larger boats to finish in reasonable time.

Hocux Pocux 2 again led from start to finish. Other notable performers included *La Samudra*, *Charro*, *Ruby Tuesday* and Cruising B's *Sanook*.

Race 2 results: Racing: 1. *Hocux Pocux 2*, 2. *Rhythm Stick*, 3. *Ruby Tuesday*. Cruising A: 1. *La Samudra*, 2. *Antigua IV*, 3. *Emerald Blue*. Cruising B: 1. *Rastegaissa*, 2. *Fat Cat*,

3. *Sanook*. Multihulls: 1. *Charro*, 2. *Image Asia Cyrene*, 3. *Slipper 1*.

Hustling at the start of Race 3 saw Cruising A class *Fi Tuen* give rival *Rhythm Stick* a "love tap" on her aft port side. No serious damage was done, however, and surprisingly little was said about the incident.

Hocux Pocux 2 stormed off the line, leading *La Samudra*, *Fi Tuen*, *Pytheas Aura* and *Rhythm Stick*. Once the spinnakers were up, however, *Somtam* sped off and narrowly missed catching up with multihulls *Charro* and *Slipper 1*, which had started 10 minutes before her. *Somtam* beat her closest competitors by 20 minutes on corrected time.

Race 3 results: Racing: 1. *Securicor Somtam Express*, 2. *Rhythm Stick*, 3. *Hocux Pocux 2*. Cruising A: 1. *Fi Tuen*, 2. *La Samudra*, 3. *Antigua IV*. Cruising B: 1. *The Four Winds*, 2. *Sanook*, 3. *Fat Cat*. Multihulls: 1. *Charro*, 2. *Slipper 1*, 3. *Image Asia Cyrene*.

Race 4, from Phi Phi to Chalong Bay, saw an incident-free start and a breeze of 15-18 knots, gusting up to 30 knots, allowing downwind flyer *Somtam* to lead all the way to Chalong Bay and across the finish with *Charro* hot on her heels.

Race 4 results: Racing: 1. *Securicor Somtam Express*, 2. *Hocux Pocux 2*, 3. *Rhythm Stick*. Cruising A: 1. *Fi Tuen*, 2. *La Samudra*, 3. *Cinders*. Cruising B: *The Four Winds*, 2. *Fat Cat*, 3. *Archival*. Multihulls: *Charro*, 2. *Image Asia Cyrene*, 3. *Slipper 1*.

7th Phang Nga Bay Regatta: Final Results

Racing Class:
1. *Hocux Pocux 2*
2. *Rhythm Stick*
3. *Securicor Somtam Express*

Cruising A:
1. *La Samudra*
2. *Fi Tuen*
3. *Antigua IV*

Cruising B:
1. *Fat Cat*
2. *The Four Winds*
3. *Sanook*

Multihulls:
1. *Charro*
2. *Image Asia Latitude 8 Cyrene*
3. *Slipper 1*

Four-goal hero sinks Dulwich

By Nonthawat Disayabutra

KOH KAEW: Jakrawuth Tohpu emerged as the outstanding player of a four-school seven-a-side soccer tournament at Dulwich International College on January 24.

Jakrawuth scored all four goals as Phuket Wittayalai B won the final of the Over-15 competition, beating Dulwich A.

He topped off a hat-trick in the first 15-minute half with a fourth goal in the second half.

Six teams from four schools – Dulwich, Wittayalai, Daorung Wittaya and Chalermprakiat – played in the one-day round-robin competition.

In the final, it took just seven minutes for Jakrawuth to show that he had the potential to dominate the scoreline in the match against Dulwich A. He accepted a pass, dribbled the ball toward the goal, then slammed it home.

Five minutes later, Jakrawuth struck again in similar style. Then, just a minute later, he received another good pass to ram home his third.



Jakrawuth (left) dances past the Dulwich defense again.

In the second half, Dulwich fought back but failed to capitalize on their chances. But everything went right for Jakrawuth, who delivered the fourth goal for Wittayalai in the 22nd minute.

The Under-15 final saw Daorung A facing Daorung B.

The A team scored three times in the first half and the B

team could manage only one goal in response in the second half.

Like Jakrawuth in the seniors, 14-year-old Saharat Intan scored all his team's goals and was named Most Valuable Player.

Results: Over 15s: 1. Wittayalai B, 2. Dulwich A, 3. Daorung. Under 15s: 1. Daorung A, 2. Daorung B, 3. Dulwich B.



Winds gusting up to 30 knots meant plenty of action in the 2004 Phang Nga Bay Regatta.

Photo by Karim Khamzin

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Some deft product placement by Daimler-Chrysler sees Angelina Jolie driving a Jeep Wrangler in her latest movie, *Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life*.

The publicity blurb surrounding the film is excruciating. "We view Jeep as a perfect partner in this film because the brand's attributes are a natural fit with the Lara Croft character," it says. Believe that and you'll believe anything.

Lara Croft's unique Wrangler – three were built for the film – boasts a roll cage complete with grab-handles, special front and rear bumpers, a winch and riveted fender flares.

As well as the cinema epic, Jeep has created print and TV ads featuring Jolie in a bid to make some kind of connection, however tenuous.

The first *Tomb Raider* movie grossed more than US\$47 million in its opening weekend and nearly US\$300 million worldwide, making Jolie a household name.

The Wrangler's popularity is presumably because it combines a degree of off-road ruggedness and superior on-road refinement with the new, extended wheelbase and a strong four-liter power plant.

The motor produces a healthy 190 bhp (142 kW) at 4,600 rpm, but far more impressive is the torque output of 319 Nm at a mere 3,200 rpm. With permanent four-wheel drive and a four-speed automatic transmission, the Wrangler is both capable and comfortable.

The latest Wrangler Unlimited maintains the legendary 4x4 Jeep capability but now is more refined on the highway because of its longer wheelbase –



IN THE SPOTLIGHT: Hollywood-style hype aside, the new Wrangler maintains its longstanding reputation as a down-to-earth off-roader.

Angelina's drive-on extra

a full 10 inches longer than the original Wrangler – which adds 15 inches to the overall length.

A side effect of this extended wheelbase is a vastly improved cargo area behind the rear seats, as well as a little more leg room for passengers in the rear.

Jeep officially began in 1963 with the formation of Kaiser-Jeep. Previously the brand had

been simply a model made by Willys-Overland, a company set up in Toledo, Ohio, by John North Willys in 1909.

The Jeep was not available to non-military buyers until after World War II. Designed and developed by the American Bantam Co, it was produced by both Willys and Ford for the US Army.

The Ford version was known as the GP (for General Purpose) and this became "Jeep", a name coined by the *Washington Daily News* in 1941.

The Jeep name was never used by Ford, however, and it was only after the war that Willys adopted it. The Jeep had a three-speed manual gearbox and permanent four-wheel drive with a two-speed transfer box.

Although the manufacturers

claimed a top speed of slightly more than 100 km/h, the ride was so rough it was foolhardy to try to maintain this kind of velocity.

During the war, more than 600,000 Jeeps were made, roughly half by Ford and half by Willys. They were used by the British and Russian armies as well as the Americans and were converted to act as gun-carriers, ambulances as well as transport for troops.

In 1970, Kaiser-Jeep was bought by American Motors (AMC), and in 1978 AMC became a division of Renault. In 1987, Chrysler acquired AMC from Renault, including the Toledo factory where the Wrangler and the Cherokee are still made, although right-hand drive Cherokees are also made in Austria by Steyr-Magna.

The Wrangler, previously called the Jeep Universal, appeared in 1986 and has remained essentially unchanged since.

The Wrangler Unlimited, however, features high-pressure

gas shock absorbers, huge 30-inch off-road Goodyear tires mounted on special five-spoke aluminum wheels and a heavy-duty rear axle for towing.

Airbags are now fitted and air conditioning is standard. There is a quality sound system. Options include side-steps, a leather steering wheel and cruise control.

There is also an innovative sunroof as well as a full top-down arrangement. The new soft-top gives a second open-air option by folding back the top above the driver and front seat passenger to create a wide opening, far larger than any conventional sun roof.

The Wrangler has come a long way in its history, but remains a relatively inexpensive, go-anywhere kind of vehicle. Well worth investigating, even if Angelina Jolie sees fit to drive one.

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



By Jeff Heselwood

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CLIFFTOP CUISINE: Mom Tri's rates highly for original taste in a near-perfect headland setting.

An unforgettable experience

The home of Mom Luang Tri Devakul, on the headland between Kata and Kata Noi, is perhaps the loveliest estate on the island. This private residence has been open to the public for fine dining, art exhibitions and concerts for a few years, ever since Mom Tri decided to remodel the buildings into an exclusive resort.

"The concept for Mom Tri's Kitchen is wellness," said Adisak "Dan" Pitukrojananont, General Manager of Mom Tri's Villa Royale. "We have a menu of many Thai and international influences but the concept is fresh, healthy, organic food, some of which comes from Mom Tri's garden in Chiang Mai."

K. Dan hands me a lemon grown in Mom Tri's orchard. Not wanting to use local limes and unable to find good-quality lemons, Mom Tri planted an orchard that now supplies his restaurants.

Dusk, just as the sun sets into the Andaman, is a great time to begin dinner here. Billie Holiday – on CD – is suitable mood music.

The appetizer selection includes some of Mom Tri's own recipes. I chose the aubergine roll; a soft eggplant rolled in pine

On the menu

with
Bruce Stanley

Mom Tri's Kitchen

nuts and apricot chutney, and garnished with feta cheese. A remarkable taste, combining Mediterranean and Asian influences.

Reading the menu is frustrating fun because it's impossible to eat everything that appeals: rock lobster ravioli in herbs and white wine cream sauce; or pan-grilled tiger prawns drizzled with spicy lemon grass and mint dressing.

Soup-lovers can dip into a chilled mango and cucumber gazpacho, pumpkin soup infused with basil purée, or a Thai *tom kha gai*.

Executive chef Sura Putha, sent by Mom Tri to train in the Alsace, recommended seafood. I chose the rock lobster flambé, with a brandy and curry powder sauce, served with jasmine rice. I particularly enjoyed the subtle pleasure of a light curry mingling with the delicate rock lobster.

I picked soft-shelled crab

and tiger prawn with a garlic and black peppercorn sauce, and pan-fried vegetables, as my entrée. Although both of my choices were seafood, the tastes and the presentations could not be compared.

The same wine list that has won Mom Tri's Boathouse the Award of Excellence from *Wine Spectator Magazine* since 1995 is available, as well as an interesting choice of organic wines.

The fun cocktail list includes a delicious combination of gin, Campari and Grand Marnier mixed with grapefruit, pineapple and lime juices. Served in a pineapple, it's named the Koh Boo, after Mom Tri's island, which is just off Kata Beach.

The price structure for appetizers, salads, pastas and main courses will not upset any pocket. If you want a memorable dinner and an unforgettable experience, this is the place.

Mom Tri's Kitchen is open daily for dinner 6:30 pm to 11:30 pm. Breakfast is served from 7 am until 10:30 am and a menu of light meals and sandwiches is served all day.

Tel: 076-333568, and email: info@villaroyalephuket.com

Every specialization has a unique vocabulary and wine is no exception. Let's peel away the haziness behind some of the more confusing terms.

Barrel Fermentation, Barrel-Aged: Two types of containers are used to ferment grape juice – stainless steel and oak. When fermented in a oak barrel, the wine is said to be barrel-fermented. Barrel-aged wine, on the other hand, means the wine was put into a barrel for some time after fermentation. Both barrel fermentation and barrel aging are expensive, but impart complexity to the wine. Be wary of wines that claim to be oak-aged. This does not have the same meaning as barrel-aged.

Botrytis: A specialized fungus that, under ideal conditions, concentrates the sugar in grapes sufficiently to produce dessert wine.

Brut: Any Champagne or other sparkling wine made from chardonnay and pinot noir grapes that is not sweet, but rather is dry.

Estate-bottled: Wine bottled at the winery where it was made. This implies higher quality because the winery retains control over the wine until it is bottled.

Filtration: The process of removing unwanted solids was invented in ancient Egypt, using camel hair to separate the grape skins from the wine. Filtration is more advanced today and generally improves wine, leaving it brilliantly clear and capable of aging with genuine expression of its true character.

Gold Medal or Show Reserve: Some countries, most notably Australia, place much emphasis on wines that win awards at wine shows. Many people who have faith in these shows fail to inquire of the judges' qualifications, whether they were in agreement,

A guide to meaning and taste



By Steven Roberto

or how many wines were entered.

Off-dry: If a wine is not dry but is only slightly sweet, then it is said to be Off-dry.

Malolactic Fermentation: Everyone knows yeast ferments grape sugar to make wine but not so many know of a second fermentation that uses bacteria to convert natural malic grape acid to lactic acid, the same acid found in milk and cheese. This second, malolactic fermentation, reduces acidity and gives complexity to wines from cooler climates that otherwise would be too acidic.

Petulant: Not a grumpy wine but one with just the slightest touch of bubbles.

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

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A home ringed by greenery and scenery

Foliage tumbles around the three pavilions that sit within this property, offering seclusion amid beautiful tropical gardens and lawns, as well as majestic palm trees.

The open-plan home was built three years ago, in a very quiet soi off Wiset Rd on the way to Rawai. Adding character and security, is a tall wooden fence that surrounds the property.

The owners, keen gardeners, have lavished care and attention on the 1.2 rai of grounds.

Entry is through a gate onto a brick driveway, which has a good turning circle, with gardens on all sides.

At the rear is a large swimming pool with a waterfall and a thatch-roofed sala to one side. Behind the pool is a good stretch of garden, with mango trees and colorful flowers.

The house, designed to maximize views to the rear from the living room and master bedroom, overlooks the swimming pool.

A large terrace runs off the



The large swimming pool at the rear of the home features a waterfall and a sala to one side.

living room. The all-teak doors and slatted shutters open outward.

There are four bedrooms and four bathrooms, with the master bedroom having an en suite bathroom that contains a pleasant choice: a bath or a discreet back-to-nature outside shower.

The bedrooms, housed in the pavilion to the left, have teak wardrobes. The middle pavilion, over a teak bridge, houses the living room and open-plan dining room. A pond running under the house on both sides teems with fish.

The large Western-style kitchen the pavilion on the right

is a cook's delight. Not only does it feature every modern appliance, but there's also a great view over the gardens.

Throughout the house there are many teak storage cupboards. The interior is tasteful – all white walls and teak architraves. Large terracotta tiles cover the floors throughout, including the terrace. The ceilings are high, with fans keeping the interior cool.

There is a study with two phone lines, which could be used as an extra bedroom.

Beyond the back door is a laundry and a maid's room. Utilities include solar power, UBC TV, water heater, well water and a security system. The land title is Chanote.

This is a family house of high quality and is a match for any on the island in terms of simple design and functional finish. It is for sale partly furnished for 21 million baht.

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



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Construction Update by Supaporn Sriprom

Katamanda begins phase 2

KATA: Construction of the 40-unit Katamanda Village Estate project on 32-rai of headland overlooking Kata and Kata Noi bays is now entering its second phase.

All infrastructure and common-area facilities are operational, and the 15 villas built in the project's first phase are now occupied.

Fifteen more units have been sold and are now under construction and only 10 land plots are still available. Green Property Developments Ltd, which invested more than 1 billion baht in the project, expects the project to be completed in mid-2005.

Villas range in size from two- to five-bedroom units, with total floor space ranging from 278 to 637 square meters. Many units are custom designed to meet owner requirements, and architectural design is described as a "blend of traditional tropical Asian themes with modern facilities and convenience".

Privacy and sea views were primary design factors in the project, which is targeted at expatriates. Prices range between 18.9 and 55.5 million baht, and some units are also available for rent.



All homes in the first phase of Katamanda are now sold and occupied.



signed three-bedroom apartments in seven blocks of three stories each, all surrounding two common pools and landscaped gardens.

Ground-floor and third-floor units are 4.35 million baht, and second-story units are 3.95 million baht. The project is targeted at long-term non-residents work-

ing abroad who choose Phuket as a place to relax and want to enjoy rental returns on their property investment. Architecture is described as "contemporary tropical". Twenty-six units have been sold.

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As we know, there are amazing plants in Phuket. Some of them are, well, a bit boring – very green, but boring. Others live only to show off.

One of the showiest plants around has to be the *erythrina*, also known as the “sunshine tree” or “coral tree”. Thais know it as *thong-lang*.

Its flowers are so showy it seems to be bragging. In terms of self-confidence, it has to be the Muhammad Ali of the plant world – quite talented, and not afraid to let the world know it.

I was on my way back from Nai Harn beach one recent weekend and saw several of these spectacular trees. I stopped to have a closer look. From a distance, the vivid color is very much like the flame tree, but up close the flowers look like giant red tiger claws. In fact, “tiger claw”, is another of this tree’s many aliases.

Originally from Brazil, the *erythrina* is a genus comprising some 100 trees and shrubs, most with spiny trunks and branches. Some of these produce strikingly beautiful flowers. *Erythrina variegata*, which grows to 15 meters, is the one most commonly seen in Phuket.

The island is definitely in its dry season now, which has

Float like a butterfly, sting like a tree



Attention grabber: *Erythrina variegata* produces Day-glo red blooms. Photo by Clément Duret, <http://cactustropicalgarden.com>

caused the three-part leaves to drop completely – as they do every year.

What saves the tree from looking like a victim of ritual suicide is the incredible blossoms that follow this leaf-shedding habit, just as the new growth starts. The dramatic scarlet coloring is almost surreal in its intensity.

One of the most fascinat-

ing things about this plant is the ability of its flowers to move with the sun’s position. Most species of the *erythrina* show this daily “heliotropic movement” of the leaflets (*helio* equals sun, *tropic* equals orientation). It even has a night orientation.

Not only does this plant boast with its Day-glo colors, it really goes over the top with its acrobatic skills.

Gardening with Bloomin’ Bert

Another variation of the *erythrina* has boldly variegated leaves with bright yellow veins running through them. If you’re considering putting one in your garden, leave plenty of space – or be prepared for a battle of wills between you and the plant.

A friend once planted one next to his pergola, so that he’d have a bit of extra shade in the heat of the day. This “bit of shade” turned into an unruly monster. He couldn’t stop it growing. Despite hacking huge limbs off regularly, he couldn’t subdue its determination to take over his entire garden.

Eventually he decided that the only way he could triumph was to uproot it completely. So he did.

It’s now been replaced with a palm tree, which will probably act a little less like a tyrannical dictator next to the pergola.

Why is it that so many plants in this part of the world seem to have it in for us? The *erythrina* is yet another poisonous plant that thrives in the tropics. The seeds of most types of *erythrina* contain alkaloids, so

eating them certainly wouldn’t be the brightest idea in the world.

The *erythrina* likes full sun and well-drained soil and blooms best after drought. Quite large cuttings root easily – just lop a sizable branch from the main tree and put it in moist compost. It will wilt a little for a week or two, then will quickly get its act together, resulting in a sturdy young clone of the original.

As *erythrina* produces large amounts of nectar, in some parts of the world it seems that hummingbirds pollinate the spe-



One type of *erythrina* has brightly variegated leaves.

Photo by Yoonki Kim

cies. It would be rather good to think that they do that here, too – but I’ve never seen a hummingbird in Phuket.

Enjoy these scarlet blooms that you see all over Phuket at the moment – because they won’t be around for long.

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LAND: LAND + HOUSE

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Property Gazette

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Property Services Wanted

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

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.

YES, I want to receive the PHUKET GAZETTE
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Sorry, no subscriptions
within Phuket province!

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.

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 are welcomed, especially German speakers. Please call or email for further information. Tel: 076-341474, 076-341427. Email: hr@vipphuket.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 are very important to us and full training will be provided. Applicants are invited to submit a resumé in English to:

8/51 Moo 3 Rasadanusom Road, Rasada,
Muang, Phuket 83000
Email: recruit@directrooms.com
Tel: 076 241 145 Fax: 076 241 021

OFFICE ASSISTANT

wanted. Must be female and aged between 24 and 30; have good written and spoken English skills; be able to use Word, Excel, Internet Explorer, Outlook Express and stock control programs. Please call, email or fax to apply. Tel: 076-273379, 09-4741246. Fax: 076-273379. Email: nid@octopusasia.com

SALES EXECUTIVE

required in Cherng Talay gallery. Female, age not over 30, bachelor's degree in any field, excellent written and spoken English, knowledge of computers, hard working and service-minded. Tel: 076-211-122, 01-7872155. Fax: 076-256726. Email: jantira@soulofasia.com

MAID WANTED

in Rawai. English speaking, live out, for full-time cleaning, domestic work, care of 2 dogs, occasional baby sitting. Please call 06-6868587.

SALES EXECUTIVE

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

PRESCHOOL

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

URGENTLY REQUIRED

secretary. Must be able to use MS Office and communicate well in English. Working hours are Mon-Sat, from 8am to 5pm. For more information and to apply, please contact Electrical Marine Co Ltd, 20/9-10 Phuket Boat Lagoon. Tel: 076-239112. Email: damian@electrical-marine.com

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.

VILLA MANAGER FOR PRIVATE PROPERTY

Private property in Kamala is looking for an Estate Manager. Must be fluent in English, have good organization skills, computer skills, basic accounting skills and driving license.

Apply by email at: rose@maitlandsmith.com
Contact: Rose Tel: 01-9583830

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 alasdair@phuketgazette.net

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 people. Send application by email to Khun Siriporn. Email: info@asianwind.biz

MOLLY MALONE'S

Irish pub in Phuket. Two positions available: Restaurant/pub manager with minimum 5 years experiences in F&B; Assistant Manager with minimum 3 years' experience in F&B. Both positions require good verbal communication, Word and Excel skills. Please email your resumé and a recent photo to apply. Email: mollymalones@loxinfo.co.th

SALESPERSON

International real estate franchise seeks a young, ambitious salesperson. Excellent English is essential; sales experience and computer skills are advantages. Excellent remuneration package for the right candidate. Please contact to apply. Tel: 076-270376, 09-8733564. Fax: 076-271193. Email: lagunaphuket@exotiqrealestate.com

Employment Wanted

JOB WANTED

Thai man with Swedish, English, and Thai language skills, and international experience, can help your business grow. Please call or email with details. Tel: 01-3081026. Email: jayphuket@hotmail.com

Clubs & Organizations

ROTARY CLUBS, PHUKET TOWN

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

THE ROTARY CLUB OF PATONG BEACH

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

LIONS CLUBS OF PHUKET

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

THE AO CHALONG YACHT CLUB

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

DIVE OPERATORS CLUB OF THAILAND

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

THE PHUKET INT'L WOMEN'S CLUB

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

INT'L BUSINESS ASSN OF PHUKET

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

SOI DOG FOUNDATION

Assist volunteer vets in the capture, neuter and after-care of Phuket's stray dogs and cats. Contact Margot on 09-8959965 or John on 01-9704772 or visit www.soidogfoundation.org.

THE SKOL CLUB

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

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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

PHUKET ANIMAL WELFARE SOCIETY

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

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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

THE MULLIGAN GOLF SOCIETY

meets Tuesdays at 12:30 pm at the Blue Canyon Country Club. For membership and playing details please email: toto@phuket.ksc.co.th or telephone 01-8930692.

THE HASH HOUSE HARRIERS

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

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

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

THE VAGABONDS RUGBY CLUB

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

ASS'N OF FILIPINOS IN THAILAND

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

DIDIT

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

THE BRITISH BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

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

THE SWISS SOCIETY

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

THE PHUKET EXPAT GOLF SOCIETY

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

PHUKET CONTRACT BRIDGE CLUB

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

EDITOR'S NOTE:

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

Tout, Trader & Trumpet

Articles for Sale

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

RATTAN FURNITURE

New sofa, two armchairs and large coffee table for 20,000 baht. Tel: 05-1630756.

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 long-board 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. Tel: 06-2774179.

MOVIES IN ENGLISH

for children for sale at very good prices. Email: micks_2003@hotmail.com

Articles Wanted

SECONDHAND PHONE

wanted. Preferably Nokia 3310 or 3315. Price not more than 1,000 baht. Tel: 01-8918689. Email: bemarco@hotmail.com

LOOKING FOR LNB

I need LNB for UBC satellite dish. It can be used but must work. For offers, please contact by email. Email: phuket-thailand@web.de

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

BABY CAR SEAT

I would like to buy a baby car seat. Tel 09-7180350, 06-2723391. Email: watchreec@yahoo.com

Boats & Marine



Thai Flagged
58 ft Indian Dohw
Rebuilt 2003
THB 4,500,000
contact
info@thaimarine.com
076-239 111



Newly Built
Prowler 9000
Composite & light
Come for Sea trails
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FOR YOUR BOAT
COMMERCIAL
OR PLEASURE**

Please contact:
Tel: 076-239111, 076-273320
Fax: 076-239974
Email: insurance@thaimarine.com

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 BOAT FOR SALE

15 berth, 24-meter live-aboard dive cruiser 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. Will consider sale of boat without tanks and compressors. Tel: 075-637064. Email: hedley@loxinfo.co.th

SAILING BOAT

for sale. S/Y Tabata steel sailing boat for sale. Thai registered, length: 10.5 meters, breadth: 3.2 meters, draft: 1.6 meters, fully sandblasted and painted, 3-cylinder Yanmar engine, 120L diesel tank, 120L water tank, depth sounder, GPS, dinghy with 3hp outboard. Very strong boat for journey around the world. No interior yet. Can be seen at Yacht Haven (berth 15). Asking price: US\$30,000. Tel: 01-8927847. Email: colonapt@loxinfo.co.th

7.7M SAILBOAT

7.7m sailboat (Maxi 77) with 8hp Yamaha outboard engine for sale. New set of sails (including spinnaker) many extras, in excellent condition. Fully insured, can be used for charter, Thai registration. Asking price: US\$20,000. See our website for further details: www.big-sailing.com Tel: 076-383080 or 06-940-1860. Fax: 076-381934. Email: bigasail@samart.co.th

SUPER DEAL

Live-aboard, can take 16 passengers, with aircon cabin and saloon, and just finished shipyard services. Length: 22 meters. Beam: 5 meters. Engine: Hino 285 EK HP x 2 (diesel). Water supply: 7,000-liter tank. Special price: 2.65 million baht, including generator, 2 compressors, kitchen equipment, TV, etc. Call for more details. Tel: 01-8948508. Email: boat_phuket@yahoo.com

GENESIS DIVE BOAT

for sale or lease. Fully equipped. Price: 7.9 million baht. Please contact for details. Tel: 01-8916143. Email: info@genesis1phuket.com

SPEEDBOAT 4 SALE

Fiberglass speedboat. Length: 5 meters, for 6 people. 70hp Yamaha. Price: 230,000 baht. Please call for more details. Tel: 06-2713407.

36-FOOT SPEEDBOAT

36-foot speedboat for sale. 2x200hp Yamaha boat with cabin, kitchen, WC. Price: 650,000 baht. Please contact for details. Tel: 06-2713407.

SAILBOAT STUFF

Sailomat self-steering wind vane for boats up to 60ft. Lots of used sails for bigger boats (can be cut down). Isuzu diesel (115hp) with Volvo gearbox and all the extras, ready to put back in a boat (mechanic included). Used water pumps, and so on. Contact us with offers. Tel: 076-383080, 06-9401860. Fax: 076-381934. Email: bigasail@samart.co.th

Business Opportunities

COMPANY

near beach for sale. Profitable company, located only 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

FOR SALE

Restaurant located in a nice part of Kata, opposite Club Med, fully-equipped European kitchen. Tel: 09-5426218.

MESSAGE 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

BUSINESS OFFERS

Karon, Rawai, good profit. Tel: 01-9792901, 076-388073. See our website: www.siam-business.com

PATONG PUB

and restaurant for sale. Big kitchen, party service accessories, 3 nice apartments included. 780,000 baht. Email: thomaspatong@gmx.de

BOOMING AREA

Very nice bar and restaurant for sale. Located in Nai Harn, must see it. Tel: 07-8860295.

BANGLA GUESTHOUSE

for sale. Guesthouse located next to Ocean Plaza on Soi Bangla, in Patong. A 4-story building with a fully equipped restaurant and bar. 3-year lease. Please contact us for more information. Tel: 076-292523 or 09-5932928. Email: webmaster@patong.biz. Website: www.patong.biz

BUSINESS FOR SALE

Sunbelt is the world's biggest business broker and has an office in Patong. More than 100 businesses for sale in Phuket. Why look further? You can find everything at our office at 239/10 Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd, Patong. If you want to buy or sell, visit us or give us a call. Tel: 076-294291 or 05-1456238. Fax: 076-294292. Email: johan@sunbeltnetwork.com

BAR/RESTAURANT

with 6-room guesthouse for sale. Rent: 25,000 baht/month, 5-year lease. No Key Money! Located in the center of Karon Beach with 7-Eleven and ATM next door. Only 2 minutes' walk to the beach. The business has been running since 2000. It has a fully established website with on-line booking facilities. The bar has a pool table with a lounge area and all music is computerized via MP3, which is interactive for customers. Asking price is 2.8 million baht. Contact Marc. Tel: 09-9085343. Email: karonbeach@hotmail.com. See our website: www.baanmaipai.com

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: 076-292523. Email: cal@algonet.se

GUESTHOUSE AND GAY SAUNA

Profitable business for sale in Paradise Complex, Patong. Building for 8-year lease. For more details, see our website at: www.aquius-sauna.com Tel: 01-7881466. Email: richard_melen@hotmail.com

THAISTOCKS.COM

Unbiased and objective investment research. Email: contact@thaistocks.com

FOR SALE OR RENT

Restaurant, fully furnished, in Patong. Contact Khun Mike at Tel: 01-8289329.

NICE RESTAURANT

for sale. Fully equipped and furnished European-style business. Call between 8 am and midday for details. Tel: 076-386046.

BAR, RESTAURANT

and accommodation for sale. All year trade, accommodation for live-in or rent, pool table, aircon, television, 28 covers, 5-6-year lease, no payment till November 2004. Asking price: 2 million baht ono. Tel: 09-9097949.

CAFE FOR RENT

Nice cafe in good location with counter bar and chairs, bedroom upstairs and equipped kitchen. Ready to open. Tel: 07-0198019.

25% Discount on Classifieds for Shopper Card Holders

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Place your ad in these pages;
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Pay for the ad at our offices,

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With more than 10,000 visitors a day, the Island Trader Online is Thailand's most active classified marketplace.

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The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd
367/2 Yaowarat Road, Phuket Town
Tel: 076-236555 Fax: 076-213971

Tout, Trader & Trumpet

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 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

FOR RENT

Shop premises in Kathu for rent. Large area, good location. Please contact for details. Tel: 07-2758460, 06-9474330.

CANDLE BUSINESS

for sale. Very profitable, high-quality, hand-carved candles. Work and retail shop in Patong, all for only 1.2 million baht. Please call Mr Ocean for details. Tel: 01-7475874.

RESORT FOR LEASE

Resort with 8 bungalow apartments, swimming pool, bar and restaurant for lease. No key money, annual lease in advance. Please contact for more information. Email: resortforlease@hotmail.com

Business Services

CARIBBEAN BANK

account. Can be opened using your real name or stay anonymous. Operative within 2 working days and major credit cards, business or private, are available. Please contact for further information. Fax USA: 001-1-4354174354. Email: caribbean@financier.com

VISA RUN TO RANONG

1,299 baht, including visa stamp fee, insurance, good-condition boat and minibus, lunch with soft drinks. Daily trip starts at 7 am at KFC at Tesco-Lotus. Tel: 076-289201 or 01-5352637. Website: phuketdir.com/expressvisaextension

BUYING OR SELLING A BUSINESS?

Are you looking to buy or sell a business in Patong? We can help free of charge. We also offer website design and web space so your company can be seen on the Internet. To place or view ads, contact us at Tel: 076-292523 or by email at: webmaster@patong.biz, or visit our website at: www.patong.biz

HEALTH INSURANCE

International coverage, no age limit. Special discount for families or groups. Tel/fax: 076-296594. Email: euthai@web.de

BUSINESS SERVICES

Company, visa, work permit. Tel: 076-388073, 01-9792901. See our website at: www.siam-business.com

Computers

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Mobile USB modem now available. Works anywhere with no telephone line needed. Also computer repairs and sales. Call now. Tel: 09-473-5080.

IBM THINKPAD 600

notebook. 266MHz Pentium II, upgraded 128MB RAM, 13.3" TFT-Display, internal 112k-modem, new battery (operating 20 hours), XP Professional. Very reliable device going for only 17,800 baht. Price also includes Canon BJC 70 printer and travel hard case. Tel: 01-0861929. Fax: 076-393269. Email: m_t_c@ksc.th.com

LAPTOP FOR SALE

Toshiba laptop. Intel 1.33 GHz CPU, 256MB RAM, DVD, HDD 30GB, 14-inch screen. Loaded with Office XP. Paid 90,000 baht, will accept 45,000 baht. Please call for more information. Tel: 076-346083.

NOTEBOOK

Toshiba 4010 Notebook for sale. Condition: Excellent. Screen size: 12.5". Processor: Intel Pentium III 933GHz, RAM: 512, Hard Drive: 30GB. Internal: DVD Player 10x. Connection: Internal LAN and modem; 2 USB ports; external monitor port; Infrared port. PC slot cards: 2. Printer connection: USB. Weight: 2.25kg. Purchased: October 2002. Warranty: International, through to October 2005. Case: Yes. Programs: Windows XP Pro and Windows Office Pro. Email: keator@inet.co.th

FUJITSU LIFEBOOK

Fujitsu Lifebook P-2040 Series. Transmeta Crusoe 800 Mhz, 256MB SDRAM, 4MB VRAM, 1.55kg. 30GB Hard Drive, 10" TFT Screen, built-in V90 56K modem and 10/100 Mbps LAN. 2 USB ports, 1xVGA, 1xPCMCIA slots, audio (headphone out, microphone in), 1xIEEE 139, DVD + CDRW, 1xS-Video. Microsoft Windows XP Home Edition (original). 38,000 baht. Tel: 01-8933077. Email: jewelryonline80@hotmail.com

DELL 600MHZ

Desktops at 5,000 baht. Office Xpress has 8 Dell Optiplex desktops left. These refurbished units each have PIII 600MHz CPU, 192 RAM, 4 GB HDD and LAN card. Add a used 15" monitor for 1,200 baht, a GPRS card for 11,200 baht, or external CD-ROM for 3,000 baht. Call today. Tel: 076-282403. Email: mike@officexpress.org

SEEKING CPU

Looking for Socket 370 CPU with 66/100MHz FSB to re-animate old friend. Please email realistic offers only. Email: chrishusted@hotmail.com

Personal Services

NIA YOGA PILATES

Nia Yoga Pilates at the Movement Center. See our website at www.phuketmoves.com. Please call or email for further details. Tel: 076-282408, 01-7975065.

YOGA WORKSHOPS

Yoga workshops with visiting practitioners at the Movement Center. Breathwork classes with Italian master, 6 classes until February 26. Join top Nia trainer from Canada in her classes from Feb 2-6 at 5 pm followed by "The Energetic Face of Nia" playshop on Feb 7. Thai Yoga Massage with Irish teacher from Feb 13-15 and "The Power is Within You" regression-transformation seminar with renowned Australian healer on Feb 21. Please contact for more details. Tel: 01-7975065. Website: www.phuketmoves.com

REPAIR, RENOVATION

and more. Phuket Expat Services has extensive local knowledge and experienced native English-speaking supervision. Tel: 06-2934264. Email: pktxpat@phuket.ksc.co.th

BAGELS IN PHUKET

Fresh bagels, baked at the new Bagels & Beyond Café, located on Ao Chalong road. Retail and wholesale. Tel: 07-2659969.

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

LEATHER FACTORY

West Coast leather factory. Made to order in 2-3 days. Contact us for more details. Tel: 01-6919346.

Personal Services Wanted

GERMAN SPEAKER

I am looking for a German-speaking woman to teach German to my lovely 3-year-old daughter. Just a couple of hours a week each month. Please call if you are interested. Tel: 076-292319. Email: richi.s@bluemail.ch

THAI TEACHER

wanted. Thai female is looking for private Thai lessons. I just learned basic reading and writing and would like to proceed and go on to the next level. I might also be interested in English lessons. I also speak English and would like to learn to write and read English. I am fluent enough in Thai. Contact: 076-270377. Email: dellapietra@mysunrise.ch

PIANO LESSONS

wanted. I am looking for a professional piano teacher for private piano lessons for my children, who are 11 and 7 years old. Email: jgkg24@hotmail.com

Personals

BACKGAMMON

players wanted for some exciting games. Please call or fax for more details. Tel: 076-386113 or 01-5778443. Fax: 076-386114.

ESTABLISH MY LIFE

with you. Senior scientist, 39, is seeking an attractive Asian woman, 25-36, for serious relationship and marriage. Email: behaviourist@hotmail.com

THAI LADIES

needed. Not over 30 years old, can speak English and can use the Internet. Tel: 09-474-0227. Email: su_kingsuwan@hotmail.com

VISITING PATONG

Generous gentleman, age 50 and young at heart, visiting Patong in late April. Wishes to meet attractive, friendly Thai girl to make the occasion very special. All replies treated in strict confidence, so please contact me now. Email: dandelion@iol.ie

ENGLISH GUY

seeks Thai lady. Single English guy, mid-forties, is seeking Thai lady to take to dinner. I will arrive Phuket (Karon) on 18 February. Email: planf888@aol.com

NEED COMPANY

for life. I am an employee who works hard at one of the beach resort hotels on Koh Phi Phi Don. I need a companion who would encourage me while I am feeling tired, upset and lonely. I am 32 years old, single, have reasonable income, and am of average looks. I speak Thai and fluent English. Any interested ladies should contact me by phone or email. Tel: 09-1959317. Email: sincerepp@yahoo.com

ADVENTURE LADY

wanted. Coming to Thailand for two weeks and will be jungle trekking and kayaking around south Thailand. Looking for a lady to join me. I am 39 years old, fairly fit, fun and keen on nature. Looking for anyone with a spirit of adventure, any age, any nationality. Please send details and photo. Email: davidtheteach@yahoo.com.au

EUROPEAN LADY

I am an open-minded, discreet lady, 46, who visits Thailand for six months every year. I am looking for a genuine male friend to meet occasionally, and who appreciates the fuller-bodied woman. Preferred age: up to 65. I am good company to be with. Please email if interested. Tel: 07-1417590. Email: zola8@aol.com

WEEKENDS IN BKK

I am a pretty woman, 35 years old, with an MBA, and I would like a friend to join me for weekends in Bangkok. If we get along, I am ready to consider marriage. You should be around 34-40 years old. Please send picture and brief details about yourself. Email: wimon_discovery@yahoo.com

Pets

PUPPIES

2-month-old Yorkshire terrier puppies for sale. Please contact for more information. Tel: 09-8749147.

BANKEAW PUPPIES

for sale. Our dear Cindy, sweet as she is, gave birth to 8 adorable puppies, which are different colors. Cindy is an original *Bankeaw*, a purebred Thai dog famous for alertness, and thus very suitable as a security dog. If you are interested, please come and take a look and book your puppy. Note: the puppies must stay with their mother for approximately 6 weeks. Prices: 4,000 baht up. Males and females available. Tel: 076-283120. Email: dchelladurai@hotmail.com



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