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Cyber Paradise takes first step

By Gategaeo Phetsawang

PHUKET CITY: After years of promises, Phuket moved one step towards the goal of becoming a center for information technology with the opening of a branch of the Software Industry Promotion Agency (Sipa) at Saphan Hin on March 1.

The opening aligns Phuket with Sipa headquarters in Bangkok and puts the local branch in control of software development throughout southern Thailand.

It also brings closer the concept of a "one-stop service center" to smooth bureaucratic procedures for foreign IT investors and workers.

The event was significant enough to bring the Minister of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Dr Surapong Suebwonglee, to Phuket. He said the one-stop service center should be open within three months.

"Apart from the basic telecommunication (like home telephones), we will promote high-speed Internet connections in Phuket," he said. "Within two years, Phuket will be comparable or even ahead of other ICT cities such as Singapore," he added.

"We have had discussions with the Board of Investment (BoI) and the Labor Ministry. The agreement we reached means that the Sipa office can operate a one-stop service for IT knowledge workers, so they no longer have to go to Bangkok."

He said that an Internet gateway is expected to be available in Phuket this year. Broadband access would also bring lower prices, he said.



PUTTING IT IN WRITING: ICT Minister Dr Surapong Suebwonglee signs a document declaring the new Sipa offices open.

Improved telephone connections and services have also been promised.

Kruewal Somana, Adviser to the ICT Minister, earlier told a seminar at the Royal Phuket City Hotel that Sipa will support all sectors of society by bringing them the benefits of what she termed "e-life".

It will also open the door

for foreigners to build software businesses in Phuket.

The Sipa center is housed in the Prince of Songkhla University building and the university has plans to train 200 people in graphic computer design in cooperation with the center.

A Sipa branch has already opened in Chiang Mai and another is to open in Khon Kaen.

Nighttime venues get temporary reprieve

By Dhirarat Boonkongsan

BANGKOK: The Cabinet resolved on March 2 that entertainment venues may stay open until 2 am for the time being – because new regulations enforcing earlier closing times have yet to be approved.

A source in the Cabinet Secretariat, who asked not to be named, told the *Gazette* that all venues, regardless of when they received operating licenses, could stay open until 2 am.

"But they must follow the law rigidly," he added, "or they will be closed immediately."

Wisut Romin, Deputy Secretary of the Phuket Provincial Administrative Office, explained that the delay in announcing earlier closing times was because the Office of the Council of State has yet to examine the Ministry of Interior's proposals to check the legal terminology. The new regulations were to be handed to the Office on March 3.

Once this process is complete, the Ministry will publish the new regulations in the *Royal Gazette*, giving them immediate effect. How long this process will take is not clear.

K. Wisut also stressed that venues in Phuket must obey the law. "There will be no exemptions," he said.

"But for now, they can stay open until 2 am."

"They must also follow the laws on drugs, underage customers and crimes in their venues, otherwise they will be closed immediately."

He offered a faint ray of hope that 2 am closing will continue. "I believe the Interior Ministry may exempt tourism provinces such as Phuket," he said.



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Third party enters municipal poll

PHUKET CITY: A third party entered the Phuket City Municipality race on February 28, the final day for registration.

The *Pattana Baan Rao* ("Develop Our Home") Party is led by my mayoral candidate Thanapong Kho-udom, 53, who explained the late entry: "We came on the last day because we didn't want to compete [for the number 1 on ballot sheets]. The number 3 is good for us; people will know us from this number."

The two mayoral candidates already registered are Prawat Suwannadithakul of the *Chao Baan Sarn San* Party and Somjai Suwannasuppana of the *Khon Noom* Party.

K. Kho-udom explained that the agenda of the *Pattana Baan Rao* Party is based "on the wishes of the people", and includes improving public utilities, raising educational standards, building public parks and developing tourism in the city while

at the same time retaining local culture and traditions. He stressed that these are long-term goals.

He said that since Phuket City Municipality covers only 12 square kilometers "it should not be difficult for us to campaign for votes by knocking on doors and introducing ourselves".

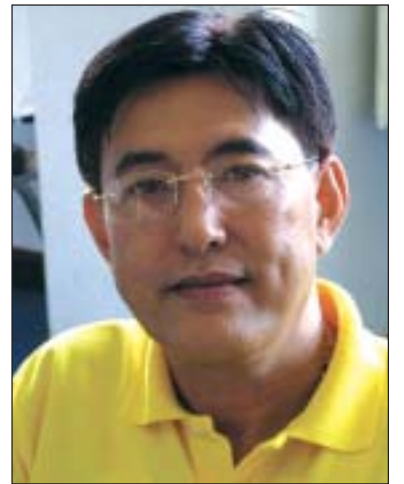
He promised a non-confrontational campaign, saying, "We are a new party, and we don't like mud-slinging. We'd rather simply explain our policies

to develop the city. It will then be up to the voters to make their decision."

He added, "We know Phuket City very well as we have lived here our entire lives and have seen what certain policies can do. We will be a new choice for people. We are confident we can work for the people - that's why we are here today."

The election takes place on April 4.

- Gategeo Phetsawang



No mud-slinging: mayoral candidate Thanapong Kho-udom.

Illegals top Feb crime stats

PHUKET: Illegal immigration topped crime statistics for February 1 to February 23 with 203 illegal migrants arrested, according to figures released by the Phuket Provincial Police.

Arrests for gambling came second, with 194 people taken into custody in the course of 106 raids.

Police apprehended another 46 people for prostitution and made 34 arrests for possession or use of illegal drugs. Three *ya bah* (methamphetamine) tablets were seized.

Another 10 arrests were made for glue-sniffing.

There were 22 reports of violent crimes, including three murders, one case of attempted murder and 18 cases of actual bodily harm.

Police received 68 complaints of offenses to property, comprising 43 cases of theft, eight cases of robbery, six cases of embezzlement, five cases of vandalism, four cases of fraud and two cases of purse-snatching. Police have arrested 34 people in relation to these reports.

'Clean up or risk loss of tourists' warning

By Nonthawat Disayabutra

PHUKET CITY: Deputy Prime Minister Bhokin Bhalakula has warned officials from Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi to clean up their provinces or run the risk of losing tourists.

In Phuket on February 28, he suggested that the governors of the three provinces use their funds to help each other, emphasizing the value of tourism-related revenue in connection with environmental improvement.

After meeting the governors, he said, "I have told them to be aware of [the importance of] first impressions. This concerns garbage, wastewater and a sustainable environment. These directly affect the number of tourist arrivals.

"If the provinces never change their approach to these matters, numbers [of tourists] will decline and the number of days tourists stay will fall, too," K. Bhokin explained.

He said that, in the middle of this year, the central government would distribute 300-500 million baht to each province, so the provinces had to think about what the central government would get in return.

"The projects have got to be really useful," he stressed. "They have to be reasonable and timely. [Provinces should not ask] for 4 billion baht 20 years in advance. Things can change in that time," K. Bhokin said.

He also urged the governors to review mutual cooperation over water resources, citing the

need for more study of water consumption levels.

He suggested, too, developing a larger sports program because sports could prove to be a draw for tourism as well.

18,889 people register as being poor

PHUKET CITY: A total of 18,889 people registered as poor in Phuket between January 5 and the registration deadline of February 29.

The registration process also brought to light 5,881 people who do not have Thai IDs.

People were able to list one or more reasons for their poverty. The following statistics were recorded:

- Not owning a home: 12,614;
- Being unemployed: 5,881;
- Having debts and being unable to make repayments: 3,502;
- Having no land to work: 1,825;
- Lacking proper support as a student: 288;
- Having lost money in an investment: 99;
- Working in an illegal industry: 45;
- Having nowhere to live: 10.

Of the total, 11,153 people registered as poor in Phuket City, with 5,193 in Thalang and 2,543 in Kathu. - Siripansa Somboon

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Impetuous boat owners to pay the price

PHUKET CITY: Overeager boat owners who have been too quick to import their yachts or take ownership from Thai boatbuilders may now be regretting their hastiness.

The Phuket Area Excise Office (PAEO) announced on February 27 that boat owners would still be required to pay excise tax at a rate of 5% if their boats were registered after the Customs duty was reduced to zero but before February 23.

The tax must be paid by March 31. Failure to do so could result in the seizure of the boat and the arrest of its owner.

The announcement, distributed by the

Phuket Provincial Public Relations Office, said that Supatra Horsrisumpun, Chief of the PAEO, had notified some of these yacht owners that they were still required to pay the excise tax.

It had not been possible to contact all the owners, the announcement said, but it was still the owners' responsibility to pay the tax by the March 31 deadline.

A PAEO source, who asked not to be named, told the *Gazette*, "We have more than 10 buyers on our list who took ownership of boats before the February 23 announcement and another 20 importers who were already

registered with the Phuket Marine Office at that time.

"Those individuals or companies will be listed by us as being required to pay the tax," he said.

Customs duty on imported yachts was dropped to zero on February 18, five days before excise tax, which applies to all boats, was also cut to zero.

To contact the PAEO for more information, call 076-212281 ext. 1017, 076-217319 or 076-354830 during office hours (8:30 am - 4:30 pm), Monday to Friday.

— *Dhirarat Boonkongsan*

Marina breaks ground

KOH KAEW: The Royal Phuket Marina Resort and Spa took its first step toward construction on March 1 with a ceremonial ground-breaking and the placing of the first stone.

Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura was the guest of honor at the ceremony, presided over by the marina's developer, Gulu Lalvani.

Mr Lalvani told the *Gazette* that he hopes the marina will attract anyone who enjoys boating and tropical living. He believes that, with the recent cancellation of hefty yacht taxes, Phuket will become an even more attractive destination for boat owners.

"The Royal Phuket Marina will include an entertainment area with a shopping center, cinema, restaurant, condominium and spa. The total investment will be about 6 billion baht on a piece of land of 180 rai," Mr Lalvani added.

The construction contract has been awarded to K-Tech Construction & Engineering, which has separated construction into two phases.

The first phase is scheduled to finish by the middle of next year. This will include the completion of 11 Thai-style villas, 120 other housing units, several condominiums, and a marina big enough to berth 50 yachts. The budget for this part of the project is 1.6 billion baht.

— *Sangkhae Leelanaporn*

D-day arrives for black taxi drivers

By Gategaeo Phetsawang

PHUKET: The Phuket Provincial Transportation Office (PPTO) and the Phuket Provincial Police can now fine any "black" taxi caught operating on Phuket.

Under new regulations effective from March 1, the maximum penalty for operating an unlicensed taxi is a fine of 2,000 baht.

Teerayuth Prasertphol, Deputy Chief of the PPTO, told the *Gazette* that the crackdown follows a month's grace period in which "black" taxi operators were given the chance to become registered as metered taxi drivers.

The PPTO focused particularly on converting black taxi drivers operating at Phuket International Airport. "Before we

started registering 'black' taxis as metered taxis, there were about 50 of them operating at the airport," K. Teerayuth said. "Now there are none."

Instead, he said, "There are now 27 metered taxis serving the airport. Only five are allowed to park inside the [airport grounds] at any time, with the rest required to wait outside."

"The taxi rank is quite difficult for passengers to see, so we will discuss setting up a new rank closer to the terminal and we will put up signs to tell tourists about metered taxis," he added.

The campaign to encourage "black" taxi drivers to come in from the cold has prompted hundreds of them to contact the PPTO about registration, K. Teerayuth said.

"About 120 'black' taxi

drivers operating in the Laguna area have contacted us. [To operate legally] they must comply with conditions set by the PPLO and the hotels at Laguna, such as wearing uniforms and charging fixed rates. [In addition, each] taxi must have a sticker showing the taxi company's name and the specific number for that taxi," he said.

K. Teerayuth said that about 300 "black" taxi drivers operating in other parts of the island have also contacted the PPLO about becoming registered. "I expect there to be more than 100 legal taxis by the end of April," he said.

"Registered metered taxis are safer for passengers because each must have on display the driver's license number, his name, his address and the taxi company's name and address, all in both Thai and English, as well as a photo of the driver," he added. Each taxi must also have a sign informing passengers of the complaints hotline number: 1584.

Metered taxi fares are set at 50 baht for the first two kilometers, plus seven baht a kilometer thereafter.

Spy network to tackle road safety

PHUKET: A new road safety campaign aims to recruit volunteers from government departments, schools, factories, transport operators, private companies and even villages — a large proportion of the island's population — to look out for and report violations of traffic laws.

The scheme was launched by the newly-formed Phuket Land Transport Security Center (PLTSC).

The aim of the scheme will

be to see school principals, tuk-tuk drivers, company bosses, village headmen and others monitoring their colleagues, subordinates or neighbors, and reporting traffic offenses to the police.

Dangerous driving through villages will be monitored and reported on by local headmen while security guards posted at the entrances of residential estates on the island will be expected to report similar infringements to the police.

Shape up or be shipped out, police told

PHUKET CITY: Police in Phuket were told on March 1 that they must make big changes to the way they work and the way they are perceived by the public, or face having massive and humiliating change imposed on them.

Speaking to a meeting of officers at the Royal Phuket City Hotel, Pol

Lt Gen Somsak Buppasawan, commander of Police Region 8 in Surat Thani, said, "It's time to re-engineer the entire Royal Thai Police system. We

have to change. According to opinion polls, the Royal Thai Police are perceived as the worst organization in Thailand, and people hate us."

The meeting followed a deadline issued recently by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, in which, Gen Somsak said, the PM gave police a year in which to "improve and behave themselves".

He said the PM had warned that if significant changes were not seen by the end of that time, he would take over all police operations himself and shut down the force.

"We have to identify the problems that have contributed to these findings in the polls," Gen Somsak said. "PM Thaksin has ordered [senior officers] to help to change the behavior [of police] and people's perceptions of us."

"He said that if nothing changed, then the only thing he could do would be to disband the Royal Thai Police and post officers to provincial offices or to work as community police," Gen Somsak explained.



Gen Somsak: Polls show that police are widely disliked.

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Queer News

Of wedding bells and funeral pyres

MUKDAHAN: Preparations for what should have been a joyful wedding ceremony turned into hasty funeral planning in Tambon Nong-ian when a young woman died just hours before she was to be married.

According to Boonkerd Sookri, the 50-year-old mother of the bride-to-be, her daughter Anchalee went off to work in a motorcycle assembly plant in Bangkok after finishing her Mattayom 3 equivalency degree in the local Non-Formal Education program.

Boonkerd did not know her daughter's exact position with the company, but said it was sufficient for the 26-year-old to send home enough money every month to finance completely the construction of a new home for the family.

Most Bangkok factory workers don't earn enough to buy a decent home on their work wages even after a lifetime of toil, but rather than ask too many questions about the source of the cash, K Boonkerd was apparently happy enough just sit back in her new home in the knowledge that her daughter had carried out her filial obligation to provide for her in her old age.

Near the end of last year, K. Anchalee returned home with a young man identified only as "Tuk" from Udon Thani province. The couple worked together, were in love, and planned to get married, they said.

Although K. Boonkerd never caught her future son-in-law's last name, she was receptive to the idea of having him marry her daughter after the man returned to the village with relatives to ask formally for her hand in marriage.

A reasonable bride price of 40,000 baht was agreed upon, payable on the wedding day, and

a one-bahtweight gold chain was given to K. Anchalee as a form of surety.

K. Anchalee returned to the village on February 23 to prepare for her big day. But wedding preparations can be stressful, and perhaps this is why K. Anchalee started to feel abdominal pain and tightness in her chest as the big day loomed.

On February 25, the day before the wedding, it got so bad she was taken in for treatment in Mukdahan's provincial capital district, where doctors said she should be admitted for treatment.

But that would mean calling off the wedding ceremony, so K. Anchalee refused. She asked to be taken home to greet her lover upon his arrival from far-away Udon Thani, from where he would arrive in a procession of cars with the rest of the groom's side of the wedding party.

"I miss him and I want to see his face," K. Anchalee said of her husband on the eve of their intended marriage.

But as she was in a tour bus returning to her village, she lost consciousness. She was rushed back to the hospital, where she died. Doctors said the cause of death was probably cardiac failure related to a bleeding ulcer.

When the groom and his family arrived and learned of the tragedy they turned their procession around and headed straight back to Udon Thani, telling K. Boonkerd that they were "too busy" to stick around for her daughter's bathing rites or cremation ceremony.

And as bride prices are only paid to out to the families of the living, they took their 40,000 baht with them – though one member of the groom's side did leave a 10-baht coin in the hand of Anchalee's corpse.

Source: Thai Rath

POWER

On March 14, voters all over Thailand will line up at polling stations to elect presidents and members of Provincial Administration Organizations (*OrBorJor*). Nationally, a total of 74 presidents and 2,208 members will be elected to four-year terms.

The size of the *OrBorJor* in any province depends on the size of the voting population. In the case of Phuket, about 170,000 people are eligible to vote. They will elect the president and 24 *OrBorJor* members.

OrBorJor are Thailand's largest local administration bodies. They command annual budgets of as much as 400 million baht each, and have responsibility for all public facilities and services, such as water treatment and main roads, that municipalities and

tambon administration organizations (*OrBorTor*), with their much smaller budgets, cannot handle. They are also responsible for solving problems such as water shortages, looking after natural resources and the environment, and supporting local traditions and culture.

They also have the power to issue regulations and bylaws, collect taxes on fuel, tobacco, homes and land, and hotel room revenue. This income is in addition to funds from central government, allocated on a population basis.

An *OrBorJor* commands considerable power and a large budget, which is why, in Phuket, there is particularly fierce competition for the presidency and seats in the assembly.

Sangkhae Leelanapaporn and Gategaeo Phetsawang look at the leaders of the four groups vying for power, and at their plans.

Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutr,

the Democrat Party's candidate, resigned her unelected party-list seat in Parliament, a seat she had held for 12 years, to enter the *OrBorJor* election.

K. Anchalee says that her first priority will be to improve the province's educational standards, particularly in primary schools. Phuket is a small province, she says, yet standards vary from one part of the island to another.

"The second thing we have to do after bringing all local educational standards to the same level is to improve Phuket to international standards," she told a recent forum organized by the Nation Multimedia Group at The Metropole hotel in Phuket City.

"Phuket is a tourist destination and can also be promoted as an educational destination to attract foreigners to study here, which will make it a really international place.

"I want to put emphasis on promoting Phuket as world-class destination. For that, zoning is the first issue to discuss.

"For example, Patong should be the 'sitting room' for welcoming guests to Phuket.

"Thalang should be promoted as a historical area. Other parts should be earmarked for residential areas. Improving the landscape is also important.

"We will encourage the private sector to open new markets for tourism," she said.

"The people of Phuket host many foreign guests, so their own quality of life, too, should be improved so they can both live happily and welcome others with happiness.

"I will push for Phuket to be declared a special administrative zone [like Bangkok and Chonburi], and we should have an information center for local people and businesses, as there is in Bangkok," she added.

"We will also push to upgrade infrastructure such as public utilities and transportation," K. Anchalee said.

Other projects she mentioned are "village police" or volunteers in each village whose job it will be to look after security in communities as well as lawyers in each tambon to serve villagers.



The head of the recently formed *OrBorJor* Gao Mai Khon-ba-an-ra-o ("New Step Our People") Party, Wisut



Santikun, pictured, was unable to attend the forum.

Somchai Duangkae,

his deputy, who was also the Chairman of the recently dissolved assembly, stressed that his party is "a local team with a local point of view, mainly for local people. National and local politics are totally different," he explained.

"There are many urgent problems in Phuket that we will look into, including traffic problems, security issues, property disputes and education, as well as random, unforeseen problems such as flooding or disease, for which we have to be prepared in advance.

"[Party members] have worked for local organizations including the *OrBorJor*, so we know the problems and can devise plans to solve them.

"Promoting tourism in Phuket is important, but we will emphasize quality rather than quantity.

"Phuket earns 40 billion baht a year [from tourism], but who does that money go to? How local people gain from that income is the issue," he said. "We want ensure that tourism revenue is spread out equally among local people."

He added that the team also has plans for improving many

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PLAYS

aspects of society, including the economy, politics, social matters, education, sports and IT.

"The most important thing we want to develop is human resources," he added.

Pol Col Apirak Hongtong,

former Deputy Commander of the Phuket Provincial Police, stepped up to bat for the Thai Rak Thai Party after Samroeng Chaisorn abruptly dropped out.

"I've been a policeman in Phuket for more than 10 years and know a great deal about the people of Phuket," he told the *Nation* forum. "I resigned from the police because I believe that the new-generation leader of the *OrBorJor* should be a strong leader with experience, whom people can call on, 24 hours a day, and who will listen to them when they have trouble."

He said his main concern was education, particularly in light of the fact that a large number of teachers had recently taken early retirement "because nobody was taking care of them or considering their true importance [to society]."

"If I am elected I will be rethinking teachers' salaries.

They should get extra money because the cost of living in Phuket is too high."

He also said that he wanted to change immigration rules (Col Apirak was at one time head of Immigration in Phuket).

"I understand many of the problems of foreigners. One reason that tourism income has decreased in recent years is that visas on arrival are available to the nationals of only 51 countries."

He added that many people in the world regarded Phuket as "the top investment". This meant that it was the responsibility of the *OrBorJor* to check that local people's quality of life reflect this "top investment" label.

Referring to the central government's crackdown on teenagers, he said, "We have to provide activities for young people so that they can go somewhere better rather than somewhere worse."

Soratham Jinda,

a former vice-president of the *OrBorJor*, said its duties were similar to those of the *OrBorTor* but on a larger scale. All policy should build on what had gone before, and mesh with provincial and national development plans.

"I would like to see the *OrBorJor* in Phuket being a leader in transparent [government] and having high-quality employees with service-oriented minds. That is my top priority," he said.

He too saw education as a priority, with the aim of "lifting up Thalang and Kathu Districts, not only Phuket City." He added that he would like to see all adults in the future being able read English.

"Preservation of the environment and the island's resources is another important element in supporting tourism; up to now the management of beaches in Phuket has not been so good.

"If I am elected president I will create a tourist rescue center at Patong and I will make Laem Promthep the landmark of Phuket, with a budget of 35 million baht," K. Soratham added.

Another project he would push would be the expansion of the *OrBorJor* bus service beyond its existing two routes.

The fare for riding the buses should also be reduced, he said, perhaps to as little as one baht, to help reduce the number of traffic accidents on the island.



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Getting felt on your table

By Nonthawat Disayabutra

The next time you find yourself out on the town with a pool stick in one hand and a beer in the other, take a look down at the pool table and see if there's anything unusual about it.

If the color of the felt is anything other than the usual green, or if it has a unique stenciled design, there's a good chance that it was bought or rented from Phuket Pool Tables, which is now spicing up the formerly mundane world of pool table coverings.

The idea is the brainstorm of Metharat "Ying" Tapaniyanan, a Bangkok native who moved to Phuket about four years ago. Her first business venture was selling high-quality silverware imported from the UK. That worked out well enough, but she really hit pay dirt after setting up Phuket Pool Tables, which supplies pool tables and accessories to the local entertainment industry and private homes.

One of the keys to the success of Phuket Pool Tables has been the fact that it rents out sturdy, coin-operated pool tables to customers. This allows pub owners to check out the income potential of an American-style table before deciding whether to buy one.

Another advantage is that coin-operated tables generate a

steady revenue that can't be skimmed off by staff, as sometimes happens in bars where customers are supposed to pay on a per-game basis.

With coin-operated tables, there is little chance of such petty malfeasance: once the final ball drops into the pocket and the winner raises his cue in triumph it's "game over" until somebody coughs up another 20 baht for the next game.

The monthly profits are divvied up based on a contract between the bar and Phuket Pool Tables, which retains sole access to the money box on its rented tables.

As a stroll along the side-strips of Soi Bangla will reveal, coin-operated tables have really taken off in Phuket, with many bar owners now opting to buy the tables outright.

K. Ying's latest innovation is custom stenciling of the felts that cover pool tables, along with a wide variety of colors other than the traditional green.

Her latest idea came, she says, in response to increased competition and the need to keep her product line unique.

"When the market in pool and snooker supplies became more competitive, I came up with the idea to change the felts. I think it's boring to see typical green felts everywhere. Now, I offer nine different colors. The felt on my own table is golden."



If this doesn't get you on the table, nothing will! K. Ying poses on a pool table with felt bearing the logo of her company.

The felts can also be stenciled with just about any design the customer wants.

The felts are imported from the UK, but the process of screening them is completely home-grown. K. Ying said it took a lot of trial and error with various chemicals to find the right combination.

"At first, there was too much swelling and the designs were ugly and smudged, but we have finally mastered the process. My first customer was my beloved friend K. Nicky, owner of Nicky's Handlebar in Patong."

The screening work is done in Bangkok, and although the designs are currently offered in only two colors, they are now looking at ways to extend the

service to include multi-color printing.

It costs 10,000 baht to change a worn-out green felt for a colorful new one with a logo or design. K. Ying feels that the cost is reasonable because the design will last for about eight or nine months on tables with normal levels of play.

The quality of the felt is important, she adds, because with so many pool tables on the island, customers will naturally gravitate toward a pub with a pool table that is in good condition.

The owner of that bar pulls in revenue not only from the table, but also from the sale of drinks – and as every bar owner knows, that's where the real money is.

"Balls roll faster on new felts too, and that means the games are over faster – and it's time for the customers to put in more coins," she laughs.

Phuket Pool Tables offers a wide variety of pool tables, coin-operated or traditional, standard design or custom-made. They also offer many other pool accessories, such as balls and cues.

K. Ying says that one hot item at the moment is the "cone chalk", which allows pool players to powder up their hands without leaving the pub in a blizzard of baby powder.

The overall trend for pool in Phuket is good, K. Ying says, noting that the sport has already taken over from snooker in some places in Phuket because it is easier to play and is more practical for small pubs.

"Thais still haven't really gotten used to pool," she admits. "They are still hooked on snooker, which many *farang* think is a weird game – especially when they watch small Asian guys like Thais holding those enormous cues and bridges. The game is far more complex than pool, too."

"In most snooker halls it costs 50 baht an hour to play, and not everybody buys drinks because it can get quite serious. But on a coin-operated table it's just 20 or 30 baht a game, and the customers often drink quite a lot."

Ever ready for the future, the company plans to open the island's first-ever showroom for pool supplies in a few months' time in order to display its growing range of products.

For further information, contact K. Ying (Tel: 076-383883; 01-8234627) or visit the Phuket Pool Table webpage at www.phuketdir.com.

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SINGHA NEW LOOK

Thailand world leader in sex change

At a recent conference on the pros and cons of gender reassignment surgery, well-known surgeon Dr Preecha Tiewtranonth said he was performing an increasing number of sex-change operations as Thai society becomes more accepting of people trapped on the wrong side of the gender divide.

Dr Thawatchai Boonpanapong, of Rajavithi Hospital, said that one in every 30,000 men in Thailand seeks an operation to become a woman, while only one woman of every 100,000 wants to become a man.

There was agreement that Thailand has emerged over the past two decades as a world leader in providing top-quality sex-change operations at affordable prices. The rate of sexual climax among men who had undergone sex-change operations in Thailand is no different from the average rate among naturally-born women, the academics noted.

Tangled web: Nathakan Ananman, labeled the "Black Widow" by the Thai media, was sentenced to 20 years in prison for cheating insurance companies and being in possession of controlled substances, but escaped murder charges involving the death of her second husband in 2001.

Nathakan, 56, was found guilty on 12 counts of forgery, but cleared of attempted murder because of lack of evidence. The prosecution claimed that she poisoned her second husband after forging his signature to take out insurance policies worth 40.6 million baht with 18 different companies.

No charges have ever been filed against her in connection with the death of her first husband – even though she collected 7 million baht in insurance as a result of his death.

I want my FTV: The Ministry of Culture plans to organize forums to determine public opinion on what is considered pornography, said Vice-Minister for Culture Veerasak Khowsurat after a meeting on how to regulate fashion shows and limit pornographic material.



ONCE BITTEN: Six-year-old Waranat Trikan of Phatum Thani is comforted by her mother after being attacked by two dogs, a Rottweiler and a bull terrier, owned by a neighbor.

Three witnesses testified that the dogs attacked the girl, but their owner denied the charges and suggested that the girl's injuries were the result of an attack by a monitor lizard.

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra likened the attack to his treatment by the media.

He said pornography producers, actors, actresses, designers, presenters, models, media representatives and audiences would be invited to the forums.

The Culture Ministry has targeted fashion shows in its efforts against pornography after a female model's nipples were exposed at a fashion event late last year.

Even flow: The Transport Ministry is considering restricting the number of taxis in Bangkok, blaming their increasing numbers for the city's traffic congestion.

The National Economic and Social Development Board has been assigned to study the pros and cons of the plan and will present its findings to the Cabinet soon.

In the past, the Transport Ministry restricted the number of taxis, requiring operators to apply for licenses from the ministry. It later deregulated the industry following complaints there were not enough taxis.

Now that the number of taxis has skyrocketed, possibly stifling the capital's traffic flow, the ministry is thinking of reintroducing restrictions.

Muay Thai Major: Rajabhat Institute Mooban Jomboeng, in Ratchaburi, will offer a one-year degree course in *Muay Thai* – Thai kickboxing – starting in June, becoming the first government school to offer such a program. A degree is a prerequisite for entry into the program, which will be taught by experts.

The aim of the program is not to produce professional boxers, said the institute's president, Dr Charnchai Yomdit, but to preserve Thailand's premier martial art.

He said that the institute planned to recruit 30 students for the first class of the course, adding that many foreigners had expressed interest.

Keeping tabs: All prisoners and juvenile offenders completing their sentences will have their fingerprints and DNA put on file in a controversial move that is aimed at identifying offenders and reducing repeat crimes.

Anticipating a public outcry over human rights violations, the Justice Ministry quickly defended the plan, saying the infor-

mation would not be made available to the police.

Khunying Pornthip Rojana-sunand, the high-profile spiky-haired Deputy Director of the Forensic Science Institute, is heading up the plan.

She said the institute would start collecting the fingerprints and DNA of 20,000 prisoners who are to be given a Royal pardon in August.

She played down fears that the compulsory collection of the information would be a violation of the prisoners' human rights, saying the data would be kept highly confidential.

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

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The Tourism Authority of Thailand has released figures for domestic tourism to Samui, from January to September 2003, comparing them with the same period in 2002.

How they gather these statistics is a mystery to many because no one ever sees anyone compiling them. What's more, there appear to be no official records other than the names on travel tickets and the check-in forms at hotels, only recently required by Immigration.

Nevertheless, the number of domestic Thai visitors to Koh Samui apparently rose to 653,000 in 2003, compared with 645,000 in 2002. In contrast, the number of domestic foreign tourists dropped from 538,000 in 2002 to 516,000 in 2003, a fall of just over 4%. Perhaps Thais were quicker to spot the potential bargains created by Sars.

Interestingly, room revenue generated by domestic tourism rose by 10.57%, even though average hotel occupancy dropped from 63% to 56%. This suggests that price increases were made to

Playing it by the numbers

compensate for the lack of guests, and that once people arrived on the island, the cheap deals were hard to come by.

The total number of foreigners checking in reached 539,913, slightly down on the same period in 2002, while Thai domestic check-ins rose from 52,594, to 69,100.

Whatever the source of these statistics, domestic Thai tourism, especially during periods when foreigners are too scared to travel, appears to be a growing market not to be ignored.

Fowl play: The Samui Municipality has stepped up restrictions on poultry – just as concerns about bird 'flu in Thailand begin to subside.

All chickens arriving from the mainland are now quarantined and released only after blood samples have been tested.

A special team is also monitoring fowl in all the villages on the island. Anyone who sees a



Tourism Association of Koh Samui President Ruengnam Chaikwang heads a recent meeting at the Santiburi Resort to discuss the promotion of "The Greater Samui" area – bringing the islands together to compete for visitors against other tourist destinations around the globe. Thirty people from 10 hotels, spas and other tourism-related organizations will represent Greater Samui at Berlin's giant ITB tourism expo this month.

bird splutter or cough on Koh Samui, especially a chicken, is asked to contact the control team immediately, who will promptly wring the poor bird's neck.

My way highway: A new road that links the main shopping strip to Chaweng Lake is finally complete after one restart, and two instances of flooding. However, the one-way system originally planned for the route has yet to be implemented.

The delay is due largely to the local elections in April. Several projects have been postponed until voters have elected people into key positions on the island.

The introduction of a one-way system is certain to require some serious attention, and it is hoped that it will be introduced before too many people ride their motorbikes into the lake.

Open sesame: From March 8 to 19, the Director of the newly-

built Samui prison will allow convicts to receive visits from up to 10 family members a day.

The move is intended to aid the reintegration of inmates into the community once their time has been served.

Visiting relatives must first register at the prison administration department at the main Surat Thani prison. Large cakes will not be allowed as gifts.

Bogus benevolence: According to the local authorities, there are several con-artists at large on Samui who are asking people for donations in the name of bogus organizations, such as non-existent orphanages and health foundations, and keeping the money for themselves.

Legitimate charity collectors are issued with two separate licenses allowing them to solicit funds: one from the organization they are collecting for and another from the government.


The police will now arrest anyone collecting money who cannot produce both of these permits, and confiscate their ill-gotten gains. How the donations will be returned to the donors, however, remains unclear.

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


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By Commander Sammy Swan




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This week



HOSPITAL DASH HOUSE HARRIERS: Paul Chody (right) and other members of the Phuket chapter of the Hash House Harriers donated toys to Wachira Phuket Hospital during a recent visit.



MEDIA ART: Senior students from the Faculty of Communication Arts at Rajabhat Phuket Institute visited the *Phuket Gazette* booth during the recent "Open World of Communication Arts" exhibition held at the insitute.



VERONESE VITICULTURE: Carlo Pasqua (2nd from right), President of Pasqua Vigneti e Cantine of Verona, Italy, was guest of honor at a winemaker's dinner at the JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa on February 25. He is pictured with his wife Giovanna; Gian Carlo de Cesare (left) of the Italasia Group; and Theera Kanjana, the resort's Food and Beverage Manager.



ON THE ROADSHOW TO SUCCESS: Ban Suzuki Company, based in Haad Yai, recently held a franchise information roadshow at the Royal Phuket City Hotel. More than 50 people interested in the prospect of owning a motorcycle showroom franchise turned out to see displays and mock-up showrooms, as well as enjoying a number of entertaining dance routines.



BIRTHDAY BOY BRINGS THE BELLES: A youthful-looking David Brook, owner of the Island Lager Bar on Soi Sea Pearl in Patong, enjoys a special moment as he celebrates his 61st birthday with his wife Karnchana (left) together with friends and work associates.



SALUTE! Italhai Food & Beverage Group recently arranged a wine-tasting evening at the Dusit Laguna resort. Erik Cornetet (2nd from right) Division Manager of Italhai, and Chatana Songsang (right), the company's Sales Manager, share a toast with guests.



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A model manager

While Bangkok may be grabbing fashion headlines with garish events like the recent Fashion Extravaganza parade along Sukhumvit Rd, Phuket is also quietly gearing up to play a part in the international modeling industry with the establishment of its first modeling agency, Angels Modeling.

The force behind the agency is Australian Ann Hanson, better known to most island residents as the events manager for PleasureWorldwide, which advertises itself as "an exclusive club for those who seek the finer things in life", and even promises to "satisfy your every wish".

As if catering to every whim and desire of the island's unabashed hedonists weren't enough, Ms Hanson has now taken on yet another ambitious task, setting up Angels Modeling. She now has more than 40 models on her books.

By Supaporn Sriprom

The idea came to her about six months ago when she was organizing a fashion show for PleasureWorldwide at the Boat Lagoon's Watermark Restaurant. She did finally manage to find models to show off the sexy swimwear featured in the show, but it wasn't easy.

"It was a nightmare trying to find people. When we did the dinner at the Watermark, just sourcing the models was a major feat in itself. PleasureWorldwide is constantly in need of models, so in the end I decided to go out and source them myself," she says.

Ms Hanson believes Phuket has great potential to help her Thai models gain international exposure.

"We can see that there will be work coming from overseas as well, so we can perhaps send local people abroad for different



Ann Hanson (third from right) with some of the models she has signed up for her agency.

jobs. I just think it is a really good opportunity," she says.

Contrary to popular belief, not all models need to be of the bone-thin, mannequin-like vari-

ety so familiar to viewers of Chic Channel. In addition to runway and swimwear models, the agency is also looking for hand models and face models, whose individual features, not waistlines, are the most important attributes.

Now in her mid-forties, Ms Hanson herself is no stranger to modeling work, having done

some in her younger days. At 181 centimeters, she towers over most of the men in Phuket. She also used her impressive height and physical prowess to play basketball professionally with the women's squad of the Brisbane Bullets franchise in Australia's National Basketball League

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Photo by Daniel Wolf

modeling – mostly in sporty shoots – she is convinced that modeling is about far more than having “too slim” a figure. Nor should models be unnecessarily

restricted by age, she says; they are in demand to promote products targeted at all age groups, from 15 to 60 years.

“Some companies need at-

tractive older faces if they are trying to promote their anti-wrinkle cream, for example, and in Phuket some clients just need photogenic people to act as families of tourists visiting a resort,” she explained.

The name Angels Models, along with its distinctive logo featuring a pair of gold wings, came naturally from Ms Hanson's close ties with PleasureWorldwide, which already uses a similar design.

She is optimistic about her business and prospects in Phuket in general.

“There is so much happening in Phuket now. The magazines are always looking for models. I really feel this is going to take off,” she says.

As if PleasureWorldwide and her fledgling modeling agency weren't enough, the dynamic Ms Hanson is filling in as a physical education instructor at the International School in Rawai and working with the Kid's Cub at the Evason Resort and Spa. On top of all this, she still finds the time to raise her nine-year-old daughter.

Ms Hanson says Angels Modeling is always seeking bright new personalities, both Asian and Caucasian. Those who think they have the right stuff can contact her at Tel: 01-0856806.



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PISCES (February 20-March 20): Pisceans celebrating a birthday this week are advised to take control of party planning. Others may think they know what floats your boat, but the best intentions are likely to go awry. This is a time to go with your instincts. If you feel like lying low, do so. Aries needs no second invitation to keep you company. The number 8 has special significance on Sunday.



ARIES (March 21-April 20): Love is in the air and an extra shower of stardust should ensure that, for those born under Aries, this is a weekend to remember. However, you should guard against being so blown away by romance that work is neglected – someone else is waiting in the shadows to jump into your sandals should you slip up. Double-check minor details, then check again.



TAURUS (April 21-May 21): Feel free to kick up a fuss if things aren't going the way you planned. It will do you good to let off some steam, and let others to see that you are a force to be reckoned with. A love from the past looks like stepping into your immediate future. If you



In The Stars

by Isla Star

Who knows what the future holds?

aren't available, don't let flirtation send the wrong messages.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): If you feel like being on the move but don't know where to go, put on your darkest sunshades and stick a pin in a map. An impulsive journey will unfold into one of the most exciting adventures you've ever experienced. Forget the drudgery of domestic routine and throw caution to the wind. Those who are doubtful about their future will benefit most from this.



CANCER (June 22-July 23): This is not the best week for floating with the tide. You will need to make decisions and follow through energetically. Your instincts to protect people close to you are in danger of being abused, so take an objective look at the balance of an intimate relationship. As long as you stay on the ball, the coming days offer chances to improve your life.



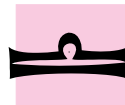
LEO (July 24-August 22): It's not too late to back out of a business deal that has been growing increasingly sour. Leos who have tried as hard as they can to sweeten the situation shouldn't waste any more energy. Turn this experience into a positive thing by using it to your advantage in future dealings. Early next week, a friend will need some emergency advice. Tell them what they need to hear, rather than what they want to hear.



VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Not everything is coming up roses for those born under Virgo at the moment, and this is not due to lack of watering. This week you will need to give your green fingers a rest and just let nature run its course. You should find that events will take on a life of their own and they will start to blossom by next Friday. On Tuesday you will hear of an attractive way to boost your finances.



LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Librans should be full of the joys of spring this week, with Saturday and Sunday being especially buoyant. On Monday you have the opportunity to rectify a misunderstanding, although this may necessitate swallowing some pride. If you're single, get ready to set sail on a new romantic voyage – the only thing that's anchoring you is insecurity. You should accept that someone is attracted to you for all the right reasons.



SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): Asking a friend to do a work-related favor on your behalf could backfire badly. Those born under Scorpio are advised to take the helm this week and resist delegating tasks to others. This is a busy time and it may seem that there aren't enough hours in the day to get everything done, but if you plan carefully you will achieve much more than you had ever imagined possible.



SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): Sagittarians should not let the sun set on relationship problems this weekend. A snake in the undergrowth would love to see things go wrong in your personal life. Putting every effort into compromise will stop this happening, and you should be able to reach new heights of understanding.



CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): Your heart is in the right place, but others are likely to get the wrong end of the stick. Capricorns should focus on straight-talking, especially when it comes to career matters. A lucky break on Wednesday could mean that you earn good money without lifting a finger.



AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): Someone who you thought was not the sharpest pencil in the box has information worth listening to. If you've been looking for an excuse to distance yourself permanently from an on-off relationship, this information could be exactly what you need. Tuesday is the most auspicious day for making business agreements.



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With a song in their hearts

One of Puccini's best-loved operas, *Tosca*, is to be performed at the Sheraton Grande Laguna Phuket on Saturday, March 13, by the European Chamber Orchestra (Echo).

Based in Britain, Echo was founded in 1991 under the patronage of the great Spanish soprano, Montserrat Caballe.

Echo is led by the acclaimed maestro Stefan Sanchez – an Associate of Britain's Royal Academy of Music since 1995.

Sanchez and singers from Echo, among a new generation of British classical singers, have toured Asia and the Middle East extensively.

Recent tours have taken in Bangkok, Colombo, Penang, Dubai and Muscat. Mr Sanchez's individual experiences include everything from Broadway shows to *La Bohème*.

Can Cavaradossi bear to watch?



Will Tosca give herself to the unsavory Baron Scarpia to save Cavaradossi from execution?

Tosca usually features a large cast – too large to fit into the appropriately-named Puccini restaurant at Sheraton – so Echo will reduce the ensemble to a “dinner-scale” quintet with piano accompaniment.

However, this is not simply a case of removing less-important players from scenes. Full-scale productions generally tour for about two years before being scaled down to meet the more intimate requirements of smaller venues, such as a hotel ballroom.

Tosca, to quote the composer, “...plays with passions rather than feelings”. It is set on June 17, 1800, just after the fateful Battle of Marengo, when Napoleon defeated the Austrians under the command of General Melas.

Rome's most famous singer

or *celebre cantante*, Floria Tosca, must decide if she can give herself to the corrupt Baron Scarpia, thereby saving her true love, the painter Cavaradossi, from execution.

And her decision?

You'll just have to enjoy the sumptuous Italian buffet at the Puccini restaurant while listening to the master's greatest tragic opera.

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The magical dolphins of Hong Kong

Think of Hong Kong and you think: city, skyscrapers, shopping – just about anything apart from a marine park.

Anyone who visited before July 1998 will recall the thrilling roller-coaster approach to Kai Tak airport over the concrete towers of Kowloon, and that last-minute dive as the packed aircraft heaved to the right and you could look sideways and see what the residents of the many high-rises were watching on their television sets.

The new airport at Chek Lap Kok on Lantau Island provides its fair share of surprises, too. Rolling green hills flank the runways to the south and the Pearl River Delta stretches away to the north.

The delta, let it be said, ain't that clean. Tons of filth are washed down from across the border, there's a power station at Castle Peak and an offshore fa-

cility for receiving aviation fuel. Add the trash from vessels ploughing back and forth, and you're left with something like a grimy ocean soup.

What is really extraordinary is this particular area's most distinctive residents – bubble-gum-pink and button-cute – *Sousa Chinensis* or Indo-Pacific Humpback dolphins that somehow manage to survive in one of the world's most polluted waterways.

Practically the only way to catch sight of these "river pigs" (their local nickname) is to join the three-times-a-week tour that leaves from the Tung Chung ferry pier.

Scientists estimate there are up to 1,000 dolphins living in the area, with perhaps as many as 100 in Hong Kong waters at any one time. As the boat steams out to sea and the noise of jets landing and taking off recedes, the first dolphins usually rise up out of the water,

trailing in the wake of fishing boats whose nets offer them a moveable feast.

The pink dolphins are actually born black, but fade to gray within a few months then, over subsequent years gradually turn pink from flushing blood to the outer layers of their skin to regulate their body temperature.

Dolphins start to reproduce at about the age of 10, but tragically their first-born very often dies after absorbing pollutants that have built up inside the mother.

The second and third babies, however, usually have a much greater chance of survival.

Sailing across the delta provides a marvellous contrast to the hurly-burly of Kowloon and Hong Kong Island, and the dolphins seem to know it. They fairly hurl themselves out of the water within a few meters of the boat, and lollop though the waves. It looks as though they are having great fun.

Commentary is provided by tour guides who seem at times even more excited than their clients, pointing out distinctive or well known dolphins such as Ringo, who, despite being snared by a fishing line while young, somehow managed to survive.



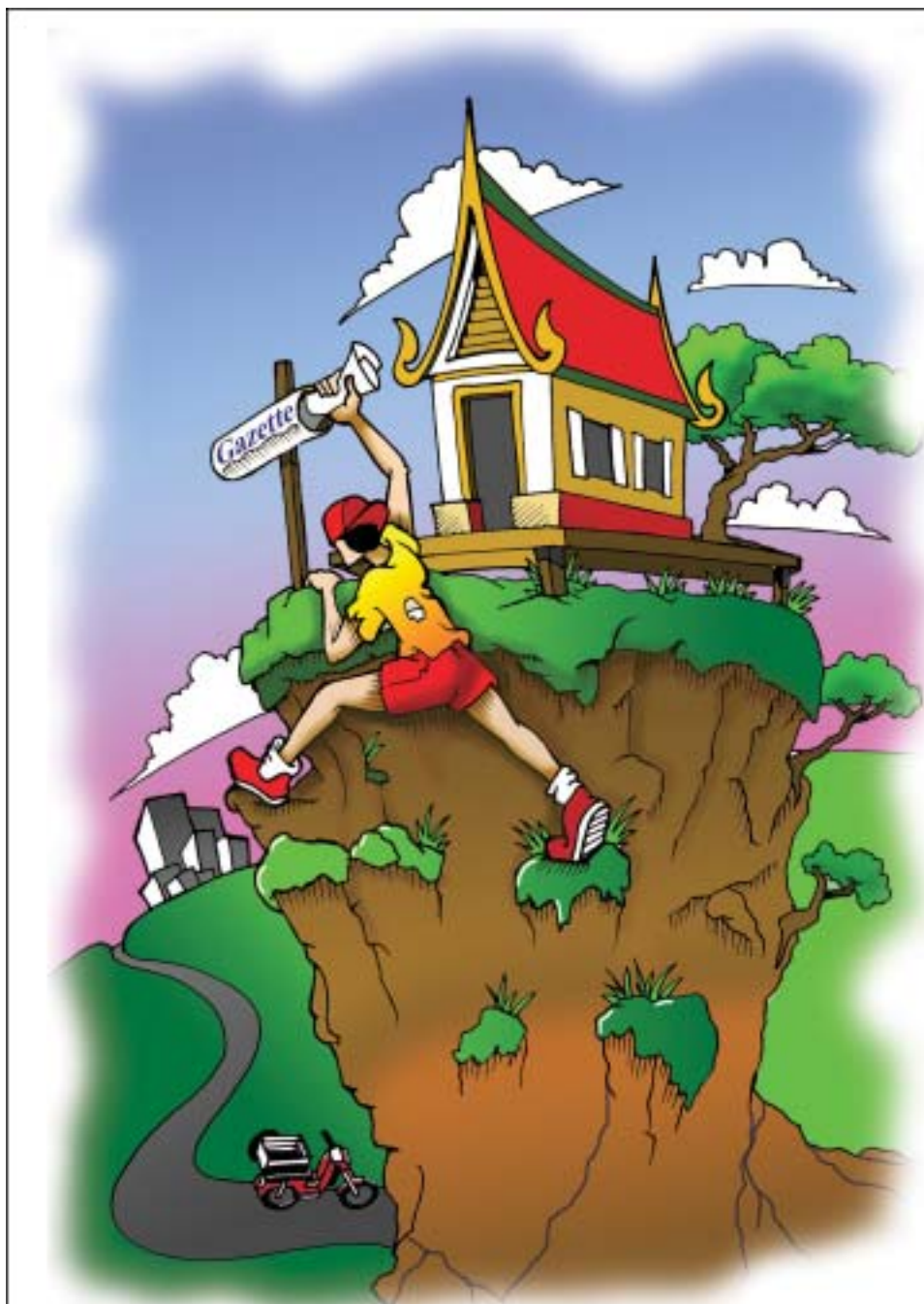
What is extraordinary about these Pink Dolphins is how they manage to survive in one of the world's most polluted waterways.

Sightings are almost 100% certain, with as many as 30 dolphins appearing on a single trip, though a half-dozen is more usual. It's ironic that next year will see the launch of a Disney

theme park at Penny's Bay on Lantau – several acres of manufactured Mickey Mouse fun that may well eclipse the natural wonders that have been provided for generations by *Sousa Chinensis*.

TALES OF A TRAVELER

By Ed Peters



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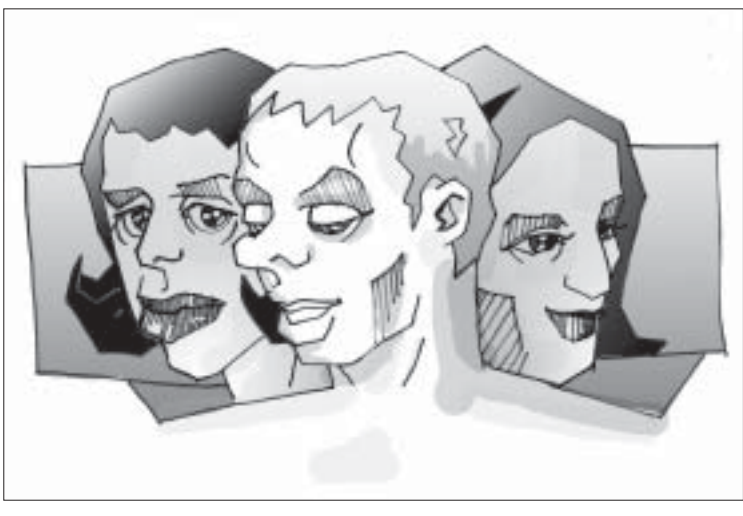
KIDS

THE FUN PAGE FOR ALL THE FAMILY

Spot the Difference



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



Brain Busters!!

Q1. Take away my first letter; take away my second letter; take away all my letters, and I would remain the same. What am I?

Q2. All of Jenny's pets are dogs except one. All of her pets are cats except one. How many cats and dogs does Jenny have?

1. A mailman
2. Jenny has one cat and one dog.

Get your brain in gear with The Monster Quiz



- What would you use a bootjack for?
- What word links "child" with "soldier"?
- Liverpool, England is on one bank of the Mersey river. What is on the other bank?
- If you were a Palatinate, what would be your nationality?
- What kind of animal comes in standard, miniature and toy sizes?
- In which sport is a shot clock used?
- In what kind of animal would you find a syrinx?
- What is the correct term for a stone shaped by wind-blown sand?
- Where is the Great Slave Lake?
- Who would you find in a yamen?
- Which planet is approximately 778 million kilometers from the sun?
- A sextant is used to measure the angle between the sun or a star and what?
- Name the "supercontinent" from the which today's continents split off.
- Which is the longest glacier in Europe?
- What facility does one acquire by kissing the Blarney Stone?
- "Buck and wing" is a form of what art?
- Xanthippe was the nagging wife of whom?
- What color is the dye obtained from quercitron?
- Which African tribe used ouabain to poison its arrows?
- By what name are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints better known?

Answers next week.

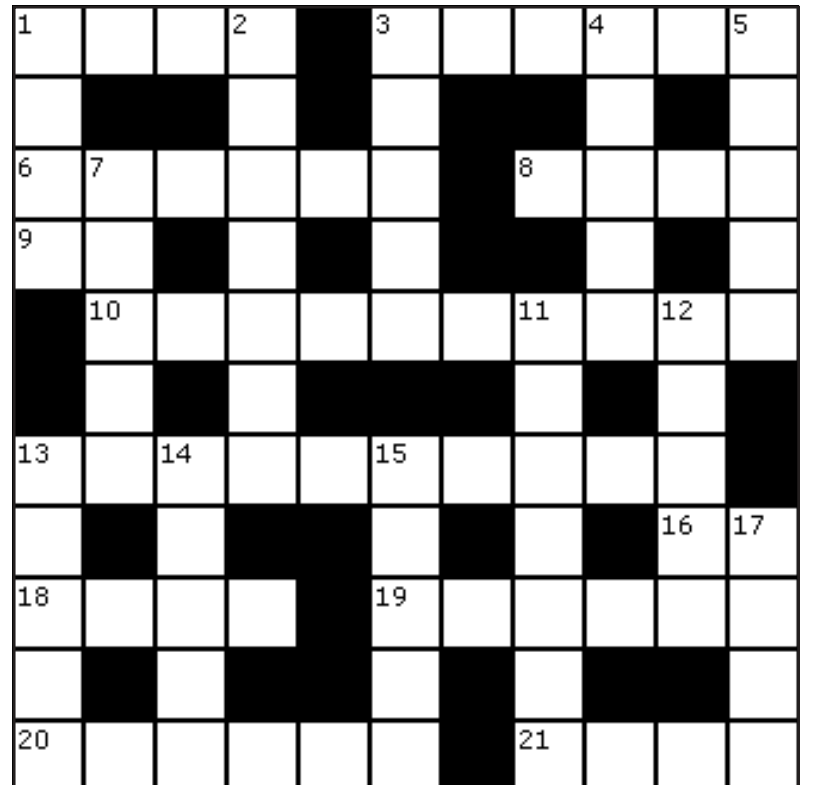
Never a Cross Word!

Across

- First in, first out.
- Capital of Oman.
- Colonel Gaddafi, for example.
- Goes with Old Father
- European Community, in short.
- Most unlikely.
- Street pageant.
- One hundredth of a kip.
- 2.54 centimeters.
- Home for friars.
- Archimedes' famous cry.
- Fencing sword.

Down

- Rasping tool
- Games originally from Greece.
- Tropical fruit.
- Ascend.



- Motif.
- More cold and slippery.
- Stupid as a donkey.
- Of the moon.
- It comes before a fall.
- Hollywood's golden boy?
- Capital of Bulgaria.
- Sort.

Solution next week

Answers to last week's Monster Quiz

- Eniac; 2. 30 tons; 3. Angola; 4. Soft-loud; 5. Billie Holiday; 6. Honolulu; 7. On a sundial; 8. Bench; 9. Delos; 10. Water moccasin; 11. Alexander Hamilton; 12. Small wallaby with a short tail; 13. Climbing; 14. Finsteraarhorn; 15. Beadsman; 16. Hue; 17. Lice infestation; 18. Kiel Canal; 19. Making arrows; 20. Boondock.

ASK KHUN WANIDA! MOMMA DUCK

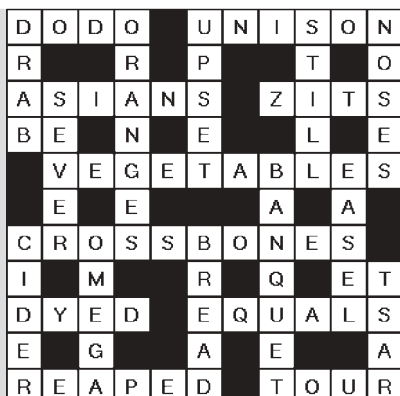
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Solution to last week's Crossword



Do Not Drink Tap Water!

I sat on our balcony with my binoculars watching hawks and other graceful birds of prey spiraling up toward the towering thunderheads that were sweeping across Phuket.

This is one of my favorite times of the year in Phuket, near the end of the dry season. There are billowing thunderhead clouds that roam across the sky, held aloft by thermal convection cells. Every few days there are showers that cleanse the air and invigorate the spirit.

Eagles, hawks and vultures seem more prevalent at this time of year. Tiny kestrels dive upon cicadas. Merlins, larger than Kestrels, capture mice in the grass around our pond.

Vultures sweep down to feed on Phuket's abundant road-kill and Serpent Eagles soar from the forest with cobras in their talons.

If you are at the beach, you can watch White-bellied Sea Eagles grab small fish from the water's surface and Brahminy Kites scavenge discarded chicken skins tossed overboard by boat cooks. Ospreys, too, hunt along the near-island shores for fish.

In northern California, where we live when we are not in Phuket, there are Ospreys,

Keeping an eye out for Phuket's birds of prey

EARTH WATCH

By Robert Cogen

sometimes called fish hawks, big Buteos, both Bald and Golden Eagles, Kestrels, previously called Sparrow Hawks, and vultures.

The Yurok, our local Native American tribe, call the vulture "the first sign of Spring" because this bird migrates South out of our area during the Fall to return at Winter's end.

But for me, the most splendid sight is watching several species riding up the warm thermal elevators with motionless wings, patiently waiting until they reach an altitude that allows them to glide over the hills to their chosen destination.

On a good afternoon on my balcony, armed with binoculars

and fortified with a cold beer, I can watch half-a-dozen species soaring: Buteos, Black Vultures, different hawks and eagles all rising together before peeling off individually and sailing away.

At the same time, a Black Baza will dive off a branch into an adjacent tree's foliage to grab a large cicada.

Black Bazas, insect-eating hawks with distinctive topknots, are winter visitors; we have two pairs that we see for two or three months each year.

There is also a big Osprey that has an appetite for our neighbor's farmed koi fish, a kind of carp. The farmer shows admirable restraint, however, leaving the Osprey alone even though he has spent thousands of baht on his ponds – raising fish is one of his passions.

On dive trips I have occasionally seen fishing boats with a White-bellied Sea Eagle pacing the deck. Fishermen capture

them, feed them until they are too fat to fly, then give them the run of the boat, where they pick up fish scraps.

After a while, they will reduce the bird's intake until it is able to fly away. I am told that some birds hang around boats for weeks or months on end as temporary pets, continuing to enjoy handouts.

Both Northern Harriers (called Marsh Hawks in northern California) and Peregrine Falcons prey on smaller birds. It's quite a sight when the hawk captures its prey, takes it to the top of a pole or dead limb, tears it apart and eats it.

Hawks and eagles nest in the high branches atop trees, cliff ledges and in other elevated places. Usually two or three chicks are raised. In many cases, older hatchlings will drive their weaker siblings from the nest to their death.

One hawk that I have never

yet seen in Thailand is the Bat Hawk, so I can only presume that its habits are similar to its American cousins. Around dusk, this hawk takes up its position on a limb or rock outcrop at the mouth of a cave.

I once watched a Bat Hawk at work at the Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico, one of the greatest cave systems in the world. As the bats streamed out of the cave's mouth for their nocturnal feeding, the hawk dove through the colony and plucked out one of its members with its sharp talons for its first course. It repeated this until its appetite was satisfied.

At least one species of Bat Hawk has been spotted in the Hala Bala Wildlife Sanctuary, a 160-square-kilometer protected forest located along the Thai-Malaysian border in Yala and Narathiwat provinces.

Phuket and its nearby islands have excellent spots to watch hawks, eagles and other raptors, so take advantage for your own enjoyment and education.

Robert Cogen is a well-known California lawyer and a broadly experienced naturalist with a degree in zoology. Email: indepth@asis.com.

Working out what's good for you, and what's not

We continue our alphabetical health advice with D and E. Please remember, this is just a guide and shouldn't take the place of professional medical advice.

Vitamin D. The medical profession has warned of the dangers of over-exposure to the sun for years but there is growing concern that the anti-sun movement is contributing to another health problem – vitamin D deficiency.

Vitamin D is essential for developing and maintaining strong teeth and bones, preventing rickets and osteoporosis. But insufficient levels of vitamin D may be linked to an increased risk of type 1 diabetes, and muscle and bone pain. Vitamin D also keeps cell growth in check – too little and cells can multiply, potentially leading to cancerous tumors.

Sunscreen, so good at protecting skin from harmful rays, prevents sufficient synthesizing of sunlight into vitamin D.

Between 20% and 80% of Americans have such low levels of vitamin D as to be classed as vitamin D-deficient. A daily 10-

15 minutes sunscreen-free exposure to sunlight – our main "source" of vitamin D – on bare shoulders, arms and legs every day is now recommended.

It is possible to get vitamin D through diet or dietary supplements but a glass of fortified orange juice or milk contains just 100 international units (IU) of vitamin D while multivitamin tablets typically contain up to 400 IU. Oily fish is a great source of vitamin D. Herring packs 765 IU per 85-gram serving but even this is topped by cod liver oil with 1360 IU in each tablespoonful.

Dark meat. All these years we've been told to avoid the dark meats because of the high fat content, but now experts say you shouldn't feel guilty about wanting to go over to the dark side. Dark meat also contains more iron – an essential element for the transportation of oxygen through the blood.

Meat has generally become leaner in recent years to the extent that pork is essentially now a white meat. Beef, notably flank and most steaks, have also lost much of their fattiness but rib-eye steaks – or any meat with visible

fat marbling – should be reserved for special occasions only.

Skinless chicken thighs are often a cheaper and tastier alternative to chicken breasts and contain only marginally more fat and calories than white meat. Remember that most of the fat in poultry is just under the skin. Removing the skin before cooking also removes most of the fat.

The Atkins Diet – a product that Fitness-R-Us promotes as a limited-time regime – has excited many a health-conscious person and led to quick and safe weight



Fitness FANATIC

By Joe and Pensri Lewis

loss. But people following this diet are now advised to limit the amount of red meat and saturated fats they consume.

Devotees of this diet had previously been told to eat liberal amounts of steak, eggs, butter and other foods high in saturated fats, and the diet was famed for its "eat-all-the-meat-you-can" philosophy. But Atkins aficionados were also told to bolster their diet with other foods, although the message didn't really come across. Atkins dietary consultants say that only 20% of a dieters' calories should come from saturated fats.

It is still a high-fat diet and the change in the regimen stems from fierce competition with other low-carb diets. Revisions to the Atkins Diet will now educate people with regard to recommended amounts of saturated and unsaturated fats – with the consumption of chicken and fish being emphasized more.

Diindolylmethane (DIM) is a natural compound found in broccoli, cabbage, turnips, mustard greens and other cruciferous vegetables may not just prevent cancer, but might also cure it too. Re-

searchers looked at various compounds that protect a person from developing cancer and specifically at compounds that block the growth of cancerous cells – particularly the PPAR gamma protein, highly active in fat cells. A chemically-modified version of DIM was found to prevent cancers and successfully treat them once diagnosed – in mice. Natural DIM is available as an anti-cancer supplement but further studies are needed before chemically-altered – and potentially far more potent – DIM is released for human use.

Eggs are an inexpensive, high-quality source of protein yet have suffered a serious image problem for 30 years having been vilified for their high cholesterol content.

Back then, cholesterol was the only issue. Now we know that there is good and bad cholesterol, good fats and bad fats. Researchers' understanding of heart disease – and cholesterol's role in it – has changed. So too has their opinion of the humble egg, which is not as damaging to the cardiovascular system as once thought.

However, egg yolks contain a large amount of cholesterol but if one does not consume a lot of animal fats, then an egg can be included in a daily diet.

But if you are eating a considerable amount of cholesterol-laden animal fat, then it's a good idea to limit eggs, take the yolk out and use the whites only, or use an egg substitute.

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

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An old-fashioned swashbuckler

Along with a mob of others in the wake of Russell Crowe's swashbuckler movie *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World*, I went looking for the novels of Patrick O'Brian, on which the film is based.

Master and Commander is the first in the 20-novel series. *The Far Side of the World* is the fourth. The plots of the two tales were merged to form the screenplay.

At Bangkok's Neilson Hays Library, I was lucky to find a yellowing old copy of *Master and Commander* (Collins, London, 1970, 350pp). I was even more fortunate in finding an appropriate venue

to read it: aboard the 47-foot ketch *Emerald Blue* during the two-week Andaman Sea Rally.

Somehow the abundance of early 19th-century nautical terms did not seem a hindrance while we were scudding along under sail in magnificent wind.

It also helps that I wasted much of my childhood building model sailing ships – something girls never seemed to bother with, cutting the likely reader-ship of this sea saga in half.

The novel opens in 1800 with the meeting of Captain Jack Aubrey, who has been in the British Navy since the age of 13, and Dr Stephen Maturin, Irish by birth but brought up in Catalonia before getting his surgeon's degree in Dublin.

They are at a harp performance by Molly Harte, the wife of the dyspeptic Admiral Harte. Jack Aubrey is carrying on a tumultuous affair with Molly Harte which is not helping his promotion prospects.

Nonetheless, he is entrusted with the command of a slow old sloop named *Sophie* and given the duty of escorting merchant convoys in the Mediterranean Sea, protecting them against the French and Spanish navies and Algerian pirates.

He persuades Maturin to accompany him as ship's surgeon and the doctor's education about shipboard life, jargon and sailing technology serves as the reader's, too. Much comedy is wrung from his clumsiness.

"He drew on his breeches as fast as he could and, straightening briskly, he brought his head up against a beam with

such force that he staggered and sank on to a locker, cherishing it with both hands.

"A voice was speaking to him. 'What did you say?' he asked, peering through a mist of pain.

"I said, 'Did you bump your head, sir?'"

"Yes," said Stephen, looking at his hand: astonishingly it was not covered with blood – there was not so much as a smear.

"It's these old beams, sir" – in the unusually distinct, didactic voice used at sea for landlubbers and on terra firma for halfwits – "You want to take care of them; for – they – are – very – low."

There are many colorful, old-salt characters in the crew, but the real focus of the novel is the relationship between Aubrey and Maturin.

It is a friendship laced with stark contrasts – the bluff man of action and the contemplative scholar – and grand good humor. The pair drink and dine and play music together and engage in uproarious repartee.

If the book has a fault, it is the 110 pages that O'Brian takes to introduce *Sophie's* crew and the technical details of her refitting before her first sea battle.

But this is brilliantly described then topped by subsequent chapters devoted to a nighttime raid of a Spanish coastal fort and the audacious taking of a Spanish frigate.

As the *Sophie* is given license to prey on enemy shipping and enrich captain and crew by taking prizes, the action scenes follow one after another in a thrilling succession.

Then suddenly Aubrey is forced to surrender *Sophie* before the onslaught of a trio of French frigates. Paroled back to the British in a prisoner exchange, Aubrey must face a court martial that could end his naval career. With 19 more novels to go, the verdict is not much of a surprise.

In my adolescence, I avidly read the *Hornblower* adventure series by CS Forester, which covers the British navy during the same period, the Napoleonic era.

But this creative series by Patrick O'Brian is more for grown-ups, with wit and irony and complex human relationships. I really look forward to reading more of the saga.



Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt

Monthly newsletter: Parish of St Fumble in the Wardrobe

To all our dear, humble brothers and sisters of St Fumble's, it is my great pleasure to go down in a state of supplication and introduce myself to you as your new Bishop, a guiding light to steer you along the path of righteousness and urge you all forward in the propagation of the faith.

Here in Pattaya, as we know so well, fighting the good fight is an uphill battle. As your shepherd, I am keenly aware of the temptations placed before my flock.

Next Sunday, we will be celebrating the Feast Day of St Smegma the Felcher, and it is with great pride that I announce we will be graced by the presence of the Very Reverend Farquhar Buzzard, who will read several inspiring passages from the Scriptures.

Some of you will be aware that the Rev Buzzard was accused some months ago by the local constabulary of fiddling with a choirboy.

These charges have since been dropped. Forensic tests showed that the stains on the Reverend's sacristy garments were the residue of Carnation milk spilt in exuberance over a bowl of Cornflakes and not the "seed of life" as first claimed by the misguided young lad.

It is to be hoped the boy and his impoverished parents will appreciate the funds donated by the Rev Buzzard to help them make the necessary extensions to their humble abode to make it liveable for humans as well as livestock.

Because this is my first newsletter to you, I should like to draw on a couple of texts from the Holy Book in order to give inspiration to those who may occasionally waver from the path of righteousness and stumble into the clutches of women of easy virtue.

Indeed, many of you may, in the past, have entered into meretricious relationships, so I feel that this text, from the First Book of Timothy (Chapter 2; 11-



FROM THE STREETS OF PATTAYA

By Duncan Stearn

14) will help: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."

Pattaya may seem like the Garden of Eden, but this passage makes it clear that you must beware the poison fruit disguised in the sweet talk of the gyrating, young, nubile, firm-bodied, ample-breasted, long-legged, sloe-eyed nymphets who caress the chrome poles in seductive and wanton fashion in our myriad dens of iniquity.

I always find an hour or so of self-flagellation and a cold shower after evangelizing in Walking Street helps keep impure thoughts at bay.

It should be noted that within the apostolate it is known that Pattaya is a haven for those who describe themselves as "gay". It is such a pity to see what was once a simple word hijacked by those about whom the Lord's

book declares: "If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them." (Leviticus Chapter 20; 13).

Unfortunately, it is not possible for members of the congregation to take up the sword, as putting people to death while invoking the Good Book is generally frowned upon by the authorities.

Next Tuesday afternoon the church organist, Miss Dorothy Shagwell, will be hosting her usual Cooking Thai Food for Christ classes just inside the church door near the Holy Water tap. Ladies, kindly bring a plate and wear sensible shoes.

We know that sin is all about us, so it is most imperative that we meet it head-on. Next Wednesday afternoon at 4:30 pm I would like to see as many of the flock as possible assembling in front of the Angels Bar in Soi 6 for a short session of proselytizing.

In the early evening, we shall then make our way down Beach Rd to the Heaven's Door bar in Soi 7. We will then move on into the Second Road and conclude our ministrations at the Cloud 9 bar, near Soi 9.

At each location, we will sing hymns and have readings from the Scriptures, after which we shall partake of a tomato juice in these establishments and preach to the young maidens in attendance, in the hope that they will come to see the error of their wicked ways.

Bishop Sylvester Smarm

Riding a motorcycle? Please . . .



Thai law requires that motorcycle drivers and passengers wear a safety helmet with the chin strap fastened at all times – 24 hours a day.



PHUKET PROVINCIAL
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

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Issues
& Answers

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Digital extraction required

After much ballyhooing of the Phuket Cyber Paradise concept, which goes back nearly four years, the first real step was taken this week when the Phuket office of the Software Industry Promotion Agency (Sipa) opened in Saphan Hin.

But it may be some time before Cyber Paradise is achieved. A large part of the reason is the continuing existence of state or semi-state monopolies that are to provide much of the infrastructure, including the Communications Authority of Thailand (CAT), the Telephone Organization of Thailand (TOT) and Thai Telephone and Telegraph (TT&T). The name of the last of these gives a clue as to just how far things must go before Cyber Paradise is feasible – how long is it since anyone used the telegraph in Thailand?

The dead hand of CAT also dominates Thailand's Internet Service Providers (ISPs). They are still, by law, obliged to have the CAT as a partner.

Anyone who uses the Internet regularly in Phuket will have experienced the deterioration of service in the past year or so. Where 56k connections once could be relied on to provide 40k service, it is now rare to get log-on speeds above 20k.

Those who opted first for the ISDN digital connection system then upgraded to the superior ADSL format experienced improvements in service. Then these links, too, deteriorated. ADSL in particular caused problems: networked offices found that dropped ADSL connections could also crash their network servers. Leased lines, though more reliable, are still expensive.

It is not easy to determine who is responsible for this. The service providers blame the telephone companies for installing poor lines while the phone companies blame the ISPs for trying to jam too many subscribers into too little bandwidth.

There have been promises from CAT and TOT that Phuket will be equipped with an Internet gateway and that people living in certain parts of the island will gain high-speed connections as a result.

One has to wonder, however, how soon these modest aims will be achieved, especially as the *Gazette* continues to hear tales of woe from companies who find their phone and Internet connections cut and must spend weeks cajoling surly phone company employees to restore them, or even to acknowledge that there is a problem.

This is one aspect of the economy that the Prime Minister could rectify. Take the approach of the US to its Ma Bell monopoly.

By break up the monolith, allowing open competition and dragging CAT out of the ISPs business, prices would fall and service improve. If changes are not made, we could well be looking at Cyber Paradise Lost.

– 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.

Tiger cub used as tourism prop

I recently visited the Phuket Fantasea show in Kamala. It was a spectacular and professional show.

It was easy to see that the animals used in the show were well-fed and cared for. Whether elephants, tigers, goats, etc, their time on stage was limited and they were removed as soon as their act was complete and returned to their living quarters.

However, my friends and I found it disturbing that a young tiger cub was being used in the main lobby as a photographic prop for tourists. It was being manhandled by two staff and was being set on the laps of tourists for about 10 seconds, then moved.

We could clearly see it was disturbed by the crowd and noise.

Is it really necessary to use a magnificent wild animal, which is already globally endangered, as a prop for tourists?

Phuket FantaSea's show is professional and well worth the price of admission, but I don't think they need to treat tiger cubs in this way.

Alistair Beveridge
Chalong

Sirikul Amaramorn, Phuket Fantasea's Deputy Director of Public Relations, replies:

This is the first letter of complaint about the treatment of the tiger cub that we have received.

Most tourists enjoy the opportunity to have their photo taken with the cub, which is why a long queue sometimes forms.

The animal is taken care of strictly in accordance with the law and has a keeper assigned to look after it at all times.

We do understand that some conservationists find using a wild animals in this way alarming, but at Phuket FantaSea we do try to raise public awareness as to the plight of endangered species, of which the tiger is just one example.

Because the cub is just two months old, it has not yet developed nails or teeth. It is not a safety threat to tourists and it has never tried to bite or otherwise cause harm to visitors.

When it reaches two years of age, it will be sent to Safari world in Bangkok, which has more appropriate facilities for taking care of an adult tiger.

Silly approach taken to motoring offenses

It seems that the Thai government wants fewer tourists next season. This week I saw police on Prachanukroh Road stopping every person on a motorbike and giving them a ticket for not wearing a helmet or not having a license.

The government doesn't seem to understand that most tourists who come to Thailand enjoy driving and that many of them don't have a special motorbike license.

I agree that people should get a fine if they don't wear a helmet or drive drunk, but to fine tourists for not having a license when driving a "small" motorbike is looking for trouble.

If the government feels obligated to trouble someone, it

should be those who rent out motorbikes; they rent motorbikes to people without asking for a license or even mentioning that one will be needed. They think only about the money, not about what will happen when people start to drive and are stopped by the police.

For starters, it would be a good idea to put up a large sign at the airport that reads, "Don't rent a motorbike or a car if you don't have a license."

Go on Thailand – drive yourself out of the market.

Ray Lukassen
Netherlands

Now the good news

I would like to commend the security staff at the Tesco-Lotus for their rapid and professional response to an accident I had in their store recently.

I tripped and fell, resulting in a severely gashed forehead. Within minutes I was placed in a wheelchair, padded up with tissues and taken to the store's medical center, where the staff nurse examined me and assessed my injury as requiring stitches.

The store manager immediately arranged for a car to deliver me to the Phuket International Hospital, accompanied by a member of her staff.

My wife and I would like to thank the staff of both Tesco-Lotus and the International Hospital for their efficient and professional efforts. Their concern and friendly manner were the embodiment of Thai hospitality, for which we offer our sincere thanks.

Dennis and Edna Matthews

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.

Press club head seeks better ethics among journalists

The Phuket Reporters' Club has about 70 members, about half of them local reporters working for Bangkok-based media, including TV and radio stations as well as newspapers.

Others work for the local media, for foreign media, or for foreign-language media, including French and German.

It's hard to guide the members. The PRC does not want to get involved directly in their work – we can't do that. They are the ones who must make the decisions about what to report and how to report it.

Reporters work in a variety of different ways. Few have formal training in journalism. Some of them fall into the business by chance, so most of them were trained on the job. Some are not trained properly. Such reporters tend to be less responsible, and that is not good.

I believe our role as journalists is to help society to develop. I also want to develop the PRC so that it works to this end.

The basis on which reporters are paid affects how they work. Some receive a salary, low or high, depending on their employer's policy.

Some of them have to work as reporters and sell advertising at the same time. Some are freelancers or "stringers", paid



only when their stories are published.

Freelancers prefer "fashionable" topics, or "hot" issues, because publications are more likely to print these. It is tempting for them to make a story more colorful, more exciting, so that it is more likely to be published and they will get paid.

I believe all reporters should keep in mind how a story will affect society, but some may overlook this because they have been offered money or other benefits.

In the case of reporters writing for big newspapers, they don't have to worry about lawsuits because any trouble like that is dealt with by the publication, which always wins in court.

Journalists' ethics in Thailand came under fire recently after a report was published in a Thai-language national newspaper that a man in Phuket had contracted avian flu and that 100 chickens had died of the disease. None of this was true.

The incident highlighted concern over the fact that some journalists' reports are deliberately inaccurate or are inflated to excite the reader's interest.

Perapong Pholpramul, who became President of the Phuket Reporters' Club (PRC) on March 5, explains what causes reporters' ethical standards to lapse, and gives his view on what ethical reporting is and why it is crucial for reporters to adhere to the standards.

FIRST PERSON

The media is the gatekeeper of information. Reporters present information from a real situation to the public, and most people make decisions based on this information. Depending on the information reporters choose to give the public, it's possible that people will get useless, distorted information.

The media should present both sides of any controversial issue. If they don't, one side stands to be victimized. One-sided stories are unethical because they lay people open to criticism by society. The media should be aware of the likely effects after a story is published.

Media companies these days are often more interested in making a profit than in the effect

their stories have on society, and in particular the effect they have on the people mentioned in the stories.

Some reporters don't check their facts. Some also use deception when questioning sources, leaving the source in trouble after publication. They may also take advantage of a situation by causing two sides to fight, without having to take responsibility. This is wrong. All sources should be treated with respect.

Some reporters promote views they subscribe to. That is wrong; we cannot do that. We should not try to control the way people think. Reporters must not make decisions for other people.

Other reporters are for sale to those who want them to write

favorable stories. Some people get close to reporters in order to use the reporters to their own advantage.

We all know that accepting money to write a story in Phuket happens all the time, but not all reporters accept bribes; it is shameful to do so. Reporters should always be able to justify what they do.

All media companies need to make a profit, but we reporters must consider carefully the stories we write. They must not be distorted, nor must they be written without consideration of our responsibility to society. Yes, we need to take the company's financial health into consideration, but without compromising our ethics.

Nobody home but us chickens

I have noticed that a new farm has been built behind the The Sands Holiday Resort in Nai Harn and is being stocked with many many chickens and ducks in what seems to be an attempt to hide them from the authorities.

Is this farm legal? If so, are they following health guidelines in view of the bird 'flu epidemic sweeping Asia.

Ian May
Hong Kong

Sunart Wongchawalit, Chief of the Phuket Provincial Livestock Office (PPLO), replies:

Our officers have inspected the farm and found that no regulations for keeping livestock were being contravened.

Please note that Thais are legally entitled to keep chickens as pets or for personal consumption, as long as they first have permission from the the local Tambon Administration Organization (*OrBorTor*)

Kittipong Maneesri, Chief Administrative Officer of Rawai OrBorTor replies:

We did not know about the farm and we have not given permission for a farm to be established there.

I have ordered the Phu Yai Baan (village chief) for that vil-

lage to have all livestock removed from that property for environmental health reasons.

Huanlai Sae-tan, Phu Yai Baan of Moo 1, Rawai, reports:

I received the order to have all animals removed from that property on February 10.

The next day I went and ordered the man keeping the chickens and ducklings there to remove them. They are now gone.

Which TEFL training schools are licensed?

I would like to do a TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) course in Phuket.

There seem to be many schools that claim they are the only *real* TEFL course providers on the island.

Which schools in Phuket offer genuine TEFL courses that are valid for employment at any language, government or international school in Thailand or abroad?

Teffly Confused
Chalong

Penkae Kunpai, Officer at the Phuket Provincial Education Office, replies:

There are five language in-

stitutes or schools in Phuket that have been approved by the Thai Education Ministry to provide TEFL courses.

They are:

TEFL Teacher Training (Phuket)
48/10 Moo 9, Chao Fa East Rd, Chalong.
Tel/fax: 076-383925-7.
Mobile: 07-0802759.
Email: tefl@loxinfo.co.th

Via Lingua Phuket
367/11-12 Yaowarat Rd, Phuket City.
Tel/fax: 076-236306.
Email: info@teflcourse.net

Patong Language School

5/19-20, Haad Patong Rd, Patong.
Tel: 076-340373.

Text-And-Talk Academy (Phuket)
15 Prachanukroh Rd, Patong.
Tel: 076-294485-6.
Tel/fax: 076-346188.

Anna's Language School
116 Phisit Gorani Rd, Patong.
Tel: 076-296372.
Fax: 076-296423.
Email: info@phuket-anna.com

(Note: The course offered at the Anna's Language School branch on the bypass road has not yet been approved.)

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.

Write to: The Phuket Gazette, 367/2 Yaowarat Rd, Muang, Phuket 83000. Fax 076-213971, or submit your issue at www.phuketgazette.net

Spouse's house

Two years ago, my Thai wife bought a house and the land under it, leasing both to me for 15 years.

My concern is two-fold: First, if my wife should pass away before me, do I have to vacate the land and house or can I remain there under the terms of the lease? I'm concerned that my extended Thai family can force me to vacate.

Secondly, I purchased everything in our home and consider these items and my car to be the property of my wife when I pass away. Is it possible to make a will to cover and safeguard the above concerns or is there a law preventing this?

A N Other

Sam Fauma of the International Law Office replies:

If your lease contract is registered at the Land Department you are secure for the whole term of the agreement. If the lease is not registered, then what happens should your wife predecease you depends on how the lease agreement is structured.

Your wife should also consider having a will drawn up, in which she would appoint you as executor and as the rights receiver for the property.

As for the car and other items, you yourself can make a will in which you can distribute any of your assets however you wish, without restriction.

Outlook – a marriage for better or worse

Three weeks ago I wrote about re-conditioning old, tired Outlook storage files – so-called PST files – which have an unnerving tendency to swell and bring Outlook to its knees. I was amazed at the volume of mail I received asking about all sorts of Outlook difficulties.

I wasn't surprised that you folks had problems; Outlook is riddled with design glitches, bugs, and things that go bump in the night. What really startled me was how many of you rely on Outlook to get your work done and, most surprising of all, how many of you are either using Outlook 2003 or are considering installing it.

Personally, I think Outlook's still a great choice. Even my staunch Eudora friends are ready to throw in the towel; the people I know who are stuck with Lotus Notes tend to use descriptive terms like "cesspool", "piece of junk" and others euphemisms that aren't quite as printable.

Pegasus chokes and dies unexpectedly on simple formatted messages. The Bat! works great, from what I hear, but it's not very versatile. If you can't make do with Yahoo or Hotmail (discussed last week), and AOL and MSN don't cut the mustard (think of training wheels with ads), the only email programs left standing are Outlook Express – which suffices for most people with light email requirements – and Outlook, the 800-pound gorilla.

Personally, I use Outlook 2003, and I swear by it. And at it. Outlook 2003 is the only good reason I've found to upgrade to Office 2003. If you're thinking of moving to Outlook 2003, here's what you need to know – the stuff you won't find in the glossy brochures and breathless reviews.

While it's possible to install Outlook 2003 all by itself, with or without an earlier version of Office, I don't recommend it. Outlook 2003 needs Word 2003 to create email messages. The

other links between Outlook 2003 and earlier versions of Word are tenuous at best. So if you want Outlook 2003, you need Office 2003.

Outlook 2003 uses a vastly improved version of the PST file that drives users of earlier Outlook versions nuts – but there's a hitch. If you install Office 2003 over the top of an existing copy of Office, you get stuck with the old-fashioned, unstable PST file.

In fact, if you save all your data, re-format your hard drive, install Windows XP and Office 2003, then copy your old data back, you'll still get stuck with the old PST file format.

The only way to ensure that you have a new-style PST file is to start Outlook 2003 without an outlook.pst file that was created by an earlier version of Outlook.

In practical terms, if you're using an older version of Outlook, you need to re-name your old outlook.pst file, then start Outlook 2003, let it create a new outlook.pst file.

Finally, open the old outlook.pst file and copy across anything that you need. There are detailed instructions on copying old messages (including the inbox), contacts, appointments and the like at www.woodyswatch.com/wowmm/archtemplate.asp?v3-n17.

Outlook 2003 and 2002 block certain files attached to email messages: if a friend sends you an .exe file, for example, Outlook 2003 will prevent you from getting at the file. It's a draconian approach to email security that keeps you from double-clicking on infected files.

If you're smart enough to avoid double-clicking on files that may not be good for you, Ken Slovak has a neat free utility called ATTOPT (www.slovaktech.com) that lets you choose which files get swallowed by the Outlook monster.

Outlook 2003 and 2002 have an annoying habit of popping up a message that says "A program is trying to access email addresses you have stored in Outlook. Do you want to allow this? If this is unexpected, it may

be a virus and you should choose "No."

That message appears whenever a program tries to get at one of your Outlook Contacts, and there's no way for you to tell Outlook which programs are okay and which might be bad. (Programmers can work around the problem, but it isn't easy.)

You're stuck with the pathetic "Allow access for n minutes" kludge that turns off Outlook's guardian program for a fixed amount of time.

Many of you would like to share your Outlook Contacts and/or Calendar folders among several users – after all, that's what networks are for, aren't they?

Outlook 2002 and 2003 do not allow you to share contacts among multiple PCs. There was a feature called Net Folders in Outlook 2000, but Microsoft decided to do away with the feature in Office XP.

KHUN WOODY'S COMPUTER

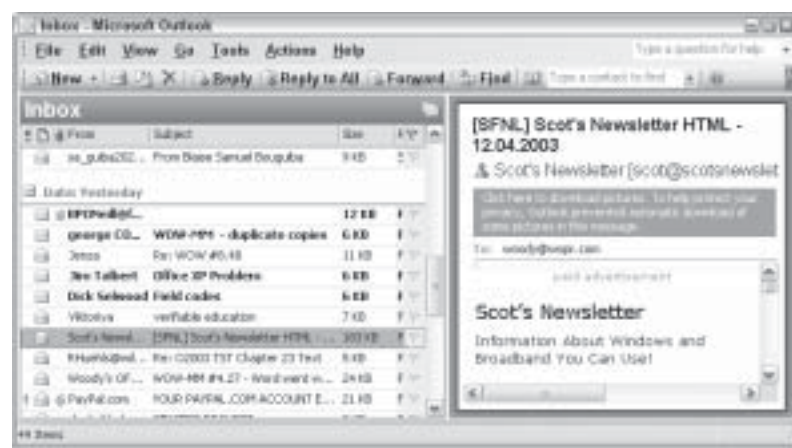
57 varieties of political

The American public has recently discovered the role that India and other countries are playing in their economy. In a Presidential election year, the Democratic Party hopefuls are all making as much political capital as possible out of the "outsourcing" of jobs in the computer field and also in call service centres. Much is also being said about the loss of manufacturing jobs.

The Democrats' leading presidential hopeful is Senator John Kerry who continually preaches against the evils of "outsourcing". It all makes for wonderful political rhetoric.

I wonder how many American voters watched an interview with a spokesman of the American Enterprise Institute, televised recently on CNN?

In the interview it was revealed that John Kerry's family are major shareholders in HJ Heinz (of the 57 varieties). The 57 varieties is an interesting and



Outlook 2003 down to work as a lean, mean email machine.

Of course, Microsoft wants you to buy Exchange Server, which allows you to designate folders as being shared and lets you set permission levels, and so on.

But Exchange Server is a pain in the neck. The best synopsis of the situation (with a bunch of not-very-good workarounds) that I know is at www.slipstick.com/outlook/share.htm

Finally, when you set up Outlook 2003, don't overlook the Alt+F1 key combination, which

brings up the folder list or hides it in a flash. (See the screen shot for an idea of how you can strip Outlook 2003 down to a lean, mean email machine.)

If you tell Outlook 2003 to show single lines on the left for each incoming message, then press Alt+F1 to get the folder list out of the way, the new Outlook 2003 user interface can help you whiz through email much faster than in any previous version.

– Woody Leonhard
woody@khunwoody.com

MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson



ironic figure; Heinz has 57 manufacturing plants outside the US, compared with 22 inside the US.

It is to be hoped that all this hot air about "outsourcing" does not bring about any misguided attempt to penalize companies that move in this direction. This would be certain to cause higher prices for goods and services and reduce corporate profits.

It is important to bear in mind that share prices depend on profits. Higher profits also mean more tax for the US government, which is always important but particularly so when the current huge budget deficit is taken into consideration.

In addition, companies with rising profits are more likely to hire new staff. US unemployment at its peak in the recent downturn reached 6.4%. It has now fallen to 5.6%. Neither figure is exactly a train wreck. Obviously, the US economy is far better managed than some, if not all, of its Euro Zone counterparts.

Unemployment in Germany, for example, is still over 10%. With Germany being the world's third-largest economy, this is not encouraging. Unemployment in Italy is close to 9%. France is just under 10%, Spain is over 11% and Belgium is over 12%.

In Germany Gerhard Schroeder has kept his position as Chancellor but has lost the leadership of his political party, the Social Democrats. This does

not bode well for the future of the very necessary structural economic changes that he was implementing.

Germany is finding it difficult to achieve even anemic economic growth figures. It may (if one is optimistic)

manage 1% growth this year, which is not the sort of growth required to put a dent in unemployment. The situation in France is marginally better, with the emphasis on "marginally".

DEFICIT WOES: There is a lot of talk about the US budget deficit and certainly it is far too high. The recent announcement by President George W Bush about more megabillions to be spent over the coming decades on space exploration is indicative of an administration that is not taking the deficit seriously enough.

The solution, as Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Federal Reserve, stated recently, is not to raise taxes (except, in his words, as a last resort) but to curb government spending.

Greenspan's biggest worry is the continuing increases in the cost of medical care. Medical costs in the US are incredibly high. In other countries, it is often argued that doctors should be paid more in order to stop them emigrating to the US.

American doctors have nowhere better to emigrate to, unless perhaps they are prepared to learn Japanese, so higher prices are the only way they will see increased income.

TRADE PROBLEMS: Europe is finding that the weak US dollar is making trade increasingly dif-

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Phuket set to be regional center for furniture sales

By Supaporn Sriprom

PHUKET: The island's retail furniture industry has expanded dramatically in the past two decades, and Phuket now seems poised to become a regional center for home furnishings, supplying not only Phuket but also neighboring provinces.

Two major new players have entered the Phuket furniture and fittings market in as many years, and a third is set to join them soon. All three are on the bypass road.

The first was the Thai company Home Products Center, better known by its trade name HomePro, which opened for business in the Tesco-Lotus mall in June, 2002.

Then, in April last year, British group Courts opened its 100-million-baht megastore on

the bypass road to the north of Tesco-Lotus.

The third major entrant will be Index Furniture, a Thai furniture chain with 21 branches nationwide, which is currently constructing its latest branch close to the Phuket International Hospital.

Pornpen Nakapong, HomePro's customer service section manager, said Phuket's booming economy made the province a natural choice for her company's first outlet in southern Thailand.

HomePro's current sales are up 20% on the previous year, she said, with home appliances and bathroom and lighting lines being the best performers. The company is now considering opening a second outlet in the South.

K. Pornpen said the store had no intention of competing with the island's many low-cost furniture stores. HomePro stocks only high-quality brands, she said, and the store's customer loyalty "among discerning foreign residents" reflected this fact.

Courts is new to Thailand, and is using Phuket as a beachhead for its assault on the Thai market. The furniture and home electrical equipment retailer hopes to expand into surrounding provinces over the next few years before reaching a "critical mass" that will position it to break into the Bangkok market.

New though it may be to Thailand, Courts already has an impressive record elsewhere in Asia. Through its regional headquarters in Singapore, where it now has 12 outlets, it has opened 70 stores in Malaysia and 22 more in Indonesia. Globally, the company has 330 stores in 220 countries with total annual sales of US\$1 billion.

The Index store in Phuket will be on a much larger scale than Courts, involving more than twice the investment. Jarinporn Patamasapayasonthi, Assistant Vice-President of Marketing, told the *Gazette* that the store, now under construction, will cost 200-250 million baht and is intended to serve as Index's flagship outlet for the South.

When completed, the store – which Index refers to as a "Liv-



The arrival of HomePro in the Tesco-Lotus mall signaled the beginning of a new era in furniture retailing in Phuket.

ing Mall" – will be the company's second-largest showroom in the country. K. Jarinporn said the island's tourism-based economy and new hotel projects were influential in the decision to site a superstore on Phuket.

When asked how Index plans to attract business in Phuket's increasingly competitive retail furniture sector, K. Jarinporn said it will target the middle- and upper-middle-income markets, attracting customers through a continuous series of promotions.

Most of Index's product lines are produced by the company's Bangkok-based parent, Bangkok Interfurn Group (BIG), which has production facilities in the capital which supplies all outlets around the country.

Apart from the 21 Index outlets, BIG has more than 100 other shops around Thailand operating under the Logica, Trend Design and Winner brands. BIG's annual domestic and international sales total around 4.5 billion baht.

In order to meet the more

exacting demands of Phuket's expatriate market, the new Index superstore will also stock imported European products, which it expects to account for about 15% of total sales.

Working through overseas agents, BIG already has furniture outlets in the Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia, Cambodia, Burma, the Maldives, India, Kenya, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Malta.

Index has international expansion plans of its own. K. Jarinporn said it hopes the Phuket showroom will help give it the international exposure it needs to achieve its ambitious long-term plan to establish a network of Index furniture stores in major cities "all over the world".

On the Move

Christina Krause, 30, has joined Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort as Director of Revenue. Of joint Thai-German origin, Ms Krause graduated with a degree in Business English from Bangkok University. Before joining Meridien, she enjoyed director-level positions with Marriott International.



Another appointment at Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort is that of French-born Thomas Barguil, 35, who becomes Food & Beverage Director. Mr Barguil is a hotel management graduate of Griffith



University on Australia's Gold Coast, and comes to Phuket from the Millenium Resort Agadir in Morocco where he was also F&B Director. He is no stranger to Thailand having worked with the Six Senses spa company at the Evason Hua Hin Resort, and at the Novotel Bangkok.

Kobkaew Kumpa, 25, from Bangkok, has been promoted to Public Relations Manager at The Metropole hotel in Phuket City. She holds a humanities degree from Ramkhamhaeng University in Bangkok and started working at The Metropole four years ago, progressing through the front office and the sales and marketing departments to her current role.



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

twisting

ficult. This is affecting not only the Euro Zone; the Pound Sterling, at current levels, is causing problems for Britain too.

Regular readers will recall, some weeks ago, the suggestion that a probable means of profit was to hold Sterling assets with an inbuilt currency hedge back to the US Dollar.

There is an increasing likelihood that Sterling is approaching its zenith against the US currency.

Patience may therefore be required before profits are realised but currency markets will turn.

OFFSHORE OUCH: Investors with bank and building society accounts in the Channel Islands and Isle of Man would be well advised to watch closely what is happening with new European legislation, scheduled to come into force in 2005.

The current proposal is that, from next year, a withholding tax of 12.5% be levied on interest earned, rising in stages to 35% in 2012. Ouch.

No final decision has been reached because of opposition, especially from EU members Belgium and Austria, as well as from non-EU members Monaco and Switzerland.

I will keep readers up to date on this very important subject. It worst comes to worst, there are alternatives.

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.

VITAL STATISTICS: COMPANY REGISTRATIONS JUMP

	Dec '03	Dec '02	% change
Limited companies registered	66	22	200%
Limited companies increasing capital	27	14	93%
Companies deregistered	33	29	14%
Limited partnerships registered	22	11	100%
Limited partnerships increasing capital	3	6	-50%
Partnerships deregistered	17	13	31%

Source: Phuket Provincial Business Development Office

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Som Tam takes line honors in Champagne Run

ANDAMAN SEA: The Rebak Champagne Run 2004 on February 28 and 29 was a race of extremes, from lulls that left the boats lurching in sloppy waters making no headway, to fresh breezes of 10 to 15 knots that sent the boats scudding across the sea.

Fifteen boats registered for the Phuket-Langkawi race, the 120-nautical-mile precursor to the Royal Langkawi Yacht Club Regatta, while others joined in unofficially.

As with most yacht races, the Champagne Run was not without a certain amount of controversy and misunderstanding; it had been announced in Phuket

that the cut-off time for finishing would be 4 pm in Malaysia, when it was in fact 6 pm.

First boat over the line, winning the Racing class, was *Som Tam Express*, skippered by Scott Donaldson, in a time of 24 hours, 55 minutes and 37 seconds.

Dai Mouse IV, skippered by Mark Hardress, won the Cruising class, while *Vertical Time*, with Bob Proulx at the helm, won the Multihull class and *First Vision*, under the command of Niels Degenkolw, was first home in the Liveaboard & Classic class.

The Royal Langkawi Yacht Club Regatta started on March 3.

— Derek Davies



Vertical Time won the Multihull class of the Rebak Champagne Run from Chalong Bay to Langkawi.

Tough coach for Thailand's tae kwon do hopefuls

By Nonthawat Disayabutra

PHUKET: One of South Korea's best known exports is a rigorous brand of martial arts known as tae kwon do – and now one of the sport's masters is guiding Thailand's bid for Olympic gold.

Tae kwon do is one of the most widely practiced martial arts in the West and has grown in popularity over the past decade in Thailand.

Helping Thailand's effort to make its mark in international competition is 31-year-old Seoul-born Choi Young Seok, who was a member of South Korea's tae kwon do team at the Olympic Games in Sydney in 2000, when Korea won three of the eight gold medals awarded in the sport.

It was the first time the ancient martial art – the name means “way of the hand and foot” – had been featured in the Olympics, and 50 countries were involved.

After the Olympics were

over, the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT) signed up Mr Choi to coach four young athletes in readiness for this year's Olympics in Athens.

Having visited Thailand in 1998, Mr Choi was eager to return and gladly accepted the position.

His Thai trainees, two boys and two girls recently passed the Olympic qualifying rounds and are bound for Athens later this year.

In Phuket for a break recently, Mr Choi spoke with the *Gazette* about some of the difficulties. “I am comfortable training others but to be successful I need to live [in Thailand] on a more permanent basis.

“If my Thai students are to compete at the top level, then they must train every day. The SAT should invest in the sport more seriously.”

Because he must fly back to Seoul once every few months, Mr Choi says that a regular train-

ing pattern cannot be established.

“It's impossible for them to practice continuously. If these Thai athletes are to compete successfully, this pattern must change,” he explained.

The Korean coach also said that there were small communication gaps between him, his staff and the students, but that he is learning Thai as fast as he can.

“It would be better if I could speak Thai fluently,” he admitted. “That would be helpful in making the practice sessions run faster and more smoothly.”

Mr Choi said that Europeans are also interested in tae kwon do but that Asians have an edge in the sport.

“Westerners have good physiques and practice hard,” he said. “People from Spain, Venezuela, Italy and many other countries have shown an aptitude for the sport.

“Asians have an advantage, however, in that they can complete movements faster because

their bodies are smaller.”

Mr Choi said he was interested in coaching in Thailand on a permanent basis, but that this would depend on the success of the athletes he is teaching now.

“Perhaps, if they are victorious, the SAT will hire me for a longer term,” he laughed.

Mr Choi's training sessions are reported to be very tough. He explained that tae kwon do in South Korea is practiced with great intensity.

The basic elements of the training sessions are punching, kicking, defending and attacking. “I won't just let them punch, hook or kick as Thai coaches always do. That's wrong. I teach them *how* to kick.”

Mr Choi said, “In my class we never laugh, play, chat, sit, or do anything other than what I order. Practice is never more than three hours but during that time I require them to concentrate only on what I teach them. After class, we are friends.”

“Compared to the Thai training, we practice 100 times harder. We keep ourselves fit by practicing every day for at least three hours,” he said.

Mr Choi said the four members of the Thai squad have worked hard and must continue to do so until the Olympics.

“The two girls have a better chance of winning,” he said. “The two males are good but their competitors are very tough. We will try anyway,” he said, not without hope.



No laughing during training: tae kwon do coach Choi Young Seok.

While the interview was taking place, representatives from the Dragon Gym, where tae kwon do athletes train in Phuket City, asked Mr Choi if he would coach youngsters there once a month.

“Okay, why not?” he replied, “I will be here once a month to train them. But I have to check to find a proper time and then I'll let get in touch with you again.”

Knowing Mr Choi's dedication to his sport, the students of Dragon Gym should prepare themselves for a real learning experience.

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Bad news for reporters

SAPHAN HIN: More than 60 local teams kicked off a six-day tournament last week in the Phuket Villa Soccer 2004 competition.

The beach tourney, organized by the Phuket Reporters' Club (PRC), was the 14th such annual contest of fast-paced, four-a-side, 30-minute games.

The first match went Team Jirasit's way in a thrilling 3-2 victory over the PRC's Media team.

Jirasit went one-up after three minutes but Media came back in the 10th to level the scores. Media's joy proved short-lived with Jirasit taking the lead again just 60 seconds later.

A free kick in the 25th minute following a foul on Media's Pisut Kayankij leveled the score but within a minute Jirasit



again went ahead, leaving Media unable to continue this particular game of catch-up.

The tournament was due to finish on March 3.

Media's Pirapol Kruesombhat (center) gets double-teamed by Jirasit's Somsak Sae-Koey and Ken Solod.

10 teams signed up for cricket

KARON: Ten teams are now confirmed for the Phuket Invitational Cricket Sixes, to be played between April 1 and 3 at the Karon Municipal Stadium. Another seven teams are still in the pavilion, but seen as "probables".

The tournament is split into two categories, Open and Spoon groups. Open teams play for the cup and teams confirmed so far include ex-India player Atul Wassan's squad and England's Surrey Vagrants, featuring former Essex captain Paul Prichard.

Other Open teams include Perth Postels and Warathai/Stockton from Australia, Kelewar Cricket Club from Malaysia and Lamma Cricket Club from Hong Kong.

Probables include Hong Kong Cricket Club, PALPA from Pakistan and a combined Chinese-Korean team.

Confirmed Spoon teams – tending to comprise less experi-

enced, downright bad or non-cricketers simply in it for the fun – include the Green Man Pub team, the Bangkok Postels and the Phuket Vagabonds, more commonly seen limping around with a slightly larger ball.

The Asian Cricket Sixes Tour (ACST) organizers are keen to hear from any other teams interested in playing at either level for what promises to be a memorable few days.

It's also hoped that this tournament will pave the way for a mini-league and an island team, ready to compete in its own right throughout the region.

Anyone interested should contact Michael Maher, chairman of the ACST at Tel: 0061-40-7385481; Fax: 0061-89-4436255; or email: mmaher.padmira@bigpond.com; or Howard Digby-Johns of the Green Man at Tel: 076-281445-51.

– Andy Johnstone

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Reviving a sense of style

The oldest privately-owned car company in Britain by a long way is Morgan Motor Co. Based in Malvern Link in Worcestershire, the company traces its origins back to when HFS Morgan, a vicar's son, became an engineer's apprentice with the Great Western Railway.

Morgan then opened his own garage in Malvern Link and built his first car, a three-wheeled single-seater. In 1910, he formed the Morgan Motor Co and built his first factory, producing single-seaters powered by JAP V-twin engines.

The following year, he began making two-seaters, for which there was greater demand.

But it was not until 1935 that Morgan converted to four wheels, when the company produced a sports model powered by a 1,122cc Coventry Climax engine.

By now, Morgan's son, Peter, had joined the company and father and son campaigned the Morgans in competition, including the classic Le Mans 24 Hours in 1938 and 1939, racing a 1,098cc Climax-engined model.

The Morgan design has changed little over the years, with the Plus Four still produced much as it was when it was introduced in the 1950s.

In 1968, the Plus Eight was launched with a 3.5-liter Rover V8 engine. It was essentially the same as the Plus Four but had larger brakes and bigger tires to cope with the extra power. The traditional ash-wood frame was still used, with steel and aluminum body panels.

The capacity of the V8 was increased to four liters and then to 4.6 liters, which offered 220 bhp (160 kW). The rudimentary chassis, though, discouraged spirited driving and the brakes



POWER AND PANACHE: The Aero 8's elegant styling is matched by its brutish BMW V8 that delivers a top speed of 255kmh.

were still far from state-of-the-art.

Four years ago, at the Geneva Salon, Morgan introduced its most radical model, the BMW-powered Aero 8. This uses the 4.4-liter V8 engine that also powered the BMW 7-series (and the Bentley Arnage), producing a healthy 286 bhp (210kW) and 430Nm of torque.

The power unit drives through a six-speed German-made Getrag gearbox. Aluminum features strongly throughout the Aero 8, giving it a kerb weight of around a ton, which in turn allows a top speed of more than 255kmh and a 0-100kmh time of well under five seconds.

The distinctive shape of the new Aero 8 was evolved in-house by Charles Morgan, grandson of the founder, and technical director Chris Lawrence.

Extensive prototype testing was carried out at BMW's secret proving ground in the south of France and it is fair to assume the German manufacturer assisted its tiny British counterpart in the run-up to full production.

Indeed, two BMW engineers and an engineer from Bosch worked at Malvern Link in the two years before the new car's launch to maximize the benefits of the BMW power plant and the sophisticated drive train.

The Aero 8 was a logical progression from the company's GT2 racer, which Charles Morgan raced in the FIA GT championship. Racing disc brakes are used front and rear, while co-



LIFE'S A BREEZE: The Aero 8 is the first Morgan to include air conditioning, if you feel you need it.

axial coil-spring damper units are used on each wheel. Because of the low weight and even distribution of this weight, roll is minimal and heavy anti-roll bars have been eliminated.

The Aero 8 is the first Morgan to offer air conditioning and cruise control. Special run-flat tires are fitted with a pressure sensor that sounds an audible warning should pressure in any tire drop below a preset level.

Other comforts include Connolly hide upholstery, variable power steering and a triple-skinned hood to minimize noise. The aerodynamics, say the manufacturers, differ little whether the hood is up or down.

Although the car is built in the traditional Morgan way, with aluminum panels mounted on an ash hardwood frame, the aluminum was developed specifically for Morgan by Alcan in Germany and it is the first car to use this particular material in Europe. The chassis is both bonded and riveted for maximum strength.

HFS Morgan would have been proud of his son and grandson's achievements to date. Sadly, Peter Morgan died in October last year, a few days short of his 84th birthday. But his and his father's legacy lives on.

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



By Jeff Heselwood

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Guest chef

By Jenna Wise

The sweet and sour taste of success

The Kota Khao Mun Kai Restaurant in Soi Surin, Phuket City, between The Metropole hotel and Robinson's department store, offers a simple menu of special rice and various combinations of roast pork and boiled chicken.

The restaurant, which first opened in 1968, serves these standard Thai dishes for breakfast, lunch and supper. The manager, Sudarat "Goong" Jira-amornrat, says that many foreign residents have become regular visitors, and tourists often drop in as well.

"We decided to print an English menu in 1990, when we realized that more foreigners were coming to try our food. I think they like it because it's typically Thai, but they can control the level of spiciness by choosing which sauce to use to flavor their meal.

"Thai customers nearly always prefer the chili sauce whereas Westerners enjoy the sweet and sour sauce. Japanese people seem to like the sweet soy sauce best."

One thing to everybody's taste is the price. At Kota Khao Mun Kai Restaurant, you can have a small plate of rice, pork or chicken for just 25 baht and the most expensive dish on the menu costs 70 baht.

Each chicken or pork dish comes with a bowl of clear chicken soup and a plate of fresh, chilled spring onions, chilies, fresh garlic and coriander sprigs. These side dishes are re-filled as often as the customer wishes.

A glass of fresh fruit or herb juice is 12 baht, and K. Goong has displayed information in Thai and English about the nutritional properties of the various juices.

The restaurant prides itself on maintaining a high standard of hygiene and environmentally-conscious people who order take-away will be pleased to find that their meals are packed the old-fashioned way – in banana leaves. Eat in or take out, you won't have to wait long for your meal as everything is pre-cooked and dished up as it is ordered.

As with many long-established Thai restaurants, Kota Khao Mun Kai is a family con-

cern. It was originally started by K. Goong's father-in-law, who is now happy to relax in the apartment upstairs while his family takes care of the business. Employees stay for a long time. Choosri Srisuk, for example, has worked there for 25 years.



Above: Chef Choosri Srisuk has been happily dishing out *khao mun kai* (left) for 25 years. Below: Clear Chicken Soup.



Method:

Fry the garlic briefly until it starts to brown. Remove from the heat and mix with the uncooked rice. Put the water into a saucepan and stir in the garlic and rice. Bring to the boil and simmer for about 30 minutes, until all the water has been absorbed.

Boiled Pork For 2 people

Ingredients:

200 grams pork loin (*moo san-nai*)
4 garlic cloves, chopped;
1 coriander root, chopped;
A pinch of black pepper;
A pinch of salt;
1 tablespoon soy sauce.

Method:

Cut the pork into fairly thin slices. Mix all the other ingredients together in a saucepan and leave the pork slices to marinate for 4 hours. Then, cook gently on a low heat for about 15 minutes. Cut slices off it and serve on top of the rice.

Boiled Chicken

Ingredients:

1 whole chicken;
Enough chicken stock to cover the chicken in a large pan.

Method:

Boil the chicken for about 30 minutes. Remove from the pan and drain well. Cut slices off it and serve on top of the rice.

Clear Chicken Soup For 2 people

Ingredients:

The carcass of 1 chicken;
1 liter of water;
A pinch of black pepper;
2 cloves of garlic, chopped;
1 tablespoon soy sauce;
2 tablespoons finely chopped spring onion stalks.

Method:

Put all the ingredients, except the spring onions, into a large pan and bring to the boil. Simmer the soup for at least 10 minutes before straining. Serve with some chopped spring onion stalks on top.

Sweet and Sour Sauce For 2 people

Ingredients:

5 whole small red chili peppers;
2 tablespoons vinegar;
½ tablespoon sugar.

Method:

Mix the ingredients together and serve in a small bowl.

Kota Khao Mun Kai Restaurant, 16-18 Soi Surin, Montri Rd, Phuket City. Tel: 076-212816. Open daily from 6 am to 6 pm.

If you have a recipe you would like to share with our readers, please email chef@phuketgazette.net.

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Home of the Week

Cape Panwa

Hillside retreat for luxurious living

This property, built on 1.2 rai of hillside on unspoilt Cape Panwa, has magnificent views over Chalong Bay and yet is only 10 minutes from Phuket City.

It has three or four bedrooms (depending on one's preference) and boasts 380 square meters of living space in a three-pavilion, three-level configuration. An adjoining half-rai plot of land could be sold or used to build a second house.

Each of the levels has terraces with sea views. The swimming pool, situated above the bedroom level, offers complete privacy. Despite the private setting, this imposing house is right on the main coast road and is accessible via a short driveway.

Immediately to the left of the two-car garage, on the lowest level is a small suite of rooms comprising a bedroom and living room – perhaps suitable accommodation for a maid or a guest – a bathroom with shower and an office-cum-storage room.

At the top of the wide stairway to the first terrace are two pavilions. The left-hand one has



a large bedroom with en-suite bathroom lavishly finished in marble and featuring windows on three sides. The pavilion to the right, above the garage, also has a bedroom with en-suite bathroom.

A second stairway leads to the next terrace and another pavilion of similar layout. All bedrooms enjoy views to the bay.

A pathway, lined with tropical plants and a water feature, connects all bedroom pavilions and terraces, and leads to the top terrace, where the main living pavilion is located.

Open-plan and airy, the living and dining areas are to the left as one enters. The well-appointed Western-style kitchen is situated along one whole wall of this pa-

vilion. Another bathroom and shower are just off the kitchen area.

The rich red of the terracotta tiling throughout is well partnered by the teak of the window frames and doors. There are air conditioners and fans in all areas and utilities include telephone, UBC TV and water heaters. The property also has three-phase electricity, well water and a septic tank.

This house, built two and a half years ago, is a luxurious home with great potential for further development.

It has a Chanote title and is offered for sale at 28 million baht.

For more information contact Richard Lusted at Siam Real Estate. Tel: 076-280805. Email: info@siamrealestate.com. Website: www.siamrealestate.com.



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www.phuketboatlagoon.com E-mail property_sale@phuketboatlagoon.com

Plants aren't as reliable as international diplomats when it comes to keeping up with the times. Everyone knows that names are wont to change in this ever-changing world but plants have yet to be affected by the trend towards political correctness.

Therefore – and despite the disappearance of its namesake – the Rangoon Creeper retains its name.

Somehow the “Yanong Quiet Mover” just doesn't work.

Many of the plants that flourish in Southeast Asia are imports from other tropical areas of the world, but the Rangoon Creeper is a native of this region. The *Iep meu nang*, as it's known in Thai, is a common sight all over Phuket and is sometimes called the Drunken Sailor. Answers as to how it got this name on a postcard, please.

There seems to be no stopping this aggressive plant once it takes root. The drunken sailor at my office is pruned daily with a pair of scissors borrowed from my desk, but it doesn't care. In fact, it seems to sneer at such treatment before growing back twice as fast, like a bibulous triffid. Now half of one of its names is starting to make sense.

One family I know resented the mere existence of the Rangoon Creeper that had become established in their garden because, to use the wife's words, it was “out to get them”.

The Rangoon Creeper always has clusters of fragrant, lazily-drooping flowers that are white when first they appear, then turn pink or crimson. One of the bizarre things about this plant is that all three colors can appear together on a single cluster at the same time. The majority of varieties are mostly pinky-red, and there is another type with double blossoms.

The best way to encourage its growth is to put some kind of framework behind it, and sit back

Gardening

with Bloomin' Bert

A creepy tale



The alpha male of the garden: turn your back and it will take over.

and watch. Once established, it will need frequent pruning if you want it to remain within boundaries. It also tends to wrap itself around any other plant that gets in its way.

The first Rangoon Creeper I bought was acquired purely by accident. I invested in a rather magnificent giant dracaena several years ago.

It had attained its height purely because the old guy at the garden center had forgotten about it, and basically allowed it to grow wild in the corner of his plot.

In the meantime though, this voracious triffid had wound itself around the dracaena, to the extent that they actually made quite a couple.

I took them home together anyway, and the Rangoon Creeper quickly became the alpha male of the garden. It took over. Once

it takes root and is given half a chance, it's the boss. It's so common in Phuket that some gardeners regard it as a weed.

But I have to say that I'm rather fond of it. It's not one to just pop in a pot and expect it to do its thing. Train it a little, and it will do as it's told.

Given the speed of its growth, along with the tendency to wrap itself around anything it happens to meet, it's a great way to cover a part of your garden that you would prefer wasn't there at all.

Any brick or concrete wall, (with a few nails knocked in and connected by wire) will be more than enough to point the Rangoon Creeper in the right direction. You'd never know the wall was there in the first place.

The drunken sailor will behave itself with a little discipline. But you do need to be firm.

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Do Not Drink
Tap Water!

Last week this column discussed the subject of selling houses before they are finished, or “shells” if you like – the concept being to allow buyers to select and buy their own finishes.

Now we have a new project in Phuket, Grove Gardens on the east coast of the island, which will market a similar concept. Houses will be rather more than shells, being built to lock-up stage, but completion of interiors will be up to the buyers.

Developed by Tri-Asia, an experienced resort management company run by well-known hotelier Lars Ydmark, Grove Gardens will offer six modern tropical-design villas, each with 630 square meters of built-up space. Of this, 430 sqm is allotted for interior air-conditioned areas featuring sea and island views.

So far that sounds like a standard property brochure. Outside, everything will be conventional, except that the pool will have no tiles.

Inside is where the difference will be really noticeable. There will be only ceilings and blank walls, with plumbing connections, wiring and air conditioning installed.

The buyer can bring his own interior designer, painter, cabinet maker, tiler, whomever, and do anything he wants inside. If he wants orange walls done in the fishtail cement style of a cheap Mexican hacienda, with yellow and purple ceilings, tastefully set off by a blue plastic din-



An artist's impression of one of the homes in the Grove Gardens development. The finish of the interior will be up to the buyer.

Project takes a new approach

ing suite and the subtle lighting of a fast-food chicken restaurant, it's up to him.

Not many people with that kind of taste are likely to buy a Grove Gardens house; more probably, the interiors will be excellently designed. But the point is that the buyer has the choice.

One developer in Bangkok told me that when he gave cus-

**PROPERTY
&
HOMEZONE**
By Graham Doven

tomers a say in the details of houses he was building for them, he lost a lot of friends arguing about the finishes.

When he built finished houses, he didn't lose any friends, but some people simply didn't like the designs and didn't buy. When he built unfinished houses, he sold them with no arguments at all, so that method seemed to work best.

Something else will be interesting about Grove Gardens: the homes will have a great view across the east coast of Phuket

and the islands in Phang Nga Bay. But the panorama will be visible only from the large terrace off the main living area upstairs, not from the ground.

Grove Gardens is still on the drawing board but potential buyers will be able to see the view from a scaffold tower erected in the middle of the site. Sounds great – if you don't suffer from vertigo.

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Property Gazette

Properties For Sale

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LOCH PALM GOLF

view land. 2 rai of beautiful land with 2 access roads and all services. Lovely location, ready to build on. Total price of 8.9 million baht. Enquiries to: Tel: 09-6498703 or Email: hotrudester69@hotmail.com

PHUKET VILLA 1

house for sale. House for sale in Phuket Villa 1 in Samkong. 3 rooms, 33 sq wah, 1.8 million baht. Tel: 01-8915932.

NEW HOUSE 4 SALE

A new 2-bed, 3-bathrm cozy hillside house of 74 sq wah on Chaofa Rd. Ready July 04. Yours for 3.5 million baht. Tel: 01-8924735. Email: noksk@samart.co.th

LAND IN PATONG

for sale. Land in Patong for sale with excellent seaviews. Price from 5.5 million baht/rai (3,450 baht/sqm). Tel: 076-349050, 01-8957159, 09-291111.

1.5 RAI NEAR RAWAI

Beach. 1.5 rai in top neighborhood, 3 minutes from Rawai Beach. Has electricity and new road. 3.3 million baht. Tel: 06-5950188. Email: nsupin@yahoo.com

SAI RUNG

Cape Yamoo. A private, tranquil estate on the east coast of Phuket with 5-20-rai land parcels available for sale with ocean view and private lake, orchard and untouched forest. Tel: 09-8732042. Email: nick@indigore.com. Please visit our website at www.sairung.com. Indigo Real Estate Limited. Sound Advice, Premium Properties.

BOAT LAGOON MARINA HOME

Fantastic 2-story, 285-sqm waterfront house with 3 bedrooms, 4 baths, beautiful interior and furniture, maid's quarters and private mooring. Property title. 9.5 million baht. Tel: 076-273461, 01-862-6954. Email: karom@libero.it

B6.6 M FOR HOUSES

and land. Two 2-story houses with seaview, 2 bathrooms, 3 living rooms, kitchen and Chanote title on 3.5 rai in the Chalong Mountains for 6.6 million baht. Call Stefan at Seraphina Co Ltd. Tel: 01-979-6011.



NATAI BEACH LAND

West Coast. 2.25 rai with 38 meters of ocean frontage at Natai Beach. Fully serviced & levelled. New boundary wall and building permits. Enjoy your sala 20 meters above high tide. 15 minutes from the airport. 25 million baht. Email: nick@indigore.com. Tel: 09-873 2042. Indigo Real Estate Limited. Sound Advice, Premium Properties.

PHUKET'S BEST VIEW

Land parcels available at Mission Hills Golf Course from 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and up to 17 rai. Best view I've seen in 25 years on Phuket. 2 million baht/rai with Chanote. The only land I know that has a complete view of Phang Nga Bay. Priced very competitively in comparison to other plots. Tel: 06-5950188. Email: nsupin@yahoo.com

ELEGANT LAKESIDE

villa. Only 10 mins from Phuket City, this 4-bedroom, all ensuite, luxury villa has teak throughout and full aircon for 19.5 million baht. Tel: 076-381717, 01-8950680. Fax: 076-282218. Email: info@phuket-sunseekers.com

HOUSE ON RIVER

Detached 3-bed, 2-level residence in Chalong with 3 bathrooms, mature gardens and river at back of house. Property renovated to the highest standards. Tel: 076-381635, 01-8926758. Email: rogerw@phuket.ksc.co.th

BEAUTIFUL LAND

for sale. Beautiful land for sale in Thalang on 3.38 rai with road, water, electricity and Nor Sor 3 Gor title. 3.8 million baht (only 700 baht/sqm). Tel: 076-349050, 01-8957159, 02-2911112.

2 RAI TOP AREA

Rawai. Urgent sale of 2 rai for 1.8 million baht/rai where land is selling for 4 million baht/rai. Tel: 06-5950188. Email: nsupin@yahoo.com

CONDO 4 SALE

Patong Beach. 1 room apt. Cash 450,000 baht or deposit 150,000 baht for yearly payment of 100,000 baht. Tel: 09-4740227. Email: su_kingsuwan@hotmail.com

LAND FOR SALE

Land in Land & House 111 sq wah. Price 1.9 million baht. Please call 01-6911986.

HOUSE IN KESENSARP

village. House in Kesensarp village in excellent location on Nanai Rd, for sale. 3 bedrooms, 3 aircon units, 2 bathrooms, landline, hot water, UBC, 24-hour security, gym, pool, sauna. Price: 3.2 million baht ono. Tel: 06-2779149. Email: pheelee68@hotmail.com

FANTASTIC SEAVIEW

Very nice and quiet land. 5 minutes from Khao Lak. 1 rai (1,600sqm): 750,000 baht. Lot without view: 350,000 baht. Call Miss Mee at Tel: 06-6834996.

LAND FOR SALE

20 rai in Rawai Soi Saliga. Beautiful view. Tel: 076-288422.

1.25 RAI KAMALA

Panoramic views over Kamala valley. Quiet location, not overlooked. Price: 2.75 million baht. Tel: 01-737-4295, 01-8929528. Email: stevebragg28@hotmail.com

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Directly on Banyan Tree golf course (Laguna property). 1,050 sqm/262.4 sq wah. 7.872 million baht. Tel: 076-239864. Fax: 076-239865. Email: hktmkt@ksc.th.com

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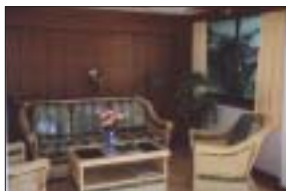
BARGAIN VALUE

European-style bungalow for sale in Kathu. Located on small private development between 2 golf courses, only 9 minutes from the sea at Patong. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, large living room, kitchen, parking area. Approx 128-sqm house area on 63 sq wah land. Price: 2.5 million baht. Enquiries to: Tel: 076-321954 or 09-4729841. Fax: 076-323421. Email: somsri@myway.com

NAI HARN

New house at bargain price for quick sale. Please contact for details. Tel: 01-7520275. Email: comfortablynumb_18@hotmail.com

2 NEW LUXURY CONDOS IN PATONG



85sqm and 106sqm. Fully furnished and high-class decoration, one and two bedrooms, large living/dining room with pantry kitchen, super bath with Jacuzzi, balcony. Long-term lease of 30-90 years. Security, garage, swimming pool. Contact Peter. Tel: 01-892-8526. Email: peterwesche@hotmail.com

LUXURY BUNGALOWS



in Patong. New 2-story bungalows with carport, large living-dining room, kitchen, 3 bedrooms, 3 baths, 150sqm. Freehold land. 4 million baht. Contact Peter for more details. Tel: 01-89 28526. Email: peterwesche@hotmail.com

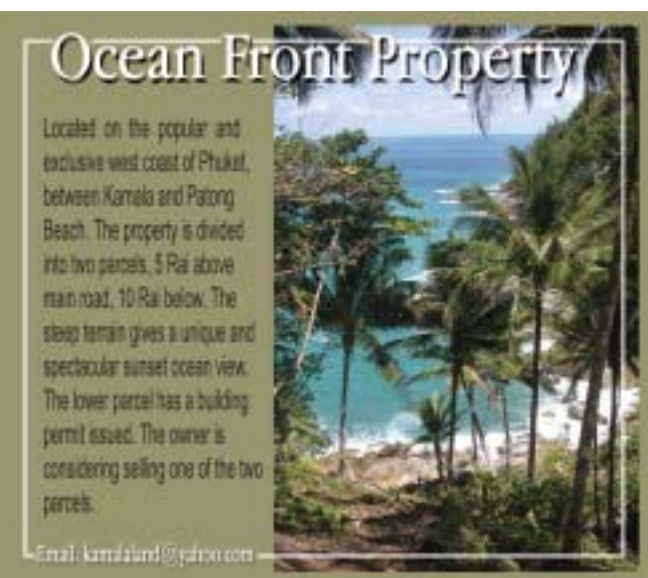


"4 plots left"

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LAND: LAND + HOUSE

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13 RAI - AO MAKHAM

This 13-rai plot has views to the sea on the east coast and on the west coast, government road and electricity. All land buildable with sensational views. 5 million baht per rai. Owner will consider splitting the land into 2 plots. Tel: 09-8715192. Email: info@phukethomes.com

4 RAI OCEAN VIEW

for sale at Kata. One of the few plots on Lamsai Cape. Chanote title, views to Kata and Karon bays. Great location, infrastructure and ready for development. 48 million baht/lot, ono. Please call 01-7192821. Email: kriepob@hotmail.com

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Accommodation Wanted

APARTMENT/ROOM

Looking for long-term rental apartment or room. Should be in Patong, Kamala, Kathu or Karon. Fully furnished and with fan ok. Max price 5,000 baht/mth. Tel: 05-1601670.

MOVING TO PHUKET

We are planning to move from Pattaya to Phuket in the next few months and are looking for a 3-bedroom bungalow with area to walk a few dogs each day. Budget is 10,000-20,000 baht per month. Please email with details: benny62@loxinfo.co.th

APARTMENT

wanted. I'm a 27-year-old boy from Sweden who wants to rent an apartment for 3 months starting in April. The apartment should be in the Kamala area. Looking forward to hearing from you. Email: mackan_larsson@hotmail.com

ACCOM WANTED,

south Phuket. I'm looking for a European standard apartment or small house fully furnished to rent for at least 3 months starting in March in the Karon, Kata or Rawai regions. Require 1 or 2 bedrooms, living room, kitchen, full aircon, cable TV. Tel: 07-2815795. Email: chaussecyrl@yahoo.fr

NICE HOME

nearby Patong. Decent and neat European gentleman would like to rent a quality home for 5-6 months in Patong, Kalim, Kathu or Kamala for next October-April. I can view your home now at any time. Email: tanewius@yahoo.com

HOUSE WANTED

long-term. I am looking for a nice house for long-term rent in Phuket, preferably Patong. I'll be arriving around March 15 and will stay about 3 weeks. During that time, I would like to find the house I want to rent for my return in mid-May. A long-term lease is preferred. Please email details and prices. Email: kofodz@e-bostad.net

1 BED RENTAL

in Patong. I am an English male looking for a 1-bedroom apartment, condo or house for long-term rent in the Patong area. Would prefer furnished with aircon, telephone line, UBC, access to pool, etc. Will pay up 10,000 baht/month for the right property. Email: Jason@jmeek.freeseve.co.uk

RENTAL IN PATONG

I am a girl from Norway who will move to Patong in August. Looking for an apartment or house in Patong for a long term stay (8 months). Some requirements: fully furnished, one-two bedrooms, access to pool, etc. Please send mail with information, price and pictures if possible. Email: lilla_4ever@hotmail.com

PATONG/KAMALA

Looking to rent an apartment, preferably quiet. I plan to be in Phuket for at least 2 years, so I'm hoping to find a place for 5,000-7,000 baht. Email: teflsteve@yahoo.co.uk

NICE HOUSE

urgently wanted. We are looking for a nice 3-bedroom house in Patong, Kamala, or Surin area, with a lease of 1-3 years. Up to 50,000 baht per month is acceptable. Tel: 076-255389, 09-6521525. Fax: 076-354724. Email: pkhongmak@courts.co.th

HOUSE IN KATHU

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

BANGKOK ROOM

Clean, inexpensive room wanted near Silom or Sukhumvit Rd for a couple with small child for about a month starting from March. Please send offers with details, including amenities, location and price by email. Photo appreciated. Tel: 01-8918689. Email: villathani@hotmail.com

BEACHFRONT HOME

We would like to rent a newer beachfront home in December '04. Prefer southern Phuket, but open to any nice homes/villas with maid service and security for weekly/monthly rental. Please email details to: s6girl02@hotmail.com

PATONG BEACH

I am looking for a room for rent in Patong from March 9 to April 22. Please email details of anything interesting to: mats.sioland@ocom.se

BUDGET ROOM

British expat requires budget accommodation in or around Patong for six months commencing June/July. Email: fletcher2u@tesco.net

SMALL HOUSE

I am planning to relocate from Alaska to the Patong Beach area around October this year. I would like to rent a small house on or near Patong Beach. I am looking to pay 12,000-15,000 baht a month for a nice home. Please email details, with pictures if possible. Tel: 907-2506089. Email: john.kiser@gci.net

WANTED TO RENT

I wish to rent a large luxury home with swimming pool and garden in Phuket for one week in October. Preferably the house will be on the beach and have a swimming pool. Please reply by email to lynbeechem@hotmail.com or Tel: 07-2745636 detailing accommodation, the rental price expected and location. A photo would be appreciated.

LIVE/WORK SPACE

Artist seeks two-story living/work space - live on top, work below - in Phuket City, Patong or Karon. Any condition. Will rent long term. Email: eunson101@yahoo.com

RANG HILL

I'm looking for accommodation in Phuket City on a long-term basis, minimum one year starting May 1. Price: between 5,000-6,000 baht per month. Contact with details to Tel: 06-9516593. Email: teflsteve@yahoo.co.uk

KAMALA/KARON/

Kata. We need accommodation starting December 6 up to a maximum of three weeks. We are 4 adults and two children. We prefer accommodation near the beach. Please email us with any suitable accommodation you might have. Email: fam.karlstrom@bostream.nu

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Change your old floor to new-look hardwood floor in 1 day.

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Do you need any kind of first-class quality painting for your new house or repairs? For more information, please call Tel: 072-868634.

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.

If an event isn't listed in the Gazette's

Events Calendar

it probably isn't one.

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

phuketgazette.com/calendar

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

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

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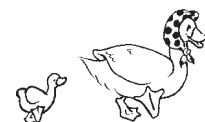
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Problems with an extra-marital affair? Need somebody to love?

ASK KHUN WANIDA "MOMMA DUCK"

Fax your questions to 076-213971
or e-mail to momma@phuketgazette.net



Island Job Mart



The famous Cape Panwa Hotel requires

- Front Office Manager
- Food & Beverage Manager
- Executive Sous Chef
- Sales Manager

Please send application letter, resumé and recent photo to :-
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 27 Moo 8 Sakdidej Rd., Phuket 83000
 E-mail : gm@capepanwa.com

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The number one five star Spa and Health Club Company in Phuket (Asian Wind) requires exceptional people to join our exceptional team, positions available:

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If you know you are the right candidate, submit your CV and expected salary by e-mail: info@asianwind.biz or fax: 076 233 384 or for more information telephone 076 233 348

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 required for ECC (Phuket). Applicants must have a strong academic background, a degree and a TEFL certificate. Details available on request. Tel: 076-214498. Fax: 076-214498. Email: eccpkt@ecc.ac.th

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 for a popular new café in Chalong. Good salary and benefits for the right person. Tel: 09-8685074 or 09-2659969.

amanpuri

Amanpuri is currently looking for a qualified, energetic, service-minded and enthusiastic individuals for the following positions:

1 ELECTRICIAN
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Qualifications:

- * At least a diploma from technical college.
- * At least 5 years' experience in related field.
- * Able to understand & communicate in English.

Qualified candidates should apply in person or submit complete resumé, references and one photo to:

Amanpuri Resort
Personnel Department
 118/1 Moo 3, Srisoonthorn Rd,
 Cherngtalay, Thalang, Phuket 83110
 Tel: 076 324333 Fax: 076 324100

SENIOR ACCOUNTANT

We are looking for a female accounting graduate with at least 3 yrs experience & fair English. Salary 15,000-20,000 baht. Please contact us to enquire and to apply. Tel: 076-263737. Fax: 076-224113. Email: recruitment@bowentraining.com

THAI COMPUTER

Technology. Hiring now with top pay for Thai national computer tech staff. Five positions available, salary 15,000-35,000 baht. Must have formal technology training. Please send your resumé by email to apply. Email: pat@siam-wireless.com

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We are Whitebay International, the most successful vacation ownership company in Asia. We are currently recruiting Sales Reps to help us promote our product. No experience necessary as full training will be given, but good communication skills are required. No fixed salary, but excellent commission - up to 15% - available for the right people. Full relocation benefits. Open to all nationalities. Please call, fax or email to apply. Tel: 076-341474. Fax: 076-290382. Email: hr@vipphuket.com

ACCOUNTANT

trainer required by software producers in Thalang. Must be a Thai national with good knowledge of accounting procedures. Computer skills important and spoken English an advantage. Training will be given. Please contact Pern to apply. Tel: 076-313137. Fax: 076-313269. Email: sales@phuketprogrammers.com

CASHIER WANTED

for Grand Plaza. 2 positions, age not over 25. Tel: 076-214922-25.

Phuket dot Com is expanding and needs additional, enthusiastic staff to join our growing team in our modern and exciting work environment:



Product Manager (Online Tours and Travel) - 1 position

Responsibilities:

To manage and control tour and travel content. To ensure featured products are up-to-date and competitive. To inspect new products. To process sales inquiries.

Requirements:

At least 3 - 5 years related work experience, excellent written and spoken English language skills, good Internet knowledge, ability to manage large volumes of inquiries and follow ups. Good team leader/player, willing to work flexible hours.

Reservation Agent (Travel & Tours) - 1 position

Responsibilities:

To process tour and travel inquiries and progress to confirmed bookings.

Requirements:

Experienced in tourism industry, good computer skills, good level of spoken and written English, service-minded.

Client Service Manager - 1 position

Responsibilities:

To supervise hotel and travel booking client service team. To control updates of rates and availability. To ensure high levels of customer service. To establish procedures for on-going system training.

Requirements:

Experienced in hotel reservation sales, excellent written and spoken English language skills, pro-active team leader/player. Computer literacy and good knowledge of the Internet.

Client Service Agent - German websites - 1 position

Responsibilities:

To process hotel reservations, and help with web page translation.

Requirements:

Excellent command of spoken, written German, ability to translate English to German and vice versa, experience in tourism industry would be helpful. Computer literacy and good knowledge of the Internet.

Sales Executives - 2 positions

Responsibilities:

To sell banner advertising, links and web pages on popular websites.

Requirements: Display advertising sales experience, 22-30 years of age, enthusiastic achiever, good command of English, neat and professional in appearance

Sales Support staff - 1 position

Responsibilities:

To assist sales staff, administer contracts and generate leads.

Requirements: Related experience in tourism industry, good command of spoken and written English, good computer skills, service minded.

Advanced web designer - 1 position

Responsibilities:

To join our award-winning design team at a senior level.

Requirements: Extensive web design experience, creativity, excellent written and spoken English skills. Examples of successful websites will be required.

Web Designer - 1 position

Responsibilities:

To join our award winning design team at a junior level.

Requirements: some experience in web page design, artistic ability, good command of English.

Note: ALL POSITIONS are open to Thai nationals.

We offer excellent salaries and benefits, please apply directly at :

ASIA WEB DIRECT CO., Ltd.
 4th Floor, Muangmai Building,
 9/17 Thepkasattri Road, Phuket, 83000

Tel: 076-236550 Fax: 076-236542

Island Job Mart

Le MERIDIEN PHUKET BEACH RESORT

Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort, the leading conference and incentive resort hotel is inviting applicants for the following positions:

ENGLISH TEACHER

- ☐ Native English-speaker.
- ☐ 2-3 Years experience teaching English to adults in Thailand.
- ☐ Enthusiastic, creative, student-centred, with a professional attitude.
- ☐ Strong written, communication and computer skills.
- ☐ Experience working in 5-star hotels would be an advantage.

SPA SUPERVISOR

- ☐ Good command of spoken English is essential, other languages beneficial.
- ☐ Strong interpersonal and communication skills for both staff (25+) and guests plus the ability to work creatively.
- ☐ Good promotional abilities and skills to spot key revenue-making opportunities.
- ☐ Organisational and coordination skills, including the ability to plan and direct spa initiatives.
- ☐ Competent staff training skills.
- ☐ Adequate computer skills, preferably with Microsoft Excel & Word.

Attractive salary, fringe benefits and career opportunities are offered to the successful candidates.

Please send your resume with recent photo by March 20, 2003 to : Human Resources Manager
P.O. Box 277, Phuket 83000 Fax: (076) 340479, Email: somchais@meridien.co.th

AMARI TRANG BEACH RESORT

Recently opened, the Amari Trang Beach Resort is the newest addition to the Amari group. The first international hotel in Trang Province, this 138-room property is located on Changlang Beach. Experienced and self-motivated Thai nationals are invited to join us in the following positions:

Front Office

1. Asst. Front Office Manager (Baht 15,000 - 20,000)
2. Night Manager (Baht 15,000 - 20,000)
3. Receptionist (Baht 6,000 - 7,000)

Housekeeping

4. Asst. Executive Housekeeper (Baht 25,000 up)
5. Asst. Housekeeper (Baht 15,000 - 20,000)
6. Housekeeping Supervisor (Baht 8,000 - 10,000)
7. Room Maid/Boy (Baht 5,500 - 6,000)
8. Gardener (Baht 5,000 - 5,500)

Food and Beverage

9. Asst. F&B Manager (Baht 20,000 - 25,000)
10. Coffee Shop Manager (Baht 15,000 - 20,000)
11. Speciality Restaurant Manager (Baht 20,000 - 25,000)
12. Restaurant Supervisor (Baht 8,000 - 10,000)
13. Waiter/Waitress (Baht 5,500 - 6,000)

Kitchen

14. Cook (Baht 6,000 - 6,500)
15. Cook Helper (Baht 5,000 - 5,500)
16. Steward (Baht 5,000 - 5,500)

Administration Office

17. Administration Manager (Baht 30,000 up)

Others

18. Driver (Baht 5,500 - 6,000)
19. Guest Activities Attendant (Baht 6,000 - 6,500)

The positions offer excellent benefits and a salary appropriate to the applicant's experience and abilities. Applications in writing, together with a recent photograph, should be forwarded to:

Khun Veerarat Limprasutr
General Manager, Amari Trang Beach Resort
Changlang Beach, Trang 92150, Thailand.

Fax: 0 75274240 or E-mail: gm@trangbeach.amari.com Visit our Web site: www.amari.com

SALES & MARKETING

Executive. An expanding Phuket company is looking for an energetic Thai sales/marketing person. The job is varied and demanding. You will have to work hard with a small team, but the rewards are excellent and the work can be fun. You need to be energetic, experienced in sales, computer literate in Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook, and aged 23-30. Good knowledge of spoken and written English essential. Good career opportunities for the right person. Please apply by email to: booemcl@hotmail.com

PROJECT ARCHITECT

Paradise Properties Limited property management company. Are you broad-minded and prepared to work hand in hand with a team as Project Architect/Senior Architect? We invite you to discuss with us the following employment opportunity: Project Architect/Senior Architect. Minimum 5 years' experience with license and good construction knowledge; ability to organize and supervise staff and projects independently; excellent design and presentation skills; good communication and interpersonal skills (imperative); skills in AutoCAD, 3D Studio Max, Freehand and Photoshop; good spoken and written English (essential). Please apply by sending your resume and a recent photo to: Chief Executive Officer, 96/35 Moo 5, Kamala Soi 10, Kamala, Kathu, Phuket 83120. Tel: 076-279550-1. Fax: 076-279092. Email: nsapple@loxinfo.co.th

STAFF REQUIRED

to work in an Internet cafe. Please contact for more info. Email: natanri@hotmail.com

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

The Hotel Travel Network, the world's leader in discount hotel reservation, is expanding its business and offering an exciting work environment with opportunities for career growth. Applications from candidates with the following qualifications are being taken for our Phuket office. Applicants must have both basic computer/English skills and preferably should have experience in tourism, Internet or e-commerce businesses. Position-Mandarin Chinese-, Spanish-, Arabic- and Japanese-speaking customer service agents: must be fluent in Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, Arabic 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); Thai nationality would be an advantage. Applicants for the following positions must be Thai nationals. Position-Accountants: Bachelor's degree in accounting. Position-Web Designers/Web Master: hold degree in Arts, graphic design, computer science or related field; must have proven experience in building, creating, designing and maintaining websites; able to work independently, supervise creative production; JavaScript, DHTML, CSS and Flash skills would be an advantage. Position-Web Developers: degree in computer science or related fields; good command of written and spoken English; proven experience in web development using Microsoft technologies, including; ASP/ASP.NET and SQL Server. Please submit your CV by email or call Khun Wiparat for further information. Tel: 076-282808. Email: employment@hoteltravel.com

SALES PERSON

required. Must have driving license. Please call for further information and to apply. Tel: 076-203011.

ADMIN OFFICER

required. Thai female, 20 years up, presentable, fluent in spoken & written English, computer literate. Please send CV by email. Email: tomkaan@nirvanaphutri.com

KITCHEN MANAGER/

Chef required for a small restaurant. Thai or European, must speak some English. Please contact Wayne to apply. Tel: 07-8924200. Email: volvos40t42003@yahoo.com

MAID/CHEF

required to work at home, good salary offered. Contact: 01-6916230.

WORK IN KOH SAMUI

We urgently require English, German, Dutch, Scandinavian people who love the Asian lifestyle but long for western commission to join our luxury five-star spa resort: Must have 5 years' experience as sales reps. Top commission and package paid for the right people. Tel: 07-2742748. Email: sales@samuiopeninsularesort.com

Employment Wanted

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looking for work in Phuket. Skills: computer support; network; LAN; WAN; Internet; wireless; manager and project management. Fluent written and spoken English. Prefer positions in IT, security or management. Tel: 05-1601670. For further information, please contact by email: paulivarlarsson@hotmail.com

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The Phuket Gazette

the island's English-language newspaper

The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following position:

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Applications should be submitted by email to alasdair@phuketgazette.net

Tout, Trader & Trumpet

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from Germany, secondhand, 125KVA, 225KVA, top condition (90%). Please contact for further information at Rothermann 1998 (Thailand). Tel: 02-6185925, 01-6176313. Email: roterman@cscoms.com, wattana@rothermannthai.com

FOR SALE

Satellite-antenna DW-TV, television Sharp, video recorder JVC, Honda wave 125 motorcycle and a 2-million baht company at Kata. Tel: 06-5964732.

Articles Wanted

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I want to buy a second hand bicycle, max 2,000 baht. Must be in good condition. Email: k.l.olsen@mail.dk

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29-foot fiberglass motor yacht with Thai registration. 2 x 280hp Mercruiser engines. Price: 3.5 million baht ono. Contact: 076-239864. Email: hkmtkt@ksc.th.com



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Comfortable, wooden 12-meter, Thai-registered small cruiser for sale. Has Isuzu 115 and a good indoor loo/shower. Price: 500,000 baht ono. Tel: 07-2642978. Fax: 076-290441.



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or fitness. Prime location in city center 4-star hotel, suitable for a fitness center or spa, with 450sqm exclusive of restroom or sauna. No key money. Contact for more info at: 076-222240. Email: rm@thavorngrandplaza.com

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PROPERTY OR LAND

swap. I am looking for an expat or local Thai interested in doing a property, land or even business/investment swap. I'm looking to swap my London property for land or villas near a golf course, any sort of commercial property (i.e. resort, hotel, restaurant), or even some sort of business or land. I'm interested in moving to Phuket in the next 6-12 months, depending on offers. Tel: 852-91629824. Email: jamesage@yahoo.com

BAR IN KARON

for sale. Bar in Karon Centre (Soi Happy Bar) Patak Road, Karon Beach. Price: 110,000 baht. Tel: 06-2744976. Email: grus35@hotmail.com

GREAT OPPORTUNITY

Very nice fully-equipped restaurant with accommodation. Only one available. Tel: 076-386046.

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and workshops at the Movement Center. Learn more about the Nia Technique at www.nia-nia.com. For more information on visiting practitioners and our class schedule, please see our website at www.phuketmoves.com Tel: 01-7975065 or 076-282408.

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Personal Services Wanted

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I am a total novice looking for a tennis professional to teach me, would like to begin immediately. Email: ms_que70@hotmail.com

CUSHION COVERS

Can anyone make cushion covers and make loose covers for a sofa? Please contact: 01-0816862. Email: belindarevett@hotmail.com

LEARN THAI

I am Troy, aged 30. I would like to find someone to teach me Thai. I am from New Zealand, but already living in Thailand. Next month, I will be teaching English in Phuket, so I need someone to teach me Thai. Email: troy8945@yahoo.com

KUNG FU FIGHTING

Can anybody in Phuket teach me kung fu, tae kwan do, ninjitsu, or anything similar? If you're trained in any of these and have time, please contact me. Email: wilki77@hotmail.com

Personals

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GENERAL MANAGER

A single foreigner in Phuket is looking for an Asian woman. Email: duhart37@hotmail.com

MISTER JOHN

from Europe. European, 34 years old, computer programmer, now is in Thailand, looking for an Asian lady for life in Europe or Thailand. I prefer natural and ordinary ladies like nurses or sales clerks. Tel: 07-258965. Email: jeebay@excite.com

FEMALE PENPAL

An engineer in Phoenix, Arizona, is looking for a penpal friendship with a Thai lady, age 20-40 years old. Email: markjive@cox.net

ENGLISH GUY

living in Phuket would like to meet any nice ladies who would like to go to nice places and like to travel for weekends away. I have my own house and car, and also have my own business here in Thailand. I am good fun to be with and would like to enjoy life with someone special. I like to go swimming and keeping fit and healthy. If you like to listen to music and would like to join me for dinner, then please send your details with photo by email. Let's get together. Email: paul2@mail2world.com

THAI LADY

seeks boyfriend. I want to help my friend find a boyfriend. She is 20, thin and very attractive, very honest and deserves someone likewise. She speaks a little English and has never had boyfriend before but is very easy to be around. You can email me with your photo and I will pass it on to her. She would like a white foreign man because of the excitement of it. Tel: 06-2762169. Email: get2547@hotmail.com

AUSTRALIAN LIFE

I am 55 years old, slim, fit and healthy. I am divorced and have my own business in Australia. I would like to meet a Thai lady, age 24-40, who can cook Thai food, look after me and enjoy a quality life in Australia. Email: squire5445@yahoo.com.au

Pets

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2 beautiful, neutered male dogs - part German Shepherd part/part Thai dog - need loving home. Owner moving and sadly cannot take them. Kind, intelligent and well trained, they love people/children. Car trained to go for walks. Small build. For more details, please call or email. Tel: 076-274819 or 01-7196937. Please Email: birdy01@loxinfo.co.th

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the bar

after dinner
after dark
drinks in the bar

for somewhere different...
where else but watermark!

watermark bar restaurant
the boat lagoon marina
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